What Is Crime News?

Crime news concerns the events that involve such wrongdoings or illegal actions as theft, burglary, robbery, gambling, blackmail, smuggling, drug trafficking, narcotics, child abuse, child labor, rape, prostitution, fraud, kidnapping, assaults, bombings, murder, assassination, and massacres.

The Techniques of Crime News Writing

The following are some of the techniques the writer of a crime news story may make use of:

1. Use *simple past tense, and past perfect tense*, for example:
   - The police of Hua Mark Police station yesterday *arrested* two women on charges of selling fake watches.
   - Police said the man *had* shot his neighbor by accident.

2. Use the passive voice to emphasize the object of the sentence, for example:
   - 45-kilos of heroin *was seized* after the police received a tip-off.
   - Two British civilians *were detained* as hostages in Rwanda.
3. Use adverbs as effective modifiers, either at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the sentence, for example:

*Immediately*, the man stabbed the passers-by with a cutter.

- The police *instantly* arrived at the death scene.
- The robber escaped, *quickly*.

4. Keep the sentences short, clear and specific, and get rid of any redundant or ambiguous words or phrases, for example:

- A man suspected of shooting a Dallas police officer = *An unidentified suspect* accused of shooting a police officer.
- Women are likely to be disappointed in their choice of a permanent mate, a study shows. = Women *want* permanent mates who are sensitive, self-assured and warm, a sociologist’s report shows.

5. Use action words such as strong verbs instead of weak verbs, for example:

- A woman who is 30 years old from a village in the North attempted to kill herself yesterday. = A 30-year-old woman from a northern village *tried to commit suicide* yesterday.
- Electrical power was cut yesterday. = People *lost* electrical power for almost three hours yesterday.
- There will be an increase in property taxes. = Property taxes *will increase*.
- Firefighters in Oregon seemed to use every method they could to fight with a forest fire. = Firefighters in Oregon *battled* a forest fire on Monday.
6. Use informal and simple words rather than the formal and elaborate ones, for example:

attempt = bid
instruct = teach, tell
affluent = rich
deceased = dead
utilize = use
solitary = alone, single
exhibit = show
numerous = many, plentiful of
fatigued = tired
genuine = true, real

purchase = buy
ponder = think
witness = see
conceal = close
possess = own, have
assist = help
terminate = end
incorrect = wrong
impoverished = poor
selection = choice

7. Be careful of the punctuation because it helps guide the reader, for example:

- A baby who was so small at birth that, if she had died, she would have been considered a miscarriage, this week reached 4 pounds and is thriving at St. Joseph’s Hospital, physicians and nurses said.

- Shanghai—“Bikinis are out!” yells Lo Chaotian.

8. Identify the persons in the news stories by giving their rank, position, name, age, sex, occupation, nationality, hometown, homeland, and clarify the name of the places and objects as well, for example:
Pol. Gen Manat Krutchaiyant    John Crawford, Lance Coporal,
An 18-year-old boy       A 24-year-old graduate student
A 40-year-old Bangkokian   A 52-year-old doctor from Japan
An a-year-old West Phoenix girl
Peter, 33, a native and veteran of Ohio
A Delaware county businessman A three-month-old baby boy
A 17-year-old student from Jefferson Junior High School
Madeleine Albright, US Secretary of State
President Joseph Estrada
Sixth floor, Orlando City Parking Garage, 53 W. Central Blvd.,
Downtown Orlando
Somchai, alias Dang Bailey
The needle, which was believed to be infected with AIDS virus, contained blood.

Identifying Crime News

Drugs trafficking

A ton of marijuana seized

Nukhon Pathom—Police seized about a ton of dried marijuana from a sir-wheel truck following a brief shootout with three suspected drug traffickers in Si Sarakham District on Monday morning.

The incident occurred on the Khamhui-Hat Paeng Road when a truck laden with Marijuana believed to have been smuggled from Laos, rammed through a roadblock manned by a police squad after a tip-off.
Police Sergeant Paichit Chanthayuth was slightly injured when the truck smashed into the roadblock and hit a tree, police said, adding that the suspects then jumped off the truck and fired at the approaching policeman.

The two sides exchanged fire for about five minutes before the suspects broke contact and escaped, police said.
Idioms and expressions:

after a tip off  to break contact  to be slightly injured

5 Ws and H:

Who:  Police, Police Sergeant Paichit Chanthayuth

What:  Police seized a ton of dried marijuana.

Three drug traffickers smuggled a ton of marijuana from Laos into Thailand.

Where:  On a six-wheel truck on the Khamhaï-Hat Paeng Road

When:  On Monday morning

How:  Police and the three suspects exchanged fire before the latter escaped.

AIDS assaults

Teenager launches AIDS assaults

A long-haired teenager said to be stricken with AIDS has gone berserk at the Pathumwan intersection, stabbing passers-by with a blood-stricken needle which is believed to be infected with AIDS virus.

It is not immediately known how many people have been attacked by the teenager, who is said to be a drug addict, but reports say a female student is one of his victims.

Police Department Deputy Director-General Manat Krutchaiyant said he had ordered a hunt for the boy who was last seen at the Pathumwan intersection.
The teenager, reportedly with long hair and wearing blue tattered jeans, was said to have approached a female student saying, “Share some of this,” before stabbing her with a needle.

Pol. Gen. Manat said he had ordered the Central Investigation Bureau and the Metropolitan Police to mount an immediate search after being informed by the Public Health Ministry.

Pol. Gen. Manat said anyone who encounters the boy should alert the nearest police office.

Vocabulary:

Verbs: to launch to stab to be infected
to be attacked to approach to mount
to strike to inform to encounter
to alert to share

Nouns: AIDS teenager
passer-by needle
drug addict victim
blue jeans search

Proper names: Central Investigation Bureau Metropolitan Police
Public Health Ministry Pathumwan Intersection
Police Department Police General
Deputy Director- General
Adjectives: long-haired, berserk, blood-stricken, female, tattered, immediate, nearest

Idioms and expressions:
to go berserk, among one of, a hunt for, to mount an immediate search

The 5Ws and H:

Who: Police, Police Department, Pol. Gen. Manat Krutchaiyant, Public Health Ministry, a teenager and drug addict, a female student, passers-by

What: Police were informed of a teenager who stabbed passers-by with a blood-stricken needle.
A teenager who was a drug addict stabbed passers-by with a needle containing blood infected by AIDS virus, among them was a female student.
A female student was stabbed with a blood-stricken needle by a drug addict.

Where: At Pathumwan intersection

When: Yesterday afternoon

Why: The teenager was stricken with AIDS virus and wanted others to share the same fate with him.
**How:**
The Ministry of Public Health informed the Pathumwan police of this incident.

The boy has gone berserk at the Pathumwan intersection and attacked the crowd of passers-by. Pol. Gen. Manat Krutchaiyant, Deputy Director-General of the Police Department ordered a hunt and search for the boy immediately.

Anyone who comes across the boy should immediately inform the Pathumwan police.

**Activities**

**Exercise 1**

Write the lead of a crime news story using the information from the 5 Ws and H.

**who:** Luke Woodham, 17 years old student of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, USA.

A jury in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, USA.

**What:**

Luke Woodham killed two classmates. One of them was a girl he had dated.

The jury found Luke Woodham guilty because he killed two friends, one of them was a girl he used to date. They charged him with aggravated assault.

**Where:**

At Pearl High School in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, U.S.A.

**When:**

On Friday June 12, 1998.
**why:** Because he was violent and the event happened during his shooting rampage.

**How:** During his shootings, he injured seven classmates and shot two of them dead in a rage. The jury unanimously sentenced him to life imprisonment.

(Write your lead in the space below.)

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**Exercise 2**

Choose the best headline to suit the crime news story above by putting a tick or cross in the space provided.

............... Two classmates killed by friend who is insane and enraged.

............... Schoolboy found guilty of shootings at Mississippi school

............... Mississippi jury sentence boy to life imprisonment

............... Schoolboy accused of killing classmates

............... Schoolboy apologizes for shooting friends
Exercise 3

Arrange the following information in the correct order to make a good crime news story by writing 1, 2, 3, ..., in the space provided.

1. Customs officials asked to search her luggage. A few other Africans whom Customs believed were in the same gang as Mrs. Mabola, fled the scene but left four bags.

2. The seizure is the largest single haul this year, according to Customs Director-General Dr. Aran Thammano, who said the drug would have a street price abroad of 940 million baht.

3. 45 kilos heroin seized in largest single haul this year

4. About 11.30 p.m. a Zairian later named as Kunga Mobola, 27, arrived at a check-in counter with a large amount of luggage to catch Egypt Air flight MS 865 to Lagos via Cairo.

5. Customs officials seized about 45 kilogrammes of high-grade heroin worth 9.4 million baht at local wholesale rates and arrested a Zairian woman on trafficking charges at Don Muang airport late on Saturday night.

6. Customs officials, acting on a tip-off, closely watched departing passengers for suspicious behaviour.

7. Miss Mabola was charged with trafficking in heroin and handed over to the Crime Suppression Division.
The officials found 41 cakes of high-grade heroin weighing a total of 15.5 kg in Mrs. Mabola’s luggage. The other four bags revealed 82 cakes of heroin weighing a total of 30.2 kg.

Exercise 4

Punctuate the following leads.

Seri launches probe into alleged Kurusapa fraudCentral Investigation Bureau Commissioner Seri Temiyavej has set up a team to investigate allegations that the president of Kurusapa Business Organization who is close to the former education minister Sukhavich Rangsithpol cheated the state firm out of Bt250 million

(From The Nation, Friday June 12, 1998)

California-- A thirteen year old Robert C. Smith abducted from his California home 21 months ago buried his face in his father’s arms in a dramatic family reunion yesterday morning outside the State Police barracks here.

(From The Boston Globe)
Exercise 5

Remove all the unnecessary words in the following sentences, You may have to rewrite some of them.

1. The assault took place late at night.

2. He called a press conference to announce his innocence.

3. She was taken into custody and sentenced to life imprisonment.

4. Police declared that a dead body had been found in the river.

5. Police made an investigation but do not make any comment at the present time.

6. Police arrived just in the nick of time.

7. The man stabbed him at the back straight as an arrow.

8. The police thought his excuse was like a fairy tale.

9. The bald-headed man surrendered to police.
10. Police were looking for a blue-colored mini van.

11. Due to the fact that the man was a suspect, the police held him up.

12. Police determined that the victim had been suffocated to death.

13. An assembled crowd of people gathered to witness the glue sniffer.

14. The police launched a city-wide hunt for the assassin at the hour of noon.

15. The man with a criminal record recorded by the Central Investigation was taken to re-enact the murder scene where he plotted the murder.