



BACIL Guide to Writing a Witness Statement

Tom Bacon BACIL Co-Coordinator

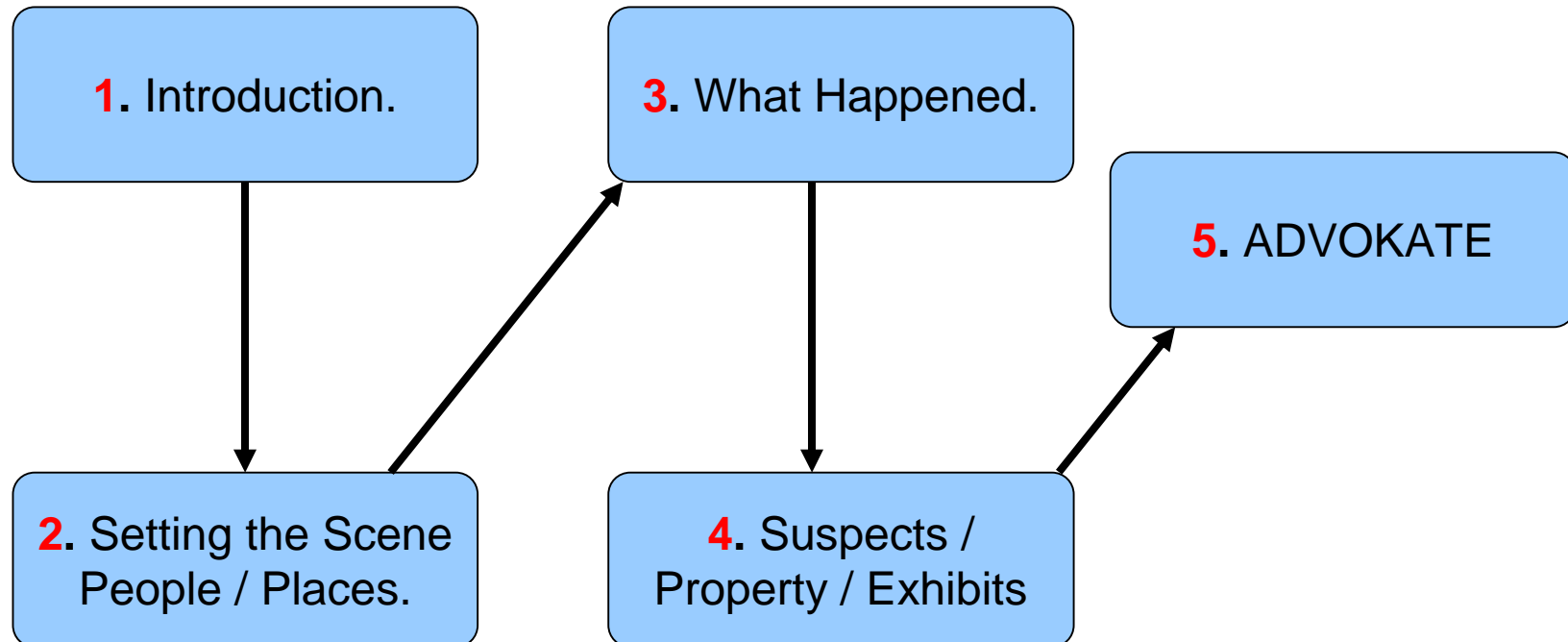
Sean Walker BACIL Manager

Greg Shaw – West Yorkshire Police Trainer

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5 Part Statement Structure

To help you structure your statement and build continuity into your version of events, try to follow the following steps.



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1. Introduction

- Introduce yourself.
- Explain Role & Responsibilities.
- Explain why the statement is being made?

“I am Joe Bloggs, currently employed by the BACIL Store on BACIL Street as a security officer. It is my responsibility to prevent and reduce crime in the store. I am writing this statement in relation to a theft which occurred on 01.10.2013 at 12.00hrs.”

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2. Setting the Scene

Introduce everyone involved excluding the suspect/s.

You should include other members of staff / PCSO's in this section.

Write answers to the relevant questions below:

- Who were you with?
- How do you know them?
- Where did the event take place?
- If there is more than once place, how do the two places relate to each other?

3. What Happened?

This is the main body of your statement and your opportunity to:

- Explain in as much detail as possible what has happened.
- Justify your actions or in-actions in terms of use of force.
- Include all the relevant legal 'points to prove' for the offence.

To help build the detail into your statements and to make sure you give a full detailed account you can use the following slides to help you.

What is SCONE?

- Selection
- Concealment
- Observation
- Non-payment
- Exit

SCONE should appear throughout your witness statement, writing SCONE into your statement ensures you cover all the legal 'points to prove' that make up the offence of theft. Writing how SCONE happened in your statement will help your version of events in your statement flow.

Modus Operandi - MO

- The MO can help us identify how a person has committed a crime.
- In your statement you need to describe how the theft has been committed, so it is important you include the relevant information.
- Offenders often have a regular method which they use to commit crimes. Your statement can help in future intelligence and **STOPCRIMES**.

STOPCRIMES – introducing further detail

SStyle – are they in and out quickly or do they use fitting rooms etc.

Time – relevant to an event not the clock e.g. only on Sundays

Objective – to gain money / feed habits etc.

Pal – associate or accomplice regularly involved?

Class – the class of person, working / middle / upper

Reason – why are they committing the crimes?

Instrument – rucksack / foil lined bag / tools

Mode – of transport. car / cycle / walk

Enter – a preferred door / entrance

Signature – e.g conceals security tags into clothes on fixtures

A detailed witness statement can be invaluable to the police so try to include as much information in relation to STOPCRIMES as you can throughout your statement.

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4. Suspects

- Ethnicity
- Sex
- Age
- Height
- Build
- Hairstyle and colour
- Complexion
- Distinguishing features
- Clothing
- Carrying anything



When introducing the suspects you must fully describe them using the 10 points described above.

4. Property / Exhibits

Exhibiting is the term for naming the items that are involved in the offence you are dealing with, to present in court.

It is important to exhibit items in your statement because it is not known at the time if the case will end up in court, so we prepare for that outcome every time in our statements.

You should exhibit CCTV where possible and a till receipt proving the value of the items that have been stolen. Using the name Joe Bloggs, you would exhibit the CCTV item like this:

I can produce the CCTV of the events as exhibit JB1, this was handed to PC 0000 at 13:00hours.

Changes to Exhibits

New policing practice will mean the arresting officer should take a picture of all the items that need exhibiting. This would be the stolen property in a theft or equipment such as de-taggers and foil lined bags.

The only exhibits you should need to produce are CCTV tapes / CD's, and till receipts proving the total value of the stolen items.

5. ADVOKATE (R v Turnbull)

ADVOKATE is the mnemonic used to help you include as much detail as possible in your witness statement.

Amount of Time – the suspect was under observation

Distance - from you and the suspect or incident.

Visibility – time of day, lighting conditions dim / bright / clear / foggy.

Obstructions – lampposts / pillars / walls / fixtures / trees

Known or Seen Before – do you know the suspect and why?

Any Reason to Remember – e.g. features / tattoos / violent / threatening

Time Lapse

Errors or Discrepancies – are the timings on the CCTV wrong etc.

ADVOKATE should be used in any order that best describes the circumstances, but all points should be included. If necessary some parts may be used more than once. ADVOKATE must be featured in your statement, if you cannot fit ADVOKATE into the statement then please include it at the end.

5. ADVOKATE

- Sticking to ADVOKATE will help your statement be clear & concise.
- It will make sure your statement has as much detail that is needed by the Police to conduct their investigations and interviews promptly and with greater effect.
- The more structured and detailed your statement is, the likelihood is that the suspect is dealt with appropriately by local authorities is increased.

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- Helps you during cross-examination in court by the suspects defence.
- Refreshes your memory, before court you will be given a copy of your witness statement to read before you give your evidence.
- In some cases your statement will be used to give your evidence in your absence. If you are not there to verbally give evidence it is important that your statement includes every detail using ADVOKATE in your written statement.

Statement Writing Tips

- Always use black ink.
- Do not leave blank lines.
- Only use fact and not opinion.
- Use the 24 hour clock.
- Don't be afraid to use words such as fat or scruffy to describe people.
- Justify your actions if necessary e.g. I did this because I feared for mine and my colleagues personal safety.

Giving Evidence in Court

Avoid bringing any new information into your evidence in court, it should be included in your witness statement.

The suspects defence will challenge you on the new information if you bring new information into the case at a later date in the court room.

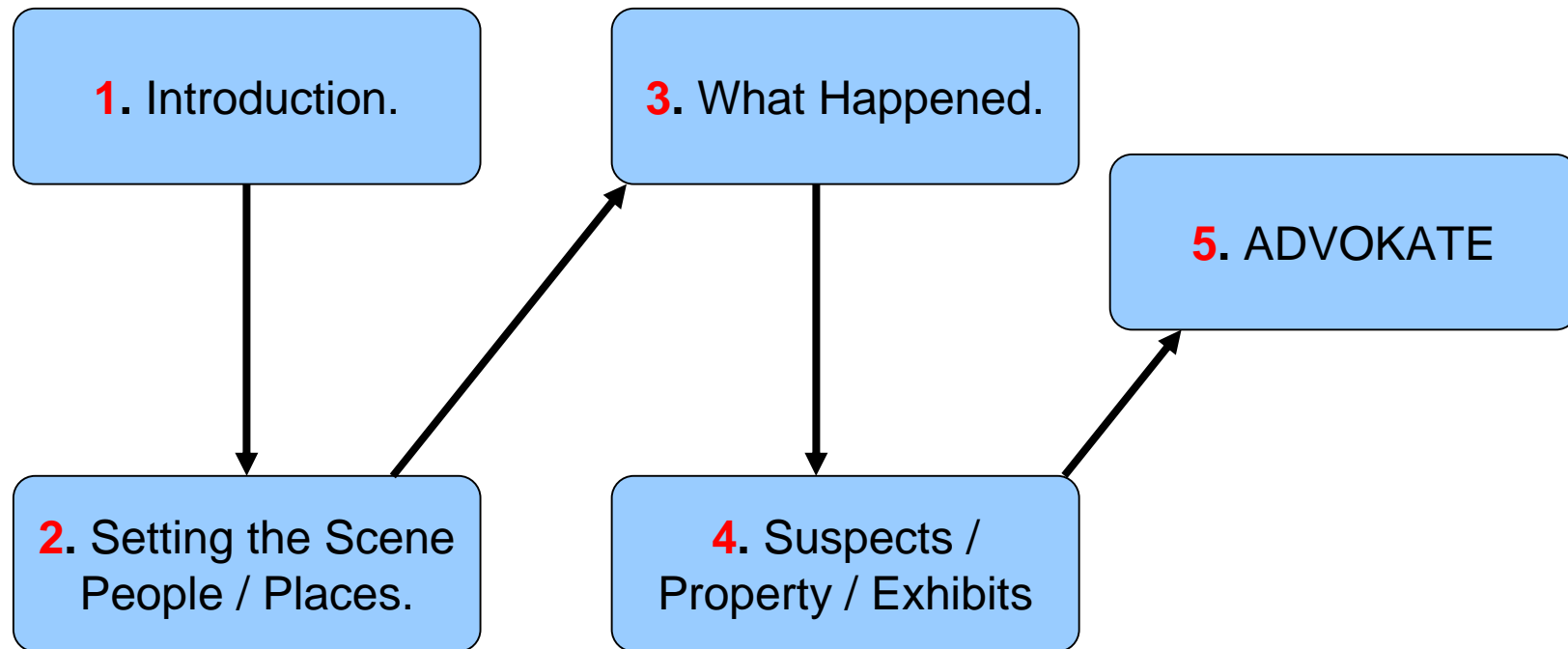
By including as much detail as possible throughout your statement using SCONE, STOPCRIMES & ADVOKATE you will cover all the information you need to give as a witness, and have justified and explained reasoned answers to any questions put to you by the defence.

Downloadable Files

On the training section of the BACIL website you can access:

- A template of a witness statement to use as a guide when writing your own statements
- MG11 witness statement forms.
- MG11 continuation forms.

Re-Cap



Feedback, Questions & Answers

We hope this statement writing guidance has helped you, if there is anything you do not understand or would like this training delivered in an interactive session in your premises please contact sean@bacil.org or the BACIL office on 0113 241 3012.

The End

The mobile BACIL website is now live. To access it simply log on as follows

<https://cis.bacil.org/login.aspx>

Thanks for coming your attendance is appreciated

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