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## Crime In David Baldacci's 2013 Novel *The Hit*

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### Abstract

*This study aims to determine the types of crime, causes of crime, and the effects of crime found in the novel The Hit by David Baldacci which was published in 2013 by Grand Central Publishing in USA by analyzing the actions, conversations, and statements made by the main characters in the novel. The research used qualitative descriptive method through forensic approach. The data were obtained by reading, identifying, and taking notes to classify the kinds, causes, and effects of crime in The Hit novel. The writer used sociology of crime theory by Bonger as main theory and forensic text type theory by John Ollson as supporting theory. The result of this study showed that there are 4 types of crime in The Hit novel, such as personal crime, property crime, organized crime, and white-collar crime. The writer also found 3 causes of crime and 3 effects of crime in the novel. The causes of crime in the novel are social cause, economic cause, and psychological cause. While the effects of crime in the novel are material losses, trauma, and loss of life.*

**Keywords:** Criminology, Forensic Approach, Crime Types, Causes Crime, Effects Crime



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is a medium to express the thoughts and opinions of the author. Literature can be used as social expression, guide of human life, and to interpret what is like to live in the time when it was created. Literary works are the results of the said thoughts and opinions. According to Pradopo (1994: p.61), literary works pictures human life and the world itself. In addition, literary works also reflects the author's views of the problems based on their environment.

A novel is a fiction in which there are stories about the life of characters and people around them. According to Tarigan (1991), novel is both fictional and reality. This means that while the story from novel is fictional, the inspiration can be taken from reality along with the imagination of the authors. Wellek & Warren (1956: p.3) also stated that novel represents the experience of human life. Novel is a prose work of length complexity, which attempts to reflect and express something about the quality of values of human experience or conduct. It is an important matter that has taken from patterns of life, as we have known or set in exotic and imaginative times and places.

Crime cannot be separated from human history since it is in human nature to do so. Kartono (2009: p.56) stated that crime is a violation towards law and norm in society. The stories of criminal acts are expressed into literary work which is known as crime fiction. Crime fiction is a genre in a literature which depicts crime or mysterious events as a central plot in its stories. Manoah (2013) stated that crime fiction fuel every research in criminology and serve as guidance to reduce crime rate in society.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Previous Studies**

In order to better understand the study, the writer conducts various research of previous studies that related to the novel and crime as follows:

Kadir (2022) conducted a study of criminality in David Baldacci's novel *The Sixth Man* by using the sociological approach to literature. Aims of this study were to describe the kinds of crime in the novel and their impacts to society. The results were there are two kinds of crimes such as organized crime and white-collar crime, and their impacts to society are negative ones, that is a loss of life and material.

A study carried by Magong (2015) on crime's motives by the character Joe Mason in David Baldacci's novel *Zero Day* by using the qualitative descriptive method and theory of human emotions, criminology, and motivation. The objectives on this research were to investigate the motives for the crimes and criterias of crime in the novel. The results of the study were that the motives for the crimes were to fulfill the character's own needs, insecurity, and fear. The criterias for crime found in the novel are human involvement, actions of crime, and the evidences.

Another study conducted by Laksono (2017) on the crimes committed by characters in Tamsir AS' novel *Jawa Krikil Krikil Pasisir*. The aims of this study were to explore the kinds of crimes and the factors that triggered the crimes by using the sociology approach to literature. The results were there are three kinds of crimes such as economic crimes, sexual crimes, and violent crimes. The factors that triggered the crimes in the novel were social conditions, economic conditions and environments.

Another study related to crime was carried by Manoah (2013) on the relation between crime fiction genre and its ascendancy through news and media. The writer conducted this research with content analysis by studying and analyzing the data found in crime fiction such as shows, movies, and novel to find the patterns that link the crimes in the literary work and crimes that happened in real life. The results shows that most crime perpetrators portrayed in crime fiction are greatly exaggerated. The example is in 1980s America and Britain when in every television show they portrayed women as more violent and manipulative than men while in real life women are rarely violent.

Inzunza & Carlsson (2021) carried out a study of how to develop an effective crime prevention in Colombia. The writers conducted the research by interviewing the police officers and civilians with questionnaires in areas covered by the initiative and covered areas. Additional data includes a focus group interviews and crime statistics provided by the law enforcement. The results of the study shows that the corroboration between civilian and police is one of the effective ways to prevent crime in the future, while civilian's trust issue of the police and personal fear of crime are still main problems that hinder the progress of crime prevention.

Another study in crime prevention was carried out by Adugna & Italemahu (2019) about crime prevention through community policing in Eastern Ethiopia. The objective of this study is to review the practicing of community intervention in the study site. The writers used questionnaires, key informant reviews, and group discussion to obtained the data needed for the research. The result shows that with community prevention system, the crime rate in Ethiopia reduce in great proportion. Such as the burglary and robbery, the most recurring crimes in area are reduced to 27% and 22% respectively. However, there are still few factors that obstruct the

crime prevention, such as the lack of awareness among the residents, inadequate financial resources, and the ill-prepared law enforcements.

Hayadin (2019) carried out a study of school brawling in Bogor city to explain the enemy perception of the students who committed the brawl and the triggering factors of school brawling. The writer used qualitative method and the data were collected through observation, documentation, interviews of Bogor Educational office, Bogor Educational Committee, Task Force of student brawling, school staffs, teachers, and student who involved in brawling. The research was conducted in Bogor city in 2016 until 2017. The conclusion of the study is that the most frequently student brawling occurs in Bogor city was triggered by the enemy perception of the student toward another school student, even toward other school groups. This kind of perception had existed a long time, as the old generation inherit it to their younger generation, and keep it maintained. Therefore, the solution to stopping student brawling in the Bogor city is to eliminate the perception of the enemy towards other schools or other school groups.

Shao (2019) conducted a study on the relation of violent video games to adolescent aggression. By making questionnaires about video games, aggressive behavior, and truth or false questionnaires in six different schools, the writers find that while violent video games can be related in adolescents' aggressive behavior it is up to their families that determine the results. If they grow up in good family environment the effects of violent video games are little to no effect for their aggression level, while the ones who live in poor family environment are more vulnerable to video games' violent effects.

Research by Lumenta (2012) was conducted to study the effects of the factors that cause crime in the city of Manado. The writer conducting the research by making research paradigms, examine and correlate the coefficients, and studying the influential crime factor. The data was obtained from the Central Bureau of Statistics and Manado City Police Resort. The research was conducted from 1990 to 2008. The results of the study shows that unemployment and poverty are the direct cause of the rising crime in Manado and the increasing birth rate can indirectly cause the rising crime rate.

Setyawan (2020) wrote a study about the works of anti-corruption of Indonesian National Police and its contribution to economic development. This research was conducted by making interviews and questionnaires to INP's officers and non-government officers that are employed to support the anti-corruption function of INP. The result shows that economic development has relation to effectiveness of anti-corruption measures. Strengthening anti-corruption function of INP shall be made through deployment of adequate human resource so that all sub-functions of anti-corruption function would be managed effectively. Career management of officers working in anti-corruption function is important to attract talent in anti-corruption function, and also motivate workers to do their best in anti-corruption behavior.

Khatun (2022) conducting a study of crime prevention strategy in Bangladesh. The objectives of this study are to studying the nature and trend of crime in Bangladesh and examines the history, structure, operational management, functional process, and success of community policing. The writer of this research used a descriptive qualitative approach to collect the relevant data using secondary sources such as books, research journals, periodicals, articles, magazines, and newspapers to understand the existing model and strategies of crime prevention, and cross-check with international crime prevention agencies and various governments' data and reports. The results show that Bangladesh has been practicing both formal and informal crime prevention

mechanisms. Formal crime control uses the law and government agencies, such as police, courts, and prisons to deter crime; while informal crime control employs moral and social institutions such as the family, religion, peers, and neighborhood groups to prevent deviant behaviors. The study also finds that the rapid modernization and substantial urbanization subsided the informal social justice system and strengthen the formal legal institutions. Overall, community policing was found to be a feasible strategy to control crime in Bangladesh with some modification and by improving the existing structure.

## **2.2 Related Theories**

Literature is a means of social expression, a mirror of life, and interpretation of human expressions that help people understand how to live. According to Taylor (2010), literature is a part of the writer's imagination in interpreting life experiences. Literature in broad sense is a medium to tell stories, dramatize situations, express emotions, analyze and advocate ideas.

Crime is an act of offense which violates the law and looked down by society. Crimes can include murder, robbery, kidnapping, fraud, rape, etc. To understand more about crime, one must learn of criminology. Criminology is a scientific approach to study criminal behavior. Kartasmita (1997) stated that criminology in broad definition is a science that study the methods that tied to the crime and its prevention. Criminology consisted of two syllables; "crime" which means a violation of law and "logos" which means science. In other words, criminology is a scientific branch that study the cause and factor of crime through behavioral and social studies.

Forensic linguistic according to Ashraf (2023) is a branch of linguistics that focuses on the adaptation and application of the analytical methods of the field to legal and criminal issues such as trial, investigation, rehabilitation, and punishment. Olsson (2008) also stated that forensic linguistic can be applied as linguistic knowledge to the legal forum.

## **3. METHOD**

The type of the research is qualitative descriptive research due to the main source of the data is from a novel which is then analyzed further with the forensic approach to literature and criminology. The main data source of the research is David Baldacci's novel *The Hit*. The novel was published by Grand Central Publishing in the USA in 2013. The novel itself has 85 chapters and 576 pages. In addition, the researcher also collected the supporting data such as journals, articles, and reviews of the novel to gain an insight of this research.

In this research, the writer applied the forensic approach to literature along with qualitative descriptive method. In addition, the writer used John Olsson's forensic transcription theory Olsson (2008: p.190) that consist of audio recordings and written language. Due to the main data source is from the novel *The Hit*, the writer chooses the written language method by finding and analyzing an incriminating text in *The Hit* novel through the actions, conversations and written statements made by the main characters that implying the crime.

## **4. RESULTS**

Based on the conducted research there are 4 kinds, 2 causes, and 3 effects of crime based on Bonger's theory found in *The Hit* novel by David Baldacci.

### **4.1 Types of Crime in *The Hit* Novel**

#### **Personal Crime**

Personal crime is a crime that target individual person. These crimes include murder,

battery, and sexual assault (Bonger, 1936).

In total, there were 14 data of personal crime found in *The Hit* novel. 8 of them are murders, 2 for attempted murder, 1 data of torture, and 3 for threats.

### **Property crime**

Property crime is a crime that target materialistic property. These crimes include robbery, arson, and theft (Bonger, 1936).

In total, there were 3 data of property crime found in *The Hit* novel. 2 of them are arson, and one data for vandalism.

### **Organized crime**

Organized crime is a crime that committed by more than one individual or an organization in an organized manner. (Bonger, 1936)

In total, there were 10 data of organized crime found in *The Hit* novel. 3 of them are murders, 6 for attempted murder, and one data of kidnapping.

### **White-collar crime**

White-collar crime is a crime that committed by people with high social status and their actions are usually covered by the government. (Bonger, 1936).

In total, there were 6 data of white-collar crime found in *The Hit* novel. 4 of them are murders, 1 for attempted murder, and 1 data of desertion.

## **4.2 Causes of Crime in The Hit Novel**

### **Social cause;**

Crimes that are committed by certain individual can be caused by their status in society. If the culprit grew up in broken family and uneducated environment, they are more likely tend to commit crimes due to no one to teach them of right and wrong decision (Bonger, 1936)

In total, there were 2 data of social cause found in *The Hit* novel.

### **Psychological cause**

The psychological causes of crime are also important to look at as they are the main catalyst of some individual who committed the crime. The psychological causes are including mental disability, poor intelligence, and depression (Bonger, 1936).

In total, there were 3 data of psychological cause found in *The Hit* novel.

## **4.3 Effects of Crime in The Hit Novel**

### **Material losses**

Material loss can happen if criminal action is still at a considerable stage. Such as pickpocketing, fraud, arson, and theft (Bonger, 1936).

In total, there were 4 data of material losses found in *The Hit* novel.

### **Trauma**

Trauma can occur in a person who is subjected to criminal activity such as physical abuse and threats (Bonger, 1936).

In total, there were 6 data of trauma found in *The Hit* novel.

### **Loss of life**

Loss of life occurs if the crimes committed by the perpetrator have entered a high degree like murder, mutilation, and torture (Bonger, 1936).

In total, there were 5 data of loss of life found in *The Hit* novel.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

In this section, the writer would describe the results found at the findings stage on the crime in terms of types, causes, and effects. There were 4 types of crime, 2 causes of crime, and 3 effects of crime found in *The Hit* novel by David Baldacci.

### **5.1 Types of Crime**

The data collected in this research was found with Bongger's Sociological approach of crime along with Ollson's forensic type approach. The types of crime found in *The Hit* novel are personal crime, property crime, organized crime, and white-collar crime. The forms of crimes committed in the novel are include murder, attempted murder, kidnapping, torture, desertion, vandalism, and arson.

Murder is the action of taking someone's life. In society, murder is usually looked down no matter the reason. But in some cases, murder can be justified especially by government if the victim was deemed as a threat to public. In the novel there were 14 data found. 8 in Table I, 3 in Table III, and 3 in Table IV.

Attempted murder is an act committed by person as a way to commit murder. The result can be success or failure depend on the results. There were 10 data found in the novel. 2 in Table I, 1 in Table II, 6 in Table III, and 1 in Table IV.

Kidnapping is an act of crime by taking someone by force without their consent. There was only one data found in the novel and could be seen in Table III.

Vandalism is an act of crime involving deliberate destruction of or damage to public or private property. There were 2 data found in the novel and could be seen in Table II and VII.

Desertion is an act of crime by abandoning the duty or post without permission from the superior. There was only one data found in the novel and could be seen in Table IV.

Torture is an act of crime committed by harming the victim physically or mentally usually as method of gathering information or punishment. There were 2 data found in the novel, one is in Table I and the other one is in Table VIII.

Arson is an act of crime by burning someone else's property on purpose. There were 3 data found in the novel. 2 in Table II and 1 in Table III.

In total there are all 4 types of crimes based on Bongger's theory found in *The Hit* novel such as personal crime, property crime, organized crime, and white-collar crime in which the most dominant crime is personal crime with 14 data.

### **5.2 Causes of Crime**

Aside from the types of crime, the writer also found 2 causes of crime in *The Hit* novel. There were social cause and psychological causes.

The social cause is determined by the perpetrator's upbringing, their status in society, and the environment they grew up in. If they were from broken home and harsh environment, they are most likely to commit crime. There were 2 data found in the novel and could be seen in Table V.

The psychological cause is also important since it can become the perpetrator's main drive to commit crimes. There were 3 data found in the novel and could be seen in Table VI.

Based on Bongger's theory, there are only 2 out of 3 causes of crime found in *The Hit* novel such as social cause with 2 data and psychological cause with 3 data.

### 5.3 Effects of Crime

In addition to types and causes of crime, the writer also found 3 effects of crime in *The Hit* novel. The effects are material losses, trauma, and loss of life.

Material losses is when a victim received a negative effect of crime that made them loss their property. From the novel there were 4 data found and could be seen in Table VII.

Trauma is a physical or psychological condition that develops as a result of traumatic incident such as accident, torture, attempted murder, or threats. There were 6 data found in the novel and can be seen in Table VIII.

Loss of life is the results of the unfortunate events such as accident and crime. This can have a negative impact for both the victim's family and friends. There were 5 data found in the novel and can be seen in Table IX.

Based on Bongger's theory there are all 3 effects of crime found in *The Hit* novel such as trauma, material losses, and loss of life. And the most dominant effect of crime is trauma with 6 data.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the result of The Hit novel's research, the writer concluded that there were 4 kinds of crime found in The Hit novel, such as personal crime, property crime, organized crime, and white-collar crime. Personal crime is a crime that targeted a certain individual done by one person while property crime is targeting victim's material belongings. Organized crime is a crime committed by more than one person and white-collar crime is a crime committed by people with high status in society. There were 14 data of personal crime, 3 data of property crime, 10 data of organized crime, and 6 data of white-collar crime in which the most dominant form of crime is murder with 14 data in total with 8 in Table I, 3 in Table III, and 3 in Table IV.

There were 2 causes of crime found in The Hit novel such as social cause and psychological cause. The social cause is usually depends on the culprit's status in society while the psychological cause is determined by the culprit's mental health problem. There were 2 data found in social cause on table V and 3 data in psychological cause on table VI.

The effects of crime found in The Hit novel are trauma, material losses, and loss of life. The most dominant effect of crime in the novel is trauma with 6 data in table VIII while material losses and loss and life only had 4 data and 5 data respectively in table VII and IX.

In conclusion, crimes can be committed by anyone in real life, no matter what their status are. And crimes are often committed by someone people can trust like government officials. While some crimes can be justified, it is still forbidden to commit crime since it can bring negative results such as physical injuries and trauma, material losses, and loss of life.

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