Summaries

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**Contract killings in a new style. The coarsening and professionalization in contract killings in the Netherlands.**
*B. van Gestel and M.A. Verhoeven*
While contract killings by organized crime groups are by no means new to the Netherlands (with around twenty to thirty cases a year over the last few decades), there is reason to believe that the nature of the killings has changed. The key question of this article is which recent developments can be identified in relation to the phenomenon of contract killings. The availability of new groups of hitmen and new means has led to a number of changes in modus operandi for contract killings within organized crime. On the one hand, there is a process of professionalization when it comes to methods of observation and counter-strategies, which involves the use of the latest technological tools. The digitization of resources and traces plays a significant part in this. On the other hand, the perpetrators are resorting to much coarser methods for the actual killings. This may be attributed to the abundance of heavy firearms available in the Netherlands and to new inexperienced homegrown hitmen, who are willing to kill in exchange for payment.

**‘Hitman, at your service’: a crime script analysis of contract killings in the Netherlands**
*L.R. de Korte*
Contract killings in the Netherlands have been a common phenomenon for the last two decades. In those two decades, the killings have become more violent and they are often executed in public spaces. Despite their big societal impact, scientific research into the contract killings is not available. This article aims to broaden the empirical basis of contract killings by studying the killings through crime script
analysis. The focus of the article is on the objects and facilitators necessary for the preparations of the killings. First, the analysis of six police files showed that stolen vehicles, machine guns, and technical equipment like encrypted phones and tracking equipment are very often used in the preparation of a contract killing. Second, spy shops facilitated the contract killings by ensuring safe communication for the hitmen and by using tracking equipment the specific location of the victim is easily available. Finally, the analysis shows that hitmen were hired to execute the killings.

**Contract killings in the Netherlands in historical perspective**

*E. Slot*

This article describes the subsequent waves of contract killings in the Netherlands since the twentieth century. Contract killings appear to happen especially within ethnic groups which are newcomers to Dutch society. The Chinese community in Amsterdam fought two internal ‘wars’. The first one was from 1918 till 1935 and circled around the trade in opium and arms. The second one took place between 1969 and the mid-seventies and was fueled by conflicts about the heroin trade. Then Turkish criminals took over the heroin trade, which resulted in a wave of Turkish victims of contract killings throughout the second half of the seventies and into the eighties. The cocaine trade came up in the eighties and was run first by Chileans and later by Colombians, which resulted in several murders within the criminal circles of these communities. While contract killings of (by birth) Dutch criminals had always been very rare, this changed from the mid-eighties. These killings not only took place in Amsterdam, but also in the southern provinces of Limburg and Brabant, as well as in Rotterdam. Most Dutch criminals specialized in cannabis growing and trading. In the nineties the number of contract killings reached a peak. By then Yugoslavs had entered the criminal scene in the Netherlands. They cooperated with Dutch criminals and offered their services as hitmen. From 2000 onwards the number of contract killings has been dropping constantly and has now reached a more or less constant level of around twenty yearly. In the last couple of years many young Moroccan Dutch criminals have been killing and killed in conflicts on drugs trade. The author signalizes a lack of ‘professionalism’ in contract killers today and draws a parallel with the period when Chinese criminals were fighting their wars in Amsterdam. The hitmen are
young, have little experience, are not intelligent and use far too many bullets to do the job.

**Victims of contract killing in the Amsterdam criminal scene**
*P. Vugts and H. Kras*

More than twenty criminals from Amsterdam were killed since 2012 in fierce conflicts in the criminal scene. The victims, mostly young men, can be divided into four categories. The assassins are young, often with a low intelligence, and easy to contract. They hope to give their criminal career a boost by killing. Their main motives are status and money. If the organization fears that they know too much and might inform the police, this can be a motive to kill them. Sometimes fear of betrayal of the organization is a motive for murder. The middlemen are important, because the ‘high profile targets’ want to stay out of sight of the assassins. The middlemen already have a rather secure position, although subordinate to the top. The motive to have them killed is often distrust and the fear that they know too much and would be able to tell the police too much. Revenge by another group is also an important reason they get killed. The high profile targets are top criminals in their thirties or forties mostly and in charge of the drug trafficking. The motive to have them killed is to gain influence and obtain a stronger, strategic position in the market, or – again – revenge. Rivals who are afraid to be killed, sometimes choose to be the first to act. The final category is formed by the victims killed by mistake. Recently at least three people were killed by assassins who thought they were shooting at a criminal target in the conflict. Just by mistake, because the victim drove the same kind of car, for example.

**The assassination of a Solid Soldier? ‘Not-knowing-for-sure’ and ‘realness’ around the death of Sin**
*R.A. Roks*

During an ethnographic research on the Rollin 200 Crips, a Dutch ‘gang’, Sin – one of the author’s informants – was shot and killed in Amsterdam. In this article, the author focuses on the ways in which the Rollin 200 Crips interpreted and made sense of Sin’s death. Several narratives of interpretation could be discerned in the aftermath of his death. Firstly, speculations and rumors about the motives brought feelings of uncertainty and suspicion to the fore, contrasting the otherwise instrumental logic of violence the Rollin 200 Crips communicated.
during the author’s fieldwork and in the media. In addition, Sin’s death produced a number of narratives about the ‘realness’ of Dutch gang life. For these reasons, Sin’s death represents an impressive, important and meaningful moment during the author’s fieldwork and, more generally, in the history of the Rollin 200 Crips.

**Speech is lead. Is the government able to protect threatened witnesses?**

*G. Leistra*

This article focuses on witness protection programs for (former) criminals who witness against suspects in criminal procedures. It goes without saying that these witnesses run the risk of becoming the target of a contract killing. The author describes the conditions of admission to a witness protection program, as well as the various existing types of protection. Witnesses themselves are often not very enthusiastic about the program. Since they themselves have a criminal past, they look at the police as their enemy and often prefer to receive a lump sum and arrange their safety themselves, as becomes clear from several examples provided by the author.

**On the edge of ideas and deeds. The prosecution of preparing contract killings. An interview with prosecutor Koos Plooij and lawyer Christian Flokstra**

*M.P.C. Scheepmaker*

In this interview the Dutch prosecutor Koos Plooij discusses with criminal lawyer Christian Flokstra on the intention of the Public Prosecution Office to adapt article 46 of the Dutch Penal Law (Sr) in such a way that the burden of proof necessary for a sentence on contract killing is lowered. Plooij argues that many suspects who were clearly up to a very serious deed, have received a relatively low punishment because it was too difficult to prove that they were preparing a contract killing – and were not simply trying to intimidate their target or for instance take this person as a hostage. For the judge it is essential to establish which crime was being prepared, since the latter are completely different crimes and the punishment is much lower compared to the punishment for murder. Flokstra replies by stressing that the limitations of the current article 46 Sr exist to assure that people are not punished for things they didn’t do or were not planning to do. He argues that the prosecution should accept that sometimes there’s just
not enough proof to convince the judge that the suspect was preparing a contract killing. A sentence for arms possession or participation in a criminal organization could be an alternative in such cases. Both men agree that the current maximum punishments for these crimes are too low.