

## International Cold Case Analysis

At the end of 2020, the first four-week international cold case analysis was implemented under the auspices of the Police Academy of Lower Saxony, together with five British and two Australian universities under the umbrella of PEN-MP and AMBER Alert Europe. The aim was to expand and develop the students' competencies in criminalistic thinking in a way that was geared towards learning objectives. But how did this unique project come about, and how should it continue according to the ideas of the project partners?

### Structure of the international course

Through the network structures of the PEN-MP, it became clear that in addition to the police academy, British and Australian universities already have experience in cold case analyses with their students. These were limited to the respective educational institutions with support from the local law enforcement authorities. After the starting signal in October, an international analysis was carried out within a period of two and a half months with a total of 43 students, including twelve students from the police academy, from courses in the faculties of forensic science, criminology, criminalistics, psychology and forensic anthropology from five British universities (Universities of South Wales, Leeds Beckett, Central



Lancashire, Staffordshire and Winchester) as well as two Australian universities (Universities of Murdoch and Newcastle) and integrated into an existing course at the PA with a total of 75 students as well as a legal trainee from the Verden District Attorney's Office.

In the international course, the students worked online in groups under the guidance of teaching staff from all participating universities and the police academy. They implemented the didactic learning concepts developed in the PA and presented their results at the end of the course to the participating public prosecutor's offices and police stations on more than 400 presentation slides in a seven-hour lecture.

The development towards an international cold case analysis was also influenced by enhancements to the Stud.IP learning platform through the conversion of face-to-face to purely online teaching to a fully-fledged digital learning platform. This included, in particular, the courseware and the VSNfD area. According to Carsten Reinhardt in an empirical topic-related Master's thesis, the courseware is by far the best digital solution for replacing face-to-face teaching. The students found the courseware via Stud.IP

to be the best and most suitable digital teaching method. 100% of the students voted to continue using this teaching method as a supplement to their studies! For the international analysis, separate topic-related courseware was created in English with a volume of 10 hours.

It is noteworthy that all project participants were equally convinced by the structure and approach of the police academy's analysis. This should also be seen against the background that the list of specialist publications on cold cases and missing person cases by the participating universities is long; in addition to co-authorships in international standard works, e.g. the "Handbook of Missing Persons" by Caroline Sturdy Colls (Staffordshire) and the "Cold Case Review" by Cheryl Allsop (South Wales). "Pathways in Crime" by David Keatley (Murdoch).

A learning objective-oriented evaluation of the project concluded the following: All learning objectives set for the levels of remembering, understanding, applying and evaluating were fully met. The results obtained are summarised by the project partners in a field report.

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**Karsten Bettels**

Detective Chief Superintendent at the  
Police Academy of Lower Saxony



## Where do we go from here?

The project experiences were presented to member states and interested stakeholders in a webinar organised by PEN-MP and AMBER Alert Europe on 25 February 2021. third countries. A total of 500 participant places are available worldwide. In addition to the existing project partners, who are available and are counting on a continuation, the aim is to inspire the police and police-related educational institutions in the EU member states with the idea and to take

responsibility for the further development of the project on the basis of the knowledge gained. Frank Hoen formulated it in a letter dated 14 January 2021 as follows: "from 2021, it is intended to develop the international cold case analysis into a permanent institution in the EU". The Lower Saxony PA has made a significant contribution here by initiating, organising and shaping the content of this first international cold case analysis of educational institutions.

## The Courseware and the Vault Solution

The courseware enables a forward-looking form of digital teaching using a variety of different elements such as audio files, pdf documents, links, films, chats, online discussions and exercises, which can be used by students themselves on a smartphone in a targeted manner and with

complete flexibility in terms of location and time. The vault solution enables the use of VS-NfD content in digital teaching, which can be used by students in read-only mode on their electronic end devices through a multi-secured system of passwords and technical requirements.



Mr. Karsten Bettels during one of the few face-to-face events in the international course in compliance with hygiene conditions