



# The Importance of Scientific Crime Investigation (SCI) in Solving Murder Cases in Indonesia

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**Abstract:** Criminal law in Indonesia grants law enforcement authorities the power to address violations, including the crime of murder. However, handling murder cases often faces challenges, particularly in terms of evidence and identifying the perpetrators. Technological advancements have driven the development of Scientific Crime Investigation (SCI) as a scientific approach that replaces conventional investigation methods by integrating various scientific disciplines to provide more accurate evidence. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of SCI in the investigation process and its alignment with applicable regulations. The research method employed is a normative juridical approach, referring to relevant laws and legal literature. The analysis results indicate that in Decision Number 39/Pid/2024/PT.YYK, the appellate panel of judges modified the death sentence previously imposed on the defendants in Decision Number 634/Pid.B/2023/PN.Smn to a life imprisonment sentence. This ruling suggests that the panel of judges did not adhere to Supreme Court Circular Number 05 of 1973, which regulates sentencing based on the gravity and nature of the crime.

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## Introduction

The Indonesian Criminal Code (*KUHAP*) and the Code of Criminal Procedure (*KUHAP*) grant authority to law enforcement agencies to take action when a legal event occurs that violates the law. Criminal law can be understood as a set of regulations encompassing the procedures and methods for the enforcement of criminal law by law enforcement agencies (Wahyuni, 2017). In this context, the investigation of murder crimes has become one of the main challenges faced in law enforcement practices in Indonesia.

Investigations are regulated under Article 1(2) of the *KUHAP*, which defines an investigation as a series of actions carried out by investigators in accordance with the provisions outlined in the law, aimed at searching for and collecting evidence, as well as identifying suspects. The rising number of criminal cases, both resolved and

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unresolved, indicates the need for a more effective approach in the investigative process. In Indonesia, crime rates, including murder cases, remain notably high. According to official data from the Electronic Monitoring Center for National Security Information (EMP Pusiknas) of the Criminal Investigation Agency (Bareskrim Polri), the police have handled at least 411 murder cases from the beginning of 2024 until May 10, 2024 ([Pusiknas Bareskrim Polri, 2024](#)).

A crime is an act prohibited by law and punishable by sanctions or penalties imposed by the state. To determine whether an action is legally accountable, a clear understanding of the elements of a criminal offense is essential. These elements are used to assess whether the act in question qualifies as a crime and whether the perpetrator is liable for legal sanctions. Every law related to criminal law explicitly regulates criminal offenses. According to Moeljatno, a crime is an act prohibited by law, accompanied by the threat of sanctions for anyone who violates these rules. To identify a criminal offense, criminal legislation generally outlines prohibited actions, followed by sanctions. These provisions establish several elements that distinguish criminal acts from other acts that are not prohibited. A criminal offense refers to the nature of the act, meaning it is subject to criminal sanctions if violated ([Lubis & Nurita, 2023](#)).

The current reality indicates that advancements and sophistication in technology in the modern era have significantly impacted the criminal justice system. The development of technology and scientific methods has opened new opportunities, particularly in the process of uncovering criminal cases. With these advancements, the resolution of criminal cases can be achieved more efficiently, providing ease for state authorities, such as the police ([Rombot, 2024](#)).

One of the methods used in criminal investigations is Scientific Crime Investigation (SCI), an approach that integrates various scientific disciplines such as forensics, psychology, and information technology. This scientific field plays a crucial role in uncovering criminal acts by assisting in the collection and analysis of evidence. The proof obtained through this method becomes a critical final step in solving criminal cases, particularly murder. The SCI method is regulated by the Indonesian National Police Chief Regulation No. 6 of 2019 concerning Criminal Investigations, which revoked the previous regulation, Indonesian National Police Chief Regulation No. 14 of 2012 on Criminal Investigation Management. Article 34 of this regulation emphasizes that criminal investigators are supported by technical assistance aimed at scientific proof (Scientific Crime Investigation).

In the investigation process, the application of this scientific method not only enhances the accuracy of evidence but also helps minimize the risk of wrongful arrests and the neglect of cases that could otherwise be solved. This scientific assistance is utilized by police investigators because, in reality, not all criminal cases can be easily solved. In serious cases such as murders accompanied by mutilation,

many of these cases are often difficult to solve due to the lack of physical evidence, witnesses, or strong proof. Therefore, this scientific method is invaluable in helping investigators prove the commission of a crime.

In Indonesia, crimes involving mutilation are not uncommon, as such incidents have frequently occurred in practice. Homicide, particularly premeditated murder, poses a serious threat to society, given that these crimes are carried out with careful planning to take someone's life.

Mutilation-related crimes are particularly grave, as they not only involve the loss of life but also have significant impacts on the victim's physical well-being, dignity, and reputation (Tangkala & Qomarudin, 2022). Premeditated murder is often committed by multiple individuals, with a time gap between the planning and the execution of the crime. This type of crime is especially dangerous for the victim, as it results not only in death but also in brutal acts of mutilation on the corpse, intended to erase any trace of evidence. For instance, in Yogyakarta, a student identified as RA was murdered after being tortured, and his body was mutilated to cover up the crime. In this case, the court sentenced the perpetrators to the death penalty through Decision Number 634/Pid.B/2023/PN.Smn.

Based on the aforementioned background, the author will formulate several issues to be discussed in this study. This research aims to further examine the position of Scientific Crime Investigation (SCI) within the Indonesian legal system, as well as how judges impose criminal penalties on defendants who brutally take the victim's life through extremely heinous methods. The objectives of this study align with the research questions outlined, which encompass various activities to address and analyze the issues raised in these questions.

## **Methods**

The method used in this study is a normative legal approach, where the author will present an analysis of positive law correlated with the main issues related to the subject matter and research on the application of Scientific Crime Investigation (SCI) in the investigation process. This research employs secondary data collection methods sourced from literature, including books, official documents, and research reports. The types of legal materials used in this study are as follows: 1) Legal Materials: These are the main legal sources, which include court decisions and applicable legislation. 2) Legal Materials: These materials provide explanations of primary legal materials, such as books, articles, journals, research reports, papers, and other relevant sources related to the issues discussed in this study. 3) Legal Materials: These materials provide additional guidance and explanations regarding primary and secondary legal materials, including internet media and relevant articles (Soekanto, 2019).

In this study, the author uses two main approaches. First, the Case Approach, which is used to analyze the legal reasoning applied by judges in deciding cases. Second, the Conceptual Approach, which refers to the evolving legal doctrines to identify the ideas that give rise to legal definitions, legal concepts, and legal principles relevant to the issues addressed in this research.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **The Role of Scientific Crime Investigation (SCI) in Solving Murder Cases under the Indonesian Legal System**

The advancement of technology in the era of globalization, when not accompanied by improvements in public welfare, can lead to an increase in crimes using new methods. In this context, the presumption of innocence becomes crucial, meaning that an individual accused of a crime must still have their rights protected. Both of these principles necessitate the development of more innovative and effective investigative methods.

In practice, police investigators have started adopting a new method, namely SCI. This method encourages investigators to move away from conventional techniques, which often rely solely on the confessions of suspects or the testimonies of witnesses. SCI is a multidisciplinary approach in the investigative process, aimed at uncovering criminal cases, particularly in cases with limited witnesses and physical evidence. By employing this approach, it is hoped that more accurate and legally defensible evidence can be obtained.

In practice, this method places the suspect's confession at the final stage as the evidence presented in court. This is because the method prioritizes scientific analysis, which involves multiple disciplines in the process of uncovering a criminal act (Sativa, 2021). One of the disciplines that supports investigative techniques is digital forensics. Experts agree that digital forensics is the process of searching, collecting, analyzing, and presenting data from digital evidence related to a criminal case. Its primary objective is to reconstruct events and ensure the integrity of the judicial process.

In the context of digital forensics, electronic evidence becomes highly relevant because it can identify crucial information that uncovers facts supporting law enforcement. For example, let's examine the application of digital forensics in a murder case involving digital communication recordings. In Jakarta, the police successfully solved the murder of a businessman that occurred at his residence. One of the key pieces of evidence in solving this case was a WhatsApp conversation recording between the victim and the defendant, which indicated intent to commit murder. Digital forensics was used to verify the authenticity of the message and link it to the defendant's physical location through GPS data integrated into the messaging application.

In the process of digital forensics, forensic experts are responsible for identifying and collecting data from both the victim's and the suspect's devices, such as mobile phones and computers. This data is then analyzed using specialized software to trace communication footprints and search for additional evidence, including images, documents, or other files related to the crime of murder. These pieces of evidence play a crucial role in court proceedings, as they can strengthen the charges against the defendant. In this context, digital forensics plays a critical role, not only clarifying the defendant's involvement in the murder but also uncovering motives and plans that were previously undetected by investigators.

The process of fact-finding in digital forensics is an integral part of criminal investigations, especially in cases related to cybercrimes or those involving electronic devices. The unethical use of electronic devices that disrupt computer systems and networks is categorized as digital crime or cybercrime. Digital crimes can be further divided into two categories: computer crimes and computer-related crimes ([Hariyadi, 2022](#)). The Scientific Crime Investigation method plays a significant role in uncovering murder cases, particularly in cases involving mutilation. This method is highly effective in providing evidence, as it serves as a legitimate proof tool during the investigation, which will later be presented in court. The strength of the evidence produced by this method, whether in the form of written documents or expert testimony, is highly valid and irrefutable, given that the evidence was obtained through scientific procedures conducted by an expert.

Police, as an institution authorized to conduct investigations and inquiries into alleged criminal activities, play a crucial role in uncovering crimes and identifying perpetrators. However, in carrying out this task, investigators often face challenges, particularly with regard to the limited availability of evidence and the scarcity of witness testimonies. In efforts to enforce the law against criminal acts, the investigation and inquiry processes conducted by the police now not only rely on conventional methods, such as the examination of suspects and witnesses, which are documented in the Minutes of Examination (*BAP*), but also incorporate scientific approaches through the application of a method known as Scientific Crime Investigation.

The Scientific Crime Investigation method is an investigative approach that integrates science and technology into the process of legally admissible evidence. This method involves various branches of forensic science, including forensic identification, forensic laboratories, forensic psychology, forensic medicine, and digital forensics. Each stage in the application of this method is aimed at collecting, analyzing, and interpreting physical evidence found at the crime scene, as well as evidence related to the suspect and the victim. In this way, investigators are able to assess evidence that can link specific objects to their sources and reveal facts that may not be detectable through conventional methods.

In the investigative process, this method not only serves as a supplementary tool but also plays a crucial role in proving complex criminal cases such as premeditated murder, rape, and cybercrime. The conventional approach, which often relies on subjective testimonies, frequently leaves gaps. Therefore, the evidence-based approach of Scientific Crime Investigation can provide validation to existing testimonies or even uncover new facts that were previously hidden. In the context of criminal procedural law, this method becomes an essential tool to ensure that investigations are conducted not only efficiently but also in accordance with fundamental legal principles.

Although the term Scientific Crime Investigation is not explicitly mentioned in the Indonesian Criminal Procedure Code (*KUHAP*), its essence has been integrated into various legal instruments, both normatively under the prevailing law and in the practices carried out by the authorities (Marjuki & Panjaitan, 2024). In the *KUHAP*, the scientific approach applied in investigations can be categorized as a valid piece of evidence, as outlined in Article 184, paragraph (1), which states: “Valid evidence consists of: witness testimony; expert testimony; documents; clues; and the defendant’s statement.”

In the context of criminal procedural law, the method of Scientific Crime Investigation plays a significant role in two categories of evidence: expert testimony and documents. The analysis results provided by forensic experts, whether in the form of written reports or testimony in court, are classified as expert testimony. Meanwhile, laboratory test results, digital recordings, and other scientific documents can be categorized as documents or clues. Thus, Scientific Crime Investigation enriches both the quality and quantity of evidence used in the judicial proof process.

Although the term Scientific Crime Investigation is not explicitly mentioned in the Indonesian Criminal Procedure Code (*KUHAP*), this method is normatively supported through Article 34 of Law No. 6 of 2019 concerning Criminal Investigations. Furthermore, the enactment of Law No. 1 of 2024, which amends Law No. 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE), further strengthens the relevance of this method. Article 5, paragraph (1) of the ITE Law states that electronic information and/or electronic documents may be used as valid legal evidence. Additionally, the Regulation of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police No. 6 of 2019 regarding Criminal Investigations, particularly Article 34, reinforces the position of Scientific Crime Investigation in the investigation and disclosure of criminal acts.

## **Analysis of the Judge's Decision in the Case Study of Decision Number 634/Pid.B/2023/PN.Smn *Juncto* Decision of the Yogyakarta High Court Number 39/Pid/2024/PT.YYK**

The judge's consideration plays a crucial role in the legal enforcement process. Through this consideration, the judge provides a rational and legal basis for every decision made. This consideration not only reflects an effort to achieve justice but also ensures legal certainty for the parties involved in the case. Therefore, judges are required to compose their considerations carefully, thoroughly, and objectively, while taking into account all the legal facts and evidence presented and examined during the trial.

In addition to serving as the logical foundation for a decision, judicial considerations also function to provide certainty regarding the legal benefits that can be proportionally received by each party. In other words, the quality of a ruling heavily depends on the extent to which the judge's considerations are based on applicable legal principles and reflect substantive justice values. Thus, judicial reasoning is not merely a formality but an essential element that determines the integrity and credibility of a legal decision.

In the case of alternative charges, this structure offers flexibility to the public prosecutor in adjusting the accusation to various possible criminal acts that may arise from a single criminal event. In this context, only one of the charges listed in the indictment needs to be proven, and the defendant may be sentenced accordingly. The judge is authorized to determine which charge is most appropriate based on the legal facts revealed during the trial, without being bound by the order of charges outlined in the indictment.

As outlined in Decision No. 634/Pid.B/2023/PN.Smn, Defendants Waliyin and Ridduan were proven to have jointly committed premeditated murder accompanied by mutilation. In criminal law, a crime is defined as an act performed with intent or negligence that violates the provisions of criminal law outlined in statutes, and is not done as an act of self-defense or with a legally valid justification. It is considered a criminal act acknowledged by the state, whether categorized as a serious or minor crime. According to the provisions in the Criminal Code, an act that endangers a person's life falls under the category of murder, with the primary objective of this crime being the act of taking another person's life ([Hagan, 2013](#)).

Based on the legal facts revealed during the trial and the fulfillment of the elements in the relevant Articles, the Panel of Judges concluded that the defendants were proven to have violated Article 340 of the Criminal Code in conjunction with Article 55 paragraph (1) of the Criminal Code, and thus sentenced both defendants to death. Criminal sanctions not only serve as a repressive measure against individuals who violate the law but also aim to prevent further violations of the

norms set forth in legal regulations (Mathar, 2023). This is related to the theory of criminal responsibility, which refers to the legal responsibility imposed on an individual for actions that violate criminal provisions. To determine whether an individual can be held criminally responsible, it is important to consider the conditions and capacity of that individual.

A person is considered criminally liable if they commit an act that violates the law and fail to provide evidence of any defense that could exempt them from liability. However, if the offender is confronted with factors that could eliminate their capacity for responsibility, such as mental health disorders or emergency circumstances, criminal liability may be annulled.

In this case, the defendants were not proven to have a mental disorder. Therefore, all elements of the primary charge outlined in Article 340 of the Indonesian Penal Code (*KUHP*) in conjunction with Article 51(1) paragraph (1) of the *KUHP* have been legally and convincingly established based on the actions of the defendants. Consequently, the subsequent charges do not need to be considered further.

Thus, Defendant I, Waliyin bin Kodrat (deceased), and Defendant II, Ridduan alias Iwan bin Iis Iskandar, have been lawfully and convincingly found guilty of intentionally committing the crime of premeditated murder jointly, as outlined in the primary indictment.

During the examination of this case, the Panel of Judges found no reasons or circumstances that could annul or remove the defendants' punishment, either on the grounds of justification or excuse. Therefore, the Panel of Judges concluded that the defendants were in a condition to be held accountable for their actions.

Through the application of scientific methods, law enforcement successfully demonstrated the element of intent in the actions of the defendants. Based on the available evidence, the Sleman District Court Panel of Judges decided to impose the death penalty on the defendants, who were lawfully proven to have committed a heinous crime. Additionally, this decision is supported by the results of medical examinations, including the post-mortem examination report, as well as other scientific evidence such as forensic autopsy, laboratory analysis of the physical evidence, and digital analysis involving communication devices belonging to both the defendants and the victim.

Through the application of the Scientific Crime Investigation method, criminal elements can be proven objectively, systematically, and measurably, thereby allowing the Court to render a definitive decision and reduce uncertainty in society. However, when the case was brought to the appellate level, the Yogyakarta High Court overturned the death sentence and replaced it with a life imprisonment sentence. This change was based on the enactment of Law No. 1 of 2023, which regulates the newly passed Indonesian Penal Code (*KUHP*).

In the ruling of the Yogyakarta High Court Decision No. 39/Pid/2024/PT.YYK, the panel of judges decided to reduce the death sentence imposed on the defendants to life imprisonment. The judges argued that the charges against the defendants had been proven in accordance with the facts revealed during the trial and in line with the applicable legal provisions. Therefore, the defendants were found to have legally committed the criminal act as stipulated in Article 340 in conjunction with Article 55 paragraph (1) of the Penal Code.

However, regarding the sentence imposed, the Judge disagreed with the death penalty verdict. This is due to the changes in Indonesia's political and legal system, with the enactment of Law No. 1 of 2023 on the new Criminal Code (*KUHP*), which was passed on January 2, 2023, and is set to take effect three years after its promulgation. The Judge took this into account when determining a more appropriate sentence in line with the evolving legal framework.

In the discussion related to Article 65, there is no mention of the death penalty as either a primary or additional penalty. The death penalty, in this case, is considered exceptional as it only applies to specific crimes that have distinct legal provisions, such as drug offenses, terrorism, corruption, and severe human rights violations. Article 67 of the 2023 Criminal Code also emphasizes that the death penalty is the most severe form of punishment and, therefore, must always be imposed as an alternative to either life imprisonment or a prison sentence of up to 20 years.

The panel of judges at the High Court in this case considered human rights elements and moral values, disregarding the perpetrator's rationale for committing heinous acts, such as murder and mutilation of the victim. The author argues that in the decision-making process, the High Court judges should have paid more attention to the guidelines outlined in the Supreme Court Circular Letter (*SEMA*) No. 5 of 1973 concerning sentencing, to ensure that the punishment is commensurate with the severity and nature of the crime committed.

This Circular Letter highlights the concern that many district courts and high courts impose overly lenient sentences compared to the gravity and nature of the crimes committed by the suspects. This is particularly true in cases involving crimes against life, property, corruption, narcotics, and rape. The Supreme Court emphasizes that every criminal decision should reflect justice that is proportional to the suspect's actions, without offending public sentiment or opinion. The *SEMA* No. 5 of 1973 stresses the importance of ensuring that the sentence is appropriate to the level of crime committed, in order to maintain justice in society ([SEMA No. 5 of 1973](#)).

The authors argue that, based on the *SEMA* No. 5 of 1973, the District Court has exercised its authority appropriately in sentencing the defendant. However, when the case was brought before the High Court, the decision made was not entirely

optimal in delivering the criminal sentence, as the punishment imposed actually reduced the defendant's sentence to life imprisonment. This resulted in the defendant not receiving an adequate deterrent effect, both specifically for the individual and generally for the public. In fact, a more severe punishment could have served as a deterrent to prevent similar crimes in the future.

This decision contradicts the principle of justice, considering that in Case No. 634/Pid.B/2023/PN.Smn, there were aggravating factors against the defendants, one of which was their actions causing deep emotional harm to the victim's family. The public will only experience justice when they see that the law not only focuses on retribution but also strives to improve the social condition as a whole. This includes efforts towards rehabilitation for offenders and restoration for the victims.

The implementation of restorative justice within the criminal justice system has the potential to encourage society to recognize that justice is not only about punishment but also about restoration and social reintegration. This approach can strengthen the relationship between the law and society, offering both victims and offenders the opportunity to reach a more holistic and sustainable resolution.

There are two key aspects that need to be considered in the High Court's decision to reduce the death sentence to life imprisonment. On one hand, this ruling reflects the application of retributive justice theory, as, although the sentence is lighter, there is still a penalty that is proportionate to the crime committed by the offender. This demonstrates alignment with the principle of justice that emphasizes retribution commensurate with criminal actions. Additionally, this decision upholds the principle of distributive justice by imposing a penalty deemed reasonable, even though it is not as severe as the death penalty imposed in the Sleman District Court's ruling.

On the other hand, in the decision of the High Court, the aspect of restorative justice appears more prominently. The panel of judges assessed that a life sentence provides room for the potential rehabilitation of the defendant and an opportunity for self-improvement. This approach reflects a more humane form of justice, prioritizing the social rehabilitation of the defendant and giving them the chance to undergo a process of self-reformation.

The imposition of a severe sentence by the judge, particularly in premeditated murder cases, represents a concrete manifestation of the state's efforts to uphold justice, focusing on protecting the rights of the victim and the broader interests of society. If the role of Scientific Crime Investigation (SCI) can provide convincing evidence of the defendant's involvement in the crime, this not only strengthens the law enforcement process but also serves as a preventive measure to deter individuals or groups from committing similar acts in the future. The application of severe punishment for premeditated murder aims to create a deterrent effect and deliver a sense of justice for both the victim and society as a whole.

## **Conclusion**

Scientific Crime Investigation (SCI) has proven to be a highly valuable method in the investigation of serious crimes, particularly murder, in Indonesia. By leveraging advancements in technology and scientific approaches, SCI enables law enforcement agencies to uncover facts in a more objective, systematic, and accurate manner. This method helps address major challenges in investigations, such as the lack of witnesses or strong physical evidence, by utilizing a broad range of disciplines, including forensic science, psychology, and digital forensics. SCI also strengthens the validity of evidence used in court, making it a legitimate tool within Indonesia's legal framework.

Although not explicitly mentioned in the Indonesian Criminal Procedure Code (*KUHAP*), the essence of SCI aligns with the principles contained in Article 184, paragraph 1 of the *KUHAP*, which outlines the admissibility of evidence. The application of SCI is also supported by recent regulations, such as Indonesian National Police Regulation Number 6 of 2019, which allows investigators to utilize technology and scientific methods to assist in proving criminal offenses. Therefore, SCI plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of investigations and ensuring more precise justice outcomes.

However, despite the potential of SCI to enhance the accuracy and effectiveness of investigations, challenges faced by law enforcement, particularly in terms of resources and training in advanced technologies, still need to be addressed. Therefore, greater investment is required in developing the capacity of investigators and providing adequate forensic equipment. Further research is also necessary to explore how digital forensics technology can continue to evolve to handle more complex cases, such as cybercrime and digital data manipulation.

A recommendation for future research is to conduct a more in-depth study on the integration of SCI with more human-centered legal approaches, such as restorative justice. This would offer valuable insights into how technology can not only be applied in investigations but also in supporting the rehabilitation and social reintegration of offenders. Furthermore, it is essential to investigate the impact of SCI implementation on the overall efficiency of the criminal justice system, as well as its effect on public trust in the legal process.

By considering the existing challenges and opportunities, the future application of SCI can be optimized to create a criminal justice system that is more transparent, efficient, and fair for all parties involved.

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