

French Gendarmerie Criminal Databases Division

PRUM Workshop – 20th Apr. 2021

General overview

- In France, there is no live/real-time facial recognition but only post-event use by law enforcement agencies.
- By-design, a tool directly available to local investigators in the police records database which means :
 - Basic knowledge needed on how to use this tool ;
 - No identification but just likely candidates to be considered as potential avenues of investigation.
- The police records database is comprised of +6 millions facial images. It is used by the National Gendarmerie and National Police.
- Legal basis : a decree from 2012 (n°2012-652 of may 4th 2012) after consultation of the « State Council » and the French data protection authority.

I. How do we use it ?

.1st option : Running a search

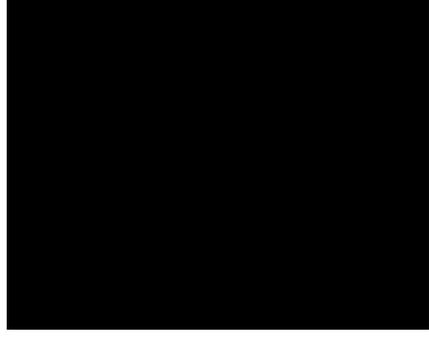
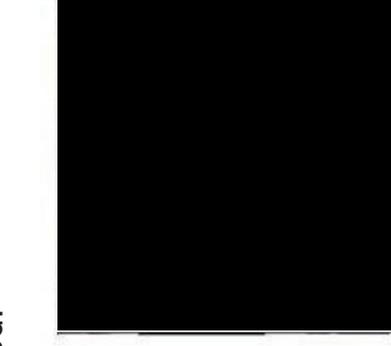
- Running a search using an image of the unknown suspect (CCTV, social network, victims' phone, etc.) ;
- Parsing the list of facial images ranked by computer-evaluated similarity ;
- Determining whether a possible candidate is part of the list;



I. How do we use it ?

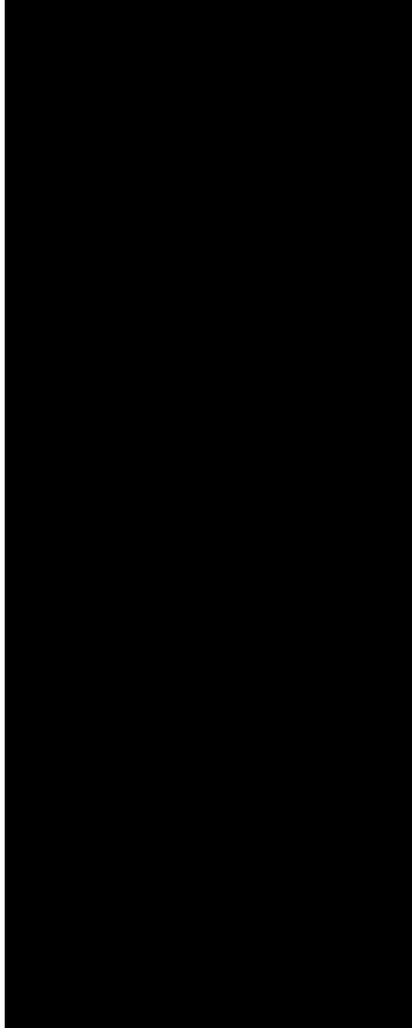
.2nd option : Inserting unknown suspects

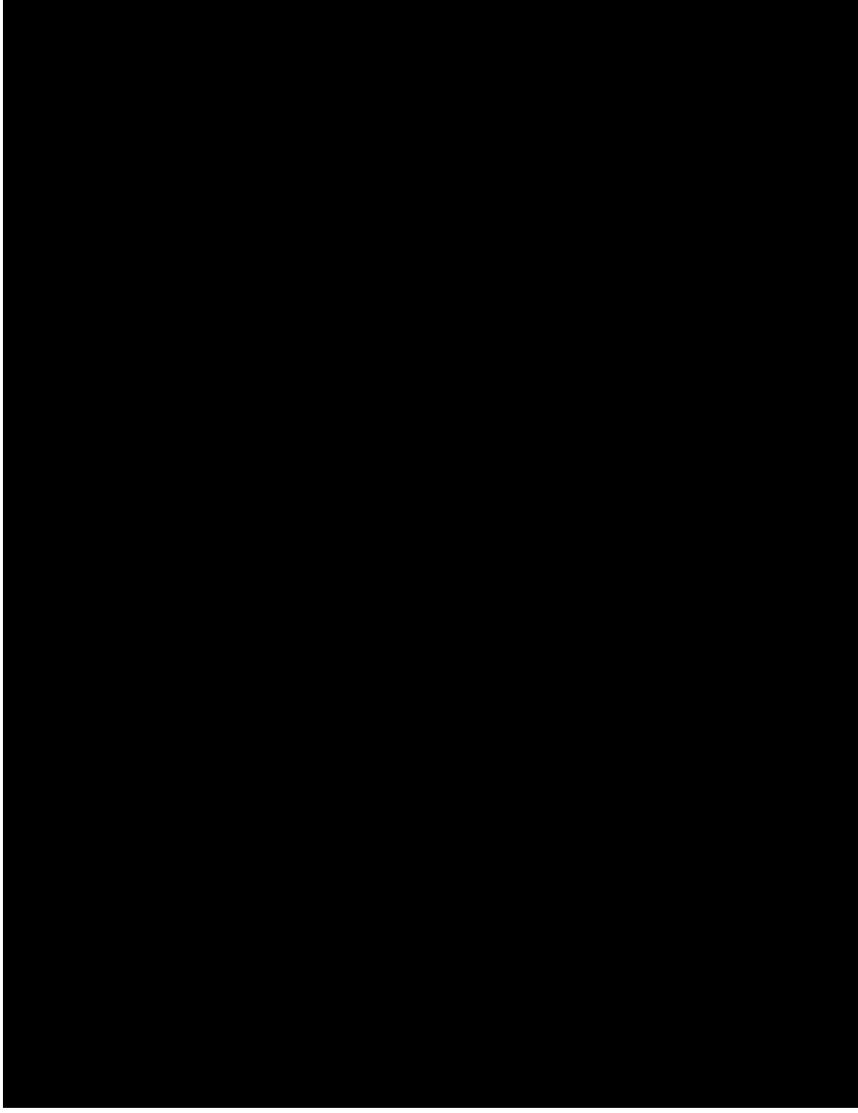
- If investigators have a facial image of a suspect but no ID, it still can be stored in the database as an « anonymous » suspect (i.e : facial images used in fraud cases or ID theft, CCTV...);
- When the tool is used in other investigations, the facial image of the « anonymous » suspect could appear as a likely candidate.
- Several cases could then be linked.



II. « Real life » examples

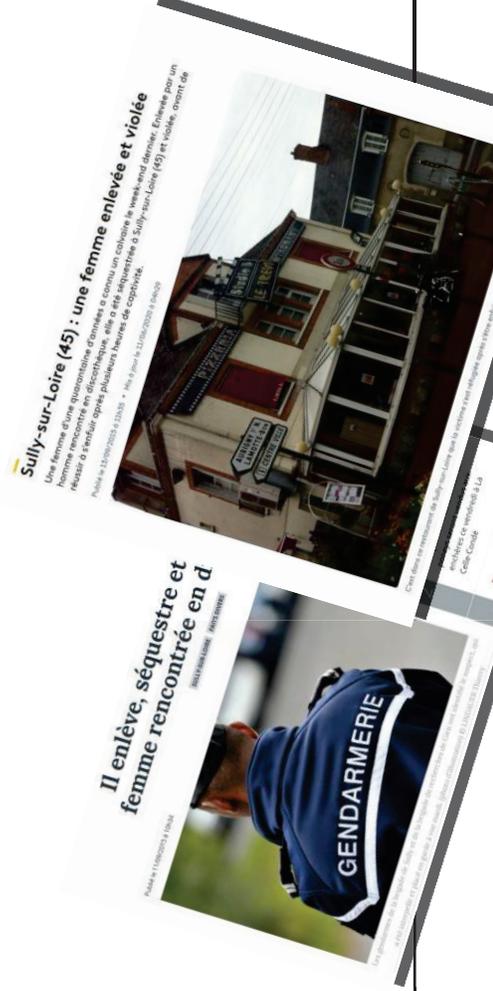
- Case #1 : Rape, abduction and illegal confinement ;
- Leaving a night-club, a young woman was abducted and raped. The victim didn't know the perpetrator.
- The only clue : pictures taken during the night in the club.





II. « Real life » examples

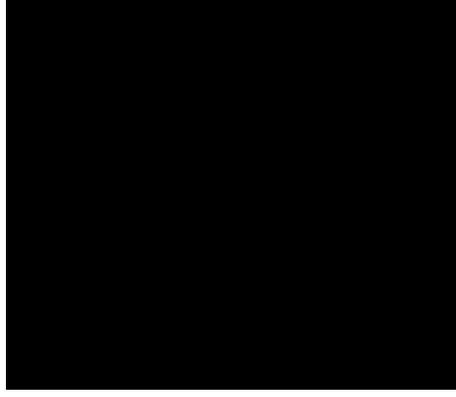
- Case #1 : The investigation confirmed the likelihood and the identification of the suspect.
- The suspect used to live in the night-club's neighborhood ;
- He was known for fraud, violence and procuring.
- **4 days after the event, the suspect was charged and on remand.**

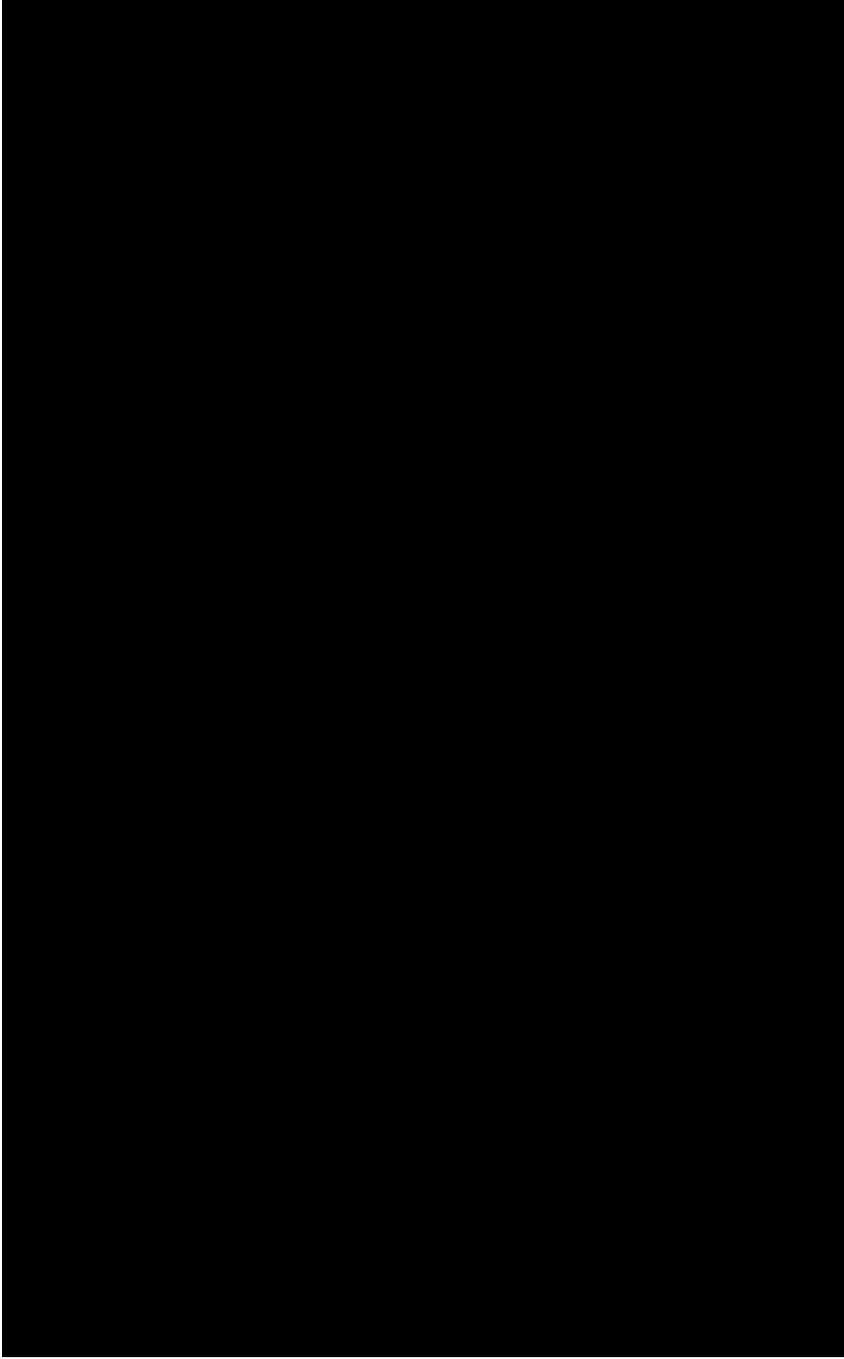


II. « Real life » examples

.Case #2 : sexual assault on minor ;

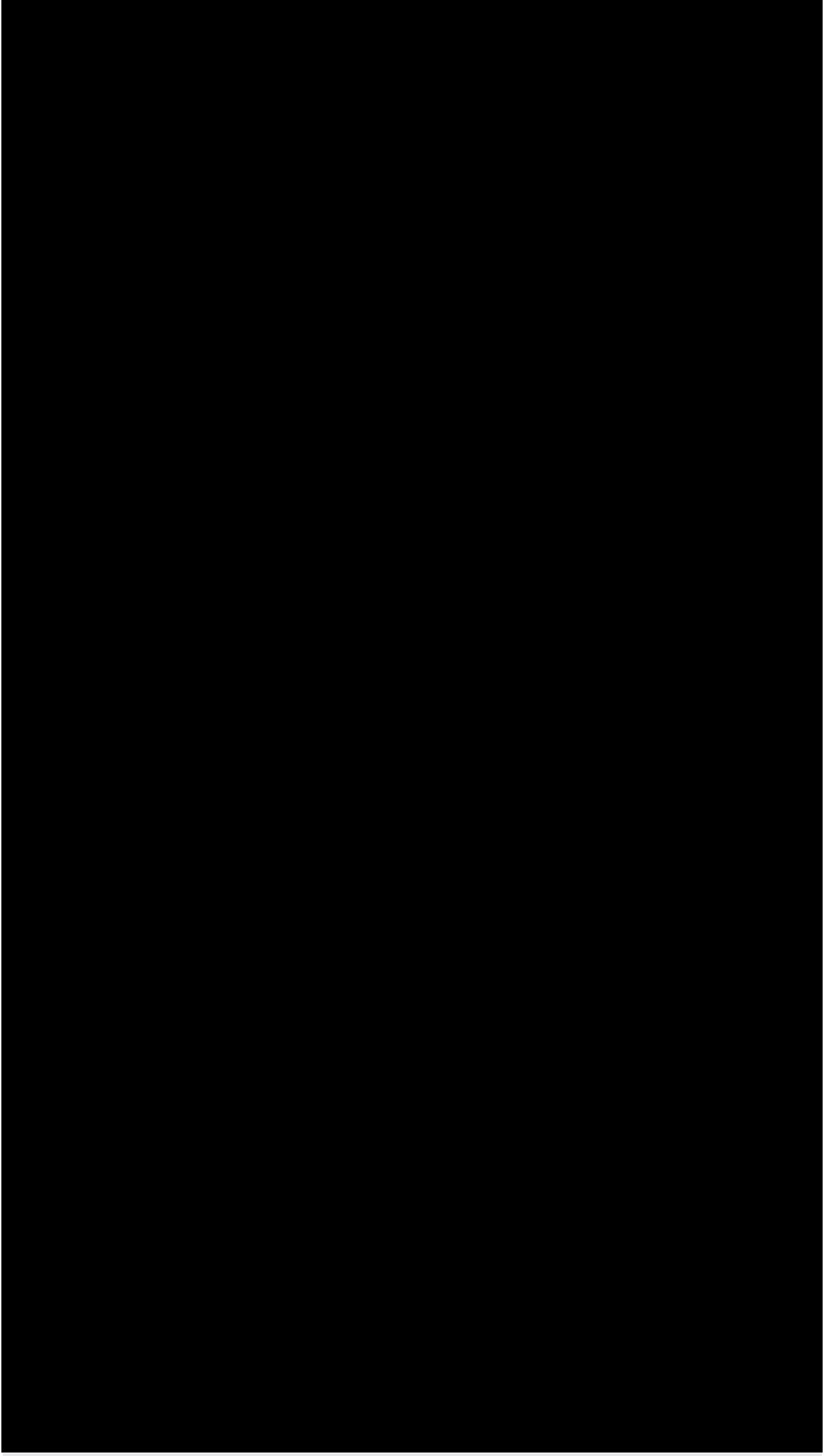
-An old man got on a packed bus and tried to sexually assault a 12-years-old boy. A friend of the victim took a picture of the suspect.

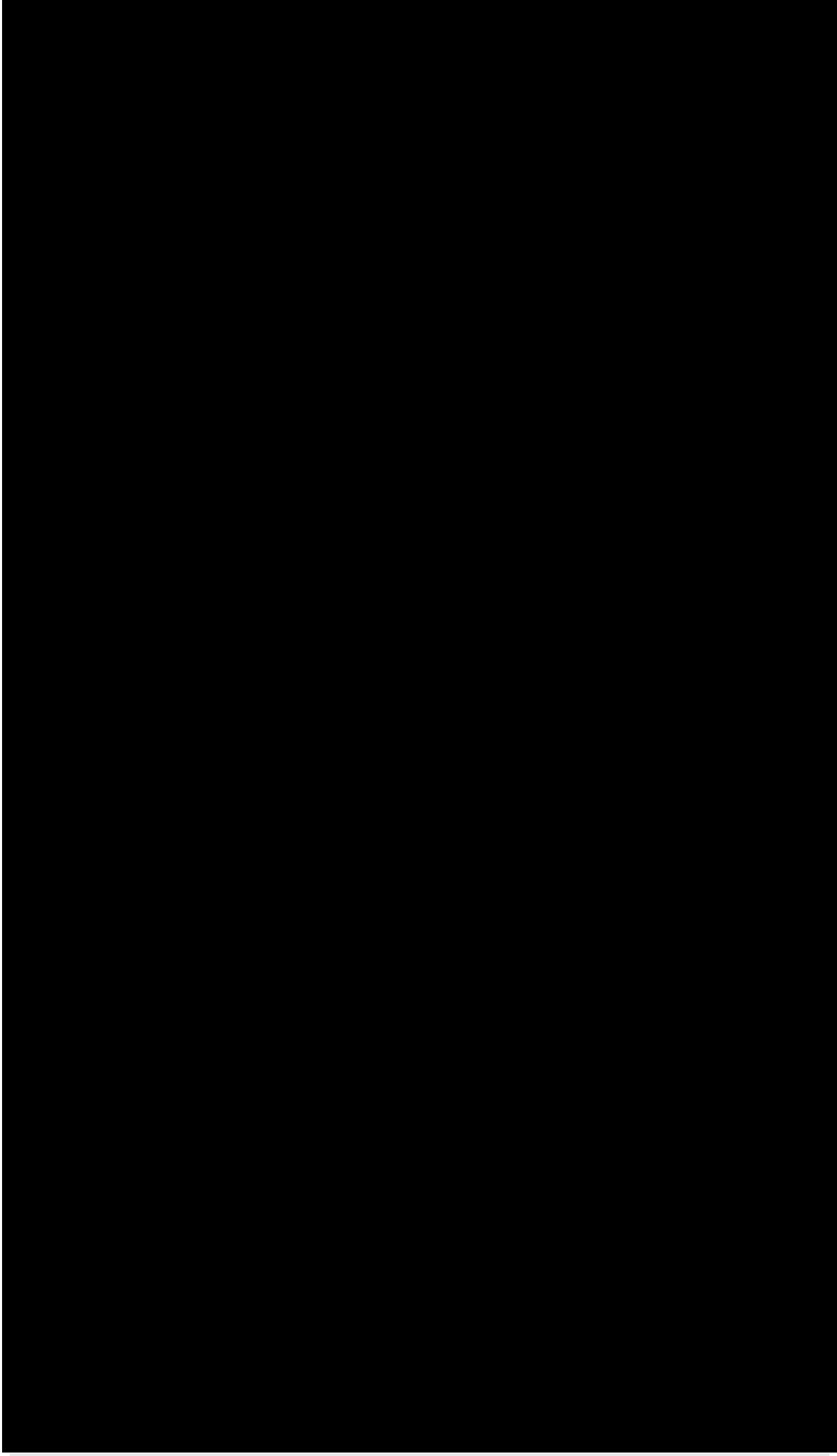




.Case #3 : Burglary

- Two individuals break into a house and steal jewelry, luxury leather goods and a car
- Images of the suspects are extracted from CCTV

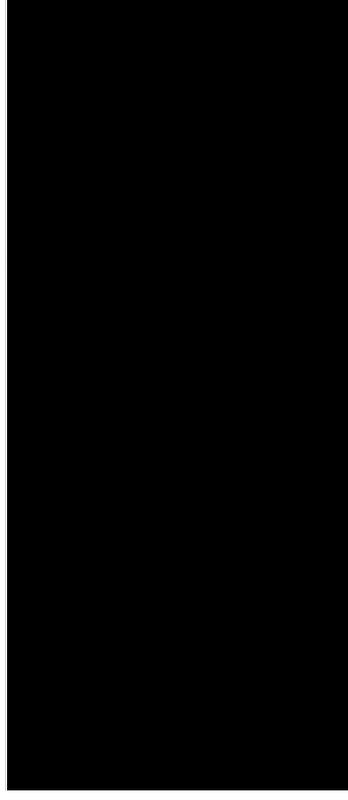




III. Facial images exchanges in Prüm ?



- .Conclusion of the TELEFI project
- .In a significant number of cases, a facial image of a suspect is available
 - From a videosurveillance system ;
 - From the smartphone of a witness or victim ;
 - From a false identity document ;
 - From social networks ;
 - ...



.The existing Prüm framework already showed the benefits of cross-border cooperation

III. Facial images exchanges in Prüm ?

- .Different state of play between Member States
- .Facial images exchanges between MS should be allowed for those using a FR system
- .A FR system should not be mandatory for MS
- .Prüm FR searches by a MS without a FR system is an open question

III. Facial images exchanges in Prüm ?

- .Due to large databases involved and FR technology limits, processes similar to latent fingerprints seem appropriate (candidate list...)
- .Multiple MS searches need to be streamlined due to candidate list size
- .Relevance of searches in uncontrolled images databases?
- .A FR positive result will be different from a fingerprint positive result
- .Step 2 data exchange will allow further investigation to confirm it... or not...
 - Like for biographic data

So, in Prüm, Face Recognition :

- .Would be another tool available to investigators, in addition to fingerprints and DNA;
- .Should be used only in retrospective use case (no live-FR) ;
- .Would not lead to identification but possible candidates (avenues of investigation), allowing links between cases ;
- .Should involve human check before requesting the personal data linked to the facial image in a second step
- .Should not be mandatory for MS



Thank you

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