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INVESTIGATING OCCULT AND RITUAL CRIME: A Case for Caution

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In recent years, it has often been alleged that the United States is facing a serious crime-wave associated with the occult or satanism; and that police agencies will increasingly find themselves in the front line against "satanic" offenders. Some agencies have gone to considerable lengths to learn about the perceived threat by sending officers to seminars and training sessions, or by employing various "experts" and consultants on the occult. This paper will suggest that the threat of ritual crime has been massively exaggerated, and the phenomenon is largely a myth - part of what social theorists sometimes call a "moral panic." The lesson for police agencies is that they should exercise restraint and skepticism in the face of "satanic" claims. Otherwise, they risk facing financial loss, together with public and political embarrassment.

The Threat of Satanic Crime

Occult crime has been much discussed in television and newspaper accounts, and in the specialized press directed at the law enforcement community, in journals like *Police*, *Police Chief* and *Law Enforcement News* (Clark, 1988; Lanning, 1989; Bates, 1990; Sills, 1990). According to the claims-makers, satanic crime is associated with numerous acts of vandalism and juvenile delinquency, but also with heinous offenses like serial murder and mass child abuse (Raschke, 1990; Schwarz and Empey, 1988; Terry, 1987). *The American Focus on Satanic Crime* (a work especially targeted at law enforcement professionals) suggests that satanists are connected with:

the murders of unbaptized infants, child sexual abuse in daycare, rape, ritual abuse of children, drug trafficking, arson, pornography, kidnapping, vandalism, church desecration, corpse theft, sexual trafficking of children and the heinous mutilation, dismemberment and sacrifices of humans and animals (they are) responsible for the deaths of more than 60,000 Americans each year, including missing and runaway youth (Peterson, 1988: foreword).

Even the worst of these charges seemed tragically substantiated by the discovery in 1989 of the sacrificial drug cult active in Matamoros, Mexico.

The commonest hazard is usually seen not as mass human sacrifice, but the danger that the practice of satanism will draw literally millions into deviant and hazardous practices. The young were especially at risk. Television journalist Geraldo Rivera claimed that:

It is teenagers who are most likely to fall under the spell of this jungle of dark violent emotions called satanism, and in some cases to be driven to committing terrible deeds . . . There is no doubt that teenage satanic activity in this country is increasing dramatically (Rivera, 1988).

The commonplace view is that occult "dabbling" will lead to serious cult involvement. Young people will graduate from mere "self-styled satanists" to become "Religious satanists" or even "Cult satanists," the most pernicious and criminal group of all (Holmes, 1989; Dawkins and Higgins, 1989; St. Clair, 1987). In the face of this danger, police agencies and prosecutors are "uninformed" or naive, and fail to follow leads that would lead them to the conspiratorial networks behind certain outrageous crimes (Ryckman, 1988). In the words of Geraldo Rivera, "Many satanic crimes are not recognized as such. . . These ritualistic crimes are everywhere, and yet in most communities they are either overlooked or under-reported." Police skepticism in these matters is natural; but other writers have suggested that cults may have infiltrated police agencies and local government authorities.

The views most commonly expressed by the theorists of "satanic crime" can be summarized in the form of a series of general propositions:

1. Occult or satanic activities provide the motive for numerous acts of violence and homicide.

2. National clandestine networks are responsible for some or all of satanic and occult criminality.

3. There is a phenomenon that can be described as ritual child abuse. It is a widespread problem commonly linked to the activities of satanic cults.

4. Occult sects and churches promote and sponsor child abuse and the corruption of minors.

5. Satanic rituals involve human sacrifices, and these acts are frequently performed.

6. Graffiti often include satanic and occult symbols, indicating the local activity of sects or cults.

7. Occult and New Age interests are often connected with satanic and criminal activities.

8. Occult or satanic activities are frequently the explanation for acts of teenage rebellion or deviancy, from vandalism to suicide.

9. Police agencies and prosecutors often neglect occult aspects of criminal acts, either through excessive skepticism or for more sinister motives.

10. Occult crime is a national problem of serious proportions that deserves to become a prominent law enforcement priority.

Desperate action was clearly required, and police and prosecutorial agencies would have to play the leading role in the proposed reforms. The *American Focus*, for example, suggests the formation of powerful "Ritual Crime Task Forces," made up of local, state and federal agencies; while anti-cult groups like the Cult Awareness Network should provide "experts" for the extensive training of law enforcement officers. In addition, the full resources of the FBI should be used in profiling and tracking "ritual" offenders, and promoting communication between different agencies and jurisdictions.

In the short term, however, the average police officer seemed quite unequipped to deal with the new menace; and it was vital to draw on the expertise of those who have researched and combated occult crime. There has been an explosion of seminars and workshops presented to police officers on this topic, while some self-styled "experts" have offered their services to numerous police agencies. Occult activity has become a specialization of a number of responsible police authorities, who are widely quoted in the media as urging public recognition of the new threat. These "occult cops" include Sandi Gallant of San Francisco, Bill Wickersham and Cleo Wilson of Denver, Pat Metoyer of Los Angeles, Robert Simandl of Chicago and Dale Griffis of Tiffin, Ohio.

We will be criticizing specific statements of these police authorities, but it must be said that some of these individuals are often restrained and critical in their attitudes to the charges so often made about the occult, and they express healthy skepticism about the more extreme charges. Metoyer, for example, accepts that human sacrifices might occur, but wholly rejects the figure of tens of thousands of victims each year (Johnston, 1989). Some of these conscientious police writers are among the first to criticize the media circus that often accompanies a charge of ritual crime, and which leads to a proliferation of extravagant claims. On the other hand, they naturally believe that devil worship is a real issue for police: perhaps it is even what some call "the crime of the nineties."

It is likely that police awareness of this perceived problem will increase sharply in coming years, in part because of the media enthusiasm, but also because the "ritual" element will be part of the VICAP form submitted to the FBI's analysts in cases of unsolved homicide. The specific question asks about "symbolic artifacts" suggesting that "any unusual ritual/act/thing had been performed with or near the victim (such as an orderly formation of rocks, burnt candles, dead animals, defecation, etc)." Once responses to such a questionnaire are collated, it is likely that increased incidence of "ritual criminality" will be observed - or imagined.

The Critics

Of course such claims about satanic activity have not gone unchallenged - a point we would scarcely imagine from the mass media. A press or television documentary is likely to find sensationalistic charges more interesting and enticing than a skeptical demolition of the same ideas; but the last few years have seen a thorough attack on virtually every aspect of the notion of a ritual "crime-wave." From the mid-1980s, criticisms appeared in newspapers and book-form, and media accounts of the claims makers have recently become far more hostile (see especially Lyons, 1988; Rodgers-Melnick, 1989; Sills, 1990). From a law-enforcement angle, the work of FBI agent Kenneth V. Lanning has provided a devastating critique of the whole notion of satanic crime. This has also been the subject of book-length accounts: in Robert D. Hicks' *In Pursuit of Satan: The Police and the Occult* (1991), and in the collection of essays entitled *The Satanism Scare* (Richardson, Best and Bromley, 1991).

Any police executive contemplating spending scarce funds on a "ritual" crime investigation, or even a seminar on the topic, would do well to read one or all of these sources. However, all pursue essentially the same themes to counter the claims-makers:

1. Claims about satanic crime are very poorly substantiated, and involve the rejection of accepted criteria of evidence and proof.

2. On the occasions when we can check specific claims about satanic crime, they usually prove to be false.
3. We can find no substantiation for the most serious charges - for example, about the existence of human sacrifice or ritual child abuse.
4. The use of language by the claims-makers is usually vague in the extreme, and attempts at closer definition cause real doubts about the whole phenomenon of ritual crime.
5. Charges about satanic crime can often be traced to religious fundamentalists, either individuals or groups, who consciously or otherwise use the occult panic as a vehicle to promote their social and political agenda.
6. The spread of the satanism panic is often based on unsubstantiated rumors and urban legends, which reflect deeper social fears and concerns.

These topics are discussed at length in the critical works described above, but a number of points can be expanded here.

Issues of Evidence

How are we to evaluate the extensive range of charges and accusations about ritual or "cult" crime? One response is simply to dismiss the whole phenomenon as a tissue of myths unworthy of critical attention, but this is unwise. If left unchallenged, these "satanic" charges will not only influence public beliefs about the nature of crime, but also the priorities and allocation of resources within the criminal justice system itself. It is therefore necessary to formulate principles of assessment and criticism on which the various statements can be tested.

We cannot prove a negative: we cannot say categorically that there is no such thing as ritual abuse, that there are no "cult satanists" or ritual murders; that there has never been a case in which a woman was induced to deliver a child for sacrifice by her cult associates. All these things might in theory have happened. Properly, though, it is the business of the theorists for "ritual crime" to make a convincing case that these are in fact real phenomena. However, none of the evidence presented thus far can be seen as remotely approaching credibility. Not just do the charges fall short in particular cases, there is in fact no worthwhile evidence for any significant aspect of the whole structure.

The question of evidence is crucial, as the "ritual crime" theorists so often invert normally accepted principles. The early Christian writer Tertullian formulated a principle of absolute faith in his religion because of its apparent absurdi-

ties and contradictions, and not despite them. He wrote *Credo quia impossibile est*, "I believe because it is impossible." Such a statement may be of great value in the history of religious dogma, but modern accounts of occult crime offer a similar anti-rationalism in their approach to matters of evidence. Not only do they freely admit that the claims they report are quite outrageous, they actually cite the improbability to support the truth of the charges. Larson (1989: 126) is quite typical in suggesting that "satanic cults deliberately fabricate preposterous forms of child victimization, knowing that the more unbelievable their atrocity, the less likely the victim will be believed."

In addition, these theorists treat improbable evidence in such a way that it will always be to their benefit. Most tell stories of mass child abuse, but with striking regularity, these have resulted in prosecutorial failure when they actually came to court. Notorious examples include the cases in Jordan and Bakersfield; and of course, the McMartin school affair (Eberle and Eberle, 1986; Jenkins and Katkin, 1988; Nathan, 1987, 1988; though see Manshel, 1990 for continuing belief in such charges). Even when convictions are obtained, it is the "ritualist" accusations which are usually the first to be jettisoned (the 1985 Florida conviction of Frank Fuster involved an ingenious child molester without cult connections). However, a satanic "Catch-22" prevails in these incidents. If a conviction were ever to be obtained, then it would be trumpeted aloud as proof that a jury had been convinced of a satanic conspiracy. On the other hand, an acquittal or limited conviction is cited as proof that the court system is too inflexible to the needs of children and other satanic "survivors." It thus proves the need for extended "education" of police and prosecutors.

This approach also provides a buttress for some of the witnesses who attest to the outrages supposedly involved in "ritual abuse." Listening to some of these alleged survivors is a distressing experience. The adults involved often appear badly disturbed, and it is soon admitted that they do in fact have a lengthy record of serious psychiatric disorders. Now, it might be thought that such witnesses would *ipso facto* be discredited. On the other hand, the believers in ritual abuse argue that the severity of the disorders is itself testimony to the extent of the traumatization. In recent years, it has even been explained why the witnesses are so often multiple personalities: they were deliberately brainwashed into this condition by satanic psychiatrists: "Every adult (survivor) that I have dealt with is a multiple personality. That behavior, doctors believe, can be induced by mental cruelty and drugs" (Kahaner, 1988: 237). To summarize:

1. An implausible and unlikely claim is as probable as a well-authenticated one, and perhaps more so.
2. The weaker the witness, the better.
3. Failure to substantiate a charge merely proves the scale of the menace.

It is difficult even to make an argument when one's opponents have set such a difficult set of rules! However, it is possible to disprove many of these charges even in this unfavorable environment. One of the most important areas is that of the "occult survivors," the rapidly growing group of women who claim to have been satanically abused in infancy. One gruesome account is that of Lauren Stratford (1988), a much-cited book which claims that she was forced to give up three of her children for human sacrifice. (This is one of the original sources for the idea of women as specialized "breeders" for cults). In reality, a detailed journalistic investigation proved that virtually every statement in the book was false (Passantino, *et al*, 1989).

More recently, the present author was involved in an examination of the whole range of survivor accounts (Jenkins, 1991). It was found not only that all these cases lacked the slightest corroboration, but that all the claims seemed to stem from the publication of one sensational survivor account, *Michelle Remembers* (Smith and Pazder, 1980). I argued that this story was essentially a fiction, based ultimately on images of African pagan cults of the 1950's and 1960's. *Michelle*, like all its successors, portrays a world of widespread clandestine satanism in the North America of the 1950's, at a time when such activity simply did not exist (compare Spencer, 1989). It was therefore suggested that none of the survivor accounts is likely to be of any value in reconstructing the actual deeds of real-life satanism. Other recent critiques are similarly demolishing other parts of the whole "Satan scare." However, individuals still claim to be breeders or survivors, and no doubt they believe it as hard fact.

In Search of "Ritual" Crime

How common is ritual crime? Much depends on the exact significance one attaches to terms like "ritual," and here I am making extensive use of Lanning's excellent study (1989). In recent writing on serial homicide, it is common to note the importance of "ritualistic" behavior by offenders, and such manifestations are much used by federal agencies in profiling. For example, we might imagine a man who killed several women, and in each case left the body naked except for one glove. Such a compulsive and repetitious behavior might well be described as "sexual ritualism;" though there need be no implication of any religious or supernatural motive, or that the body had been employed in any form of ceremony. Nor is there a suggestion of group activity (Holmes, 1989; Holmes and DeBurger, 1988; Jenkins, 1988).

But let us suppose that there is in fact hard evidence for such a ceremony, and that an individual or group performed a religious ritual which either intentionally or by accident resulted in death. We might even imagine that the perpetrators explicitly confessed that the crime had the purpose of placating supernatural forces, and that it was intended as a

sacrifice to the devil. Many would accept that this could legitimately be described as a "ritual" crime; but it is questionable if even such a case can legitimately be linked to satanism or the occult.

In fact, it is quite common for acts of violence to have as their goal some imagined religious motive, such as a response to a divine commandment. Receiving orders from supernatural forces is a common manifestation of paranoid schizophrenia, a condition believed to be present in a number of multiple homicide cases (see the typology in Holmes and DeBurger, 1988: 72-80). In the 1970's, for example, Californian multiple killers Herbert Mullin and John Linley Frazier were both "visionary" killers who committed their crimes in response to divine commands, and Frazier was one of many who found special significance in the Biblical Book of Revelation (Lunde, 1976). Often, the orders take the form of an injunction to carry out a special mission: this might involve the killing of immoral and sinful women, as in the English case of the "Yorkshire Ripper" Peter Sutcliffe.

In all these cases, the offenders received orders from what they perceived to be the Christian God, and this is the norm in the vast majority of such delusions. We have no precise figures, but the number of murders attributed by an offender to divine command is certainly many times greater than those blamed on Satan; and the Book of Revelation in particular has led to far more acts of violence than all the works of satanists like Anton LaVey or Aleister Crowley. On the other hand, it would surely be unacceptable to describe such actions as "Christian ritual killings" or "Biblical sacrifices." These were disturbed individuals whose psychiatric conditions chanced to be expressed in the language and rhetoric of a belief system widespread in their particular social background. It would be unethical and inaccurate in the extreme to condemn a movement or a philosophy from the misdeeds of a handful of its sick adherents.

One might equally well use the "Zebra" killings of the 1970's to stigmatize the whole Islamic movement among Black Americans. In 1990, it was charged that a religious cult based in Ohio was responsible for the murders of several of its members. The group consisted of dissident Mormons; but nobody chose to characterize the crimes as "Mormon human sacrifices." In each of these cases, it would be possible to find scriptural texts that appeared to justify sacrifice, violence and warfare, and to argue that bloodshed was fundamental to the religious grouping concerned; but this would widely be seen as an untenable and indeed offensive view, quite contrary to American traditions of religious pluralism.

Lanning (1989) has cited a variety of situations where a religious motive can be used to explain questionable or illegal acts. Imagine, for example, a child forced to kneel on a cold, hard floor to say a rosary; children beaten repeatedly by members of a fundamentalist group who see this as a Chris-

tian duty; children allowed to die from a measles epidemic because the religious convictions of their parents do not permit medical intervention; or a religious extremist who bombs an abortion clinic. Any of these acts could be seen as "religious" crimes, even as "ritualistic" abuse or terrorism; but generally they are not so described, because the groups concerned are seen as part of the social mainstream. It would similarly be difficult to write a legal definition of "ritual child abuse" that did not include the act of circumcision; but no group so much as criticizes an act that is central to the Jewish and Muslim religions.

In addition, there may well be satanists serving in police or governmental agencies, just as there are Christians or Jews, but there need be nothing sinister here. "The word 'infiltrated' is used only when talking about an *unpopular* belief system" (Lanning, 1989: 78). The definition, like the stigma, depends on the power of the given movement in society, and its ability to make its views felt in politics and the media.

A disturbed individual might well claim to be acting in the name of Satan with no more plausibility than another might kill in the cause of Christ or Allah. This is especially important when considering the widely publicized cases of teenage murderers like Sean Sellers and Pete Roland, both of whom attributed their actions to Satanic worship and belief. But we may well believe that if Sean Sellers had never heard of satanism, he would still have been sufficiently disturbed to commit essentially similar crimes, though attributed to whatever other ideological baggage lay to hand (Sellers, 1990). In the case of Pete Roland, psychiatric testimony suggested the role of drug-induced psychosis (Rodgers-Melnick, 1989).

Equally weak is the case of Clifford St. Joseph, who at first sight appears much the most plausible example of a true "ritual murderer." After all, a victim was killed in the context of a satanic cult meeting, and ritual symbols carved on his body. Yet even here, there is room for doubt. St. Joseph's group was little different in practice from other group serial homicides of the last two decades, where a number of men abduct, torture and kill young victims, usually male. These crimes are normally categorized as "homosexual serial killings;" and it must be asked whether events would have been substantially different if the paraphernalia of devil-worship had been lacking.

The question of causation is thus extremely difficult, and we are reminded of the excellent definition of satanic murder offered by Lanning: an act "committed by two or more individuals who rationally plan the crime and whose *primary* motivation is to fulfill a prescribed satanic ritual calling for the murder." He continued, "By this definition, (I have been) unable to identify even one documented satanic murder in the United States" (Lanning, 1989: 82). It is not clear whether the Matamoros "cult" killings would meet his criteria; but even

if they did, these did not occur on American territory (Linedecker, 1989). Naturally enough, Lanning's definition has been angrily denounced by theorists like Larry Jones, who see it as part of a concerted federal attempt to play down the scale of the problem.

I would also extend Lanning's definition to the issue of "ritual child abuse," emphasizing that the term "ritual" should only be used where the acts fulfill a prescribed ritual calling for such molestation. It would not be sufficient, say, for a lone self-described "satanist" or cultist to molest children in the presence of ritual robes or paraphernalia. By this test, the existence of ritual abuse remains unproven, and in fact thoroughly unlikely. In summary, we are quite at liberty to describe a peculiarly heinous action as "satanic" or "diabolical" in a rhetorical sense. "Satanic" murders, on the other hand, are a tenuous concept that should have no part in the vocabulary of either law enforcement or academic criminology.

Examining Satanic Crimes

But let us for a moment accept that certain cases can be described as "satanically" motivated. If in fact a full fledged crime-wave is in progress, it is remarkable that nearly all the exposes of the last few years should so frequently tell the same stories. The repertoire is very limited, especially in a country that will record some twenty thousand homicides in a particular year. Again and again, we read the same stories of Clifford St. Joseph and Sean Sellers; of Tommy Sullivan and Richard Ramirez; of Ricky Kasso and Pete Roland. It will also be noted that some of these incidents have already been felt worthy of book-length accounts, again suggesting that they are rare enough to receive detailed attention (St. Clair, 1987; Dawkins and Higgins, 1989).

It is also interesting that these much-quoted cases offer little evidence for the notion for an elaborate national network or conspiracy of hard-core "Cult satanists." Whenever a particular offender is arrested in a "satanic" crime, then he is almost invariably a self-taught teenage dabbler like Roland, Kasso or Sellers, whose notion of the occult derived from horror films or the role-playing game "Dungeons and Dragons." Moreover, these crimes often seem closely related to the activities of teenage gangs and petty drug dealing. There is no suggestion that these youths had been drawn into any more sophisticated cult; and the evidence of wider or national links is, if possible, even weaker (St. Clair, 1987; Dawkins and Higgins, 1989; Sellers 1990).

Even if there was such a cult, the accounts of their supposed practices, beliefs and rituals have many problems and inconsistencies. For example, the theorists of occult crime have described as "characteristic" of this type of offense such a wide range of acts and symbols that almost any activity could be seen as fitting. Particularly outrageous here is the "Satanic

Calendar" included in some courses, the list of specially significant days on which rituals might occur. Police officers would thus be alerted to the true significance of peculiar acts occurring on such a day. There are indeed such special days, such as April 30 or All Hallow's Eve (October 31); but some recent calendars include forty or more dates, most with no known connection to any occult tradition. If we further include acts occurring "near" a special day, then it would be almost impossible to avoid suggesting some ritual significance to a routine crime.

Alleged occult graffiti are equally bogus. Among a vast and proliferating number of examples, it is especially startling to see the familiar 1960's "peace" symbol co-opted as the satanic "Cross of Nero"! We can also find the six-pointed Jewish star in many lists, as well as a range of other signs with equally little connection to any real-life occult movement.

Furthermore, the alleged rituals do not fit into any of the long-known traditions of ritual magic and the occult, where (for example) child sexual abuse has never played a role. Particularly curious here is the apparent frequency in "ritual abuse" of acts of urination and defecation. This is unknown in the history of the occult; and, we might add, not common in recorded cases of non-ritual child abuse. This appears to be a new crime, and it might be suggested that it reflects the increased willingness of therapists to listen to the accounts of young children. Once a child has admitted an act of molestation, further questioning might well lead him or her to elaborate on these "dirty" acts in the only physical terms that the child might understand. Ignorance of sexuality would therefore lead to such charges of personal defilement.

The Roots of a Panic

In summary, the evidence presented for a satanic crime-wave in the United States seems wholly unconvincing, a tissue of improbable charges based largely on the assertions of very questionable witnesses. Also dubious is the vocabulary employed by the various authors, and the lack of precision they so often demonstrate in their definitions. We have already discussed the problems in using terms such as *ritual*, but other words are even more troubling, and the most hazardous of all is probably *occult*. However, the misuse of the term is highly revealing because it suggests a great deal about the political and religious agendas of those most active in creating and exaggerating the "satanic threat."

Occult and *satanic* are confounded in a way that reflects the views of the narrowest Christian fundamentalist sects, for whom all religious experience outside mainstream evangelical Christianity is suspect; and anything beyond Judaeo-Christian monotheism is quite literally of the devil. For the fundamentalists of the last two decades, New Age and mystical movements have been the Devil's Trojan Horse in the subversion of America, a means to introduce the gullible

young to anti-Christian concepts and practices. "These New Age techniques are not new at all, however, but are the same old sorcery under new labels" (*Passport Magazine*, 1986: 12; compare *America's Best Kept Secret*, 1988). Given the strong political growth of religious fundamentalism in the 1980's, it is perhaps natural that the sects should have latched on to the idea of Satanism as a real threat demanding political action. They supported this view by publicizing stories of breeders, survivors and ritual sacrifice (Jenkins, forthcoming, 1992; Hicks, 1991; Richardson, *et al.*, 1991; Sills, 1990).

Satanism and its alleged crimes provide a vehicle for attacking the occult and New Age ideas generally, together with a host of other phenomena that the fundamentalists hate - such as rock and roll music, legal abortion, fantasy games like "Dungeons and Dragons," even Halloween celebrations. Books and public presentations that attack Satanic crime often spend a great deal of their energy denouncing such abuses, and Sills (1990) refers to "the notorious promotion of unreliable data during satanism workshops." However, this can only be understood if we appreciate the underlying agendas of the groups that promote claims about the horrors of satanism.

Implications for Policy

Current critics argue that "occult crime" is very different from the menace that is sometimes portrayed, and most of the serious charges are in fact mythical. Whenever a police department has been tempted to credit the allegations, it has usually been embarrassed by the utter failure to produce results. There have been numerous local examples of "wild-goose chases" after alleged satanic altars and cults; while attempts to dig for the bodies of sacrificial victims have been humiliating failures. In the Lucas County affair in Ohio in 1985, an expensive search for sixty or more bodies produced nothing (Rodgers-Melnick, 1989; Kahaner, 1988).

If the satanic danger is so slight, then the measures that have been proposed to combat it seem superfluous and unnecessarily expensive. In fact, the existing legal apparatus seems quite adequate to the challenge. There will always be disturbed individuals whose aggressive tendencies may culminate in homicide, and these may well find justification for their acts in religious motives. Long experience suggests the limitations in attempting to predict and prevent acts of extreme violence, and there is little reason to believe that new techniques might lead to the effective and accurate early diagnosis of the potentially dangerous. There will always be offenders like Sean Sellers and Clifford St. Joseph, who find an occult context for their acts of violence.

Group or cult activity is a different phenomenon, but again it is difficult to see what changes might be possible or desirable. If in fact there is a cult or sect which believes that the commands of its religion require the commission of criminal

acts, then there is no reason why it should not be infiltrated by agents of law enforcement. If terrorist and organized crime groups can be penetrated, then "ritual" cells should be no great challenge. Moreover, there exists a sizeable legal arsenal to deal with such a group, in the form of well-established laws against (say) theft, assault, drug abuse, cruelty to animals, murder and so on. If these acts are the work of an organized movement or even a national network, then the conspiracy laws and RICO provide a more than adequate weapon to combat the menace. It is unnecessary to devise new legislation or procedures, to say nothing of the constitutional minefield that would thus be involved.

It would therefore be wasteful to divert resources to establishing special "occult" units. In addition, the increased attention paid to this alleged form of activity may well lead agencies to seek an "occult dimension" where in fact none exists. The consequences might be disastrous in terms of courtroom challenges, to say nothing of squandered resources. This type of activity must be placed in its proper, and strictly limited, context.

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BLACK POLICE OFFICER RECRUITS: Aspects of Becoming Blue

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What do Black recruits expect and imagine the police officer job is all about? What beliefs and expectations do they bring with them when they enter the Police Academy? Research on this question was conducted over a two year period with an entry class to the Police Academy of the City of New York Police Department (Maghan, 1988). The entire July 1986 Recruit Class, approximately 1,900 recruits, participated in the research effort that was designed to measure changes in perceptions across a range of beliefs and ideas about policing prior to training and after successful completion of the Police Academy's recruit school.

The study hypothesized that recruits from varied racial and occupational backgrounds would experience the training differently — meaning that pre-conceptions and expectations of the police officer role are rooted in different social backgrounds related to race, socio-economic status, religion, and the occupational history of their families. The statistical analyses of the data derived from quantitative survey instruments administered at the inception and conclusion of the training demonstrates that recruit conceptions of policing were significantly modified. Briefly, those recruits, White or Black, male or female, with strong enforcement and those with strong service orientations moved toward common perspective and understanding of what is appropriate and expected of police officers by the department and the public.

None of the recruits, White or Black, male or female, evidenced subcultural tunnel vision. One might reasonably expect that differential experiences with policing prior to induction into the department would mold attitudes and expectations in dramatic ways. The evidence from the study shows some differences which were evened out in the training period. However, the study did reveal that Black recruits, female more strongly than male, had more significant pre-Police Academy enforcement than service orientation of the police officer role.

Police Occupational Socialization

The occupational socialization process begins well before entry into the police as a recruit. Anticipating the demands and dimensions of policing, recruits begin to perceive what it is like to be a role incumbent - a police officer. Upon entering the department, the pre-police civilian self of the recruit undergoes a re-socialization through the training which coaxes a personal adaptation to new ideas, values and ideas from the recruit.

The perception of the recruits about themselves as police officers is, importantly, dependent upon their life situations and backgrounds. Such factors as age, race, gender, income, education, and military experience as well as previous encounters with the police are formative to shaping recruit images of themselves as police officers. The generational transfer of choice of occupation also represents a significant sociological component of work and family studies. The special category of sons and daughters of police officers enrolled in the 1986 NYPD Class were also surveyed to determine familial influences on their decision to become police officers. The generational transfer of occupational choice in law enforcement represents a fertile research area in the sociology of policing. This research found familial influences to be positive.

Recruit Perceptions of the Police Officer Role

The entry model that constitutes the core of the New York City Police Department may be divided into three distinct phases: the anticipatory, formal and informal stages. The focus of this research paper on police recruit perceptions centered on the anticipatory and formal arenas of recruit training (Maghan, 1988).

The orientation to the role of police officer in the New York City Police Department takes the recruit through a complex training and evaluation program operated by the Department's Police Academy. The numerous instructional programs include classroom lectures in relevant social sciences, practicums in police field procedures, weapons use, law, the peace officer code and sessions both in the Academy and in the field on department organization and protocols.

In addition to college-level teaching and training, recruits participate in patrol type exercises in which they are exposed to problems officers in the field encounter. Throughout the six months training regimen recruits are evaluated at regular intervals. The socialization process itself which is geared to the preparation of the recruit for a specific occupational role is not deliberately designed to nurture or cultivate what police researchers refer to as a "police personality" (Skolnick 1966; Niederhoffer, 1967; Van Maanen, 1975; Bennet, 1984). Police training assumes that recruits bring with them attitudinal and value orientations typical of citizens at large. One of the crucial tasks of the training program is to help recruits acquire the body of knowledge, values and attitudes consistent with their anticipated police roles.

Changing Demographics of Policing in New York City

The racial upheavals of the 1960's called attention to the small number of minorities in police work throughout the United States. As a result of the Kerner Commission's dramatic report on racial tensions in American society, some police departments changed their policies towards minority employment. At first, attempts to recruit Black and Hispanic candidates were disappointing. McCreedy (1980) observed that the brutalizing experiences and emotional tensions of policing in minority communities was a likely deterrent that discouraged minorities from deciding to pursue a police career. He writes:

In many Black communities, the police are viewed as representing the existing power structure and provide recollections of past oppression. Joining the ranks of the police is often not highly valued (1980: 76).

Moreover, even when recruitment efforts actively seek minority recruits, the legacies of racism and poverty lingers. Goldstein (1983) observed that entering female and minority recruits have often found the traditional police environment uncomfortable and, in some cases, hostile. As a result, their potential contribution to law enforcement work is curtailed. A contributing factor to these apparent maladjustments among women and minority recruits, or the intolerance of police departments toward them might be attributable to an absence of research into employment demographics and socio-political factors, such as family background, affecting the contemporary police labor market. An understanding of the generational influence of the Black family as a source of occupational choice is needed and can assist with developing more effective police recruitment, training and retention programs for all races.

The New York City Police Department has had a long enough duration of multi-racial employment to develop a pool of recruits each with a police officer as a parent. This pool of Black recruits whose parents were or are currently serving in the department were compared to the sons and daughters of White police officers whose parents had/have the same background in police service. What sociologists have noted about the importance of family background as the primary agent of socialization and occupational choice is apparent in these data. The family background provides a crucial frame of reference where values, attitudes, beliefs, and motivations are molded and given substance.

Parents of minority recruits had higher educational levels than non-minority recruits. For police in general, educational levels are higher than in the population at large. Thus the image of the police officer as uneducated is an empty stereotype - at least for New York City. The data on educational backgrounds of recruit officers of this study show a continuity of the value placed on educational achievement. The findings of this study demonstrate that the stereotypical

profile of police family background for recruits - White and Black - is fallacious. These police family recruits have common values and share a common vision concerning policing as a occupational and career choice. As with earlier studies by Merton (1957) on the impact of the family on the occupational choice of medical students, continued study of the police family, in particular the sons and daughters of Black police officers, can produce data, introduce new constructs, and, consequently, enrich both field research and department training and retention records.

In terms of race and gender, the New York City Police Department has changed over the past two decades. In 1987, nearly 90% of the Department (some 27,300 members) was male; and of that number more than 75% were White.

The following table illustrates a rich and growing minority police recruit source of information in the New York City Police Department.

Ethnic Composition of NYPD: 1978-1986*

Year	Total/%	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
1978	24,580	21,847	1,914	801	18
	100	88.9	7.8	3.3	.1
1980	22,431	19,751	1,817	844	19
	100	88.1	8.1	3.8	--
1984	24,153	19,685	2,481	1,892	95
	100	81.5	10.1	8.8	.5
1986	27,425	21,572	2,949	2,733	171
	100	78.7	10.7	10.0	.6

*From Zuccotti (1987).

An examination of hiring trends from 1968 through 1986, including gender profiles, illustrates that the percentage of Whites has begun to diminish. Upon close inspection, however, the data indicates that Black recruits entering the NYPD has been steady but meager whereas Hispanic and female recruitment has, in contrast, been more dramatic.

The relatively small increases year by year of Black recruits reflects the structural conditions and obstacles Black males have faced in all aspects of social life in the United States.

Gender/Race Frequencies for Recruit Class 86-B

Gender	Total/%	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Male	1,830	1,417	158	233	22
	81.2	77.4	8.6	12.7	.2
Female	423	236	97	89	1
	18.8	55.8	22.9	21.0	.2
Total	2,253	1,653	255	322	22
	100	73.4	11.3	14.3	.9

Total hire includes NYCPD, NYC Transit and Housing Police. Source: NYPD Personnel Bureau (1986).

Race and Gender of Recruit Classes (1979-1986 Combined)*

Gender	Total/%	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Male	15,856	12,295	1,354	2,041	186
	84.1	65.2	7.2	10.8	.9
Female	3,003	1,681	771	524	27
	15.9	8.9	4.1	2.8	.1
Total	18,859	13,976	2,125	2,565	193
	100	74.1	11.3	13.6	1.0

*From Zuccotti (1987).

In the 1986 NYPD recruit class, 27% were Blacks or Hispanics. Specifically 210, or 43.75 of the entire class were Black. Interestingly, compared to non-minority candidates nearly 55% of minority recruits had some college background, and a slightly greater number (who had completed undergraduate degrees) had graduate level courses. Apart from this fractional differences in background, minority recruits are quite similar to White recruits. Nonetheless, as with any group of individuals with no prior history of involvement in a major social institution, it is very likely that perceptions of it are based on their narrow experiences with it. In the case of racial minorities, the police may be experienced mainly as an enforcement organization in which the use of force is commonplace (as reflected in their pre-police perceptions of the role of police officer).

Deciding to Become a Police Officer

The similarities with their White counterparts is evident in the decisions of minority recruits to become police officers. The five most important reasons cited by minority recruits in choosing to join the police department were (1) ability to help people; (2) the ability to work directly with people; (3) the challenge of police work; (4) an opportunity to experience working in the community; and, (5) the excitement and challenge of police work. The following table profiles the minority and non-minority vision of the occupational choice to become a police officer. The following table clearly illustrates the need to examine similarities of occupational choice and vision among young people irrespective of race or gender.

These response rankings did not change significantly in the post-training interview survey. It affirms that both minority and non-minority recruits focus on the service dimensions of the police officer role which is also the thrust of training instruction and patrol performance. On the whole, recruits, both Black and White, left the Police Academy with a balanced perspective of both service and enforcement orientations.

Most Important Factors in Decision to Become a Police Officer

Factor	Minority	White	Probability
Ability to help people	2.93(1)*	2.89(1)	.01
Ability to work w/ people	2.81(2)	2.77(2)	.05
Challenge of police work	2.75(3)	2.76(3)	n.s.
Working in community	2.71(4)	2.61(4)	.001
Pay as police officer	2.49(5)	2.47(6)	n.s.
Good job opportunity	2.49(5)	2.29(9)	.001
Always wanted to be officer	2.40(6)	2.43(7)	n.s.
Excitement of police work	2.39(7)	2.56(5)	.001
Chance to work outdoors	2.27(8)	2.34(8)	n.s.
Freedom of the job	1.97(9)	1.87(10)	.01
Recruitment information	1.94(10)	1.75(11)	.001
Wearing a uniform	1.75(11)	1.65(13)	.01
Influence of friends/relatives who are police officers	1.70(12)	1.74(12)	n.s.
Influence of friends/relatives who are not police officers	1.59(13)	1.54(14)	n.s.
Carrying a gun	1.50(14)	1.40(15)	.001
Always had a police officer in family	1.18(15)	1.32(16)	.001

*Rankings

Social scientists have noted the profound importance of family background as the primary aspect of personality formation. The family constitutes the most powerful and influential frame of reference for the individual. The influence of the family on motivations that subsequently effect occupation and career choice are significant.

Like non-minority recruits, minority recruits indicated that their fathers, stepfathers, siblings and friends exerted the most influence on their decisions to become police officers. Mothers of minority recruits were the least favorably disposed.

Significant Others Influence in Decision to Become a Police Officer

Significant other	Minority	White	Probability
Father/Stepfather	3.40(1)*	3.52(1)	.01
Brothers/Sisters	3.36(2)	3.42(2)	n.s.
Friends	3.31(3)	3.39(3)	n.s.
Mother/Stepmother	2.89(5)	3.09(5)	.001
Spouse/Partners	3.09(4)	3.14(4)	n.s.

*Rankings

As a whole, minority and non-minority recruits demonstrated there is no "police personality." Despite the variety of backgrounds, there are many similarities in values, familial background, educational experience, beliefs and attitudes that cut across racial differences. It is worth emphasizing that though the recruits were heterogeneous racially, culturally and sexually, they showed a marked pattern of familial influences on their choice of occupation. Similar community oriented values - the most important factors affecting recruit choices - were across all groups.

Conclusions and Summary

The research literature and the 1986 study of police recruits suggests that the choice of police work for socially mobile minorities may parallel the selection of work by ethnic immigrants decades earlier - notably civil service employment - as a lever of social and economic advancement. Long delayed and frustrated by racial discrimination, the social integration of Blacks into police work may signal the beginnings of a true and collective racial integration of American society. The noteworthy ascendancy during the past decade of Black Police Commissioners such as Benjamin Ward, Lee Patrick Brown, Reuben Greenberg and numerous others gives solid testimony of Blacks in police leadership roles.

The police institutions perform extremely sensitive and vital functions in the maintenance of public order. The absorption of Blacks and other minorities into the police has had dramatic effects on both police agencies and on minority communities. This represents an important symbolic signal that the institutions in the society are no longer closed to Blacks; for police departments, greater minority assimilation will mean that the community policed will be better served by the policing agencies.

**Dr. Maghan's research specialty is the organizational work culture of law enforcement and correctional services. He has served as Director of Training of the New York City Police Department and has written numerous articles on law enforcement and correctional services. Dr. Maghan, a specialist on criminal justice response to hate crimes and bias incidents, was a keynote speaker at the 1989 annual conference of the National Organization of Blacks in Law Enforcement. Dr. Maghan is currently the Assistant Commissioner for Training and Resource Development of the New York City Department of Correction and an adjunct Associate Professor of Law and Police Science at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York.*

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From the Editor. . .

Police Forum invites the submission of materials for inclusion in the June 1992 newsletter. Items for publication may include articles, essays, research notes, book reviews and news items related to police studies. I hope you will share this publication opportunity with your colleagues. Materials to be included in the June issue should be submitted no later than April 1, 1992 to allow time for editorial processing.

Articles appearing in *Police Forum* are now abstracted by *Criminal Justice Abstracts*. In addition, the *Criminal Justice Periodical Index* will soon begin indexing our materials. I am sure this will expand our audience and hope it will serve as an incentive for our members to continue submitting exciting essays to share with other Police Section members and the criminal justice community.

POLICING RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

The Key to Success for Hostage Negotiations Teams: Training, Training and More Training

James L. Greenstone*
Chief Hostage Negotiator
Lancaster, Texas Police Department

What we may lack in experience, we make up for with continuous training. Formed five years ago by order of the Chief of Police, the Lancaster Police Negotiations Team meets every other week for two hours of formal training and exercises. These training sessions are mandatory for each of the five team members. In addition, a basic hostage negotiations training course at the regional police academy is required for all officers joining the team. The biweekly training sessions are supplemented by extended simulations conducted both within the team and in coordination with the department's Tactical Unit or tactical units from other departments.

Training sessions focus both on basic negotiations techniques and responsibilities, and on more advanced techniques which are being studied, developed and adapted by the members of the team. One hour per month is always devoted to exercising of the hostage negotiations telephone system and to its maintenance. Other sessions include review of incidents, human dynamics exercises, command post operations, face-to-face negotiations, and other related topics. Team members are encouraged to seek out training in other areas which may be valuable under unusual hostage or barricade incidents. Courses at local and regional training academies in such areas as cults, interviewing, critical incident management, handling abnormal persons, stress management, as well as formal courses in Basic and Advanced Hostage Negotiations are attended as time, money and availability allows. Often, those who attend such courses provide training for other members of the team during our regular training sessions.

All members of the team are trained to perform in all critical command post areas, and periodically are required to show proficiency in each area of function including, Primary Negotiator, Secondary Negotiator, Coach, Intelligence Coordinator and Negotiations Coordinator. Such requirements allow for maximum utilization of resources during incidents especially in the case of limited or reduced manpower.

If one problem were to stand out regarding the training and preparation of a unit, such as ours, it would be the maintenance of a super high level of readiness when calls for these highly specific skills are few. As a result of the low ratio of skills-developed to skills-utilized in the field, there has been periodic losses of negotiators from the team. However, because of the

careful selection process used to add members to the negotiations team, those who are selected understand that training must continue and proficiency maintained even though call-outs are limited. To this end, it was noted that 60 percent of the original team was still in place after four years, and of the 40 percent attrition, one-half of those occurred due to job changes which would have been incompatible with continued team membership. When notices are posted or announcements made concerning negotiations team vacancies, the responses are usually few. Most of those responding, however, represent high interest and dedication, although some of them are turned away due to lack of street experience. Those selected are able to maintain a dedication and commitment vital to team success.

A high point in our training program occurred recently when our team underwent an external evaluation of our training and proficiency. The purpose of such an evaluation was to determine whether or not the training received by our team has prepared us adequately for actual incidents. An outside examiner, not usually associated with our team, gave a level of objectivity to the evaluation and was not possible using departmental personnel. The evaluation lasted several hours and consisted of a command post simulation during which the examiner observed and rated the performance of each team member. The scenario used was an actual incident provided to us by the evaluator and of which we had no prior knowledge.

The results of the evaluation were discussed with the team and were then submitted to the Chief of Police. Although taxed extensively, we scored very high and learned a great deal from the experience. It is a valuable thing to know that our training has been effective and that we are ready for real world incidents as they occur.

Training is a must. However, training within an established team seems to provide the best results. When members come together with those whom they trust and with whom they are willing to make mistakes and to learn from those mistakes, the quality of what is gained increases dramatically. Such "team-ness" takes time to foster, and can be done if such a tone is set early in the formation of the team. Although our team has a designated trainer, all members are part of the training process. From time to time, each will present part of a training program or bring to the team areas of expertise which they have developed. In so doing, the education and on-going training is an active rather than a passive process for all concerned and team morale remains high.

**For additional information about our team, its training program, or about this article, please contact Dr. Greenstone, c/o Post Office Box 670292, Dallas, Texas 75367-0292 or call (214) 361-0209.*

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

The annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences is shaping up to be of substantial interest to people concerned with policing. The preliminary program for the 1992 meeting (to be held in Pittsburgh from March 10th-14th) lists 216 panels, roundtables, and workshops. The program lists nearly 30 panels, 4 roundtables, and 2 workshops that will deal directly with policing issues. Also of interest will be a Major Session titled "The Legacy of Conservative Ideology in Policing." This presentation is scheduled for Thursday morning March 12th from 8:30-10:00 a.m. Finally, the general meeting of the Police Section membership will be held on Tuesday, March 10th, from 5:15-6:45 p.m. Watch for the next issue of *ACJS Today*; in it you will see the preliminary program and a page listing panels of interest to police section members. I hope you can all make it to the meeting; it is always fun and informative.

The general meeting of the section membership will include a new event this year. Alpha Enterprises has generously offered to sponsor an award to honor an individual for "Outstanding Service to the Police Section-ACJS." John Angell (former Executive Counselor to the Section), Mittie Southerland, and Bob Taylor have agreed to serve as an awards committee to determine who should be the first recipient of the award. If you would like to nominate someone for the award, please contact a member of the awards committee.

This year most of our efforts have been directed toward stabilizing the structure of the Section (preparing a revised constitution, developing budgets, insuring the continuity of *Police Forum*, etc.). However, it should be noted that we have begun to explore the feasibility of establishing a syllabus bank to serve the Section Membership. James Frank has agreed to explore options and implications (costs, media, means of support,

etc.) for establishing such a service. He will have a report for the membership at the general meeting of the Section. Anyone with ideas or concerns about the syllabus bank should contact Jim at the Department of Criminal Justice, University of Cincinnati, ML 108, Cincinnati, Ohio 45221-0108.

The success of *Police Forum* has led several persons to suggest that the Section publish it quarterly. I have asked Gary Corder (whose idea it was) and Vic Kappeler to examine the feasibility of taking the newsletter to a quarterly. They have been charged to pay particular attention to resource issues (how will we pay for it) and the availability of suitable material for publication. We are justifiably proud of the appearance and content of the *Police Forum* and do not want to starve it for publication resources or quality material. If any of you have insights that you would like to share with Gary or Vic contact them as soon as possible. Gary and Vic will report their conclusions at the general meeting of the Section.

Finally, I would like to once again thank Eastern Kentucky University, Central Missouri State University, Shippensburg University, and Alpha Enterprises for underwriting the publication of *Police Forum* during its inaugural year. This issue of *Police Forum* represents a turning point in the publication. For the first time the newsletter is published on our resources rather than relying on "the kindness of strangers." Recently, the Executive Board approved policies to govern reprints, institutional sales, and editor selection. Further information on those policies will be presented at the general meeting.

I look forward to seeing you in a couple of months at the annual meeting of ACJS. Once again, the meeting should prove both fun and informative. I plan to have a ball and sincerely hope you can make it.

Robert H. Langworthy, Chair
ACJS Police Section

Book Reviews

Police Deviance, 2nd Ed.

by Thomas Barker and David L. Carter
Anderson Publishing Company, 1991.

The arrival of Thomas Barker and David Carter's *Police Deviance* was a welcome addition to the literature on police issues. It was timely and touched on behavior that unfortunately, is still all too prevalent in law enforcement. The second edition exceeds the standards of the first. It adds additional material on the topic and eliminates material that was redundant.

The major theme of the book is the understanding and controlling of various forms of police misbehavior. What is more important, the authors designed this text to provide a thorough analysis of the reasons for police deviance. Their goal is to make the reader familiar with why police deviance happens, how it happens and how it can be controlled.

The chapters are grouped into four logical topic areas: fundamental concepts, occupational deviance, abuse of authority and managing police deviance. The text, therefore, first addresses why the police become deviant; what form the deviance takes; and finally the authors discuss the management problems associated with investigating and controlling police deviance.

The first group of articles provides the theoretical framework. These attempt to develop an understanding of those elements within law enforcement organizations that contribute to officer deviance. The foundation is laid initially by describing the problems associated with a study of deviance and then with a discussion of the functions and limitations of organizational directives in controlling employee behavior. These discussions are necessary to lay an adequate foundation for the study of police deviance. The text jumps fully into the major topic in the last chapter of this section. It provides a discussion of those factors within the organization that contribute to the organizational atmosphere in which deviance can grow. At this point a major theme is stressed. Deviance within police organizations cannot develop and grow without the support of the organization's members and administration. It is not necessary that the support be deliberate, only that the organizational atmosphere allows deviant officers to rationalize their behavior as acceptable.

The next two sections take the reader on an in-depth tour of the dark side of law enforcement. Barker and Carter chose to distinguish between occupational deviance and abuse of authority. This decision was explained in the very first

chapter, "A typology of police deviance." Under the broad heading of occupational deviance the reader is introduced to corruption of every known type, including drug abuse among police officers, perjury, sex on duty, sleeping on duty, drinking on duty and police brutality.

The third section focuses on police abuse of authority; a subject that has been much in the spotlight of late. The chapters within this section deal with every form of police abuse from the police use of deadly force to profanity in dealing with the public.

The final section deals with managing police deviance. This section opens with a superb discussion of controlling and reviewing police citizen contacts and closes with an equally outstanding review of civil and criminal liabilities of police officers. The interaction between these chapters is excellent.

The first edition of *Police Deviance* was well received by students and faculty. For a number of reasons I believed the second edition is even better. The first reason lies in the book's conception. The ideas behind this book are solid, the topics well chosen. Second, the book is well written. Students will find it informative and interesting. Third, the theoretical foundations are carefully laid; the research is sound and the presentations are professional. Additionally, anyone interested in this topic will find it difficult to find a single source on police deviance as comprehensive as this text.

Anthologies are always difficult to create. There is the basic inability to control for the style of various authors. The flow is often uneven and it is difficult to avoid redundancy. This book did not suffer from these defects. The topics are arranged in logical sequence. Each chapter supports and adds to the information presented earlier. The author's styles are similar enough that the book reads more like a single author text than a reader. Overall, this edition of *Police Deviance* is excellent and should be required reading for law enforcement majors.

Richard N. Holden
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Civil Liabilities In American Policing

By Rolando del Carmen
Brady, 1991.

America has unquestionably become a litigious society. As a people, we have repeatedly sought answers to any number of social problems through our legal system. Although civil litigation has significantly affected virtually every phase of American life, this influence has been particularly profound in American policing. del Carmen's text represents an

important work for all who seek to more fully understand the law on civil liabilities and its influence on policing in the United States.

The mission of this text is succinctly stated by its author in the preface: to acquaint police authorities with the basics of civil liabilities with the hope that this knowledge will minimize the possibility of being sued, or of being held liable. To accomplish this onerous mission, the author has developed the topic comprehensively while managing to present the materials in a clear, concise, and organized fashion. The text, as with others by del Carmen, has been written with a minimum of "legalese," enabling non-lawyers to grasp and comprehend the complexities of this sometimes confusing area of law.

The text is divided into three major sections. In the first section, the reader is introduced to the basics of civil liability. The author begins by illustrating the necessity of understanding the topic, noting that while the police prevail in most suits, their increasing numbers and ever present threat continue to have a significant impact on police management and practices. The author goes on to provide a broad overview of the differences between civil, criminal, and administrative liability - under both state and federal law. The section also provides a thorough discussion of civil liability under state tort law, and under Section 1983. The latter type of liability is a continuing theme throughout the text and receives substantial coverage. The first section concludes by identifying legal defenses in civil liability cases, and discusses officer's and agency's responsibility in providing legal representation and paying damage awards. While practitioners are likely to find both of these topics of immense interest, the discussion on defenses is particularly pertinent - since the author sketches the means of insulating officers and agencies from findings of liability.

In the second major section of the text, the author has devoted extensive coverage to specific liability topics in policing. Individual chapters target subject areas that include the use of deadly and nondeadly force, false arrest and imprisonment, searches and seizures, and negligence. Each of these chapters provide clear definitions of the issue being addressed, the general rule(s) governing the issue, several simple examples to illustrate the application of these rules, and numerous citations from prevailing case law. A chapter is also included in the section addressing specific instances of negligence in police work. In this chapter, compelling questions are addressed as to whether the police are liable for failure to protect (generally no), failure to arrest drunk drivers (generally no), and for failure to respond to calls (generally no). The final chapter in the section addresses a topic often left untouched in policing: liability for jail management. Since jail employees are often drawn from the ranks of police officers, this section seems especially important in the text. Included in the chapter is a fairly extensive treatment of topics that include liability for overcrowding, use of force, search and seizure,

discipline, access to courts and lawyers, visitation, First Amendment rights, and specific suggestions to minimize liability arising from suits filed by inmates.

The final section of the text is comprised of three chapters. In one of these chapters, del Carmen discusses the implications of naming government agencies as defendants in civil suits. Two of the chapters in the final section seem especially important for agency administrators. One discusses the liabilities of police supervisors for what their subordinates do. In this chapter, liability issues such as negligence in failure to train, failure to supervise, and failure to direct are discussed. Another chapter addresses the liability of police supervisors for what they do to their subordinates. Here the author discusses employee rights provided by the Constitution (e.g. freedom of speech), federal laws (e.g. Title VII), and the ramifications of infringing upon these rights. One of the primary strengths of this text lies in its clarity. Topics are organized logically, technical terminology is kept at a minimum, and important yet sometimes confusing legal terms (e.g. tort, good faith) are clearly and concisely defined. Each chapter concludes with a summary of key points.

An interesting feature of the book is its inclusion of leading case briefs which are presented at the end of each chapter. The briefs introduce the reader to cases that continue to play a central role in defining and guiding the law on civil liabilities.

It is difficult to criticize the text. If anything, it might be said that readers of this work will probably find themselves seduced into believing that this area of the law is not nearly complex and confusing as often portrayed by those in the legal profession.

This text should appeal to a wide audience comprised of practitioners, academicians, and students having an interest in the area of criminal justice. Given its lucid yet comprehensive coverage, it is well suited for use at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. It is a must for the bookshelves of those who instruct courses on policing and/or civil liabilities. The text would also seem essential for agency administrators, police trainers, and direct service delivery providers employed in criminal justice agencies.

In summary, this is an informative, practical, and timely publication which would be useful to anyone having a need to learn more about the laws of civil liability as they apply to police authorities.

Richard D. Sluder
Northeast Missouri State University

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POLICE FORUM is a publication of the Police Section of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences and serves to: (1) encourage research and theory development related to policing; (2) link research, academic, practitioner, and policy-making sectors to further develop knowledge about police and policing; and, (3) encourage appropriate and effective teaching practices for police-related courses.

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Anderson/Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, 1992.

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POLICE LIABILITY REVIEW

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