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The meaning that police officers make of their work : a phenomenological study of police occupational stress.

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THE MEANING THAT POLICE OFFICERS MAKE OF THEIR WORK:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF POLICE OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

A Dissertation Presented

by

GARY L. BERGE

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

September 1989

School of Education

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PREFACE

This study utilizes a phenomenological methodology that is designed to obtain firsthand knowledge about police officers and the way that they function on the job in relation to occupational stress. From a phenomenological perspective it is important to know what police officers know, to see what they see, to feel what they feel, and to understand what they understand. Therefore, it is also appropriate to introduce the author's personal relationship to the work being presented in this research study. A brief biography of the author will help the reader to better understand why this research study was undertaken.

The author began his doctoral studies while working as a full-time municipal police officer in a large metropolitan area in New England. His experience as a police officer was representative of the diverse functions and duties that most police officers are required to perform. At the age of 32 he retired from the police force because of a serious work-related injury. Even though his career as a police officer was relatively short, it was obvious that his job had a serious effect on his values, attitudes, and personality. For example, when he entered the police force, the author had very positive attitudes and feelings about his job and the people with whom he worked.

However, his attitudes and feelings changed dramatically once he became a seasoned officer. In other words, the longer he stayed on the job, the more cynical he became about police work, his family, himself, and the public at large. During his thirteen year career he went from a person who fostered high altruistic feelings about police work and the people in his community, to a professional crime fighter who had a basic distrust for everything and everybody.

Once the author's career as a police officer ended, his attitudes about police work, himself, and those close to him began to shift in a more positive direction. It is apparent that his separation from the pressures of police work gave him the opportunity to emotionally decompress. Once removed from the strain of police work, the author was able to recognize that his career had seriously affected his emotional health. He began an in-depth examination into the meaning that he made of his work. He searched and discovered time after time that only one word could be used as a descriptor. He made meaning of his work according to "stress." Stress had become the currency of exchange between himself and his work. Stress also formed the framework for much of his cognition. He interpreted, understood, and valued his work most often through a cognitive filtering apparatus whose filter medium was "S" shaped ("S" standing for stress). This research study is

an attempt to better understand the relationship between police occupational stress and the meaning that police officers make of their work.

ABSTRACT

THE MEANING THAT POLICE OFFICERS MAKE OF THEIR WORK: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF POLICE OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

SEPTEMBER 1989

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In-depth interviews were conducted with twenty police officers. The interviewing process used a phenomenological approach which focused on the meaning that police officers made of their work. "Meaning" relates to the personal interpretations and evaluations that officers make of their work experiences.

The interview process consisted of three ninety-minute interviews with each participant. The first interview centered around the question, "How did you come to work as a police officer?" The second interview focused upon the question, "What is it like for you to work as a police officer?" And the third interview asked, "What does it mean to you to work as a police officer?"

The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed. After significant transcript material had been identified, it was then synthesized in two ways: first, as profiles of the participants; and second, as excerpts from the interviews which were woven together with emergent

themes that connected the stressful experiences of the participants. Eighteen themes relative to occupational stress emerged from the data. Themes associated with autocratic management practices of police organizations were the most frequently perceived occupational stressors by the participants of this study.

The author suggests that police work is no more stressful than other high-stress occupations, though police work seems to be very stressful because autocratic management practices intensify other stressors. Management reform seems to be an important task for the future well being of police officers. If police management styles become more democratic and supportive, there could be an across the board reduction in the negative affects of many occupational stressors. Officer health and job performance could subsequently improve.

The author suggests that stress plays a critical role in the meaning that police officers make of their work. Stress has become the currency through which officers exchange meaning. Stress is the psychic Purple Heart of policing and validates an officer's experience.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introductory Statement

The work of police officers is central to the security and stability of our society. Any systematic examination of the workings of the criminal justice system must begin with the police, who have become the most critical and perhaps the most powerful component of our society's legal structure (Black, 1980). Police officers, often with limited formal training and minimal qualification requirements, are granted more latitude and discretion in dealing with the lives of people than any other professional group (Blumberg, 1985).

Police officers wield tremendous power. It has been estimated that police officers are responsible for one out of every 28 homicides in the United States (Sherman & Langworthy, 1979). On the other hand, only 68 persons died in the United States from 1977 to 1987 as a result of judicial executions (Flanagan & Jamieson, 1988). Meyer (1980) indicates that in some municipalities police officers annually shoot 25 civilians for every 1,000 officers.

In a free society, it is understood that social order is not an end in itself. Social order is the means to the end of justice, liberty, and the sanctity of the individual. Ideally, in a democratic society the public are the

police and the police are the public. In other words, the police accurately mirror the general culture of the society they represent. If democratic law is to be credible and ethical to ordinary citizens, with standards of fairness, reasonableness and human decency, it will be so only to the extent that police behavior reflects such qualities (Radelet, 1973).

Police officers are required to protect the rights, property and lives of individual citizens. Yet, in the name of social order, police officers are also required to deprive citizens of their freedom, their property, and sometimes to even take their lives. Officers often feel cut off from the mainstream and unfairly stigmatized for performing a job that society demands to be done. Although the police serve the community at large, they do not feel accepted. Subsequently, many police officers tend to become cynical and to a large extent xenophobic.

When a person enters into police service, there is an entrance into a distinct subculture (Westley, 1953). The police subculture is governed by norms and values designed to manage the stress created by the role of police in society. To believe in their role and appear consistent to themselves and the public, police officers tend to be guided by a rigid set of cognitive rules which influence their work (Skolnick, 1966). As a result, many researchers argue that police officers develop a working personality

(Skolnick, 1966; White, 1972; Muir, 1977; Hatting, Engel & Russo, 1983; Broderick, 1987). They suggest that if a police officer stays on the job long enough, the development of a working personality is inevitable. It is not a matter of "if," but "when" police occupational stress will begin to reshape an officer's personality and negatively influence job performance. It is clear from the literature that occupational stress plays an integral part in the development of the working personality.

The concept of a working personality is an attempt to distinguish between the entire personality of a police officer and his or her on-the-job personality. But somewhere between the stressful experiences of police work and the development of the working personality, lies the subjective experience of the work itself. Does stress cause the working personality, or is stress the result of the working personality, or both? (The research difficulties in defining and measuring stress are discussed in Chapter 2.)

In terms of the present state of research there appears to be a good deal of methodological difficulty in sorting out the precise causal linkages between stressful events and the impact those events have upon police officers. Regardless of such difficulties, the concept of cognitive appraisal is clearly emerging as playing a critical role in the moderation of the cause and effect relationship (Hamilton, 1982). Cognitive appraisal refers

to the evaluative process that infuses experience with "meaning." In a very general sense, meaning can be synonymous with appraisal. For the purpose of this study, meaning is more than the simple appraisal, interpretation, or evaluation of experience. Meaning imparts purpose, value and significance upon experience.

According to Frankl (1988), meaning relates to the concept of being human and is relative to a person's specific experience. Meaning differs from person to person. Within the same person, meaning can differ from day to day and from hour to hour. Life's experiences allow for a wide variety of meaning.

If one believes that stress is a cause, then it can be defined in terms of stimuli, or stressors. Stressors can be defined as any external agents, events, or conditions; or any internal demands or appraisals that negatively affect a person. Breznitz and Goldberger (1982) define stressors as "external events or conditions that affect the organism." (p. 3). Stressors can be environmental factors such as loud noise in the work place, extreme temperatures, or a hurricane. Stressors are also physiological in nature, such as a broken leg, fever, exhaustion and even the common cold. Stressors are not exclusively physical. For example, emotions such as love, hate, joy, anger, and many others can be stressors. Anxiety and depression can be stressors of a psychological nature.

Meaning plays a critical role in stress because it may be the subjective appraisal of stressors that determines to what extent a person will be affected by those stressors.

In order for any internal or external stimulus to become a stressor, a person must first appraise the stimulus as threatening. Secondly and perhaps most importantly, a person must then impose a meaning to that threat before it can become stressful. Halroyd and Lazarus (1982) argue that stressful circumstances do not take their toll on individuals who make passive meaning of them, but on individuals who impart stressful circumstances with significant meaning. Naturally, there are universal stressors which are sufficiently brutal to produce the same meaning for nearly everyone, such as prolonged military combat, torture, or a Nazi concentration camp. Even so, it is worth noting that quite a few individuals have managed to cope with such experiences and have emerged apparently unscathed. The term coping is defined as a person's efforts to manage environmental demands and internal conflicts (Lazarus, 1981). Coping refers to a person's efforts to effectively manage stressors and remain stable.

The remaining portion of this chapter will present a statement of the problem, the purpose and significance of the study, as well as a brief discussion of the methodological approach. Chapter Two presents a review of the literature relative to: 1). The Concept and Definition of Stress; 2). Phenomenological Research; 3). Meaning and

Stress; 4). Occupational Stress; and 5). Police Occupational Stress.

Chapter Three presents the design of the study. It describes the interview procedure and how contact, access, and selection of the participants were made. It also describes data collection in two sections: the first describing the pilot study; and the second describing the final study.

Chapter Four reports the results of the study by presenting synthesized raw data in two ways: first, as profiles of 10 participants; and second, as excerpts from the interviews woven together with emergent stress themes. In the final section of the chapter the author offers his analysis of the data.

Chapter Five concludes this study by offering an evaluation of the data and recommendations for future research.

A Statement of the Problem

Today, everybody talks about stress. It is in vogue. Stress seems to be a daily topic. Stress is in people's conversations, in the media, at school, and just about everywhere else. Scientific interest in the stress phenomena and stress management is at an all time high. Miller et al. (1988) states that stress management will be a

fifteen billion dollar a year industry in the United States by the mid 1990's.

Stress has been blamed for causing nearly every kind of illness or disease known to humanity. And at the same time major controversies exist about key concepts and research strategies (Mason, 1975; McGrath, 1970; Rose & Levin, 1979). Most researchers do not define the concept of stress in the same way and most do not have a clear definition for stress. For example, a physician would define stress as any condition that harms, damages, breaks down, or causes the death of cells. A psychologist might define stress as any action or situation that places special psychological demands upon a person. Holt (1982) defines occupational stress as certain aspects of many kinds of work that have negative effects on most people under certain circumstances.

The most critical issue today for the law enforcement community in the United States is the issue of occupational stress. In a recent survey of U.S. law enforcement agencies conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Training Division, the top 54 training priorities were identified. The number one priority chosen was personal stress (Phillips, 1984). Stress is a serious threat to the well being of both individual officers and society as a whole. Indeed, police work has been recognized as one of the most stressful of occupations (Hurrell & Kroes, 1975; Kroes, Margolis & Hurrell; Selye, 1978).

According to Goolkasian, Geddes, and DeJong (1985):

Job stress is a serious threat to the well-being of both individual officers and police departments as a whole. Unrelieved stress can result in high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, chronic headaches, and gastric ulcers. It can lead to severe depression, alcohol and drug abuse, aggression, and suicide. Stress affects an officer's alertness, their physical stamina, and their ability to work effectively.
(p. 1)

The atmosphere surrounding the police occupational stress debate is charged with emotions, fear, entrenched assumptions, hidden agendas, and intractable value conflicts. Stress is a very important part of the police agenda and yet the research field seems to be chaotic and spasmodic. There is no single research paradigm upon which all scholars in the field can agree. The stress concept may be too complex to be captured by any single research strategy. At present, controversy surrounds any research attempt that does not recognize the transactional and dimensional characteristics of the stress concept.

If so much difficulty and controversy surrounds stress research, then why does the author of this study use stress as the focus of his research study? The author hypothesizes that stress has a critical influence on the meaning that police officers make of their work and significantly relates to their personal health and job performance. If one truly wants to better understand police

stress, then one should examine the meaning that police officers make of their work.

The major problem in stress research is to clearly define "stress." The definitional task is a difficult one because the etiology of stress does not develop along predictable pathways. The trick in conducting a qualitative social research study on stress is to define and measure stress without getting it hopelessly entangled in phenomena. However ill defined or indefensible "stress" may seem to be from a research perspective, it can still be examined through the careful use of traditional qualitative social research. (The author has addressed these critical research issues and discusses them in Chapter 2.)

The author of this study has thirteen years experience as a police officer and several years of experience conducting "stress training" for thousands of police officers. He has had thousands of conversations with police officers, has read nearly everything ever published about police stress, and has conducted in-depth interviews with police officers for this study. All that the author has ever experienced and known about police work comprises a rich source of data.

In this study the author draws heavily upon this personal data base. He believes that the term "stress," however defined and measured, is used more often than any other term when police officers themselves describe their

work. Stress is the one variable that all police officers readily identify with, regardless of their rank, departmental affiliation, gender, age, ethnicity, racial identity, etc. Stress is the universal variable of policing. It is the bonding agent common to every police officer's experience everywhere. Stress is the rallying cry of police officers and it is the one issue that brings them all together.

Thus far, scientific research has rarely examined the phenomenological aspects of an individual officer's work experience as it relates to occupational stress. Today, there is a strong need for police occupational stress researchers to abandon traditional quantitative research paradigms and seek innovative approaches. This study is an attempt to address that need. The author believes that an individual's subjective and phenomenological relationship to stress lies outside the realm of traditional quantitative inquiry and may be best examined through the use of qualitative social research.

Purpose of the Study

It is the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the personal meaning that police officers make of their work and how that meaning relates to police occupational stress. Modern science has determined there are pathways and channels that connect cognitive processes with the biology of human beings. Research

suggests that our thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and values do influence our health (Cunningham, 1981; Wolf & Goodell, 1976; Hinkle, 1974; Good, 1981; Weil, 1983). A positive attitude and a constructive frame of mind, as well as depression, can alter a person's ability to resist infections, allergies and even cancer (Good, 1981). New knowledge from the neurosciences has discovered many chemical messengers that influence communication between the cells in our bodies. Roskies and Lazarus (1980) acknowledge that good health is most often the result of effective coping and positive meaning rather than simply a consequence of the presence or absence of stressors.

During the 1960's, the police became the entity against which many social grievances were directed (Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder, 1968). The major riots and civil disorders during that decade created a greater demand upon the police. Even today, political protests of all kinds are at first directed at the police, rather than at their intended targets. In such a process, the anger and the fury of a protest movement might become diverted, diluted, or even extinguished by a confrontation with the police. This may be the most important function of the police in our society today; that of acting as a buffering agent in insulating and protecting existing political and social structures from threats (Quinney, 1974).

As a result of serving such social functions, policing has become a multidimensional institution, rather than a simple profession. Police officers are now required to possess a disparate set of job skills, perform a variety of functions, and to excel in many areas of expertise. They are obligated to be lawyers, paramedics, social workers, marriage counselors, athletes, human relations experts, automobile mechanics, photographers, race car drivers, youth advisers, and much more.

It is clear that the police are intimately involved in the anxiety, fear, violence, and social conflict that occurs to the members of our society. For police officers, physical and psychological injury are all too often the most enduring legacy of their careers. The working police officer experiences frustration, disappointment, and alienation because he or she might perceive that the higher the degree of personal investment in police work, the less the satisfaction and the greater the rejection from the public (Blumberg, 1985).

As a practical matter, it must be stated that the multiplicity of roles, tasks, and functions of the police will take a heavy toll upon the individual officers who are required to do the work. Some researchers explain many aspects of police behavior in a social psychological, role-conflict model (Skolnick, 1966; Wilson, 1963; Preiss & Ehrlich, 1966). In essence, police officers are cast in

nearly impossible roles in which their personal health becomes affected. The resultant strain seriously influences the ability of police officers to effectively carry out their work.

Basic to the purpose of this study is the assumption that understanding the perspective of those individuals who work within the police profession is essential if one is to better comprehend police occupational stress. Also basic to the purpose of this study is the assumption that the personal meaning that police officers make of their work affects the way in which that work is carried out. It is the intention of this study to better inform police officers about the nature of police occupational stress by presenting to them the perspectives, descriptions, and reflections of others who perform the same work. This study also intends to examine how police officers comprehend the concept of stress and how they use it in their daily lives.

It is not the purpose of this study to redefine stress or to utilize the stress concept from its most defensible position. Nor does this study attempt to tell the reader what stress is, rather it attempts to inform the reader about what police officers themselves think about stress.

Significance of the Study

When dealing with the many complex and dimensional relationships between human beings and their work, it is no wonder that hardly any occupation or job has escaped from being labeled at one time or another as being boring, or over demanding, or dangerous, or impersonal, or anything else that is generally considered to be stressful. Police work is no exception and a sizable body of literature exists which pertains to police stress. Even so, much of the research related to police occupational stress is fragmented and spasmodic (Malloy, 1984). Therefore, it should be the goal of new research to provide the comprehensive and stabilizing concepts which are presently missing from the field. One effective way to achieve the above goal is through a qualitative social research study which examines the meaning that police officers make of their work.

This study is significant because it will attempt to explain why police officers respond in a wide variety of ways to occupational stressors. It may also explain why some officers are seriously affected, why some are moderately affected, and why some are not at all affected by different occupational stressors.

For example, an examination of the literature related to police officer suicides rates has revealed a wide range in the rates reported. One study has indicated a rate of

203.66 per 100,000 population for Wyoming police officers for the years 1960 to 1968 (Nelson & Smith, 1970). While Dash and Reiser (1978) have reported that the Los Angeles Police Department had an 8.1 per 100,000 rate for the years 1970 to 1976. Stereotypic beliefs indicate that urban Los Angeles police officers are under greater stress than Wyoming police officers, and therefore more susceptible to suicide. Yet, the literature suggests the opposite to be true. Why should the Wyoming police officers in their predominantly rural setting be at a greater risk?

The author speculates that one of the many reasons why rural police officers are more often the victims of suicide than their urban counterparts is because the rural officers are entangled in a responsibility-saturated social environment. For instance, they are much more likely to be called at home anytime of the day or night to respond to a call. Whereas, urban officers work their eight-hour shifts and then retreat to the sanctuary of their off-duty hours.

Rural police officers usually live and work in the communities they serve and they are more apt to become involved in an active partnership with the community. On the other hand, urban officers are more likely to find themselves working in an area where the only role they play is that of a police officer. Urban officers are passive subcontractors who can "pack up" and move when the job is done. Los Angeles police officers are distant

and remote as they ride around in their patrol cars. In this sense urban officers can more easily buffer themselves from personal involvement in the community.

The issue of police officer suicide is so complex that it does not lend itself to ready examination. It is not the author's intention to imply that this study can reduce such complex issues to simple explanations. Though, this study may be able to unravel some of the complex relationships that entangle many issues. Halroyd and Lazarus (1982) argue that stressful events do not take their toll on individuals who make passive meaning of stressful events, but on those who impart significant meaning to those events. The author of this study speculates that rural officers are more likely to impart significant personal meaning to their work, whereas urban police officers are more likely to impart a passive and professional meaning to their work. If one accepts this speculation, then it seems reasonable to suggest that those officers who impart significant personal meaning to their work are the ones most affected by occupational stress.

Police officer suicide is one of the many complex issues that may be better understood as a result of this study. The meaning that a police officer makes of his or her work may be the one stabilizing concept which is presently missing from the research field. It is hoped

that this study will add cohesiveness and clarity to the scientific field of police occupational stress.

Methodology

Recent research suggests that the everyday meaning that a person makes of his or her experiences may influence that person's health (Cunningham, 1981; Wolf & Goodell, 1976; Hinkle, 1974; Good, 1981; Weil, 1983). Critical to this research study is the assumption that meaning plays a major role in the transaction between the person and stressful experiences. The meaning that an individual makes of stressful experiences is crucial in determining to what extent that individual will be affected by those experiences (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Launier, 1978; Folkman & Lazarus, 1980).

The meaning that a police officer makes of his or her work experience is descended from many untold and inestimable sources. The measurement of meaning and its relationship to stress is not easy to ascertain. Nonetheless, the author believes that in the best tradition of qualitative social research the use of in-depth interviewing may be the best way to uncover the meaning that police officers make of their work. While other approaches try to uncover facts or events that fit into a predefined measurement scheme, this methodological approach does not.

At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people. The

author believes that in-depth interviewing may be the best way to bridge the gap that lies between people who try to understand the experiences of others.

For the specific purpose of this study the author has chosen in-depth phenomenological interviewing as the method for collecting data. In-depth phenomenological interviewing is a variant form of in-depth interviewing. Its purpose is to have participants reconstruct their experiences and reflect on the meaning they make of those experiences. Through the careful use of in-depth phenomenological interviewing the author hopes to explore the experiences of police officers and examine how the meaning they make of their work affects how they carry out that work.

The use of in-depth phenomenological interviewing in this study requires police officers to reconstruct their past experiences and reflect upon the meaning that they personally make of those experiences. The in-depth phenomenological interviewing process is designed to explore those experiences which may have significantly contributed to the meaning that police officers make of their work.

If, as much of the literature argues, police officers utilize a coping strategy known as depersonalization, then it seems fair to assume that officers often verbalize their experiences in a public voice rather than a private voice. Private voices better express the constitutive

factors of past experience and inner feelings that help shape the meaning that police officers make of their work. The process of in-depth phenomenological interviewing promotes trust amongst the participants and the researcher, particularly in this study where the researcher is a disabled police officer. Their shared experiences and a sense of trust allowed the author to gain access to the participants' private voices.

According to Seidman (1985):

It is not the purpose of in-depth phenomenological interviewing to get answers to questions, to test hypotheses, or to "evaluate", as the term is normally used. At the root of in-depth phenomenological interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience rather than in being able to predict or control the experience. (p. 15)

The framework of the in-depth phenomenological interview process consists of three ninety-minute interviews with each participant. The first interview centers around the question, "How did you come to work as a police officer?" The second interview focuses upon the question, "What is it like for you to work as a police officer?" And the third interview asks, "What does it mean to you to work as a police officer?" The interview process does not focus upon getting specific answers to the above questions. Neither does it examine scientific assumptions, nor does it merely solicit the participant's opinions.

The interviews are audio-recorded and later transcribed. Excerpts are taken from the interviews and woven together around emerging themes. These themes are then displayed in a participant's profile. The profiles are constructed almost totally in the words of the participants. For the purpose of this study, a profile consists of synthesized data from the interviews which relate to the issues of occupational stress.

In this study, the author never asked about stress until it was first mentioned by a participant. Sometimes the author would ask the participant to go into more depth when, for example, a participant said, "This is the kind of stuff that really stresses me out," or "This really bothers me," or "This kind of thing makes me sick." The author did ask to hear more details about issues that related to stress, but he always avoided asking questions that might have created themes for the participants that were not already presented by the participant during the interview. (A more in-depth discussion of the interviewing process is presented in Chapter 3.)

In-depth phenomenological interviewing does have limitations. The information obtained from the participants is from the "top of their cognitive deck." The material is accessible only because the participant is aware of it at the time of each interview. What would happen if interviews were conducted at another time, in

another place, and by another interviewer? Would the recall of the constitutive events be the same? Probably not!

Selection of participants was another issue the author carefully addressed when examining the methodology's limitations. When a prospective participant declined to participate, was that refusal indicative of a sample bias? From a purely empirical perspective, the police officers who participated in this study did not truly represent a random selection. The pool of potential participants was drawn from only those officers who were attending professional training courses. There is no sure way to verify why the officers who participated in this study have done so. Perhaps they were more curious about the research study than those who declined to participate.

During in-depth phenomenological interviewing, relationships are created between the researcher and the participants. Naturally, the author is not free of biases and subjective opinions which may influence a participant, and subsequently the outcome of the collected data. However, the above issues are not significant in terms of this qualitative social research study because it was designed so that the author became an integral part of the data collection process. While in-depth interviewing provided the methodological framework for data collection, in essence the author himself was the data-collection instrument.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Concept and Definition of Stress

The word stress is very old. Some researchers believe that the word is a variant form of the noun distress. An Old French word estrece, which meant straits, narrowness and oppression, probably combined with distress to develop our present concept of stress that signifies hardship, adversity or affliction (Rosenthal & Rosenthal, 1983).

For many years physicians considered the word stress too unscientific to be taken seriously. Medical practitioners became interested in distress on the battlefield where the overwhelming effects of stress are unmistakable. At Gettysburg during the American Civil War disabling heart palpitations were so commonplace that the physicians labeled the ailment as soldier's heart. During World War I soldiers who suffered from disabling anxiety were labeled as shell shock victims. Physicians at that time attributed the ailment to broken or damaged brain capillaries resulting from the concussion and shock of heavy artillery fire. This way of thinking was abandoned and replaced with the well known phenomenon of battle fatigue during World War II. The term operational exhaustion was used during the Korean War. And finally, in the Vietnam War it became Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome. It wasn't until 1980 that

the medical profession recognized the word "stress" and bestowed upon it an official classification. The American Psychiatric Association in the third edition of its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders lists "Post-traumatic Stress Disorder" as an anxiety disorder.

In ancient Greece, Hippocrates, commonly referred to as the father of medicine, appreciated the maxim of vis medicatrix naturae, or the healing power of nature. Essentially, this meant that the human body had natural mechanisms for restoring health after a person became injured or diseased. During the nineteenth century, scientists advanced this concept by pointing out that the internal environment of living organisms remain constant despite changes in the external environment. They also began to recognize that living organisms must change and adapt in order to survive a physically hostile environment. Charles Darwin proposed that living organisms must physically adapt to their hostile environment in order to survive.

It was near the turn of the century when scientists began to understand how living organisms adapt to internal physiological changes caused by the external environment. They discovered that human physiology will compensate for external disturbances. For example, the human body will begin to sweat if it is introduced to a hot environment.

The American physiologist Cannon (1939) suggested the name homeostasis, from the Greek "homoios," meaning simi-

lar, and "stasis," meaning position, for the coordination of processes that maintain an organism's equilibrium. Cannon's work established the existence of many highly specific mechanisms that protect the human body from damage. He identified the physiological processes that prepare the body for the now well known "fight or flight" response.

And it was during the 1930's that Hans Selye, the person considered by most to be the father of stress research, formulated the General Adaptation Syndrome (Selye, 1936). Selye discovered that all toxic influences upon the body, regardless of the source, produces the same pattern of physiologic change. For example, the adrenal glands become enlarged and hyperactive. The thymus, spleen, lymph nodes, and all other lymphatic structures shrink. Bleeding appears in the stomach and upper intestines. Identical organic changes are caused by heat, cold, nervous irritation, hemorrhage, trauma and any other stimuli.

Selye demonstrated that at the onset of stress, the pituitary gland at the base of the neck starts a protective action by secreting chemical messengers, or hormones, called ACTH (adrenocorticotrophic hormone) and STH (somatotrophic hormone). These hormones are carried in the blood to the two small adrenal glands above the kidneys. These messengers cause the production of adrenal hormones. One of these hormones is commonly referred to as adrena-

line. These adrenal hormones quickly prepare the body to meet emergency needs. The body's proteins are broken down to form sugar necessary for immediate energy and body mobilization. As the blood sugar level rises, additional sugar is stored in the liver in the form of body starch, or glycogen, which can be instantly converted into sugar upon emergency demand. Also, minerals are drawn from bones, fat is mobilized from storage areas, and an abnormal amount of salt is retained. These processes make it possible for the body to meet emergencies and repair damage to vital tissues through a process which takes resources from one area of the body to give to another.

Selye identified three distinct stages observed in individuals who are exposed to the wide variety of environmental stressors:

- Stage 1. alarm reaction, characterized by less than normal resistance to the stressors and a more abundant secretion of stress hormones;
- Stage 2. resistance, during which the level of resistance to the stressors increases and bodily defense mechanisms are activated; and
- Stage 3. exhaustion, when bodily resources are depleted and the person cannot maintain an adequate defense against the stressors.

If stress is prolonged, the body repairs itself by rebuilding with the raw materials on hand. When the source is adequate a person can go for years withstanding tremendous amounts of stress with little harm. But, should the raw materials be deficient, such as with malnutrition, chemical abuse, or physical exhaustion, then disease develops. Death will ultimately occur if damage is not repaired. Today, many researchers suggest that stress can result in cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity and many other conditions.

Since Selye's first description of the physiological processes of the General Adaptation Syndrome, perhaps the most important single discovery was made in 1977 at the Salk Institute. A Nobel Prize was awarded for the discovery of "endorphins." These substances are produced by the brain and have painkilling properties. This discovery has opened up a new field of stress research.

Scientists are now examining the profound concept of stress not as a biological response to a noxious event, but rather as a cyclical pattern of life similar to the recurring biological needs for food, water, sleep and sexual activity. They are formulating a natural code of behavior: a biologically justifiable code of behavior. What scientists had been examining for so long was distress; the damaging effects of stress. Endorphins and other discoveries have allowed scientists to begin examination of human eustress, from the Greek word "eu" meaning

good, as in euphoria (Selye, 1974). When the human organism is traumatized (distress), the brain releases endorphines to complete the cycle (eustress). Simply, distress is the breakdown of adaptation and eustress is returning the organism to its natural state.

However, most of these discoveries have been purely medical and physiological. The profound concept of stress must include greater attention to the holistic concept of health and wellness. Cognitive and psychological processes have to be examined and incorporated in the overall stress concept. Much of the research that has been completed has isolated the biological and environmental aspects from the psychological and cognitive aspects of stress.

Contemporary interest on psychological stress became apparent during the 1940's. Scientists began to examine human behavior during extreme circumstances. Studies during that time were concerned with military combat (Grinker & Spiegel, 1945), the concentration camp (Bettelheim, 1943), bereavement (Lindemann, 1944), and traumatic injury (Hamburg, Hamburg & deGoza, 1953). The people who were exposed to those extreme situations often displayed profound disturbances in physical health and psychological functioning. People often displayed severe anxiety, psychotic behavior and bleeding ulcers (Paster, 1948; Swank, 1949). Researchers began to conceptualize these phenomena as the result of stress. They consequently began to formu-

late principles about stress that transcended the unique situation. Researchers began to investigate factors that either increased or decreased the psychological and somatic costs of stress.

Since the 1940's the scope of research has gone beyond the casualties of the battlefield and into the laboratories. Lazarus and his colleagues examined the conditions under which skilled performance deteriorates, morale declines and somatic health diminishes (Lazarus, 1981; Lazarus & Folkman, 1982). Also, a great deal of effort was expended to demonstrate that the consequences of stress can be predicted from life events scales.

(Gunderson & Rahe, 1974). However, these scales failed to find the strong relationship between life events and stressful adjustment demands caused by those events (Rabkin & Struening, 1976). Most researchers do agree that the consequences of stress cannot be understood merely in terms of the stressful event. Stressful situations do not take their toll upon a neutral individual, as is implicitly assumed by some researchers, but upon an individual who is experiencing stressful situations with significant and subjective meaning, and then struggling to control and master those situations.

People over the millennia have suggested that life is easier with a smile on our faces. This practice has survived up to present day and there have been countless studies, both plausible and bizarre, that suggest a rela-

tionship between physical health and the power of our minds. Scientists now believe that negative psychological states, brought on by emotional strain or chemical imbalance, cause the immune system to falter (Good, 1983; Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1981; Rabkin & Struening, 1976).

No one yet knows, for instance, whether each individual emotion sparks a distinct body response, or what precisely are emotions. One thing many scientists do agree on is the idea that if a person can cope with a negative event with a positive mental attitude, that person has decreased his or her chances of being negatively affected. When considering how humans react to life events, we must distinguish between exposure to a potential stressor and actual physical and psychological harm. Stress does not result simply from a negative event, even the death of a loved one. Rather, it results from a very complex interaction between an event and a variety of cognitive factors; such as a person's expectations, experience and the presence or absence of a caring support system. It seems that the meaning a person makes of a negative event may increase their risk of being negatively effected by such events.

Control of our thoughts, our emotions, our situations and our lives results in the least amount of stress. Being caught up in uncontrollable situations is one of the most stressful of all experiences. If you're not physically in

control of your body or environment, then being in mental control may reduce those stressors. Control serves as a buffer against stress. If we let stress reactions increase, we become less and less able to handle even minor stress. Our ability to interact with and understand others is also reduced. Stress reactions are often unnecessarily harmful!

Many researchers believe that the effects of a stressor on a person is determined by how each person views the stressor. Controllable stressors have the least serious consequences on our health. Uncontrollable stressors cause the most damage to our health. Thinking that you are in control of a stressor, even though you are not, may prove beneficial. Clearly, beliefs and attitudes play an important role. Studies using animals have demonstrated that animals with no control over stressors developed tumors more often and more rapidly than animals that controlled the stressors.

Why do we feel the way that we do? Where do our anger, our infatuations, our frustrations, and our griefs come from? Even to this day this question is unanswerable in scientific terms. One way to ponder this question is to examine pain. Pain has a specific purpose and it is beneficial in small amounts. When pain is taken to extremes, however, it can be immobilizing. Some persons have high tolerances for pain and some have low tolerances. The tolerance is subjective on the victim's part. Pain is the

most universal form of stress, whether it is physiological or psychological. Research has shown that our bodies react to pain in the same way, regardless of its source: the body or the mind. A thought or an emotion can bring about serious stress reactions. Our thoughts create electrical activity in the brain which in turn triggers the release of chemicals. These chemicals do prepare us for the fight or flight response. These chemicals are inherently protective of us. What happens when these protective mechanisms are activated for threats that are not real?

These responses may work to cause additional damage or even shorten a person's life. Psychological events do have physical consequences. Control of our thoughts, our emotions, our situations and our lives results in the least amount of stress. Being caught up in uncontrollable situations is one of the most stressful of all experiences. If you're not physically in control of your body or environment, then being in mental control can reduce those stressors. Control serves as a buffer against stress. If we let stress reactions increase, we become less and less able to handle even minor stress. Our ability to interact with and understand others is also reduced. Stress reactions are often unnecessarily harmful.

In regards to occupational stress it has been commonly assumed that managers, supervisors and executives suffered stress as the result of their responsibilities.

Such an assumption has been challenged by research (Restak, 1984). The degree of control that executives have over their situations serves as a buffer against stress. Subordinates don't have the power to set policy, set standards, and to make organizational change. As a result subordinates are more likely to suffer stress reactions and develop ulcers, headaches, high blood pressure and many others disorders.

Small amounts of stress can help us to achieve our best performances. Some people actually thrive on stress. Stress can become an addiction for some people. A little bit produces a craving for more and more until, eventually, the situation gets out of control. It is unclear what a person's stress tolerance is until there is a breakdown. Some forms of the kinds of stress that people thrive on are risk-taking and thrill seeking. Risk-taking can be gambling for money all the way up to gambling with one's health. Some people accomplish this by sky diving or driving automobiles very fast. Supercops sometimes fall into this category. Stress at low and moderate levels increases our abilities and increases our awareness. As stress mounts though, stress creates further stress which interferes with our health and deteriorates our performance. These types of behaviors should be examined by individuals and they should be competently assessed for any negative consequences.

Some experts believe that the secret to a long and healthy life is not to try to avoid all stresses. The secret consists of being good at avoiding the avoidable stressors and healthily dealing with the unavoidable stressors. For many people this relates to job and home satisfaction in addition to peer and family support. Some professions, such as with policing, are proving difficult for their workers to achieve long and healthy lives.

Summary

There seems to be no cohesiveness to the concept of stress and most of the definitions that attempt to define stress are biased toward the scientific discipline of the researcher. As a result, any research study that attempts to measure stress can become potentially entangled in methodological difficulties. Therefore, it is not surprising when scientists question the scientific validity of research studies on stress. Before the author of this study chose a measurement of stress, he realized that it was imperative that he first unravel and then clarify some of the conceptual perplexity surrounding the definition of stress. His review of the research literature supports three conceptual definitions of stress as they relate to human functioning.

Definition 1: Stress as an Effect. Stress is most often defined as a disturbance in a person's biological, emotional, or behavioral functioning. Most of the classi-

cal definitions of stress fall into this category. Hans Selye, considered by most to be the father of stress research, led the way when he measured stress as changes in endocrine functioning and the autonomic nervous system. People often use this definition when they say that they "feel stressed." Such conclusions are in response to a person's increased heart rate and perspiration, as well as a wide variety of other physiological responses. These responses are caused by the activation of the autonomic nervous system.

Unfortunately, for the purpose of this study, the response definition of stress is of limited value because the measurement of stress and its relationship to the meaning that police officers make of their work is greatly entangled. If meaning is used as an index to measure stress, then the measurement of stress requires the author to execute the difficult task of precisely defining the meaning of "meaning." Thus, the definition of stress as a response to meaning plunges "stress" further into complexity and adds no new information to the scientific field of police occupational stress because "meaning" cannot be precisely defined; and it certainly adds no explanatory power to the definition.

Definition 2; Stress as a Cause. In the second major definition stress can be defined in terms of stimuli, or stressors, whose properties are most often objec-

tively measured and whose occurrence is independent of the actions or characteristics of the individual on whom they have an impact. This is most often the framework used in laboratory experiments where noxious physical events (extreme heat, loud noises, etc.) or psychological stimuli (induced anxiety, social isolation, etc.) are imposed upon randomly selected individuals.

This definition allows for easy separation and measurement of variables, and often, to some degree, with good predictability. When researchers use this definitional framework they often claim that particular types of stressors have specific causal impact and outcome with some individuals. Using objectively identified stressors to define stress is a first step in evaluating stress independently of other variables. At least this definition attempts to extricate the independent variable of stress from the web of life's phenomenological influences.

From a research perspective this definition may offer the most defensible measurement of stress because the research variables are less likely to become entangled. However, it is not the purpose of this study to define stress in its most defensible position. For the purpose of this study, it would be improper to define stress as merely a cause, without regard for individual cognition or social context. In this second definition of stress the impact of the social world upon the individual is often denied. This denial is contrary to the commonly held

belief by many researchers that stress may be controlled and moderated by an individual's idiosyncratic and cognitive appraisal structures.

Although this definitional framework argues that stress causes dysfunctional biological, emotional, and behavioral events to occur, this definition does not sufficiently provide the comprehensiveness sought after in this study.

Definition 3: Stress as an Interaction Between Stimuli and Moderating Variables. As helpful as the first two definitions might be in describing certain aspects of stress, when either of these are applied to the daily experiences of police officers, they tend to be more constricting than informing. The etiology of stress is not typical. In the phenomenal world stress does not develop along predictable pathways. In real life most of the events measured in the laboratory do not occur under controlled conditions nor in the same intensities. Even if the definitional issue were to be resolved in favor of either of the first two definitions, there still exists the research problem of untangling "stress" from the many factors and variables associated with the phenomenal world.

From the perspective of this phenomenological study, it is purposeful to make tandem use of the two previous definitions and acknowledge that stress can be both a

cause and effect. An interactional definition, using both of the previous conceptual definitions, is what forms the basis for this third definition. The two previous conceptual definitions are most often based upon scientific thinking that uses models borrowed from the biological and physical sciences. This third approach borrows heavily from the social sciences and defines stress as a relationship between the individual and the surrounding social world with all of its influences.

It should again be emphasized that it is not the purpose of this study to redefine stress, but to study how police officers understand stress in their daily lives. Stress is part of each person's conceptual apparatus and also a part of the way in which each person views the world. A baseball umpire once said, "The pitcher may throw a strike and I may mistakenly call it a "ball", or he may really throw a ball and I may call it a "strike." I try to do the best job I can in calling what I see. But, you see, it really doesn't matter what kind of pitch he throws because the pitch ain't nothing until I say what it is!"

The interactionist's definition incorporate's conventional wisdom when it recognizes that one person's stress is another person's challenge. This conceptual approach makes good sense when used in combination with the two previous definitional approaches. However, when this third definition is used alone and not in tandem with the other two definitional approaches, this definition of stress

plunges the stress concept into an untenable position. If stress is defined only by the perceptual or cognitive interpretations of the individual, then the measurement of stress becomes hopelessly entangled in phenomena.

This study does not utilize a conceptual framework in which stress is defined merely by the perceptual and cognitive interpretation of the individual. This study takes on the difficult task of building upon the conceptual foundations of the first two definitions by broadening those definitions to be more inclusive. The author now argues that for the purpose of this study the best approach to defining the "concept of stress" is from the interactional approach because the stress of police work is not amenable to easy investigation. This study is not attempting to tell the reader what stress is, it is merely attempting to inform the reader what police officers themselves think about stress. This third definition fits best with a phenomenological approach. Additional epistemological issues are further discussed in the summary of this chapter's section on occupational stress research.

Phenomenological Research

Police work takes place in a multi-dimensional social and cultural context. Important and conflicting values dynamically intersect and collide. Police officers have spouses, children and extended families. Officers belong

to familial, social, political, educational, religious, ethnic, recreational and other assorted institutions. Police officers derive a mixture of pleasure and pain when their work interfaces with those institutions. The quality of the interfacing often depends upon many variables such as individual officers' personalities, their unique police departments, their unique communities, and the criminal justice system itself.

When researchers are dealing with such important human concerns as a person's work and health, which are reciprocal parts of a highly sophisticated and multi-dimensional system, choosing a research methodology is not an easy task (Holt, 1982). Many of the research issues and difficulties related to police occupational stress are not unique to the field. Such issues are endemic to the study of human behavior.

There are many different types of research strategies which can be used to study police stress, each of which have their own strengths and weaknesses. A review of police occupational stress literature indicates that quantitative and empirical research strategies are most often utilized. Phenomenological research is seldom used.

The function of phenomenological research is to construct the multiple meanings of phenomena (Carini, 1975). The complexity of the person-environment stress relationship requires a breaking away from the traditional research methods, which are most often used in stress

research, toward phenomenological research. Surkin (1970) argues that to use an objective interpretation of a social situation, such as the person-environment stress relationship, turns subjective reality upside down. He argues that the outcome of inquiry is inverted; sense and meaning are turned into non-sense or non-meaning.

Context is one of the many variables that phenomenological research concerns itself with. Gergen (1973) argues that the sciences of human behavior are context dependent. Mishler (1979) contends that all human action and experience are context-dependent and may be best understood within their contexts. He suggests that the common sense understanding of human experience as context-dependent is often excluded from the research in the social and psychological sciences. Mishler (1979) states, "As theorists and researchers, we tend to behave as if context were the enemy of understanding rather than the resource for understanding which it is in our everyday lives " (p. 2).

One of the limitations of traditional methods of stress research is that they tend to focus on short-run events and have a limited range of significance across situations. One of the strengths of phenomenological research, specifically in-depth phenomenological interviewing, is that it offers a researcher the ability to inquire about the multiple truths and meanings which

people make of their experiences across many situations and over a long period of time.

Zuckerman (1976) suggests that the assessment and study of stress might be better over time rather than in terms of limited situational measurements. His hypothesis was tested in his study of specific stress situations where it was possible to predict a person's future stress response (coping behavior). From his findings, it seems appropriate to choose a methodology that looks at human experience over a period of time and across many situations. Therefore, Zuckerman's study implicitly supports the use of in-depth phenomenological interviewing.

Magnusson and Endler (1977) describe the process of a person's reaction to stress in a specific situation as yielding a situational profile. Each stressful situation creates its own idiosyncratic profile. The combined profiles would become a cross-situational profile which might reflect a person's total coping patterns. A methodology that measures a person's cumulative experiences might be able to uncover a cross-situational profile. In-depth phenomenological interviewing is well suited for this task.

In 1962 Kuhn introduced the concept of "paradigm" in his discussion of the scientific revolution (Kuhn, 1970). More recently, some stress researchers have suggested that a paradigmatic crisis exists in stress research. Lazarus and Launier (1978) concluded:

We are certain that only a radical change in outlook, research paradigm, and conceptual language, will allow us to escape the doldrums into which research and theory on psychodynamics and adaptation have lapsed using the research models and language of the recent past. (p.321).

These perspectives encourage the use of new research strategies in the field of police occupational stress. In Laux's and Vossel's (1982) critique of the literature that examines the advantages and disadvantages of both qualitative and quantitative forms of stress research, their conclusion indicates that the field now favors qualitative research. Runkel and McGrath (1972) indicate that the most desirable features of any empirical study: realism, precision, and generality; cannot be maximized within the same study. They also conclude that each available research strategy can serve only some of those features well. Accordingly, it seems that a researcher should not search for the single best strategy, but should choose a strategy that is best for the researcher's purpose and then minimize any inherent weaknesses.

Quantitative research is still widely used today within the field of police occupational stress, but researchers are calling for new studies with emphasis on qualitative inquiry (Malloy, 1984; Terry, 1985). Because of the complexities of the issues, no single method of inquiry has proven adequate in providing a comprehensive and stabilizing concept to the scientific field of police

occupational stress. This study's use of phenomenological research is an attempt to provide a comprehensive and stabilizing concept to the field.

Meaning and Stress

The relationship between the mind and body has intrigued people since the time of Ancient Greece. Today the interest in that relationship is at an all-time high. Exciting new advances in the research fields of psychoimmunology, neuroendocrinology, and neurophysiology are revealing how psychosocial stress is negatively effecting our health. The meaning that people make of their everyday experiences does influence their health (Hinkle, 1974; Wolf & Goodell, 1976; Cunningham, 1981; Good, 1981; Weil, 1983).

Roskies and Lazarus (1980) acknowledge that good health is most often the result of effective coping and positive meaning rather than the simple presence or absence of stressors. Stressors are present in everyone's life, but it is the meaning a person makes of those stressors that determines to what degree, if any, a person's health is negatively affected.

There is cumulative evidence that the brain and the peripheral organs are linked in a complex and mutually adjusting relationship that is tuned to "social" as well as "physical" changes in the environment. Zegans (1982)

identifies six basic human needs, one of which is a person's need of exposure to coherent meaning structures which relate to the self, the social group, and the environment. When this need is unmet, psychosocial stress develops and produces emotional and physiological reactions. These reactions set the stage for the onset of disease.

Rahe and Arthur (1978) indicate that one of the crucial factors related to stress-induced illness is the meaning that persons attach to stressful experiences. They examined the psychological reactions of U.S. Navy recruits during basic training. When recruits made meaning of their training as burdensome, depressing, and likely to end in failure, their cholesterol levels sharply increased. When other recruits experienced the same training as challenging and worthwhile, though stressful, their cholesterol levels were unchanged.

Positive and negative meanings elicit different physiological responses (Hamburg, 1982). For police officers, making a positive meaning of their work is an essential part of maintaining their health. On the other hand, making a negative meaning increases reactions to stressors and runs counter to good health (Rahe & Arthur, 1978).

Police officers are not mere victims of stress, they may also be victim to the negative meaning they make of their work. Meichenbaum (1985) indicates that groups of people who share a common meaning, such as police offi-

cers, unintentionally reinforce that meaning in the others within that group. For some police officers, this process serves to maintain negative meaning. The more officers make negative meaning of their work, the greater the potential for intensifying stressors. A vicious cycle may be occurring. A process then emerges where officers' agendas become consistent with their meaning and vice versa. In this fashion, officers play a critical role in perpetuating a negative meaning and perhaps negatively influencing their health.

Negative meaning may be endemic to the police profession. William Parker, former Chief of the Los Angeles, California, Police Department, paints a negative picture for the future of our society. McDonald (1962) offers this interview excerpt:

I look back over almost 35 years in the police service, 35 years of dealing with the worst that society has to offer. I meet the failures of humanity daily, and I meet them in the worst possible context. It is hard to keep an objective viewpoint. But it is also hard for me to believe that our society can continue to violate all the fundamental rules of human conduct and expect to survive. I think I have to conclude that this civilization will destroy itself, as others have before it. That leaves, then, only one question, when? (p.169).

William Parker has been identified as one of the two most prominent leaders of police professionalism in this century (Johnson, 1981). He has influenced the future direction of modern American policing well into the

next century. The above quotation gives strong support to the argument that police officers at all levels are sensitive to and affected by occupational stressors. It seems that pessimism, despair, and anger are part of the meaning that Mr. Parker has made of his work. What are the consequences for officers who make such a negative meaning of their work?

According to Justice (1987) disease is influenced by the way people make meaning of their situations and by their attempts to adjust to that meaning. The way in which police officers make meaning of their work may be the most important indicator as to what degree an officer's health is effected by occupational stress.

Occupational Stress

Historically, work has received mixed reviews. According to the Bible, the main attraction of the Garden of Eden was the lack of any need to work. Since the beginning of recorded history work has been considered a hard task and toil; work was undertaken for survival. Recently however, work has produced comforts, pleasures, luxuries and cultural rewards. Work seems to be a new social invention. The workplace is now a social setting where large numbers of people intersect. The industrial revolution increased the standard of living for most persons, but it also subjected workers to accidents, traumas, burns,

amputations and disease resulting from large industrial centers (Holt, 1982). Today, specific worker populations are being exposed to hazardous chemicals and ionizing radiation. A less obvious consequence of modern work is the loss of autonomy a person has with the environment. It has been suggested that one of the most stressful aspects of modern living is machine pacing (Mumford, 1967, 1970). Mumford (1967) suggested that technology created a person's sense of time urgency.

Completely different forms of government exist in the world that reflect different attitudes on work. In some parts of the Western World trade unions were born as an attempt to regain some of the worker's lost power. The union movement sought to gain control over the unwanted and threatening side effects of work. Pressures by unions upon owners and employers has made work safer in many respects. Although, new dangers for workers are being constantly discovered and challenged.

Karl Marx introduced one of the first general critiques of work that went beyond the perspective of work being just physically dangerous. Marx argued that under capitalism the vast majority of work causes worker alienation, deprives people of the true meaning of their work. Consequently, work had lost its intrinsic value. Since Marx's critique our society has generally recognized the deleterious aspects of work; defined largely by physiological and psychological aspects. The general public demands

reforms in the organization and conduct of work in order to avoid the harmful effects of the workplace. These demands have resulted in a call for scientific inquiry and research related to the negative or stressful aspects of work. Some of these first demands for inquiry appeared when diseases like peptic ulcers and hypertension were observed to occur in epidemic numbers. (Chase, 1972).

Investigations into the workplace gained U.S. government support in 1970 with the passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act and the creation of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), within the Department of Labor. And in 1971 the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) was created within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. OSHA was charged with setting and enforcing standards for industrial health and safety and NIOSH was directed to conduct and fund research which included the psychological, behavioral and motivational factors of work.

A chief source of confusion still exists as whether to conceive of occupational stress as a situational factor or a unique reaction of the person. Regardless, some aspects of many kinds of work have negative effects on many people. Thus, the field of occupational stress becomes the study of those aspects of work that have or threaten to have negative effects upon workers. The prominent research paradigm is; stressors in the work environ-

ment (independent variables) yield unhealthy results (dependent variables) under certain conditions (moderator variables).

Stressors can be defined as any external agents, events, or conditions; or internal demands or appraisals that negatively affect a person. Many independent variables of the workplace have been identified by researchers as stressors. They include the physical properties of the working environment such as: chronic physical dangers (Althouse & Hurrell, 1977) and extremes of heat, cold and humidity (Biersner, 1971); time variables such as non-standard working hours (Rentos & Shepard, 1976) and deadlines (Pearse, 1977); social and organizational aspects of the work setting that include machine pacing (Murphy & Hurrell, 1980), poor labor-management relations (Colligan & Murphy, 1979) and availability of intrinsic rewards (House, 1972); changes in job such as job loss (Jahoda, 1979); role ambiguity versus role clarity (Kahn, 1973) and responsibility for people (Caplan et al., 1975); and finally conflict with or pressure from the community (Kroes et al., 1974).

The above independent variables, according to many research studies, lead to the following effects (dependent variables): increased pulse rate and blood pressure, anxiety, depression and boredom (Caplan et al., 1975); tension and alienation from the organization (Kahn, 1973); burnout (Daley, 1979); the use of drugs or alcohol on the

job (Mangione & Quinn, 1975); absenteeism (Akerstedt, 1976); disrupted performance of social role as spouse, parent and friend (Mott, 1976); as well as somatic-physiological effects such as hypertension, diabetes and peptic ulcer (Cobb & Rose, 1973); and finally social behaviors such as violence, anti-social acting out, delinquency of worker's children and impaired interpersonal relationships (Work in America, 1973), and accidents with harm to others (Colquhoun, 1976).

Researchers of late are attempting to demonstrate that stress will result in negative health only under certain specific conditions. These researchers are using more sophisticated research designs that incorporate moderator variables. Instead of using the linear connection of stress yields unhealthy effects, longitudinal connections are being made. Some of these connections have focused upon moderator variables such as: off the job usage of drugs and alcohol (Cobb, 1974); age (Mangione & Quinn, 1975); gender & ethnic identity (Ramos, 1975); self esteem (London & Klimoski, 1975); Type A personality (Caplan, 1972); depression (Mott, 1976); nationality (Orth-Gomer, 1979); work values (Crain, 1974); tall versus flat organizational structure (Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1975); and social support from home (Caplan et al., 1975).

All occupations and all workers experience stressful events related to their work places. Police work has the same stressors as other occupations, as well as many more unique stressors that can be found only in police work. It is the intention of the following section of this chapter to clarify and identify many of the important issues that specifically relate to police occupational stress.

Police Occupational Stress

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate the vital relationship between police occupational stress and the health of police officers. Much of the research has failed to provide direction or insight into the complexity of police occupational stress. The following literature review will attempt to connect the disparate themes, issues, perspectives and research strategies which comprise the field.

Like most species in the animal world, human beings will prepare to fight or run away when threatened. The following is a concise example of the fight or flight stress response:

It is millennia ago and you step from your darkened cave. Suddenly, you hear movement in the nearby bushes. Your heart begins to pound, your skin flushes, your muscles tense, and your breathing comes more quickly. You are soon eye to eye with a saber-toothed tiger. Do you fight or run for your life? Quickly, you reach down and pick up a large stone and throw it at the creature. You have managed to hit it square on its nose. The creature snarls and

disappears into the brush. You now feel your body going limp and your breathing is easier. You return to your secure cave to relax (Developed from Wallis, 1983).

Modern human beings have the same automatic stress responses that cave people used for life threatening situations many thousands of years ago. People are no longer faced with saber-toothed tigers and the absolute choice of fight-or-flight (Wallis, 1983). Today, human beings are gathered into societies where most of their threats are no longer life threatening. For many, the most stressful part of their environment is the work place. The police profession is much like any other in the sense that a great deal of occupational stressors are due to the day-to-day routines of the work place. What are some of those routines for today's police officers? Let's look at the following example:

You are a police officer and it is the start of another working day. As you wind your way through the streets you discover a huge traffic jam just a few short blocks from work. There has been an accident and a fellow police officer is directing traffic at the scene. You think to yourself, "This guy is a moron! If he was doing his job correctly there wouldn't be any traffic jam."

Three minutes late for work, you are met at the doorway by your supervisor Lieutenant Reaction. He tells you that another officer is very angry at you. Officer Perfeckt had to stay until you arrived. Lieutenant Reaction then reminds you that you can forget about leaving work 15 minutes early so that you can take your pregnant wife to her obstetrician. He also reminds you that you'll be working the next seven holidays in a row. You'll probably be assigned a week's vacation during a bliz-

zard in February. Suddenly, you find yourself reaching for your revolver, but realize that a pitcher of draft beer at the corner pub is a much better choice. Kicking the crap out of Lieutenant Reaction doesn't sound too bad either. Instead, you get into your patrol car with your muscles knotted, your stomach churning, and your blood pressure soaring. You mumble, "Beware John Q. Citizen," as you reach for the Maalox and aspirin that you always carry in your briefcase. (Developed from Wallis, 1983).

The most critical issue today for the law enforcement community in the United States is the issue of occupational stress. In a recent survey of U.S. law enforcement agencies conducted by the FBI's Training Division, the top ten training priorities were identified. The number one priority chosen was "personal stress" (Phillips, 1984). Stress is a serious threat to the well being of both individual officers and society as a whole. Indeed, police work has been recognized as one of the most stressful of occupations (Hurrell & Kroes, 1975; Kroes, Margolis & Hurrell, 1974; Selye, 1978).

The literature review indicates that most of the early research on police occupational stress had been conducted by police officers or sponsored through police organizations or governmental agencies. Many of the studies were embroiled in social controversy, labor-management struggles, and politics. Many of the studies were attempting to support either the line officers' campaign which centered on occupational hazards, or management's campaign

against union organizing and occupational safety constraints.

The most often studied stressor was danger. For the purposes of stress research, the question of whether a situation is dangerous or not dangerous is not significant. As long as a police officer perceives his or her work to be dangerous, then there will be a stress response; either physiological, psychological, or both. The most critical mistakes that police officers make usually occur during times of physical threat. Drawing from an analysis of military combat behavior in World War II, researchers stated that when an individual is confronted with a dangerous situation, he may react blindly one way or another, without regard for normal assessment (Grinker & Spiegel, 1945).

Another commonly held assumption asserts that a person's reaction to fear is apt to interfere so seriously that he or she would be unable to exercise good judgment or to carry out skillfully any action for which they had been trained to perform (Stouffer, 1949). Thus, the perception of danger by those who are often or chronically exposed to it, can often cause dramatic effects. These effects were the concerns of many researchers of that time and still are concerns for today's police officers.

Police behavior during the many urban riots and disturbances of the 1960's was also the subject of much research. Some studies have described police behavior as

uncontrolled and undisciplined, as an over-reaction, or as trigger-happy and brutal. Some stress researchers took the opportunity to demonstrate what the considerable effects might be upon an officer's behavior when an officer acknowledges the obvious dangers of a riot, then couples that with the daily dangerous routines of policing, and finally fitting both of those into the individual officer's perception of danger. It was believed by many that the threat of danger was the most significant form of stress for police officers.

Also in the decade of the 1960's many researchers suggested that police officers suffered from a high rate of stress related illnesses. Occupational mortality tables listed specific data on police mortality rates. Of particular interest was the age category of 45 to 54 years. In this category, the death rate for police officers was 601 per 100,000 as compared to 355 per 100,000 in the general population (Guralnick, 1963). During that period it was suggested that the primary cause for the nearly double mortality rate was the resulting stress from the threat of physical danger. According to the Uniform Crime Reports of 1969, 17 of every 100 police officers was assaulted. In the ten year period of 1960-1969, 561 police officers were killed by felonious criminal action. Accidental deaths of police officers during that same period was less than half the number of those murdered. Researchers were trying to

distinguish the unique characteristics that made police stress more serious than many other hazardous occupations.

One important distinction between police officers and other high risk occupations has been highlighted (International Association of Chiefs of Police [IACP], 1970). The primary hazards that a fire fighter or industrial worker face are the results of accidental occurrences. The hazards are the unintentional consequences of a missed step by a worker, the mishandling of an object, or the malfunction of equipment. These hazards are considered to be impersonal and can be given to chance. Police officers face these hazards as well, but much more importantly, they face a more profound hazard at the hands of the people they are sworn to serve and protect. Police officers face bodily harm and death most often from the direct and deliberate actions of citizens. Because many officers do recognize this distinction, their perception of the threat of danger is greatly magnified. Perhaps magnified beyond appropriate assessment.

Another major area of research focused upon the social role that police play within our society. Police recruitment continues to draw candidates largely from the ranks of manual and service workers in the working classes, and from the children of the lower-middle class. In general, the recruitment process brings into the police service men and women who are moderates in their social and political values (McNamara, 1967). People who enter

the police service represent a diverse array of normal personalities. They are somewhat above average in intelligence, and are often superior to their contemporaries in terms of physical conditioning and agility. In psychological terms, they are less neurotic than samples of other occupational groups (Fenster, Wiedeman & Locke, 1978).

In addition to the to the law enforcement, order maintenance, and service functions, the police serve as an important means to measure social change within our society. Politically, police officers serve as an anchoring device. It is in this role that the police serve their most important function in society by keeping in place our social and political institutions. The police serve as buffering agents in insulating and protecting the existing political and social structures (Quinney, 1974). The literature does not address the significance of the fact that regardless of what political party is in power, or which person or persons comprise the political structure, the police remain.

Police officers also perform a more subtle role by keeping our society within structural confines that are narrower in reality than in our society's stated ideological commitments. The police are a vehicle for testing social limits, boundaries, and tolerance. Police officers will continue in their roles as social control agents well beyond the foreseeable future (Blumberg, 1985).

The police profession has often prided itself in being the only social service agency that makes house calls 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Police officers perform the functions of a social worker day-in and day-out for an average work-life of 25 years. The average work-life expectancy of a Department of Social Services field worker in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is 18 months. It may be suggested that one of the reasons the Department of Social Services' field workers burn-out so quickly is because of emotional exhaustion. The coping and adapting behaviors of field workers short circuit. Police officers also become emotionally exhausted. They too short circuit. This researcher suggests that the critical difference between the two professions is that maladaptive behaviors are more easily disguised and more readily accepted as the norm within policing. They are tolerated. Being aggressive and cynical are widely accepted within the police profession; they are not accepted in social work.

There have been times when our society did not view police officers as social workers who carried guns. The 1960's was a socially violent period for our society and as a result our police took on new roles that forever changed society's perception of the police. It was during that period that many police departments for the first time became armies of occupation. Communities were equipping officers with gas grenades, bombs, body armor, hel-

metes, shields and powerful assault weapons. There was no question about it: police work was changing.

Today's researchers are not so ready to accept that physical danger is the most significant stressor for police officers. Most researchers do agree that there are four general categories of police stressors. They are:

- (1) stressors inherent in police work;
- (2) stressors stemming from the policies and practices of police management and organizations;
- (3) external stressors arising from the criminal justice system and society in general; and
- (4) internal stressors of individual officers.

No one has ever been able to demonstrate which of the four categories represents the most stressful of stressors. (The author offers a discussion of the above four categories in relation to the findings of this study in Chapter 4's Data Interpretation and Analysis section).

Stressors that have been identified as inherent in police work are:

- the constant threat to an officer's health and safety;
- boredom, alternating with moments of sheer terror;
- responsibility for other's behaviors;
- constant exposure to human suffering;
- the need to control emotions and behaviors according to simplistic legal and departmental values, regardless of complex human interaction and strong emotional involvement;

- the responsibility of a lethal weapon both on and off duty;
- and the fragmented nature of policing and its ambiguous social mission.

Stressors stemming from the policies and practices of police management and organizations are:

- officers' infrequent input into administrative policies and procedures;
- insufficient police resources such as poor equipment;
- internal investigation practices which scrutinize an officer's off-duty behavior and overly harsh penalties for minor infractions;
- poor supervision and lack of administrative support for patrol officers;
- few rewards for good job performance;
- insufficient and inappropriate training;
- inadequate career development opportunities; and
- excessive paper work.

Stressors which stem from the criminal justice system and society in general are:

- lack of consideration by the courts for scheduling officer court appearances. These appearances most often interfere with an officer's work assignments, personal time and sleep schedules;
- lack of cooperation among the courts and law enforcement agencies;
- court decisions that curtail officer discretion and restrict the role of law enforcement for police officers;
- the perceived leniency of the courts;

- premature release of offenders on bail or probation;
- lack of public support and negative public attitudes toward police;
- distorted and unfavorable media coverage of incidents involving police; and
- the inaccessibility and perceived ineffectiveness of the social service agencies to which police must refer individuals.

And in the final category of internal stressors the following individual characteristics might be listed. They are:

- an officer's subjective interpretation of stressful situations;
- age;
- gender;
- racial identity;
- ethnic identity;
- work values;
- Type A personality behavior patterns;
- number of life changes;
- self-esteem;

and many more (Goolkasian, Geddes, & DeJong, 1985).

Jacobi (1975) reported on his psychiatric practice with disabled Los Angeles police officers. He observed;

Psychological stress can produce a whole gamut of psychophysiological disturbances that, if intense and chronic enough, can lead to demonstrable organic disease of varying severity. (p. 86).

Jacobi listed a wide range of somatic disorders such as backaches, muscle cramps, headaches, asthma, hyperventilation, high blood pressure, heartburn, ulcers, and thyroid disease.

Most research in the field of police occupational stress has focused upon the identification of police stressors and the frequency of their occurrence. These findings suggest that police work is related to relatively high rates of physical disorders. But a careful review of the literature shows little empirical support for the common assumption that police work is more stressful than other occupations. Most studies were able to demonstrate that officers did suffer from a wide variety of somatic disorders. But, few significant cause-effect correlations were demonstrated.

Many studies have attempted to relate stress and emotional problems of police officers with their rates of suicide, divorce, and alcoholism. Several studies do indicate a significantly higher rate of suicide for police officers (Kroes, 1985; Davidson & Veno, 1978). Some investigators examined the large discrepancy in the suicide rates (Fabriacatore & Dash, 1977). The most often cited reasons by researchers for the discrepancies were: random samples were too small to permit proper statistical analysis of the data; and the studies were weak in population validity. Often, the samples were not representative of

the police profession. Ethnicity, culture, and gender considerations are often ignored in the sample. Some researchers demonstrated that police suicide rates for specific geographic areas were below the average within that given area for the general population (Dash & Reiser, 1977).

Bennett (1978) described a police mystique which identified the unwritten code of conduct that police officers must live up to. The mystique includes the following attitudes:

- officers are expected to be cops first, and secondly a family member, friend or member of society;
- silence is security;
- always keep your cool;
- always stay on top;and
- sexual activity is survival.

A good many investigators who have examined the relationship between police occupational stress and an officer's home life. Studies have reported unusually high rates of divorce among police officers (Stratton, 1976). However, these studies show several weaknesses which include a lack of control groups and a total failure to consider any other factors which might influence a divorce rate, such as age at time of marriage or the number of children in the home. Often, the methodology was too simple for the complex issue of divorce.

Hurrell and Kroes (1975) have suggested that police officers are especially vulnerable to alcoholism. Although research has established a relationship between high job stress and excessive drinking (Margolis, Kroes, & Quinn, 1974), there is no direct evidence that police abuse alcohol any more than other high stress occupations.

The effects of job stress on an officer's performance is also inconclusive. A great number of studies suggest a strong relationship between stress and job performance. For instance, one stressor, boredom, may cause some officers to begin looking for action and these officers may self-initiate citizen contacts or engage in horseplay. Many officers sleep while on duty (Rubin & Cruse, 1972). But these studies are inconsistent and some studies have indicated that stress increases an officer's performance (O'Neil, Hanewicz, Fransway, & Cassidy-Riske, 1982).

Studies that have sought to identify stressors for police administrators have identified the same stressors that were cited for patrol officers. Mid-level police managers did experience many stress related problems as the result of being caught in the middle between upper management and patrol officers. Mid-level police managers are also directly responsible to both the community and to the administration for the conduct of their subordinates (Kroes, Hurrell, & Margolis, 1974).

Selye's (1956) explanation of the General Adaptation Syndrome did suggest that even when relatively mild stressors such as common life events, when the events occur in close succession, can affect the body's resistance and can lead to disease. Many recent studies have pursued the idea that life-events requiring change or adaptation may cause a wide range of human disorders. The most popular and most widely known researchers have been Holmes and Rahe (Holmes, 1979; Holmes & Rahe, 1967; Rahe, 1978). Their breakthrough methodology provided by their life events method was able to quantify what had been largely a qualitative area of study. The life events scale provided a simple index of life stress. Events were measured according to how much readjustment or change a subject would have to make after each occurrence. Events that were perceived as positive or negative were included.

The scale went through many modifications and changes. As the use of the scales proliferated, many researchers challenged its validity (Goldberg & Comstock, 1976; Rabkin & Struening, 1976). The scales conceptual foundation assumes that the stress-disorder relationship is linear. While severe stressful events elicit a high risk for disorder; and everyday events entail some risk, then a lack of events should be stressless. Human intuition contradicts that assumption because events that fail to occur when expected or events that never occur, for whatever the reason, can be very stressful. If this is so,

whatever the reason, can be very stressful. If this is so, then a lack of an event is an event in itself. Most life-events scales are seriously deficient in this area.

Attention has been paid in attempting to tailor the life-events scales to specific populations (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1974). A study by Buren (1982) discussed a life-events scale specifically designed for police officers. The life events were self-reported by experienced police officers and were used to develop two scales. One scale listed the 25 most stressful professional life events. The other scale listed the 25 least stressful life events. Each event was assigned a numerical value which weighed each event according to the amount of change an officer must go through in order to adjust.

See Appendix A for the 25 Most Stressful Law Enforcement Critical Life Events Scale and Appendix B for the 25 Least Stressful Law Enforcement Critical Life Events Scale. The appendices are photocopies of the scales that this researcher completed as a police officer in 1985. Please note the numerical value assigned to each stressful life event. These values, when added to each other, indicate an overall score. This researcher scored 277 on the most stressful events and 591 on the least stressful events.

According to the original designers of the scale, a score of 150 to 199 indicates that a person is at risk of developing a somatic problem, with a mild risk the person

will feel the impact of stress with physical symptoms. A score of 200 to 299 indicates a moderate risk of experiencing stress related illness. A score of 300 or more indicates a high risk of developing stress induced pathologies such as ulcers, psychological disorders, and physical injuries.

If one accepts the life events scales as a significant scientific instrument, then logic would dictate that, at least for the author's scores, the most damaging of professional life events in police work are the ones listed on the 25 Least Stressful Law Enforcement Critical Life Events Scale. The paradox is that the most stressful life-events for police officers are the least damaging, and the least stressful life-events are actually the most damaging. Researchers are still arguing the importance of chronic stressors such as the day-in and day-out routines of police work versus acute and traumatic stressors. New research is just emerging that may indicate that the relatively minor, but everyday events of police work, are the main culprits in stress related disease.

As research continues in this field, there should be a movement away from the quantification of the professional life events phenomena toward an interest in the phenomenological aspects of police work. The professional life events scales are still widely used in many stress management training sessions of police officers. Future researchers in this field will have to move away from the

focus of life events stress toward a comprehensive approach that considers the individual, situational and environmental phenomena.

Much of the research literature stems from basic, widely held assumptions that most police occupational stressors and effects are related to street work. Death and serious physical violence are probably so severe that most anyone would be at risk of displaying a stress response. But within our society and especially within policing, these events command untold resources that help to mediate and buffer the stress response. The community and society rally around our dead and injured police officers. Our fallen officers receive recognition from political leaders such as the President of the United States, their communities, and the police profession itself. Dead or injured officers are immediately launched into hero status with all of its glory and prestige.

The relentless stressors of routine police work, of being a social control agent, are probably more damaging to police officers than the stereotypic cops and robbers syndrome. Many researchers believe that one of the most significant stressors is administrative restrictions, such as inflexible rules and limited professional opportunities. Police officers are not as concerned with the threat of danger as the studies of the 1960's would lead us to believe (Malloy, 1984; Gaines & Jermier, 1984; Maynard &

Maynard, 1982). What appears to be unique for policing is not the dangerousness, but the role of the police within a complex social system. Of course officers are effected by danger and the other stereotypic stressors, but not as severely as once believed. Physical danger is not predictive of emotional exhaustion, nor are the other factors that might be expected (Gaines & Jermier, 1984). For modern policing, the field of police occupational stress research is turning up some startling results.

Sixty deputy sheriffs involved in shooting incidents in the Los Angeles, CA, area were studied. The significant demographic data indicated that 40% of the involved officers were in the department for 6 to 10 years; 73 % of the shootings involved other police officers and 91 % occurred while on duty. A variety of psychological reactions were examined such as time distortion, sleep difficulties, fear of legal consequences, and emotional reactions such as anger, elation and crying. About 30% of the involved officers were effected greatly, about 33% were effected moderately, and 35% were effected not at all. The stress responses to the shootings appear to be as varied as the unique personalities of the individuals involved (Stratton, Parker & Snibbe, 1984). Each and every shooting situation is unique and therefore results in unique responses by each officer.

A new and original concept was presented by researcher W.C. Terry, III (1985). He has proposed that the recent

emphasis on police stress is a careful strategy by the profession to gain legitimacy and prestige from society; as well as to bring coherence to a number of diverse conceptions regarding the task and the role of police in our society. Terry put forth the notion that stress, danger, and public service are concepts with which the public readily sympathize, such as with medicine, the ministry and other occupations that relate to the personal lives and welfare of the public. It would seem that the public would accept the police claim to the same professional status as the helping professions and thereby enhance the police image and consolidate its roles. But the social and political conditions within our society, which underlie police work and contribute to the disparate roles of control agents and public servants, continue to inhibit acceptance by the public. Policing seems to be in its own separate occupational category.

Kroes (1985) suggests that police job stress is primarily psychological. Some of the stressors that were identified were red tape, lack of support, poor supervision, shift work, economic inadequacy, job conflict, conflicts in values, judicial restraint, discordant social demands and a negative public attitude.

Many police officers have indicated that any administrative attempts or personal attempts by officers to deal with stress is a sign of weakness. Many officers feel that

dealing with stress is supposed to come naturally. This attitude highlights the call by some researchers to develop specialized training that goes beyond the individual officer to include his or her spouse, children, peer counseling, and organizational and administrative changes (Alkus & Padesky, 1984; Lester, Leitner & Posner, 1984). Reiser and Geiger (1984) demonstrated a need to provide help for police officers who have been the victims of physical or psychological violence. Many officers who are victims and who maintain the attitude that dealing with stress should come naturally often display somatic illnesses. When officers are faced with the choice between being considered a police officer who is weak and in psychological pain or a an officer with a physical illness, most will consciously or unconsciously choose the latter, more occupationally accepted role. This might reflect why the majority of literature dealing with police occupational stress reflects the effects as bodily diseases.

Police officers may not have control over events that may negatively effect them and create stress. But officers do have control over their perceptions of those events and therefore stress can be reduced by altering those perceptions (Schaefer, 1985). Use of a positive attitude can help officers to maintain control over stress. The energy of stress can be harnessed to improve officers' physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. Specialized

police training programs may help officers to achieve the positive attitudes needed to maintain control over stress.

According to Selye (1952) all stressful events will initiate the General Adaptation Syndrome. The physical changes that take place prepare the person for the fight-or-flight response. Police officers cannot flee and thus direct all of their energy to the fight response (Reese & Bright, 1982). Police officers are constantly confronted by strong emotions and must take charge of situations. Through training, an officer can reduce the duration of the General Adaptation Syndrome. Once adequately trained, an officer can develop intentional and neutralizing responses to stressors.

During 1979, 4,524 California Highway Patrol officers participated in a health screening program. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between police stressors and disease. In order to obtain an overall picture of an officer's health, a seven factor examination was conducted. Two of the measured factors were blood pressure and Social Readjustment (Life Stress Scale). After police occupational stressors were broken down into categories, role conflict and role ambiguity scores positively correlated with the incidence of coronary risk. The findings did suggest that those officers with high role ambiguity scores were at a greater coronary risk than those reporting moderate scores. Law enforcement organiza-

tions should provide preventative health programs to moderate the impact of organizational stressors on their officers (Kreitner, Sova, Wood, Friedman, & Reif, 1985).

An examination of statistics compiled by the Los Angeles Police Department Peer Counseling Program indicates that 70% of counseling time is spent on issues involving personal relationships, discipline and career problems (Capps, 1984).

A study by Honig and Reiser (1983) examined the work histories of the stress disability pensions of 63 officers with those of 63 matched officers. The study intended to determine the potentially differentiating factors in police stress. The study indicated that a significantly larger number of disabled officers did not obtain promotions, were unmarried, and used more sick days and more disabled days during their first six years of service than did the control group.

A questionnaire completed by over 2,000 police officers has indicated that police occupational stress is most strongly related to confusion and conflict in job expectations and friction between job and family demands (Hurrell, Pate, & Kliesmet, 1982).

Female police officers may experience more stress than male police officers because of their gender roles. Some researchers have indicated that female officers are more likely to face disapproval from fellow officers, friends, and family members because of their decision to

enter into a career in policing (Washington, 1984). The ability of female officers to handle the physical and emotional rigors of street work is often questioned by peers, supervisors and the public (Bass, 1982; Wexler & Logan, 1983). O'Brien (1986) demonstrated that minority and female officers suffer from a lack of informal tutoring and mentoring. The absence of role models diminishes an officer's ability to understand how the system works. But women may also find less stress because of the improvement of their status associated with their entry into male-dominated employment (Pendergrass & Ostrove, 1984).

Many officers cannot adequately develop successful coping strategies which might buffer or neutralize the negative effects of stress. Henderson (1981) identified three often used coping strategies for police officers. They were: deception, or hiding the perception of a threat; substitution, replacing stressful with nonstressful goals; and avoidance, or removing oneself from the stress. These mechanisms come into play when regular coping strategies fail to relieve the stress. Maladjusted behavior is the result and police officers display alienation, despair, loneliness and cynicism.

An analysis of three elements of the police stress process found a strong positive relationship with two coping strategies (Violanti & Marshall, 1983). Two occupational demands that have been identified as stressors are

depersonalization and authoritarianism. Depersonalization is the objectification of emotions, and authoritarianism may be manifest in a worker style that upholds obedience to the law and forsakes individual freedom. These correlate with the two significant coping strategies of cynicism and deviance. Even though cynicism and deviance are considered coping strategies, they are more often maladaptive and lead to greater stress for officers. A vicious cycle then takes place.

Police work can be physically exhausting. Physical exhaustion can leave an officer more susceptible to the negative effects of stress (Dallas, Texas, Police Department Psychological Services Unit, 1981). If officers are physically tired they will be at greater risk of being negatively effected by the stressors of conflicting roles (ambiguity), peer group pressures, continual confrontation with ambiguous situations that require personal judgment, and lack of administrative support for discretionary judgment. These stressors may result in impulsive behaviors, over reactions to citizens as well as fellow officers, and displaced aggression. Other effects may be difficulties in submitting to authority, insecurity and immaturity, poor marital relations, and the supercop syndrome. An experimental physical fitness program within the Dallas, Texas, Police Department showed that physical fitness training improved job attitudes and an officer's self-image and job performance.

Some studies indicate that stress reduction for police officers should be motivated on humanitarian grounds, rather than as a means to improve job performance. The testing and comparison of stress management programs for police officers indicated that of the programs examined, there was no improvement in job performance (O'Neil, Hanewicz, Fransway, & Cassidy-Riske, 1982). They tested the following hypotheses:

- 1). an individual focused stress program will increase job performance;
- 2). a physically or psychologically based program will show greater improvement beyond the Hawthorne effect; and
- 3). either the physical or the psychological approach will demonstrate greater improvement in job performance than the other.

After conducting the test over a one year period and using a control group, there were no improvements in officer job performance.

In perhaps one of the most original and far reaching studies Malloy and Mays (1984) investigated the basic assumptions underlying police stress and they reviewed the empirical evidence related to those assumptions. They suggested that police work is stressful in the same sense as any other occupation might be stressful. Whether police work is more or less stressful than any other occupation is merely an academic issue. They propose that research has neglected to examine police stress in a manner that

would study the differences in occupational role and individual differences in stress response capacities. Research on police stress must not examine the problem by investigating only the environmental factors. A comprehensive examination should combine the environmental with the subjective, individual and personal experiences of police officers.

The effects of stress can be intensified when maladaptive coping responses alter the fabric of an officer's everyday life. Alcohol abuse is a good example. If alcohol is used to cope with stressors, then additional stressors that are associated with alcohol abuse may occur. Another good example is when police officers integrate their personal lives with their professional lives. For many, the two worlds cannot be separated; both lives are lived simultaneously. This may cause serious problems. Many officers maintain a hypervigilant state on the streets in order to stay alive. It is a professional responsibility to be vigilant. But this steady state can be maladaptive and cause serious adjustment problems for officers in their personal lives. Officers have to turn the ready-state on and off as they move from personal to professional lives, and vice versa. Officers change roles so often that they forget which role is appropriate. After awhile officers forget which role is appropriate for a given situation. A police officer is on duty 24 hours each day.

Many officers cannot easily interchange the roles of civilian and police officer. It seems that one identity succumbs to the other. This inability to adapt healthily from one world to the other is almost exactly the same phenomenon faced by returning Vietnam combat veterans.

Officers are socialized into their roles as members of a subculture. As a result, a large gap is created between officers and their society (Van Maanen, 1973). Many police officers and police administrators have identified themselves, because of their occupational identity, as a socially disenfranchised group. A remarkably similar set of socio-cultural symptoms characterize police officers as well as racial and ethnic minorities. Each group is comprised of individuals who for a great variety of reasons may have been deprived of meaningful social interaction and access. Police officers may experience emotional and psychological pain as a result of their perceived rejection by a society that they are sworn to serve and protect. As reported by Bracy (1979), a National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health study reported that of the officers studied, 37% had serious marital problems, 23% had serious alcohol problems, and 10% had serious drug problems. These socio-cultural problems are symptomatic of other disenfranchised groups within our society. There is scant literature which might confirm that this effect occurs to police officers as a result of their social roles.

Officers are constantly exposed to the psychological effects caused by the deaths and injuries of other human beings. Officers may be affected by the pain that members of our society feel. A study of police officers in Virginia found that the typical officer is exposed to an injured adult three times each month, a severe assault victim every 45 days, and a dead person every three months (Nielsen & Eskridge, 1982). Officers experience these situations in their own unique and utterly subjective ways. No objective physical measure is very likely to capture those experiences. Research has been capable of quantifying the effects upon officers; by measuring the symptoms. Counting, measuring, inquiring, and quantifying are merely ways of establishing objective significance in our world. Society's pain, tears, sorrow, injustice, poverty, loneliness and death cannot be easily measured. Yet, these very things may be the most stressful of police experiences.

Emotional exhaustion, also known as burn-out, was often examined. Police officers not only burn-out, they rust-out as well. Burn-out implies that stressors are too hot to handle, and therefore cognitive circuits blow. Implicit within this analogy is that repairs can be easily made if the stressful load is reduced. Rust-out implies that the original structure is eroded and forever changed. It implies structural fatigue. Rust-out implies the obso-

lescence of previously used coping strategies. Namely, the negative effects of stress for police officers is not a matter of "if," but "when" an officer is going to be affected.

Police officers are not mere victims of stress, they are also victim to the processes that officers use to appraise stressful events and how officers appraise their coping resources and options. These appraisal processes influence the dynamic transaction between officers and their social environment. Meichenbaum (1985) indicated that groups of people who share a common identity, such as police officers, unintentionally produce reactions in the others within that group. This process serves to maintain maladaptive stress responses. The more officers utilize the same coping skills to adapt to different occupational stressors, the greater the potential for intensifying stressors. A vicious cycle may be occurring. For example, female officers who are fearful of physical confrontations may use avoidance to cope with the fear. Such avoidance could elicit over protectiveness from other officers. In turn, the female officer may never test out her fear, which in turn leads to a lack of self-confidence and a lack of professional esteem. As the cycle continues and grows it may lead to further over protectiveness with serious consequences for the other officers. Other officers may be injured, may harbor deep resentment, or may have their initial questions about female officers' abili-

ties to handle physical situations answered in the negative. A process emerges where officers' biases and agendas become consistent with the events. In this fashion, officers play a critical role in perpetuating occupational stressors. Stress may be a self evolving process. Many researchers agree that;

Stress, in addition to being itself,
and the result of itself,
is also the cause of itself.
(Wallis, 1983, p. 49)

Most of life's stressors are subjective experiences and may lie outside the realm of objective inquiry. In regards to science, each individual researcher's specific discipline is structured to define and assess stress in relation to that specific discipline's constructs and parameters. There is a lack of conceptual cohesiveness to the theories of stress. Much of the research literature from the field of police occupational stress stems from basic, widely-held assumptions that most police stressors are related to the threat of physical danger. Death or serious physical injury are probably so severe that most anyone would be at risk of displaying a stress response. But within our society and especially within policing, these events command untold resources that help to mediate and buffer the stress response. The community and society rally around our dead and injured police officers. Our fallen officers receive recognition from political leaders

such as the President of the United States, their communities, and the police profession itself. Dead or injured officers are immediately launched into hero status with all of its glory and prestige.

Summary

Much of the research regarding police occupational stress has concentrated on identifying police stressors. Working from that perspective most studies have attempted to document the incidence and prevalence of stress related disorders among police officers, including physical disorders, emotional and personal problems, and impaired work performance. Many of the research instruments that were used relied upon self-reporting. Officers most often reported severe stressors, usually those related to physical danger such as harm to self, shooting someone, and the injury or death of other officers. Many of the empirical studies suggested a relationship between severe occupational stressors and physiological effects. Mortality rates, disease and somatic complaints were the effects most often measured.

Contrary to the commonly held beliefs of most people, the literature has failed to empirically demonstrate a positive relationship between danger and stress. Much of the recent research has demonstrated that most stressors for police are associated with organizational, bureaucrat-

ic and administrative deficiencies (Kroes, Margolis & Hurrell, 1974; Kroes, Hurrell & margolis, 1974; French, 1975; Hageman, 1978; Aldag & Brief, 1978; Singleton & Teahan, 1978; Blackmore, 1978; Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Malloy, 1984; Gaines & Jermier, 1984).

The literature on police occupational stress indicates that the field has gone through four levels of development. The first level identified simple cause and effect relationships. Simply, stress caused illness or disease. At this level investigators defined stress as a condition of the environment. For example, officers are routinely exposed to the violent death of others. But this is a universal stressor and usually has the same effects upon most people in all professions. At this level stressors were the result of external forces upon an individual. Both cause and effect were objectively defined. Few positive correlations were found, and those few were low in value. Researchers examined mortality, somatic, and physiological disease rates for police officers. It is obvious that police officers, because of their occupational role, are at great risk for developing physical problems. Simply, for police officers, occupational stressors resulted in biological disorders.

The second level saw the appearance of theories that recognized the interaction within the cause and effect relationship. Researchers began to conduct experiments and carry out studies that searched for interactions between

stress and its effects upon police officers. At this level the simple cause and effect chain was examined as well as an officer's interaction with the stress. At this level researchers investigated the individual's response to a threatening environment. How an officer perceived the environment or situation was added to the cause and effect chain. An officer's age, number of years on the job, rank, gender, and duty assignment were some of the variables that were examined.

The third level examined the transactional concept of stress. Namely, not only does the police environment influence police officers, but the police officer is also active in influencing the environment. In this conceptual framework, the cause and effect relationships are longitudinal and geometric. At the second level an interaction referred only to the influence that the perceived stressor had upon an officer and how an officer might in turn react to the stressor. However, at the third level an officer might be an active agent in influencing the total environment. This includes not just the work environment, but the family and social environments as well. An officer's physical health, personality, unique work situation, police organization and social system were examined. The interactions among these variables were seen as dynamic, cyclical, and sophisticated. Studies focused upon the process of interaction over time and across many situa-

tions. For example, Maynard and Maynard (1982) indicated that police agencies and police peers harbor antifamily sentiments. Also, maladaptive coping patterns used by officers at work were often used by spouses at home.

From a transactional perspective, stress is defined as a cognitively mediated relational concept (Meichenbaum, 1985). The transactional concept reflects the relationship between the officer and the environment that is appraised by the individual as being either stressful or not stressful. Stress is not the property of the officer or the environment, nor is it a stimulus or a response. Stress is a unique relationship between the officer and the environment as they act upon each other (Folkman, 1984). This relationship is constantly changing, it is bidirectional and dynamic.

In the developing fourth level researchers are recognizing that police work takes place in a multi-layered personal, social and cultural context. Many values intersect and collide. A police officer's reaction to the work environment depends upon many extraordinarily complex factors. Researchers are exploring many new concepts through longitudinal studies and they are focusing upon the development of research models that examine the multi-dimensional and complex relationship between police officers and their work.

Today, most researchers in the field of police occupational stress are leaning away from the traditional form

of objective and empirical inquiry which utilizes the traditional scientific approach. A new awareness of the almost infinite complexity of the issues has led researchers to call for multidisciplinary research. The stress concept is still a long ways from being comprehensive and researchers have indicated a critical need for the design of research studies that go beyond simple explanatory models (Novaco, 1977; Sarason, Johnson, Berberich, and Siegel, 1979). And, it is from this research perspective that this study examines the phenomenological relationship between the meaning that police officer make of their work and occupational stress.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Interview Procedure

At the heart of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experiences of other people. For the specific purpose of this study the author has chosen an in-depth interviewing process that utilizes a phenomenological approach to data collection. "In-depth phenomenological interviewing" is a variant form of in-depth interviewing and is basically the same as other forms of in-depth interviewing, however it has a specific focus. The focus of in-depth phenomenological interviewing is to have participants reconstruct their experiences and reflect on the meaning they make of those experiences. It goes beyond facts and events to get at the subjective meaning of experiences. The meaning of an experience has to do with the interpretations, associations, and emotional responses that a person has to those experiences. Through the careful use of in-depth phenomenological interviewing the author hopes to explore those experiences which may have significantly contributed to the meaning that police officers make of their work.

The interview style that was used in this study was developed by Seidman (1985). Seidman's interviewing format was suggested by the work of Kenneth Dolbeare and David

Schuman (Schuman, 1982). The theoretical basis for the process of phenomenological interviewing, which suggests that a person can make meaning of his or her experience by reflecting upon the aggregate of that experience, was put forth by Alfred Schutz (1967). According to Seidman (1985):

It is not the purpose of phenomenological interviewing to get answers to questions, to test hypotheses, or to "evaluate", as the term is normally used. At the root of in-depth, phenomenological interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience rather than in being able to predict or control the experience. (p. 15).

The author was interested in understanding the nature of police stress and the role stress plays in the experiences of police officers. A good way to understand police occupational stress is to better understand the experiences of the individuals who conduct police work. Becker and Geer (1969) offered a comparison between participant observation and in-depth interviewing. They concluded that the meaning that people make of their experiences is much more relevant to understanding those experiences than when only the researcher makes meaning, such as in participant observation studies. Simply, the author believes that the best way to understand police stress is to better understand the experiences of police officers, and the best way to understand those experiences is to understand the meaning that police officers make of those experiences.

Campbell and Stanley (1963) warned against the bias of instruments that collect data. They described experimental designs that objectified the relationship between the researcher and the object of the research itself in order to protect the study from threats to validity. Phenomenological research does not attempt to objectify the relationship between the researcher and the participants. During in-depth phenomenological interviewing the people who are interviewed are neither subjects nor objects of the research. By the very nature of the process, both the interviewer and interviewee are researchers and participants.

In this study, the interviewing process does not focus upon getting "answers." The process does not examine scientific assumptions nor does it merely solicit the participant's opinions. The purpose of the in-depth phenomenological interview process is to explore experiences which may have significantly influenced the meaning that people make of their experiences.

In order to accomplish the purpose of this study the author conducted a series of in-depth phenomenological interviews with 20 police officers. The in-depth phenomenological interview is designed into three components, each being a ninety minute interview. The interview procedure utilized for this study requires three ninety-minute interviews with each of twenty participants. The total

elapsed time for interviewing each participant was four and one-half hours; and for the entire study it was ninety hours of interviews.

Each of the three interviews had an explicit focus and purpose. The first interview centered around the question, "How did you come to work as a police officer?" The second interview focused upon, "What is it like for you to work as a police officer? And the final interview asked, "What does it mean to you to work as a police officer?" A written consent form was developed which ensured the adequate protection of the rights and welfare of the participants. (A copy of the written consent form is in Appendix C).

While having consented to participate in the interviews, participants may have at any time, and for any reason, withdrawn from the process. Furthermore, while having consented to participate in the interview process, participants may have withdraw their consent to have specific excerpts from their interviews used in any printed or oral presentations. The author also agreed to furnish to the participants the audio-tapes of the interviews and any copies of presented written material should a participant make such a request.

The first interview focused on the life of the participants before they began to work as police officers. They were asked to talk about their childhood, their school experiences, their family, their friends, and

previous work experiences. The purpose of the first interview was to go as far back as possible in the participants' lives in order to understand the aggregate of events that helped to shape their choice of careers. The first interview was not the place to probe into "meaning."

The second interview focused on what it was like to work as a police officer. Participants were asked to reconstruct as much as possible the specific details of how they spent their time and energy in carrying out their work. They were asked to concentrate on the details of their experiences. It was during the second interview that participants told war stories. The purpose of the second interview was to recreate aspects of the participant's present experience in order for the author to better understand the constitutive and substantive particulars of the participant's work.

The third interview was built upon the foundation laid down by the first two interviews. The cumulative effects of exploring the past during the first interview, when combined with the second interview's concrete details of the present, established a rich environment for the third interview where participants reflected and made meaning of their work.

Given what material had already surfaced during the first two interviews, the participants were asked to consider what police work meant to their lives. In es-

sence, the author asked the participants about their evaluations, associations, emotional responses, and interpretations of their work experiences.

Even though the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the meaning that police officers make of their work and police stress, there was not a set of pre-established questions which were asked. The primary interviewing technique was open-ended. Yet, it was most often during the third interview when a participant would mention the word "stress." The author never asked about stress until it was first mentioned by a participant. Sometimes the author would ask the participant to go into more depth when, for example, a participant said, "This is the kind of stuff that really stresses me out," or "That's real stress," or "This is the kind of thing that real stress is made out of!" The author did ask to hear more details about issues that related to stress, but he always avoided asking questions that might have created themes for the participants that were not already presented by the participant during the interview. At such times the author might have asked questions about specific content from previous interviews if that content seemed to relate to the issue at hand.

The methodological goal of the interviewing process was to have the participants reconstruct and reflect on the concrete and constitutive details of their experience. The primary task of the author was to be an active

listener, but often the process required him to do more than just sit idly and ask open-ended questions. Often, the process required empathic listening skills because participants would often dig deeply into their experiences and uncover uncomfortable and painful experiences.

Many of the participants found it difficult to talk about certain issues, most notably their families, certain victims, and some of the things they did to people. Some officers cried, some became angry, and some just sat in silence for a long time. Some officers displayed all of these behaviors from time to time. As a general rule, the third interview progressed slowly because the participants often found it painful to talk. As one participant stated, "I can't talk about this stuff too easily. The only way I've been able to survive has been by keeping it inside. I'm afraid to let it out because if I do they'll be a flood of shit pouring out of me. And when it's all out, I don't know what parts of me will be left. You know what it's like. You've been there. You know that I shouldn't be talking about this stuff!" For many of the participants silence was their security.

Frequently, the progress of the interviews went slowly. The third interview, in which the participants were asked to consider what police work meant to their lives, often had substantially less verbatim transcript than the first two interviews. Participants often fell

silent. The author probed during such periods of silence by asking a question like, "How would you talk about this today if you were now talking to your spouse, a close relative, or a good friend?" Sometimes the probing was effective in breaking the silence, and sometimes the probing would push a participant's red button and the author would meet with greater resistance.

Quite often participants would describe their experiences using the pronoun "you." A participant might have said, "Seeing injured children really bothers you!" or "You shouldn't do things to hurt people." At times the author would ask what the participant meant by "you," and at other times he would ask, "Do you literally mean me?" After such queries, the participant would usually return to the first person use of "I." Also, they would often describe what police work meant to others, rather than to themselves. Again, the author would ask the participant, "What does police work mean to you?" These examples help to illustrate the difficult task the author had in keeping the participant's on track during the third interview.

Surprisingly, none of the participants hardened toward the interviewing process or the author. The author would like to conjecture that an aura of intimacy and trust was easily maintained between himself and the participants because of their shared experiences, and quite often, their shared meaning. The author feels that the

participants would not have accepted him so readily if he had been an outsider.

Many participants in this study were appreciative of the interview process. As declared by one participant, "...I had a chance to decompress." Another participant compared the process to "...being far away from home and then returning." And another believed "...that the process allowed me to penetrate, to search, to find, and to finally express certain thoughts and feelings in a way that I've never done before."

At times the interviewing process took on a therapeutic tone. Many officers expressed their need to emotionally decompress from their work experiences, and for many such a decompression was achieved during the interviewing process. Most felt that the interviewing process provided them with the opportunity to reach inside and rediscover the stories that their private voices had been waiting and needing to tell.

Contact, Access, and Selection of Participants

All of the participants in the sample were active, sworn, and full-time police officers from the Northeastern part of the United States. Access to the participants was gained through the author's role as a police trainer. During several dozen training sessions conducted by the author in locations throughout the Northeast, he asked for participation from all of the police officers who attended

the training sessions. Officers attending the training sessions were representative of all ranks and both genders; as well as many ethnic, religious and racial groups. The pool of potential participants represented well over one hundred different police agencies and several hundred individuals.

At the first level of access to the participants, the author openly addressed classrooms full of police officers about the research study. At this level the officers were given a basic description of the study and the author's interests and goals. During coffee breaks and at the end of each training session, a pad was left in the classroom for any interested officers to sign-up and leave their names, addresses and telephone numbers. Eventually, 213 officers left their names as possible future participants.

Then, at the second level of access, the author began to call or write to all 213 of the possible participants. There had been a minimum of a few weeks to a maximum of ten months from the time when an officer signed-up to the time when the author attempted to make contact. Out of the original total of 213 possible participants, 146 were eliminated. Of those 146, 33 could not be contacted and the remaining 113 of that group were unwilling to give four and one-half hours of their time for the interview process. Subsequently, only 67 possible participants were left.

At the third level of access the author presented to each of the remaining 67 officers a more in-depth description of the study, particularly the interviewing process. Out of the 67, only 52 finally agreed to participate. The 15 officers who withdrew during this level of access were unwilling to participate because of issues of self-disclosure. They expressed concern that the data generated from their interviews would someday return to haunt them.

The remaining 52 potential participant's names were then separately written on index cards and shuffled 10 times like a deck of playing cards. The first 20 officers on the top of the stack were chosen to be the participants. There were no third party involvements.

Data Collection

The Pilot Study: Learning to Work with the Material

A pilot study was conducted in which three of the 20 participants were interviewed. Once a participant was ready to begin, a written consent form was signed by the participant and the author. The consent form was made as explicit as possible about the purpose of the study, the process of the interviews, the use of the data, and the rights of the participant. The written consent form, in addition to its technical function, was also a means of maintaining the dignity of the participants and the equity of the process.

All of the interviews were audio-recorded. Recordings of the interviews were an essential part of the process. Recording of interview sessions allowed both parties to focus their efforts and energies on listening to the meaning of the words, rather than diverting energy from listening to write the words down onto paper.

Once the interviews were complete, they were then transcribed. The 4.5 hours of interview time spent with each participant resulted in about 40 single-spaced pages of transcript. The pilot study resulted in 13.5 hours of interviews and about 110 pages of single-spaced transcripts. The final study resulted in 90 hours of interviews and about 800 pages of transcripts.

During the reading of each participant's transcript the author identified and highlighted passages that related to occupational stressors already identified in the body of literature. These highlighted passages were identified from the four general categories of:

- 1). stressors inherent in police work;
- 2). stressors stemming from the policies and practices of police management and organizations;
- 3). external stressors arising from the criminal justice system and society in general; and
- 4). internal stressors of individual officers.

After the material had been identified and highlighted, it was then synthesized in two ways: first, as pro-

files of the participants; and second, as verbatim excerpts from the interviews which were woven together with emergent themes. Many critical themes relative to occupational stress emerged from the data connecting the experiences of the participants. (Chapter 4 displays 10 participant's profiles and 17 emergent stress themes.)

Profiles were constructed almost totally in the words of the participants. The function of the profiles was to recreate the experiences of the participants in their own words. Hopefully, their words are representative of many aspects of their work lives and provide a pathway to understanding the meaning they make of their work.

The profiles were edited in order to make them readable. Modifications were made in order to improve the clarity of the spoken word. Syntactical changes were made in order to ease the reading process because the spoken word and verbal utterances are often difficult to transcribe. Regardless of any modifications, the original meaning and context were maintained. All of the material presented in the profiles is in a manner consistent to the order in which it appeared in the interviews. Once a profile was created, it was generally from five to six double-spaced pages in length. Undoubtedly, the profiles were not intended to replace all of the data generated by the interview process. Much of the process centers around the author's subjective interpretation and evaluation of

the participant's experiences. (The author presents his analysis of the data in Chapter 4).

Regardless of whether the presented material is in the form of a profile or excerpt, it meets the four following criteria:

- 1). The material is fair to the participant;
- 2). The material preserves the dignity of the participant; and
- 3). The selected material reflects an accurate account of the interviews as a whole.
- 4). The selected material is connected to issues that relate to the broad concept of stress

Interview material not selected to be used in a participant's profile or any excerpt was based upon Seidman's (1985) criteria. Material was not used because it was:

- 1). repetitious material;
- 2). ad hominem material (supporting prejudices);
- 3). material unconnected to the interviews as a whole;
- 4). material that would make the participant vulnerable if he or she were identified; and
- 5). material that, if taken out of the context of the interview, was not fair to the participant.

During the interview process officers would sometimes talk about the weather or the score of a professional baseball game. Clearly, that kind of material is relevant to an officer's daily discourse, but it is not significant

for the purpose of this study. Therefore, that type of material has been omitted.

The names of the participants that are displayed in the study are pseudonyms. Many steps were be taken to protect the identities of the participants. Much of the recorded material contains information, which, when taken in context, might reveal the identity of the participant or the identity of the department for which he or she is employed. None of this type of material is presented; nor will it be presented in any future use of the interviews.

Though in-depth phenomenological interviewing provides the framework for the collection of data, it is the interviewer who is required to use his or her own analytic skills to identify relevant data and then synthesize it into a profile or excerpt. In order to assess his skills at identifying relevant data and synthesizing it into themes and profiles, the author presented portions of the transcripts in their raw form to 16 students as well as the professor of a graduate course at the University of Massachusetts. The name of the course was "In-depth Interviewing and Issues in Qualitative Research." The course was specifically designed to teach students about the use of in-depth phenomenological interviewing and the author was a member of the course.

As part of the course's requirements, students were expected to examine and evaluate each others raw data from

interviews that each student was required to conduct. The evaluation process obligated the students to identify from each others raw transcripts the major themes that were relevant to the purpose of the interview. In general, the students identified nearly all of the themes that were identified by the author in his own transcripts. Consequently, the author's analytic skills were verified during the pilot study. It was also during the pilot study that the author was able to improve his interviewing skills.

The pilot study demonstrated the proficiency of the interviewing process to adapt to the differing experiences of individual officers. The process broke down many of the barriers which prevent open and effective communication. Regardless of a participant's gender, race, ethnicity, age or departmental affiliation, the interviewing process enabled most of the participants to freely express their thoughts, feelings, and attitudes about their work experiences. The author believes that the interview process was maximized by a mutual trust based upon the common identity held by the author and the participants, and an enduring sense of camaraderie that often exists amongst police officers.

Conducting the Final Study

After the pilot study was complete, the author conducted interviews with the 17 remaining participants over a period of several months. As in the pilot study, the

interviews were audio-taped and later transcribed. The relevant data was again abstracted and synthesized into profiles and excerpts. A total of 20 profiles were finally constructed and excerpts were woven together with 18 themes. Although, only 10 out of the 20 profiles were chosen at random to appear in the final study. Again, the 20 participant's index cards were shuffled ten times and the ten cards on the top of the stack were chosen. Two of the three profiles reported in the pilot study were also among those chosen for presentation in the final study. A presentation of all 20 profiles is unwarranted because their bulk and volume would make this study unwieldy.

In the following chapter the data generated from the interview process is presented in two ways: first, as profiles of 10 participants; and second, as verbatim excerpts from the interviews woven together with 18 emergent themes that connect the stressful experiences of the participants.

CHAPTER 4

REPORTING OF THE RESULTS

This chapter presents data from the interviewing process in two ways: first, as profiles of 10 participants; and second, as verbatim excerpts woven together with emergent themes that connect the stressful experiences of the participants. However, the presentation of distilled transcript material in the form of profiles and excerpts, without further interpretation and analysis by the author, would be at odds with the process.

Part and parcel of this study is the author's continual interpretation and analysis of the data. On the whole this methodological approach cannot escape the fact that the author was required to constantly interpret and analyze the data from the very beginning. For example, whenever the author heard the word "stress," he asked what "stress" meant to the participant. In this fashion the author was interpreting the data.

Just as important as it is for the reader to interpret, evaluate and make meaning of the data, it is just as important for the author to do the same. The author presents his interpretation and analysis of the data in the final section of this chapter.

The Profiles

The profiles generate compelling material. In these profiles police officers detail their work experiences and the many agendas, concerns, and feelings that influence the way in which they carry out their work. Each profile offers a distinct view of how individuals make meaning of the complexities of police work.

When viewed as a whole, the profiles provide clarity and insight into police work. Individuals who are already in the police profession will be able to relate their own experiences to those presented in the profiles. Hopefully as a result, police officers will be better able to mobilize the appropriate resources that will buffer them from the effects of occupational stressors.

To those outside the police profession, the profiles offer compelling evidence to the emotional struggle that many police officers suffer while performing their duties. The profiles also demonstrate the participants' abilities to articulate and describe their experiences. As stated by one officer, "Contrary to popularly held beliefs, we're not illiterate, nor insensitive, nor idiots!"

Profile 1: Officer Dominic Tetrazolla

Dominic is a 34 year old municipal police officer who works in a large urban area.

You can't be a knight in shining armor. When you become a police officer you have already seen so much crap on T.V. that you think that's what police work is really like. All of the veterans will tell the rookies this job is not what you expect. I was told the same thing. I went into there with the expectation that I'd see what it was like. Maybe they'd be wrong. And I think that's the general consensus of every new cop.

The veterans who told me not to become a cop later said to me, "I told you so!" They told me that the job is not what you expect. It's not what you see on T.V. It's a lot of bullshit from the bosses. The people on the street you can handle fine. You can deal with them. It's when you don't get any support from your own department; that's what does it. That's what creates burn-out. Or at least part of what leads to burn-out. I can handle all the crap that happens in the street, as long as I have support from my department and my family. But when that goes, you turn into yourself, or you turn to your fellow officers because they are the only ones who know what you're talking about.

You can't talk to an insurance man about your problems. You can't talk to a lawyer, or anybody in a different field of work. The only ones out there who can really appreciate what really goes on out there is another officer. And that is usually a line officer, not a supervisor. You feel boxed-in. You feel like nobody cares about you. You're a person first. Your job is second. Some guys don't

think that way. Some guys put everything they have into the job. They burn-out fast.

Some guys in the detective bureau work odd hours. They spend more time with their partner than they do with their wife or husband. They feel more secure with their partner than they do with their spouse. And they spend their off-hours with that person whether it be in a bar or just hanging around together. Then the spouse doesn't know what's going on, they don't understand what's going on in the officer's head. The officer starts spending more time at work because he's catching a bashing of negative feelings at home. So it's easier to go into work and talk to their partner.

You know when things aren't right at home, or in your marriage, or in the way you're thinking, or on the job. Cops get in trouble. They get in trouble with drugs, with alcohol, or whatever. Some of them will realize that they've got a problem before others. Some have to be fired. Some have to be suspended. Everybody is different. Everybody is an individual. But the bosses don't treat it like he's an individual. They treat it like he's a non-individual. They should treat it like he's an individual. How come this guy has got a problem and his partner for five years doesn't have any problems?

The job takes its toll on you. It takes its toll on every cop. The rookies are all full of piss and vinegar

when they come on the job. And the bosses stick them with a veteran cop. All the veteran cop wants to do is read his newspaper, go to the donut shops, go to lunch, and then go home. He doesn't want to get involved in too many activities unless he absolutely has to. Cops become lazy. Cops become lax. Which is the most dangerous. That's how you get hurt or killed. Because you're a cop you have a false sense of security. You're not going to get hurt going into a situation because you are who you are. Tombstone courage is, I guess, what we call it. But you don't believe it's going to happen to you. But that's just like anybody else. People don't wear their seatbelts because they believe they won't get into an accident. Cops are the same. They believe that they're not the one to get shot, or injured, or whatever. It's always the other guy.

But that's the stuff that's easily seen. The unseen thing is that cops do the same thing with alcohol and drugs. It's always the other guy whose going to develop alcoholism or drug addiction. Cops shouldn't have this attitude. These are the unseen things. I don't know why cops drink so much. Maybe to forget the bullshit. To forget about being reprimanded or bawled-out by the supervisors. You have to forget about all the bullshit. You just crawl into your own little world, your own shell, and you just don't give a shit anymore. You don't want to be bothered with anybody.

This can all backfire on you. When you withdraw that much, you're not thinking clearly. When you're married your spouse is wondering what's going on. You're not thinking on the job which means you're unsafe to yourself and other officers. After awhile, the job sucks. You resent having become a cop. Don't ever be a cop. The low pay and shitty hours. And nobody gives a rat's ass about you. About once a week you'll hear, "You're a public servant and we pay your taxes."

You have all these other things on your mind. Sometimes you get a real negative attitude and you don't do your job the way you should. You're negative and cynical because you've been through all this before. You're sick of it and you get an attitude. A restraining order type call is a good example. It's when you've been to the same house, see the same husband and wife, the same complaints six or seven times. People don't listen to us. The husband won't listen to you. He wants to argue with you, or he wants to talk with the wife. The wife doesn't want to talk to him. You're in the middle. You're the bad guy. If you arrest the husband on a restraining order, the wife might go down and bail him out. But an hour before she wanted him out of the house. So you back to the same house two days later with a real bad attitude.

They're just people. They've got their problems. You try to figure out their problems, but you're in the middle. You're the referee. You're a counselor, a psychia-

trist, a first-aid station, a priest, a parent; you're supposed to be all these things in one. Your feelings get mixed up. Big time mixed up! You try to go into situations with an open mind, but it's impossible.

A previous call might be on your mind and you might be thinking about that. You're thinking about going home. You're thinking about your family. It's hard to keep a clear mind when you have all this stuff on your mind. It is real hard to keep an open mind and a clear head.

You feel that the system has put you in that situation and you have to protect yourself, but you feel miserable about it. The system is screwed-up and the system doesn't offer you any alternatives other than what you're doing, whether it be drugs or any other negative behavior. You seem to lose no matter what you do. And then they wonder why so many cops don't give a shit.

I feel bad a lot of times. It's good to talk about it. The programs that the police department doesn't have, which they should have, is counseling so that you can deal with this. If officers feel that they need help, you can send them to somebody who can help them; somebody they can talk to about what's happened to them; about how they feel about the job. Cops are people too. They have different capacities for caring and for pain. For high levels of stress some people have low tolerances and break down easier than others do.

Profile 2: Lieutenant Mark Waslewski

Mark is a Lieutenant in a medium sized urban police department. He is 42 years old and has been a police officer for 20 years, eight of which have been as a supervisor.

It's my belief that most cops come on the job for job security, to help folks, and maybe some excitement. I believe that very few people come on the job to abuse power. A lot of cops do eventually end up abusing people, but it's caused by stresses from the job.

Right from the beginning when you're in the police academy, cops are told, "Screw the helping people crap. Get that garbage out of your head right now. Negative thinking is the only way that you're going to survive!" How can I effectively manage my people when they're required to be negative, cynical, and suspicious? I don't like it. It bothers me a lot. I sometimes don't know what to do. Sometimes I'm just managing bad attitudes. And I'm not sure it's the cop's fault.

I once received a complaint from a young mother about an officer. Myself and three or four other officers were working an overtime detail at a large shopping mall. It was the Christmas season. Well, this mother comes up to me and she is carrying a beautiful little boy about four years old. He was whimpering and it looked like he'd been crying. She wanted to complain about one of the other officers who was working the mall with me. Her complaint

was that the officer told her little boy that she'd be taken off to jail if the little boy didn't stop crying. She demanded action. I informed her about our department's formal complaint process, and I also told her that I would immediately go and find the officer and inquire. I really didn't intend to do that, but I do know that I was trying to appease her. She left and I just stood there. About 15 minutes later she came up to me and told me that she'd been watching me ever since she left. She knew that I never went over and talked to the officer. Now come on, how many people do you know that would stand around with a whining kid and watch a police lieutenant for 15 minutes. She was vindictive. So I shrugged my shoulders and went off looking for the officer. She told me his badge number so I knew who I was looking for. I really wasn't up to it because I knew the officer and this kind of stuff wasn't his style.

Well, I found him and she stood right beside me. I asked him about what had happened. The officer told me that the woman dragged the kid by the arm up to him and she told the little boy that the officer would put him in jail if he didn't stop crying. Uh oh! The bogeyman syndrome again. Well, the officer got down on his knees, just at the right level to communicate with a four year old. The officer told the little boy that police officers do not take little children away from their mommies. The officer then cautioned the woman about doing such things

because the little boy could grow up being terribly afraid of police officers. The little boy should learn to trust and seek out police officers when he's in trouble. The officer continued by saying that policeman do take away big people, though. Especially grown-ups who don't behave. The officer reassured the child, but I'm sure the mother thought that the officer was threatening to lock her up and she was offended. Obviously, she didn't like what the officer had said. And what he said was what any good cop would say.

After hearing the officer's side of the story, I figured the case was closed. But, she wasn't satisfied. She did go through the formal complaint process. Both the officer and I had to fill out reports. Our department's response was horrendous. Instead of acknowledging that this woman had a problem and that the officer was a good cop, the officer was victimized. They expended a great deal of energy investigating a nonsense complaint. Why couldn't somebody have had enough guts to tell this lady where to get off? Eventually the officer was cleared of any wrong doing, but I'll bet there were 50,000 words written down and about 40 hours worth of police labor were spent working on it. An awful lot of police energy is spent on defending against such nonsense. That time could have been spent much better. Putting a cop on the streets

for 40 hours would have been a better way to spend the taxpayer's money.

One of the big problems is that little cops grow up to be big cops. What I mean by that is police supervisors are just grown-up patrolman. The police profession doesn't bring in police managers from the outside. We all come up through the ranks. I guess that's both good and bad. It's good because officers can have something to look forward to in their careers. And supervisors have been there so they know what it's all about. The bad part is that there's a lot of politics involved in any promotion, and just because a cop passes a test on paper doesn't mean that he'll be a good boss.

Because he was a patrolman, he knows the attitude and he knows how patrolmen do things. Some supervisors are always trying to catch people doing things wrong. Unlike a lot of supervisors I know, I spend time trying to catch my people doing things correctly. I try to be proactive. I try to manage my officers in a way where I consider the entire officer, including who he or she is as a person.

Some bosses do nothing but ignore their people. They then stick it up a cop's ass when a mistake is made. A lot of patrolman are then given the message not to do a damn thing. Good cops are doing less and less. They tell me that it's tough enough to get it from the folks on the street, but what they really can't deal with is when they get it from their bosses. The bosses should know it's not

an easy job. Christ, when you're expected to do everything for everybody all the time, mistakes are bound to happen.

And then we wonder why most cops have such a bad attitude. What happens when that bad attitude gets a guy in trouble at home? We fail there as well. Sure, we'll take care of the surface stuff. If a guy has a problem with alcohol, we'll take care of it. But we're only treating the surface stuff. We're only treating the symptoms. We're only glossing it over. I've never known a cop who's had a real bad alcohol problem who didn't display signs of trouble for years before he finally took the fall. And I'm not talking about the guy who was confronted and refused help. Therefore, he'd have no one to blame but himself. No way! I'm talking about how we know the problem is there long before things come to a head. We just ignore it. We don't know how to handle it. I struggle trying to understand all of this stuff. It seems that every time I think I've got it figured out, something happens that blows my mind.

I know of this one incident that, when I think about it my heart breaks. A brand new police officer was put undercover with the drug task force. He was a good kid; bright, healthy, well liked, and a load of common sense. About eighteen months into that assignment the young officer's wife went in to see her husband's immediate supervisor, a Lieutenant. She complained that her husband

was changing. He wasn't the same man that she married. He was moody, depressed, suspicious, uncomfortable away from the job. It seems that he was making his wife nervous. Well, the supervisor thanked her for coming in and he said he'd have a talk with her husband.

About three months went by and nothing had been said by her husband. She figured that he would at least mention it if his boss had talked to him. At least he'd be upset and let her know. But, no way! Absolute silence. Her husband got worse. He was talking about quitting and moving away. He was talking about how he hurt others. He talked about how it was just a matter of time before he got seriously hurt. The wife couldn't stand it anymore because the cop would never talk to her. Never! So, she went to see his Captain. The Captain said the same thing as the Lieutenant did. Another six months passes. Things are getting even worse. She's now at the point where she fears for her children's safety. She goes to see a lawyer and gets a restraining order against her husband.

The husband is served with the papers and falls right apart at the seams. He doesn't know what to do. So, like the horse who runs back into the burning barn, he goes and finds his Lieutenant. He tells the Lieutenant what happened and the Lieutenant's response was, "She's a bitch. Don't worry about it." The Lieutenant then takes the officer down to the local V.F.W. and gets the kid drunk. After about three hours there the Lieutenant looks

at his watch and says, "Holy shit, it's late. I've got to get home or my wife will kill me." So off the Lieutenant goes, leaving behind one really drunk, confused, and scared kid. The kid then gets up enough courage to confront his wife. Naturally, she doesn't take too kindly to it. She calls the cops and they come over and arrest him for violating the restraining order. The system failed that kid and his family. Now he's left to fend for himself. All for what?

There's another similar story. I'm close to this one chief of police. He went on record stating that his job and the job of his department is not to help cops who have substance abuse problems. He firmly believes that police management should not be in the business of rehabilitating cops with problems. He wants to have cops piss in a cup, and if they show positive for drugs, he'll fire them. He's trying to find something wrong with the guy's urine when there's something wrong in the guy's head. He's hurting good cops that way. He's flushing good attitudes right down the drain with all that piss. Christ, if we're not responsible for helping out each other, then who the hell should be? I sure as hell can't do it alone!

Profile 3: Officer Edward Munez

Edward is a 44 year old police officer. He has 22 years street experience and works in an urban police department.

We were married about a year after I became a policeman. And about two years after that I became a father. And so really, my relationship with being a policeman separated at that point. I looked at things differently. I became more aware of how the job effects me. I became aware of how the job effects me as far as my relationships with others go. It effects other people and stuff like that.

Being a cop changes people. Once you become a cop, you're never the same. I went to an autopsy. The medical examiner was giving us a good show. He removed the lungs and told us that even though the victim was a young woman, her lungs were a real mess from cigarettes. Probably a three pack a day smoker. Since then I sometimes look at the women who are wearing bikinis at the beach and I admire the outside beauty. Then I picture the very beautiful victim with these blacks lungs lying on a tray. I sometimes can't look at the obvious, or what is outwardly presented to me. I must look deeper.

You know, it's like that with a bunch of issues. It's more than simply being suspicious. It a whole different way of seeing the world. It's a different filter being used to screen through reality. Except when you're a cop the screen in the filter gets smaller and smaller. Your filter catches everything. Then it clogs. It happened to me. Of course I didn't know it at the time. It was clogged and I had no idea what was going on with me. Tremendous

mood swings and thoughts that I was going crazy were very much an everyday occurrence.

My wife and family noticed it before I did. I often wonder whether I ever would have noticed if it weren't for my wife and family. It's always been my family that has been paramount to me as far as keeping the lid on my emotions. I've got a bad temper and when I'm not feeling good, all the little problems get magnified. Such as a couple times, especially during the past few years. There's been a lot of pressure on me, not in terms of the general public, but in terms of the people I work with, and their work ethics which I don't agree with, and their everyday dealings with the public which I don't agree with.

Cops need to demonstrate that they're good cops. Some do it in ways that bug me. If they're not getting their rewards from themselves, or from within the system, or from their department, they go out and invent their own rewards. They measure their goodness according to the way they do things with people. They think you're a good cop if you don't care. You're a good cop if you don't get frazzled. You're a good cop if you don't give a shit. What craziness!

There's some cops who, whenever they get a chance, they'll stick it up the public's ass as far as they can for no good reason. It doesn't make any difference to these guys who you are. If they get a chance to do it to

you, then they'll do it to you. That's what I hate. That's why I can't be associated with those kinds of cops. And they feel good and brag about it. It's like they're getting even with the public for something. I have never been able to understand it, and I don't do it, but I sometimes get worn out by them. When you're with a guy like that, after awhile, he'll wear you down. I mean, you kind of just buckle under. It's always such a struggle. It's a struggle to stay away from that kind of behavior or that kind of cop.

I was working with an officer once. This couple and their kids pulled up along side of us. They were lost and they asked for directions. They told us that they were from another state and they were trying to find a local college so they could pick up their daughter and drive her home for the Christmas vacation. They were headed in the right direction and were probably about 15 minutes away from the college. Well, this other cop, before I had a chance to realize what had happened, had given them directions that would take them exactly in the opposite direction. Worse than that, he directed them to a highway which would have led them out of town at 60 miles an hour. They'd be miles in the wrong direction before they realized that they were again lost. And even if the father began to sense something was wrong, he might discount his own intelligence because it was a cop who gave him the

directions. You can trust cops, can't you? As the family drove off my partner said something like, "Those assholes, they'll be in East Cupcake, Nova Scotia, before they figure out where they're at! Ha, ha, ha!" It was like, "Screw them!"

What were those people going to do? Do you think they're going to file a complaint with the department? These kinds of cops know what they are doing. They don't physically beat up people like they used to. They know that they'd get caught. Society is a lot less tolerant than it used to be. So they got to beat up on the public in other, more sophisticated ways. If the family did complain, the officer's defense would be, "Sure they went in the wrong direction. I thought he asked for directions to So-and-So College, not ABC College. I didn't send them in the wrong direction intentionally, I either heard them wrong or they weren't clear in what they asked of me. You know, there's over 300 colleges in this area!" And even if the cop does get caught, he'd use another trick next time. He'll stay away from phony directions, but he'll get into something else where he can stick up the public's ass. They know what they're doing. They always get their shots in. That's what is really awful. That's what really sucks about this job!

And that kind of stuff builds up pressure in me. And that pressure mounted and mounted until, I was blessed in a way, with having the accident that I had. And that kind

of got me out of all that because I was at a boiling point. And if it wasn't for one or two individual people, and my wife, whom I confided in, I think the accident could have been a more severe strain and stress on me. Emotionally, you know, everyday having those kinds of feelings about the people you work with, is what can destroy a good cop.

Profile 4: Officer Gary Raymond

Gary has been a police officer for 11 years. He works in a large municipal police department.

I often think about it. I'm sure that other cops often think about it. But what's the reward for being a good cop? Yeah, every once in awhile they'll hand out an award. But they're few and far between. I know of an example where these two cops did great police work. There was a description given out over the radio about a car used in an armed robbery. A gun was used and money was taken. But only a sketchy description was give. About three days later these two cops stop two kids who fit the description. They weren't even in the same car. But, they knew their district and they had that sixth sense. They knew what was going on. They talked to the kids a little bit and eventually got these kids to admit that they had committed the robbery. It was good police work. They didn't threaten or strong-arm the kids. They did good

police work and recovered the money and gun. Their Sargent put them in for a commendation, but their Captain rejected it. The Captain refused to authorize the commendation because he felt that the cops were just doing their job. They shouldn't be rewarded for just doing their job.

Yet, it was politically appropriate for the same Captain to recommend commendations for seven officers who broke up a teenager keg party. Big deal! But the property the kids were hanging out on was right next door to a politically affluent member of the city council. It's these kinds of mixed messages that kill my intensity. I feel like the little league kid who practices for the games, get suited-up, and then realizes that he'll never win a game. Cops don't know what to do. I'm not talking about the streets. Cops know how to handle the streets. Sure, it can be a pain in the ass and cops are sometimes bothered by it, but the really big problem is working for the department.

What about the cop who doesn't get into trouble? What about the cop who doesn't get into a jam? What about a cop who is confronted with a dangerous situation who uses diplomacy or finesse to get himself out of trouble? But what about the cop who gets himself into trouble? What about the cop who gets into a pissing match with somebody and that somebody happens to be correct and the cop is totally off base? The cop may be wrong, but he sure as hell can lock-up the person for being a disorderly person,

or whatever. When some cops don't win they become abusive or physical when there's no need. They've got an overall ache that they take out on people, other cops, and their families. The system doesn't call on this kind of cop to knock off the shit. The system accepts this as normal, as the standard. I'm not saying that we cover it up. It's much worse than that. We don't even recognize it as being wrong. It is wrong, but there's no guilt. For me that's the biggest danger. I don't want to catch what they've got. And what's really scary is that there's a little bit of that kind of stuff within every cop.

If you're a good cop you're just doing your job and sitting back and watching all this stuff happen. After awhile, you say to yourself, "All I want to do is mind my own business." You don't want to have anything to do with those other cops because they'll get you into trouble. But, you can only do that for so long. There are other issues of safety and security that you need those other cops for. It gets really messy. You know, that's the most stressful thing with this job. It's not knowing where you stand. One day you do one thing and it's okay. You do the same thing the next day with the same motivation, and it turns out to be wrong because you have a different partner, or street supervisor, or watch commander, and then it's not okay. Or what's okay for me isn't okay for the next guy. Or what's okay for that guy isn't okay for me. I

mean the police department has a lot of politics, I mean.....Ah, I could scream! It's crazy.

Some guys make a little noise and then they get transferred or they get pushed out. Some guys can screw up all the time and we're constantly and perpetually covering up for them. We're protecting and denying. You know it all depends on who you are. In some departments if you're Irish Catholic you can just about get away with murder. In other departments it's another issue, maybe the French, or Italians, or Polish, or whoever, that get the breaks. But, there's always some group on the bottom of the totem pole.

The ideal of justice, which police officers are supposed to carry out, isn't often enough carried out within the police profession itself. Most supervisors don't want to know anything, they don't want to hear anything, and they don't want to see anything that's going to make their jobs tough. I remember being at roll call and there was this one guy who was drunk. Everybody knew it and we were standing in line. The guy could barely stand up. The two officers on each side of the drunken officer were instructed by the Sargent to lock arms with him and hold him up until the end of roll call. So when the Watch Commander came in everything appeared fine. The Watch Commander didn't have anything to worry about because the Sergeant had taken care of it for him. Then we patrol officers had to spend all night babysitting for the guy. What good does that do anybody? Really, only this

kind of stuff could happen in policing with complete denial. Sure this stuff happens elsewhere, but I don't think that society would want us to do that with an airline pilot. Yet, impaired cops carry guns and arrest people each and everyday. Now, I don't mean to have this sound all bad, cops are human. What I can't understand is why we deny our problems? We won't admit that we're human. Why can't we openly discuss these problems? I'm not so sure that we're going to keep cops from getting drunk and into trouble. That's going to happen no matter what we do. I don't think that there's any simple answers. But why don't we say anything? It's like when the space shuttle Challenger exploded and the whole country ignored it. No way! A tragedy occurred and the nation dealt with it. We mourned and then we made changes to correct the problem. Each day a little part of me dies when I see my peers and my close friends not doing well. And it's usually because of the rinky-dink bullshit.

Profile 5: Sargent Robert Fisher

Robert Fisher is a 31 year old police supervisor. He has been a police officer for 10 years in a large New England city.

It was my first night on the job. I had all these expectations that we were going to fight crime and arrest all the people who were committing the violent crimes in the downtown section of town. The first place we

went was a restaurant for coffee. We spent about an hour mingling with the people inside the restaurant. Then we had to stop over at the hotel and drop off all the equipment we're supposed to carry. But it's too bulky to carry and nobody ever carries it, so you leave it there until you come in. Then we watched a little T.V.

These were the things that popped my bubble about what it's really like to do police work out on the streets. I didn't expect that we could catch 42 robbers or nail people who were murderers, but I expected it to be a little bit more exciting until at least the newness or the excitement of the new job, the new responsibilities, wore off. My bubble was popped right away or at least the job was put in the proper perspective.

When I first came on the job police service was probably 20 percent crime prevention and maybe 80 percent service oriented. Today, I bet you it's less than five percent crime prevention. Nobody prevents crime anymore, or protects the public. Well, that's not what we do anymore. We do service calls.

So the public is probably hoodwinked. I don't think that any police officer came on the police department to do social work. Yet, that's about 98 percent of their job. Probably between 95 to 98 percent is social work, rather than, as they perceive it, actual police work.

The job is not advertised as that. The job has never been advertised as a social service or social worker's job. It has always been advertised as a crime prevention, catch the bad guys job; that you spend all your time doing major investigations. You send people to prison. That's not what the job is. That's what the job is advertised as. That's the perception they'd like you to believe. Maybe that's what the public thinks that's all that cops do. In reality they do very little of that.

You know, as much as we hate to admit it and as hard as we try to resist it, we're still police officers doing social worker's duties, we're doing social worker's responsibilities, we're doing a social worker's job. And we have to do that job. If we don't do that job then we're going to be held civilly liable and we're going to be sued. When we do the job and screw it up, we are still going to be sued, but the damage might not be as great. The theme is that you acknowledge that it's better to do something wrong than to do nothing at all. At least if you do something you can maybe rely on good faith and say "Well, I tried" or "I did the best I could" or "I did what I thought was right." Maybe it wasn't right or maybe it was an honest mistake, but who can fault you for that? With a do nothing attitude, if you do nothing where you should have done something, that's what going to get you in trouble. And I think as hard as it is for police officers to understand that, that's one of the things that we

are slowly but surely coming around to. Yeah, you are damned if you do and damned if you don't, but its better to be damned for doing something than it is for doing nothing.

I don't personally think that I could continuously be apathetic and just not give a shit all of the time. You've got to draw the line somewhere. I think sympathy probably comes in the middle the best, in that I feel very bad for what happens. But I wouldn't be empathetic, I wouldn't really be feeling, or I wouldn't really try to understand why what happens? I wouldn't be all that concerned with the long term ramifications or even probably the short term ramifications of what happens. It's something that would bother me for a short time. I think that's a healthy balance or a healthy median to stay with. You can't continually be empathetic. Maybe you can be empathetic one or two times. But if you continue to do that it's going to catch up with you and it's going to burn you out, it's going to drag you down, it's going to be your downfall. And if you are continually apathetic, it's going to ruin your home life because you are going to change. It's hard to turn on and off completely. And then all of a sudden come home and be sympathetic or show some empathy toward your family and then go to work and be apathetic and just all out say "Who gives a rat's ass or who gives a shit less? Nobody cares, so why should I?"

The fear of being shot, or the fear of being beaten up, or the fear of being injured is, to me, not a true fear. I think that when police officers get shot and killed for a good long time after that it stays in everybody's mind. Maybe we tend to be a little more cautious, we tend to be more careful, and we tend to be a little more disciplined in how we approach people that we're not sure of or just generally how we handle ourselves. It's not to say that we become Gestapo.

Certainly I don't think that I am going to die. I say "This may be the day that I die." I don't get hung up on it. I don't dwell on it. You have to realize that you could die today, that you could get killed today, or when you get into the cruiser that it could happen. But you don't dwell on it. It's not something that causes a great deal of stress. My mother might worry about it. My wife might worry about that a lot. I don't worry about that.

What drags a guy down is probably peer pressure from his colleagues, his first line supervisors, and from the upper administrators. This is what causes the greatest amount of stress for police officers. It's not the public out there. You can deal with the people out there. You expect to deal with the people out there. But you don't expect to catch it at both ends. So maybe you burn the candle at both ends and sooner or later somebody is going to get burned as long as you hold onto the candle. Well, as long as you stay on the job you can expect that. You

are going to catch flak from the people you work with. You can expect to catch the flak from your supervisors for whatever the reason. "Why didn't you have your hat on?" or "Your tie isn't hooked straight!" or "Why aren't your shoes polished?" It's the chicken shit, small stuff that you get bothered by.

The things that cause frustration are not being able to do your job, and not being able to spend time. Why shouldn't I be able to spend 10 or 15 minutes with some lady 70 years old who had a bat in her house? And now she's all upset. She's not sure what's going to happen next. Maybe she tried to kill the bat herself and destroyed half of her house doing it. Why shouldn't I be able to spend 10 minutes? Why should I have to hide that? Why should I have to be afraid to say "Yeah, I did that?" It's because I know the job is cynical. It went too far the other way. Instead of carrying just a little bit when we should care, we don't give a shit. We have to be hardened. Most cops would say "Screw it, it's just a 70 year old bag. Who gives a shit? She doesn't care about me or my family, so why should I care?"

If I ever brought up the discussion, you know, "Gee fellows, I feel kind of bad about what happened to Mrs. Whatever-Her-Name-Was." They'd say, "What, are you out of your mind? Who gives a shit? You get paid on payday, you work extra jobs, you get paid overtime, who gives a shit?"

Take care of your family. Worry about your family, and don't worry about that."

Profile 6: Officer Michael Connors

Michael is 54 years old and he has been a police officer for 18 years in a suburban police department. He recently shot and killed an armed suspect.

I'd already had two jobs where they had said, "Your job is all over at the end of this month." I had already been involved in police work as a part time auxiliary officer for many years. So, an opportunity came along where I could jump into police work full time. It was something that was secure and I liked it. I had been exposed to police work and I really needed the money. It was civil service and as long as you didn't commit any criminal acts, that job was going to be there until you retire.

I don't really think that I gave much thought about the safety part of it until a couple of years into the job. I worked with this guy and then I realized through him, that I got to maintain a high. I figured I could do it. I figured that I was tough enough to handle it. They told me, "Always be ready, kid. You never know what's going to happen."

There are some people out there that want to kick your ass. If you want to go home at night you should prepare yourself to be able to handle the job. So I paid

attention because people want to give you a crack with a bat or do whatever they want to do. It's dangerous. I learned and kept myself safe. When I put my uniform and gear on I am ready to work. I am ready for anything, for whatever happens, all of the time. You've got to be ready because if you scratch your ass when you should be looking, then somebody is going to clean your clock for you.

I know this guy who kept this up for 35 years. He had to remind himself every single day. He also paid the consequences. I thought that he was a superman. But he failed miserably in his home life. He lost both of his kids to crime and I put both of his kids away. That hurt me! A guy who I really admire and I put his kid in jail while we were working together. I'll never forget that. I still think that he's the best cop I've ever seen and at home he failed. Both his kids were involved in violent, serious crimes involving the use of their father's gun. He had a problem at home and as it deteriorated it destroyed his kids.

It just dawned upon me now that if I put in another ten years I'd probably develop the same problems. He had a problem. I don't think that he knew that he had a problem. What happened to him was because he stayed on top for 35 years. He maintained that alertness. I was with him when we got our asses handed to us a few times. He maintained that level of alertness and I think that he paid the price for maintaining that level. I say that all of us have to

maintain the level. So, if we maintain that level we have to figure out a way to stop what's going to happen because if we don't, then we're all going to suffer at home. The results are that your home life is going to suffer. I'm sure that some officers will not agree with me on this, but I'll argue with them about it.

I know because it has happened to me. I consider myself to be a good police officer. When I go to work I am aware that from the time I put that key in the car that I've got to be ready for the next eight hours because somebody might try to clean my clock. So I can't let down. It's demanding.

It's like a professional athlete. The mental aspect of playing baseball. Now here I am sitting in Boston's Fenway Park looking at some guy making \$400,000 or \$500,000 or even a million dollars for playing a game. And then he's telling me what a bitch it is to put on the uniform and go out there and catch balls. Now I'm saying to myself, "Yeah, what a bitch it is to get out of my house, put my gun on, and go out and hope that some bastard doesn't try to kill me!" It is true that he's telling us he can't bat 300 because it's a bitch to maintain the mental alertness. We are both talking about mental alertness. I'd like to be able to say that it's tough to force myself out of my Mercedes and go into the clubhouse where every body is going to kiss my ass so I can go out and

play the Yankees. I'd love to be able to do that. I've got to have mental alertness so when I go out onto the streets of my town some guy doesn't make my wife a widow. Now I think that this kind of mental alertness is a hell of a lot different than his.

I don't think that people really understand the difference. He's getting paid to maintain a batting average and I'm getting paid to maintain the peace. I'm not getting paid to stay alive. I'm getting paid to help other people stay alive. If I have to die as a result they'll say, "Well, that's his job." Can you explain these things to your mother? I wouldn't even want to talk to her about it. How about your wife? Your kids? My son has already had to face it!

I have with me the images of the cops who got beat. Such as a guy who walked up to a tumultuous situation with his hands in his pockets. The first punch took his four front teeth out. I saw that guy just yesterday standing in front of an argument in front of the rowdiest bar in town, and his hands were again in his pockets. He's got four false teeth from the last time. He's never going to learn. He's going to get hurt or he's going to cause somebody else to get hurt. If he worked for me I would stress to him, "Jesus, you've got to be aware. You already got your ass handed to you severely and there you were the other night with your hands in your pockets!" I wouldn't want to be his wife or kids because he is going to get hurt. Maybe

he won't, because he's thinking about the overtime detail that he worked today and the three details he's going to work this week. Ah, the money, the boat, and the car. But he's not selling wallpaper at Wallpaper World. The biggest problem that he's going to have at Wallpaper World is that customers don't buy the wallpaper. The biggest problem he could of had the night before last was that one of those guys knifed him, kicked him, or smacked him. So, he's not thinking. There's a guy that's not mentally alert. There's a guy who doesn't realize that he's a police officer. My opinion as to why he does what he does is because he's not physical. So, he figures that if he goes to that situation and he's not physical, then they won't be physical. I really believe that. He's not a physical guy. Every time he gets a call where it's physical, he gets hammered! How he faces that with himself, I don't know.

I believe that the man we were talking about before, you know, the crackerjack cop, if he were in another work environment, he wouldn't have developed the problems that he did. Of course everyone has problems, but not to the extent that he did. Even though he may have been aware of the causes of some of his problems, he never let down at work. The two weapons his kids used were police service weapons. He wasn't a drinker and I really don't know what he did to cope with it.

But as a result of his problems, when I bring my weapon home, I lock the weapon in one box and the bullets in the other locked box. I got rid of all my other weapons. The only weapon I have is my service revolver. I never used to carry the weapon home. I used to take the weapon off and put it in my locker before I went home. But after the shooting incident I started to bring it home. I don't know who that guy's friends are and he's not from around here. I don't know his background. So I felt a little bit safer being prepared in case I have to face it. I think about somebody coming up to me from behind a building or from behind a tree and saying, "I'm so and so's brother, cousin, or Uncle Harry, and I'm going to get you for what you did to him!" I consciously think about that. So, to be prepared I take my weapon home. That's the only reason why I bring it home. I am constantly conscious of where my gun is located.

Profile 7: Officer Lori Hanson

Lori is a 34 year old police officer. She has been a police officer for eight years in a large urban police department.

I wanted to be a cop ever since I was a kid. I wanted to help. You know, service to people. I like people. I like working with people. I like listening to people and trying to help them out. It's putting forth an effort and letting them know that you're putting forth an effort.

Maybe you get a kid who is a runaway from home and you have to take him off to the center. So go by and see the kid and talk to him. Let him know that he's not alone. Stuff like that. It's not what I expected.

Most people who are cops come into it because they really do want to help people. They believe that. And then you find out that the job is not like that. You just get caught off guard and things start to happen and then you just don't care anymore. And it takes so much energy to keep the guard up.

In the police academy I was taught that it was "us" versus "them." We were taught that we were better than the public, but they didn't know it. It took me about six months before I started to notice things. Maybe even a year. I started noticing cop's attitudes. In the academy the "us" were the cops; and the "them" were the citizens. Once I was in the cruisers the "us" and the "them" became the "me" and "him." Comments were made about every thing. There were comments about me being a women. It was pathetic.

You lose your center. I can't say that they make you over because they don't. What they do is add something different that's sort of negative. I'm not sure what it is. There is something wrong in the system. It's so strange. I was a fun person, I thought. Then my friends started saying "You're no fun" because I was so paranoid. I'm a cop, I couldn't do the same things.

I didn't go out anymore. I didn't laugh anymore. I didn't have my old friends anymore. I can't have fun anymore. I usually just sat home and did nothing. Just get up, go to work, come home and do nothing. I started wondering about what I was doing wrong that I didn't have any friends anymore. For awhile the only people that I was talking to were the people at work. It wasn't helping at all because I was getting feedback from them and they were getting it back from me.

Some cops just shut down. I don't mean that they just don't talk to people around them. They don't communicate. They reflect what's going on around them. Of all the cops I know and have gotten to know, about 99 percent of them are stressed. They are totally off the wall. I am really concerned about a couple of them. A couple of them told me, "We're really concerned about you. We thought that we should take your gun?" I said, "Buddy, I thought that I should take your gun!" It's like everybody is looking at everybody, and we all have the same problem. You're on the edge and you don't even know it. It's like you're in a war. But it's strange because I don't know who the enemy is. I'm not sure who the enemy is. It might be the enemy within, or the enemy is behind the lines with us and we're all brain washed. We go marching off and there is nobody to shoot. So you turn around and start shooting at each other.

It's all a joke. When people come up to you and say, "My husband is beating me" you just gather yourself and you become a different person. It's like, "Oh well, we have these cards, Ma'am. Why don't you read this? Why don't you go and take out a complaint?" It's like we've rehearsed these things so many times it's no big deal. You just tell them right there what they want to hear and you go on. And then you go back and talk about it and laugh and then you think, "What assholes!" It's a joke to us. But once they come up to us for help we are so understanding. It takes a toll on me. We're phonies.

We sit around and laugh at dead people. You go into a house and the lady is saying "Give him mouth-to-mouth." The guy is dead! So you say, "Yes Ma'am, why don't you leave the room and we will handle the situation." And all the time you're thinking "Man, what a grubby son of a bitch!" And then you come away and talk about that incident for the next three days. Why don't we just leave that there? But no, you have to talk about it. It is part of the healing process, but let's be for real! We could talk about it. We could sit there and say, "You know the guy was dead; and it was really gross; and it was this, and this, and this. And I really felt this way." But let a cop say, "I felt," and it's like you need a psychological exam. You're not supposed to feel anything.

When a cop cries in front of another cop they think that they lost it. If I went to a fellow officer and cried

they'd think that I'd lost it. If a cop cries they need help. That's stress. You're not supposed to cry. You can laugh. If a guy gets his head blown off you can laugh, that's okay. But heaven forbid that you should cry. Throwing up is okay. They'll laugh at you. But don't cry. I saw a guy with half of his face blown off. The lieutenant said, "This is her first one. Hah, hah, hah." He is laughing. The guy is laying there and his face is gone. I wasn't sick, I didn't cry, I didn't laugh because I was in shock. I got over that.

The next time I saw a guy hanging; my first suicide. Everybody was making a joke. I went home and got drunk because I had never seen a guy swinging like that. It stung. I cried. I called up a female cop and I was talking to her. She too thought I was crazy. She said that I couldn't stand the pressure. I was very disappointed.

I should be tougher than that. I should be able to watch somebody hang, commit suicide, and just laugh about it. I should be able to make a joke about swinging in the breeze or something like that. I started to say to myself, "Well, maybe I don't have the stuff it takes to be a cop," because I was thinking about what people think about when they commit suicide? Do they just jump and then the rope snaps and do they say, "Oh shit, I didn't mean to do this!" What a ditty I was for thinking that. So when I cry, I cry alone. I don't cry in front of cops. When cops

cry they need help. I think that it should be when they don't cry they need the help. They should desperately seek help. These are the people walking around with the guns protecting you and me.

It's not the people that can't handle the job. It's what the job does to the people. It makes them lose touch. It makes them lose touch with everything; their feelings, their families. It's "them" against "us" and it's "us" against "them." Pretty soon you've got cops just saying, "Do I get a paycheck this week?" And that's all that they have to worry about.

Profile 8: Officer Robert Frazier

Robert Frazier is a 40 year old police officer from a medium-sized municipal police department. He is an 18 year veteran and has been assigned to a variety of bureaus within his department.

I've seen guys break down in a situation. Whether it's in their personal lives or whether they're in a work situation. What it means to me is that cops are human. If you pin a badge on your shirt or not, you're still human. You still have feelings and you still have to get your feelings out into the open. That's the thing. You're a cop and there is comradery, brotherhood and all that. And you take the badge off and you have to go home to the family. You are who you are. Some cops don't know who they are. That's how they get in trouble and have problems.

If a person is already married when they become a cop their marriage is going to change. Or if you're not married and you become a cop you're at risk. The statistics speak for themselves. Cops feel better with other officers than they do with their own spouse. Cops can tell their spouses everything in the world every night after work. They will understand to an extent. After awhile they are going to get sick and tired of hearing about the same things, the same complaints. Either they will shut you off or you'll get this feeling that they don't want to hear it anymore. So a cop withdraws and doesn't talk anymore in the same way.

Cops are their own worst enemies. Sometimes cops will help each other, but usually they won't. They're negative. They're cynical. There's no place to go with your feelings. That's the toughest part because cops really do care about people. But they're not supposed to cry. They're supposed to do everything that the public sees them do on T.V. People expect that of you and you're supposed to be a macho man. That's a bunch of shit.

This job does take its toll on you stress wise, physically, and emotionally. You're up one minute and down the next. You can be bored for seven hours and then at the seventh hour and 15 minutes you're in a fight or a confrontation with an armed suspect. You go into the fight or flight every day. There's no person who can go through that without feeling the stress. A cop can lose his sani-

ty. You can lose your marriage. Cops become very negative and then they burn-out. Cops say, "Screw it," and then just put in their eight hours. Then they put in their 20 years, or whatever, and then they just get out. They don't give two shits about anybody, but mostly about themselves.

It's the attitude that nobody cares. So why should I? Nobody gives a shit about what happens to me! Nobody appreciates what cops do! You see it so many times when you go on a suicide, or when you try to prevent a suicide. Cops tend to empathize. Sometimes cops feel that way, the way the people do who want to commit suicide. I'm sure that every cop feels that way at one time or another. Cops see so much of it that they probably feel that way more often than the general person on the street. Cops are afraid to talk about it, though. It's a sign of weakness. It's a sign that there's something wrong with you. You're not fit for duty. You should be off somewhere else doing another kind of work, like washing cars.

The department doesn't want you to feel. You're not supposed to feel. Yeah, that's it! You're supposed to be a cop. That's all. Just a cop. You're not supposed to be a person. You're born human and you're made into a cop later. You're a person when you put the badge on, and you're still a person when you take the badge off. Where does the cop end, where does the cop begin, and where do you sort out where the person is? Where does a cop's life

begin and end? Cops try to leave their job at work, which is very hard. Cops always have a sense of having to do what's right. If you are driving down the street and happen to see something wrong, you're still a cop even if you're not in uniform. Cops want to do the right thing. And it's very hard if you have your family in the car. It's hard not to stop. It's hard not to do something about the situation. Cops are always telling each other to leave the job at the station. Don't bring it home. It gets drilled into you, and drilled into you, and drilled into you! But everybody brings it home. It happens to some of us more than others.

The stronger person leaves the work behind. The more emotionally strong person leaves the work at the station. The one who is not so strong will bring it home. I'm not sure if this is exactly true, but cops are people. Some people are emotionally strong, and some aren't. Cops are the same way. You can give cops all the psychological tests you want before they get into the police academy, but they haven't experienced anything yet that's going to change them. There's no way you can tell how cops are going to act when they get into a stressful situation. Recruits can falter the first week that they're on the streets, or they could go 30 years and be a good cop who handles situations. There is no way of telling. Each situation is different. They can train you for it, but each situation and cop is unique.

Cops turn into themselves more than other people. Cops can talk to their spouses. They can talk to their fellow officers. But, there are some things that cops just won't talk about to anybody. A cop won't talk about such things because a fellow cop might learn about you. It would be a sign that you're weak. You'd be labeled as having sensitive feelings, or you care too much, or whatever. Other cops can't work with that kind of cop. Christ, imagine working with a cop who cared too much or who had sensitive feelings. Your name would end up on the shit-house walls.

When I stop and think about the names of the people who ended up on the shithouse walls at my department I feel angry. A lot of those guys or women didn't deserve it. With cops, all you got to be is different from them. If you're a cop that's too smart, or if you gave up a better paying job, or if you spend a lot of time talking about good things, or whatever else makes you different from most cops, your name will end up on the shithouse walls. From my point of view, an awful lot of good cops had their names on the walls. It must of hurt them. I've never had my name on the shithouse walls, but I know it would really bother me if it did.

I often wonder why we're at each others throats so often. Cops will get into the shit with each other over the stupidest of things. Yet, let a citizen or an outsider

say anything bad about cops in general and we will lock their asses up. I think we're abused by the public. I expect that from them. But I can't understand why so many bosses have to make our lives so miserable. We've got some bosses who, if they find out you like working with a particular partner, they'll split you up. Then they'll find somebody you can't stand or somebody you just can't work with. Then they'll put you with that guy. It's like they don't have anything better to do than mess with our heads like that. They do an awful lot of stuff like that to us. You know, if a parent, school teacher, or anybody else treated the people that they were responsible for like that, somebody would call the cops. Who are we going to call? Our union? Even that can be a joke!

Profile 9: Trooper Nick Mulkowski

Nick is a 28 year state trooper. He has five years experience as a road trooper. He is married and lives with his wife and two children.

Being a trooper is a good job. I love it. I guess you have to love it after all that we go through to get the job. The prescreening, the background checks, the interviews, the tests, and the academy must mean something. I get paid well with all the overtime. I think this is a much better job than being a small town cop. I used to be a small town cop before I became a trooper. I now work with small town cops everyday and I don't think I could

stand the boredom or the lack of respect they get. Even though I wouldn't want their job, I do respect them. They work closely with me and I work closely with them. If I get into a jam while on picket duty in the hill towns, it's probably going to be one of the local cops who gets there first. And vice versa. I really like some of those guys. We go out partying sometimes together.

I also sometimes envy the small town cops. Sometimes I wish we could do it by the seats of our pants like they do. We're too rigid. Troopers do have lots of discretion and freedom in doing their work, but there's still the "ought to" or "should be" way of doing everything! And that bugs me.

About a year ago I was transferred. I guess they had to. I was having trouble in my head. I was having trouble at home and on the job. I'm a great trooper. I wasn't a druggie or boozier. There weren't any complaints against me. But, I thought that I was probably going through police menopause at age 26. I kept asking myself, "What am I doing here?" and, "What's all this mean?"

I was tired and confused. I tried to get help from my superiors. They treated me like I was a leper. Maybe I wasn't clear. Maybe I presented it all wrong to them. Maybe I should have said that I was going crazy or something. Maybe I should have just walked in and jumped on their desk and pretended I was a monkey. All I know is that I felt so tired that I couldn't do my job. I just

needed a break. My wife needed a break too. I didn't feel particularly anything more than that; just exhausted.

I eventually got up enough nerve, though my wife pushed me real hard, to ask for a few days off. That helped for awhile. I went back to work and the same feelings came back. I then asked to be put inside. They jokingly asked if I needed to go to the stress unit. I jokingly responded, "No way!" I was put inside for awhile and it was very comfortable there. I was just starting to get my shit together when they applied pressure on me and I was sent back out on the road. It was okay for awhile. But then it started all over again. Whatever I was doing, it must have been wrong. I tried every trick in the book, but nothing worked for very long. I felt like shit.

Then one day I took a deep breath and said, "I can't do it anymore!" I went and told my supervisor and he said, "Can't do what?" I told him that I didn't want to be a trooper anymore. I figured that this strategy would blow him off his chair. No way! He didn't even blink an eye. He responded, "Here we go again!" They sent me to see somebody, to talk all about it. I talked and when I went back to work nothing had changed. Nothing! They expected me to do all the changing, like it was all my fault. Sure, I'm not perfect. I've got goofy emotions. So what? If they had just pried a little, or if they had even known just a little bit about my suffering, I would have felt better.

Shouldn't the people I work with notice if I'm getting into trouble? I guess what hurts me the most is that they probably did notice that something was going on, but they ignored it. And that hurts worst. When your maintaining, it's okay, but when you're beginning to bend in the wind, they maintain their distance. Isn't that an awful way to treat somebody? But, I'm a trooper, not a somebody.

I discovered how to play their game. I figured I had them by the balls. I realized that I must quickly fall back into line; to be a good old boy. I then began to plot, at least in my imagination, how I'd get off the job without the hassles. I didn't know how or when, I just knew that I was eventually going to get hurt. Probably an accident, but I wasn't sure.

Profile 10: Trooper Maureen Sweeney

Maureen is a 24 year old state trooper. She has been working as a trooper for 2 years.

It was a warm and beautiful summer afternoon. It was about 7:00 p.m. and I was working in a rural area. I was called by the local town police to the scene of a suicide. I was a little anxious because I didn't know what to expect. Was it a hanging? A shotgun to the face? Was it a kid? An old man? Whatever, I knew that they had to be calling me for a reason. My professionalism required a certain behavior from me. I knew I could do that, but I'd never been called to the scene of a suicide before.

I'm a trooper. I figured that they needed my help or assistance. When I arrived there were four or five local cruisers there. There was even one from another town. I remember thinking, "This must really be a good one." It was. It was a man in his late twenties who put a high-powered hunting rifle into his mouth. You know, once you see something like that you're never the same again. It changes the way you look at the human body. You don't just see people, you see a hunk of meat. Anyway, the scene was terrible. He'd been dead for awhile. It stunk. There were flies. His entire skull was gone. It was just a neck with a jaw attached. Nothing much else. There was stuff all over the wall behind the chair.

I had walked inside because there was no one on the outside of the house. I was hoping that there would be. That way I could have prepared myself a little bit before going inside. I at first didn't notice it, but all the cops that were there had a kind of shit-eating grin on their faces. I thought at the time it must have been their way of dealing with stress. You know, nervous laughter kind of stuff. They didn't say anything to me. The way it was set up, and I'm not sure how it happened, I had to get real close and make a preliminary investigation. You know, the Jack Webb stuff. A real professional, right! Well, once I was there for a few minutes, it all started to hit me. I felt sick. I had to leave the house and get some

fresh air. I was embarrassed, but I didn't care. When you're sick, you're sick. Once it hits you, there's nothing you can do.

Well, while on my way out the door they all burst into laughter. They all started talking, but strangely, none of it was directed at me. They were busy talking to each other. With hindsight, I can now say it reminded me of an outdoor market place where the customers were trying to beat down the merchant's price.

The only reason I was called there was because I'm a female trooper. They had a bet to see how long it would be before I would get sick. They had a betting pool going. Somebody passed a hat and they each threw in five bucks. They then drew scraps of paper with numbers written on them. The numbers equaled minutes. If one of those guys drew a number three, they would win if I got sick during the third minute after I entered the house. I still don't know who won the money.

They wanted to have fun at my expense. Maybe it was the only way that they could deal with it by using me in a sick practical joke. But what really makes me crazy is that they weren't just calling a trooper. They were calling for me. At first, I figured, "Great, they need my advice and opinion." How did they know I was even working? They knew because the guys I work with told them. They probably had something like this planned for a long time. If it wasn't the suicide, it was going to be something

else. My supervisors had to be in on it. They probably decided that the bitch, or the dike, or whatever, needed to be educated. Can you imagine having to put up with that kind of bullshit. It's really sophisticated. I can go and complain about the local cops. They're the village idiots. But how can I complain about the troopers involved. They set me up. They didn't do anything wrong in sending me there. It was the kind of experience a cop should have. But why use me?

When I now stop and think about it, the most stressful part of my job is gender, being a woman. The motorists all think that female troopers are lesbians. Almost all of the male troopers that I work with are great and they treat me as an equal. But there are a few who make my life miserable. One minute they act nice, the next minute they're messing with me. I can handle the motorists because I know what to expect of them. It's a clear cut relationship between me and the public. I've got a job to do. They expect me to do it and I do it. What I can't deal with is the knot heads I work with. I'm not afraid that they won't back me up or support me while I'm out on the road. What I can't stand is their attitudes. Perhaps even worse, state police management talks a good game, but they allow all too much of this kind of stuff to happen. It certainly is a male organization dominated by male attitudes.

I am often in conflict with myself because I have to buy into those attitudes in order to survive. I have to give up large parts of me, those special parts of me that are a woman, in order to survive. You can't be a woman unless that role conveniently fits into the role of being a trooper. As a little girl, my parents taught me how to compromise, to negotiate, and to communicate with others. This stuff doesn't work between me and some of those knot-head troopers. The only way I can stop them is to do battle with them on their level. They want me to get pissed, to get angry with them. Maybe I should sucker-shot one or two of them. But, I can't do that.

Because I don't engage them, this furthers their cause. I've been called "pathetic" or "gutless" because I don't bring sexual harassment complaints against them. Let's be real. I've got to work with those guys. Would you put your life on the line, let's say by driving 90 miles-an-hour on dangerous roads to come and assist me, if I took out a sexual harassment complaint against you? You'd come, but just how quickly is the real question? And seconds could mean the difference between life and death. The odds are greatly in my favor that nothing would ever happen to me that would require the response of other troopers, or even local cops, within seconds. But even though the odds are good, would you bet your life on it?

Emergent Stress Themes

The author has identified many themes that have emerged from the data that connect the stressful experiences of the participants. These themes are woven together with verbatim excerpts taken from the passages and are presented below. They are presented in the order of their frequency with the most frequent being presented first, and the least frequent being presented last. For example, Theme 1 appeared in all 20 of the participant's transcripts and Theme 18 appeared in only two of the participant's transcripts.

Themes 1: Anger and a sense of betrayal with management practices and administrative policies that cause unnecessary distress.

The first theme focuses on the belief held by all 20 participants that the most distressing aspect of police work is related to police management and administration. One officer powerfully relates that "... the supervisors and the administration are destroying good cops. They treat us like shit. It's like being back in Vietnam and not knowing who's the enemy. The enemy combatants, the civilians, our military leadership, and the American public were all potential enemies to me. As a cop I feel the same way about the criminals, the average citizen, the local politicians, and the police administration. Though,

on the streets there is a certain code of conduct, a certain honor. I can deal with the average citizen and all the assholes because I at least know where they're coming from. They don't hide their contempt for me. I know that they can hurt me. I'm trained to protect myself from their threats.

What riles my ass and puts pressure on me is the fact that I don't know how to defend myself from attacks from those who are supposed to be on my side. The administration doesn't care if I'm a good cop. Shit, they don't manage us like we're people. They're task masters. They require us to do this and do that. They require a patrol car in every district, period! That's all they care about. They don't care about us as human beings. They want robots. And that's what hurts me the most!"

Theme 2: Officers care about helping people. They begin their careers because they want to help their communities.

The second theme indicates that 19 of the participants care very much about helping people and their communities. One officer describes why individuals become police officers. He states, "Kids today want to be police officers because they want to help society. They don't want to beat up people, or deprive them of their rights. There has been an awful lot of media hype about drugs and crime running rampant in the streets of America. These

kids want to stop that kind of stuff. They want to help their communities and become cops in the same way their parents tried to help by becoming social workers back in the 1960's. We all want to make this a better place to live."

Theme 3: Lack of public support, Officers feel that most people don't care about them or their work.

The third theme illustrates that 19 of the participants have overwhelming feelings that people in general do not care about them, least of all about their work. They feel unsupported by the public they're sworn to protect. One officer ably describes her feelings when she states that, "We are a necessary evil! We're just like the mentally retarded Uncle Billy who the family hides and keeps locked away in the closet or some institution. They lock him away because his presence makes them uncomfortable, or because they refuse to accept responsibility for him. Either way, they only pay attention to Uncle Billy when he takes a fall off the end of his bed and cracks his skull wide open, or when the family finds it convenient. Society acts the same way with cops. We're an embarrassment to society because we represent its dark side, or the dark side that is a part of every person. The only time we get attention is when we screw up or when it's convenient to appreciate us. Our work becomes a real popular issue

during every election. Once it's over, no one pays attention to us unless we make mistakes."

Theme 4: The types of people that police officers work with and their peers change officers for the worse.

The fourth theme relates to the expression by 19 of the participants that their work has changed them in a negative way. Not just in their work environment, but in their entire life as well. One officer states, "Stress? Hell, I live it. I'm concerned that stress is causing me to change my personality. I'm becoming someone that I don't want to be. It frightens me. It frightens my wife."

Another participant expresses her concern; "You lose your center. I can't say that they make you over because they don't. What they do is add something different that's sort of negative. I'm not sure what it is. There is something wrong in the system. It's so strange. I was a fun person, I thought. Then my friends started saying "You're no fun" because I was so paranoid. I'm a cop, I couldn't do the same things.

I didn't go out anymore. I didn't laugh anymore. I didn't have my old friends anymore. I can't have fun anymore. I usually just sat home and did nothing. Just get up, go to work, come home and do nothing. I started wondering about what I was doing wrong that I didn't have any

friends anymore. For awhile the only people that I was talking to were the people at work. It wasn't helping at all because I was getting feedback from them and they were getting it back from me.

Some cops just shut down. I don't mean that they just don't talk to people around them. They don't communicate. They reflect what's going on around them. Of all the cops I know and have gotten to know, about 99 percent of them are stressed. They are totally off the wall. I am really concerned about a couple of them. A couple of them told me, 'We're really concerned about you. We thought that we should take your gun?' I said, 'Buddy, I thought that I should take your gun!' It's like everybody is looking at everybody, and we all have the same problem. You're on the edge and you don't even know it. It's like you're in a war. But it's strange because I don't know who the enemy is. I'm not sure who the enemy is. It might be the enemy within, or the enemy is behind the lines with us and we're all brain washed. We go marching off and there is nobody to shoot. So you turn around and start shooting at each other."

Another participant is aware that, "If I ever brought up the discussion, you know, 'Gee fellows, I feel kind of bad about what happened to Mrs. Whatever-Her-Name-Was.' They'd say, 'What, are you out of your mind? Who gives a shit? You get paid on payday, you work extra jobs, you get paid overtime, who gives a shit? Take care of your

family. Worry about your family, and don't worry about that.'" . . .

Another participant reveals his belief that, "The department doesn't want you to feel. You're not supposed to feel. Yeah, that's it! You're supposed to be a cop. That's all. Just a cop. You're not supposed to be a person. You're born human and you're made into a cop later. You're a person when you put the badge on, and you're still a person when you take the badge off. Where does the cop end, where does the cop begin, and where do you sort out where the person is? Where does a cop's life begin and end?"

Theme 5: Poor use by management of individual officer's talents and skills.

The fifth theme reveals a belief held by 14 of the participants that it matters little about one's talents and skills when it comes to their work. They believe that the police profession often uses other criteria; "Some guys make a little noise and then they get transferred or they get pushed out. Some guys can screw up all the time and we're constantly and perpetually covering up for them. We're protecting and denying. You know it all depends on who you are. In some departments if you're Irish Catholic you can just about get away with murder. In other departments it's another issue, maybe the French, or Italians,

or Polish, or whoever, that get the breaks. But, there's always some group on the bottom of the totem pole.

And being on the bottom usually means you get the shit assignments. Sure, seniority is important, but once that requirement is met, there is still lots of room for personal prejudices on the part of management: like who works with who; what's your assignment; extra duty or overtime; where you work; and right down to what vehicle you're allowed to drive. Those types of decisions are most often made considering loyalty to friendships, politics, or a common heritage, if you know what I mean. You could be the best cop in the world and it won't make any difference when it comes time to dishing out some of the candy."

Theme 6: Job dissatisfaction, (Boredom, long hours, low pay, stay with the job just for job security.)

Thirteen participants conveyed an overall dissatisfaction with the job pertaining to issues of boredom, long hours, low pay, and staying with the job, even though dissatisfied, for the sole purpose of job security. One participant explains; "I'd already had two jobs where they had said, 'Your job is all over at the end of this month.' I had already been involved in police work as a part-time auxiliary officer for many years. So, an opportunity came along where I could jump into police work full time. It was something that was secure and I liked it. I had been exposed to police work and I really needed the

money. It was civil service and as long as you didn't commit any criminal acts, that job was going to be there until you retire."

Another describes how, "Police work is a job just like any other. Whether you're working in a sweat shop or teaching school, we're all pretty much the same. A lot of us have the same complaints. When I worked the midnight to 8:00 a.m. shift I was bored out of my mind. I got into more trouble because I was so bored that I looked for trouble. Sort of like, 'Idle hands make devils work.'

Another conveys his feeling that, "If I just worked my regular 40 hours I couldn't survive financially. I'd have to quit and get another job. In this job you have to work a lot of hours in order to live like most people. That's where they've got you. By keeping you working so many overtime hours you can't take a second job on a steady basis. With our rotating days off and schedules, it's real hard to find a normal part-time job. So they've got us coming and going. Most of the guys I know work seven days a week and wear their uniform seven days a week. It's no wonder that so many cops are going bonkers!"

Theme 7: Few extrinsic rewards for good job performance.

Twelve participants conveyed their feelings that there are few rewards and satisfaction for police officers. As one officer clearly relates; "I often think about

it. I'm sure that other cops often think about it. But what's the reward for being a good cop? Yeah, every once in awhile they'll hand out an award. But they're few and far between. I know of an example where these two cops did great police work. There was a description given out over the radio about a car used in an armed robbery. A gun was used and money was taken. But only a sketchy description was given. About three days later these two cops stop two kids who fit the description. The kids weren't even in the same car they used during the robbery. But, the cops knew their district and they had that sixth sense. The cops knew what was going on. They talked to the kids a little bit and eventually got the kids to admit that they had committed the robbery. It was good police work. They didn't threaten or strong-arm the kids. They did good police work and recovered the money and gun. Their Sargent put them in for a commendation, but their Captain rejected it. The Captain refused to authorize the commendation because he felt that the cops were just doing their job. They shouldn't be rewarded for just doing their job."

Theme 8: Little participation in decision making procedures that affect working conditions.

Twelve participants described experiences in which decisions had been made by others without seeking their input, particularly by police management or outside governmental administrators, which affected their working

conditions. One participant describes how, "We needed a new radio console. The old one was almost a hundred years old. We were really happy because the old radio often didn't work right and we were nervous that someday somebody would get hurt because of its age. Well, the administration hired this communications consultant to design the console room, ergonomics kind of stuff. I thought to myself, 'Great idea to use a professional, but what a waste of money.' We officers know what's needed. We're not stupid. We can't figure out the electronics, but we sure as hell can figure out where things should be placed in order for us to do the job correctly.

Well, wouldn't you know it? After the final plans were approved and construction began, an officer who just happened to be watching noticed that the telephone was on the exact opposite side of the room away from the radio transmitter. The jerks put the radio about 12 feet from the phone. The consultant probably figured out that the officer assigned to the radio just talks on the radio. Any twit with half an ounce of gray matter should have realized that cops need to be able to do talk on the phone and talk on the radio at the same time. They didn't realize that most of the information which is given out on the radio comes from a telephone.

Lo and behold, they had to redesign the radio room. They did pay the consultant his full fee. What a waste!

All they had to do was ask us what we thought and they would have saved the taxpayers several thousand dollars. Welcome to the world of participatory management."

Theme 9: Being burned-out; emotional exhaustion, Need to control emotions according to group standards, rather than own.

Eleven of the officers disclosed their fear and concern about emotional exhaustion and how they must maintain their personal emotions according to group standards and norms. One participant explains how such a process can occur; "You lose your center. I can't say that they make you over because they don't. What they do is add something different that's sort of negative. I'm not sure what it is. There is something wrong in the system. It's so strange. I was a fun person, I thought. Then my friends started saying 'You're no fun' because I was so paranoid. I'm a cop, I couldn't do the same things.

I didn't go out anymore. I didn't laugh anymore. I didn't have my old friends anymore. I can't have fun anymore. I usually just sat home and did nothing. Just get up, go to work, come home and do nothing. I started wondering about what I was doing wrong that I didn't have any friends anymore. For awhile the only people that I was talking to were the people at work. It wasn't helping at

all because I was getting feedback from them and they were getting it back from me.

Some cops just shut down. I don't mean that they just don't talk to people around them. They don't communicate. They reflect what's going on around them. Of all the cops I know and have gotten to know, about 99 percent of them are stressed. They are totally off the wall. I am really concerned about a couple of them. A couple of them told me, 'We're really concerned about you. We thought that we should take your gun?' I said, 'Buddy, I thought that I should take your gun!' It's like everybody is looking at everybody, and we all have the same problem. You're on the edge and you don't even know it. It's like you're in a war. But it's strange because I don't know who the enemy is. I'm not sure who the enemy is. It might be the enemy within, or the enemy is behind the lines with us and we're all brain washed. We go marching off and there is nobody to shoot. So you turn around and start shooting at each other."

Theme 10: Having difficulty relating to others.

Ten participants expressed that they were having difficulties relating to the general public. One participant reveals that, "You can't talk to an insurance man about your problems. You can't talk to a lawyer, or anybody in a different field of work. The only ones out there who can really appreciate what really goes on out there is

another officer. And that is usually a line officer, not a supervisor. You feel boxed-in. You feel like nobody cares about you."

Another officer states, "I don't want to have anything to do with anybody. For me, when I'm out in the public, it's just a matter of time before some scumbag is going to say or do something that is going to piss me off. My wife is a manager at a local bank. She wanted me to go with her to their annual Christmas party. No way was I going to hang around and rub elbows all night with those Holier than thou pencil-necked geeks!"

Theme 11: Anger at the system for ignoring or denying that officers have problems, and lack of resources for problems.

Ten participants described their anger at the system for ignoring or denying officers who have problems, and anger at a lack of resources for those problems. One officer states that, "The ideal of justice, which police officers are supposed to carry out, isn't often enough carried out within the police profession itself. Most supervisors don't want to know anything, they don't want to hear anything, and they don't want to see anything that's going to make their jobs tough. I remember being at roll call and there was this one guy who was drunk. Everybody knew it and we were standing in line. The guy could

barely stand up. The two officers on each side of the drunken officer were instructed by the Sargent to lock arms with him and hold him up until the end of roll call. So when the Watch Commander came in everything appeared fine. The Watch Commander didn't have anything to worry about because the Sergeant had taken care of it for him. Then we patrol officers had to spend all night babysitting for the guy. What good does that do anybody? Really, only this kind of stuff could happen in policing with complete denial."

Another officer concludes, "I feel bad a lot of times. It's good to talk about it. The programs that the police department doesn't have, which they should have, is counseling so that you can deal with this. If officers feel that they need help, you can send them to somebody who can help them; somebody they can talk to about what's happened to them; about how they feel about the job. Cops are people too. They have different capacities for caring and for pain. For high levels of stress some people have low tolerances and break down easier than others do."

Theme 12; Role ambiguity; An inability to clearly focus upon the job's boundaries. (Role conflict).

Ten participants described experiences in which they could not clearly focus upon their job's boundaries. One participant described the dilemma; "For the longest time I

really didn't know if I could search a car or not, even if I had probable cause. There have been so many court cases over the past two decades that have tried to clarify an officer's legal rights to conduct searches that it made me gun shy. One ruling says you can, another ruling says you can't, and then another says you can. And then some are retroactive, and some aren't. You've got the state courts and then the U.S. Supreme Court making decisions. I've lost my confidence in the knowledge I hold of the law. It's the rights of the individual citizen playing tug rope with the rights of society, and we're the ones used for the rope. We keep getting tugged this-a-way, and then that-a-way."

Another participant declares that, "We're expected to enforce the laws. Yet, they tie our hands. That's okay with me as long as it's consistent. But, when something big comes down, like a murder, there's all sorts of pressure put on us by the public to solve the crime and arrest the criminal at almost any cost. We've been taught that sometimes the means do justify the end."

Theme 13; Distress from the threat of physical danger.

Eight participants expressed concern about the threat of physical danger. One officer ably conveys his feelings; "I have with me the images of the cops who got beat. Such as a guy who walked up to a tumultuous situation with his

hands in his pockets. The first punch took his four front teeth out. I saw that guy just yesterday standing in front of an argument in front of the rowdiest bar in town, and his hands were again in his pockets. He's got four false teeth from the last time. He's never going to learn. He's going to get hurt or he's going to cause somebody else to get hurt. If he worked for me I would stress to him, 'Jesus, you've got to be aware. You already got your ass handed to you severely and there you were the other night with your hands in your pockets!' I wouldn't want to be his wife or kids because he is going to get hurt. Maybe he won't, because he's thinking about the overtime detail that he worked today and the three details he's going to work this week. Ah, the money, the boat, and the car. But he's not selling wallpaper at Wallpaper World. The biggest problem that he's going to have at Wallpaper World is that customers don't buy the wallpaper. The biggest problem he could of had the night before last was that one of those guys knifed him, kicked him, or smacked him. So, he's not thinking. There's a guy that's not mentally alert. There's a guy who doesn't realize that he's a police officer. My opinion as to why he does what he does is because he's not physical. So, he figures that if he goes to that situation and he's not physical, then they won't be physical. I really believe that. He's not a physical guy. Every time he gets a call where it's physical, he gets hammered! How he faces that with himself, I don't know."

Theme 14: Fear of being sued over issues of responsibility for other people's behavior.

Eight participants expressed a fear of being held civilly liable for performing their duties. One participant describes his fear; "You know, as much as we hate to admit it and as hard as we try to resist it, we're still police officers doing social worker's duties, we're doing social worker's responsibilities, we're doing a social worker's job. And we have to do that job. If we don't do that job then we're going to be held civilly liable and we're going to be sued. When we do the job and screw it up, we are still going to be sued, but the damage might not be as great. The theme is that you acknowledge that it's better to do something wrong than to do nothing at all. At least if you do something you can maybe rely on good faith and say 'Well, I tried' or 'I did the best I could' or 'I did what I thought was right.' Maybe it wasn't right or maybe it was an honest mistake, but who can fault you for that? With a do nothing attitude, if you do nothing where you should have done something, that's what going to get you in trouble. And I think as hard as it is for police officers to understand that, that's one of the things that we are slowly but surely coming around to. Yeah, you are damned if you do and damned if you

don't, but its better to be damned for doing something than it is for doing nothing."

Theme 15: Distorted media coverage of the police.

Seven participants revealed their concern over media coverage which distorts or takes out of context the activities of the police. One participant explain that, "Brutality is an emotional term. It can include just about anything that the police do, from name calling to beating to death a person who is in custody. Whatever the case may be, it seems that the newspapers and television always report only one side of the story or they get it all wrong.

I no longer read the newspapers or watch television news. It was depressing enough before I became a cop, but now it's a hundred times worse. Not because the news is depressing, but because I don't trust anything they say. I don't want to get excited over things that might be bullshit. I'm not paranoid, just sensitive because I've been burned too many times by the media.

I once received a call to go to a car accident. When I arrived a huge Black man was standing outside of a pick-up truck which was smashed against a tree about 20 feet off the road. It was a single vehicle accident and it seemed that no one was injured. It was obvious that this guy was drunk. It was obvious to me and I could tell it

was to all the bystanders by their comments. I knew I had to lock him up. So, I told him he was under arrest for drunk driving and placed him in handcuffs. He was so drunk he could barely stand up. So I leaned him against his truck and ignored him for awhile. When I was ready to leave, I went over to get him. Once I got into his range he kicked me in the shins. It smarted, but I wasn't going to make too big a deal out of it. Believe it or not, I told him that if he did it again I was going to get really pissed. What do you expect, he kicks me again. Now there's all sorts of people standing around on this warm, sunny summer afternoon. I hear comments like, 'Hey man, I wouldn't take no shit from that asshole.' I then stood on his feet and told him to knock it off and he said he would. So I got off his feet and he kicked me again. You know, he had on work boots and my legs were beginning to really hurt. I then told him that if he did it again I'd break his knee caps. Naturally, I didn't literally mean what I said, but I was trying to break through his drunken sense of the world in the reality of the situation. He never kicked me again.

The next day there's an article in the newspaper describing the offensive nature with which I had made the arrest. Somebody in the crowd went to a reporter and told him or her that I tried to break a guy's legs and so the guy kept kicking me. The guy never filed a complaint and he later stated that he'd be willing to go to court with

me if I wanted to sue the reporter. This guy was grateful that I really didn't kick the shit out of him. It wasn't a racial issue like the newspaper claimed. The guy was kicking me, what was I to do? I contacted a lawyer for advice. You know what he told me after he finished laughing? He said, 'You haven't got a chance in court. You're a cop, how can your reputation be ruined?'"

Theme 16: Inappropriate training.

Six participants referred to their training as being inappropriate. One participant states, "I feel that most of the training which I get is reactionary. It's called C.Y.A., or cover your ass. I'd be happy if I felt the training was being given to improve my skills. Most of the training is conducted to satisfy folks out in the community who have complaints about us.

Now we're being given human relations training in order to improve our ability to relate with the public. I agree with the concept and it is badly needed. But to me, it's like pissing in the wind. You can't mandate this kind of training. Those that need it the most will perceive of it as punishment and they'll resist it until hell freezes over. Also, human relations is a two way street. The public should also be involved. Wouldn't it be better to not only inform us about issues of oppression, but to also better inform the public about the nature and reality of

our work? And even if you do that, there's still those guys who are so stressed out that this kind of training will never touch them. Those guys have got to be debriefed and brought in from the cold before this kind of training will work. Anyway, we sit through the training and go through the motions knowing full well that to us, the most important part of the training is that it got us off the night shift for a few days."

Theme 17: Responsibility, both on and off duty, for a lethal weapon.

Five participants expressed concern about their responsibility for their service weapons. One participant declares, "No matter what time of the day or night, or what day of the year it is, whether I'm drunk or out swimming, I know where my gun is. It's not a terrible burden, but it can wear on me. I'm always a little paranoid that something is going to happen; either someone is accidentally shot, or someone steals it, or I'm going to need it. It really doesn't matter why, but that gun is never very far from my thoughts."

Theme 18: Issues of sexism and gender.

Though only two participants referred to issues of sexism, it must be clearly stated that there were only two women in the study. It is impossible to predict what the data from a larger sample of women would provide, but is

reasonable to assume that for women police officers these are critical issues for them. Excerpts from both female participants are presented. The first describes that, "In the police academy I was taught that it was 'us' versus 'them.' We were taught that we were better than the public, but they didn't know it. It took me about six months before I started to notice things. Maybe even a year. I started noticing cop's attitudes. In the academy the 'us' were the cops; and the 'them' were the citizens. Once I was in the cruisers the 'us' and the 'them' became the 'me' and 'him.' Comments were made about every thing. There were comments about me being a women. It was pathetic."

The second female participant explains that, "When I now stop and think about it, the most stressful part of my job is gender, being a woman. The motorists all think that female troopers are lesbians. Almost all of the male troopers that I work with are great and they treat me as an equal. But there are a few who make my life miserable. One minute they act nice, the next minute they're messing with me. I can handle the motorists because I know what to expect of them. It's a clear cut relationship between me and the public. I've got a job to do. They expect me to do it and I do it. What I can't deal with is the shit heads I work with. I'm not afraid that they won't back me up or support me while I'm out on the road. What I can't stand

is their attitudes. Perhaps even worse, state police management talks a good game, but they allow all too much of this kind of stuff to happen. It certainly is a male organization dominated by male attitudes."

Summary. Figure 1, The Frequency of Themes, appears on the next page and summarizes the frequency of themes.

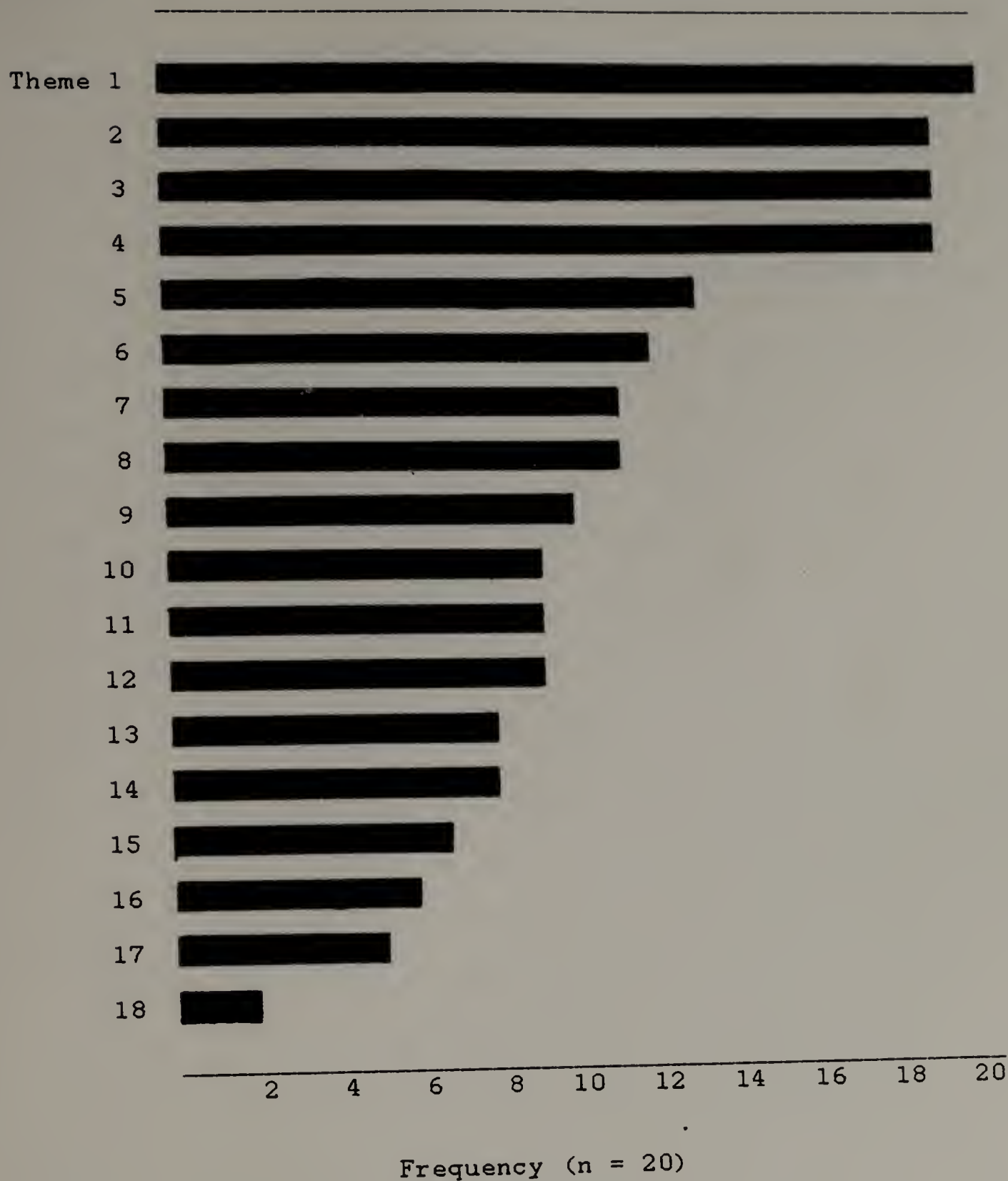


Figure 1. Frequency of Themes

Data Interpretation and Analysis

We all experience stress in our daily lives. Is police work "really" more stressful than other occupations? The author believes the answer to be "no!" Of course police work is stressful, but it is no more stressful than many other high-stress occupations. Naturally, police officers are concerned with the acute stressors associated with the threat of death or serious physical injury, but the participants in this study clearly state that such stressors do not significantly affect them. Similar to many other workers, the participants in this study were most affected by issues relating to management practices, administrative policies, and organizational goals.

The author would like to argue that given the results of this study, the etiology of police stress is more often affected by systemic influences rather than by individual influences. The literature on police occupational stress has identified the following four basic categories of stressors:

- (1) stressors inherent in police work;
- (2) stressors stemming from the policies and practices of police management and organizations;
- (3) external stressors arising from the criminal justice system and society in general, and;
- (4) internal stressors of individual officers.

Clearly, from the results of this study, it is the second category of stressors that is most consequential to the participants. (Seven of the 18 themes relate to category 2 and are identified and discussed in Chapter 5).

The primary service provided by municipal police agencies is the "officer on patrol." Ideally, patrol work has been the mainstay of modern American policing. But for a great many departments, patrol work is what officers do when they're new to the job, being punished, or waiting until they get promoted or transferred. At worst, patrol has been the dumping ground for officers who are incompetent, impaired, or burned-out. The lowest status in policing goes to the patrol officers, and higher status goes to supervisors and detectives, at least from an organizational point of view. In some departments officers get "busted to patrol". It is doubtful that officers ever get "busted to the detective bureau." The author believes that police organizations have it all backwards. If the most important service provided by the police is the patrol function, then why isn't patrol treated that way by police agencies?

The average patrol officer handles the public's most urgent problems and must make complicated decisions immediately. Moreover, they do it with little supervision or support. If they make the correct decision they're okay, if not, they're in trouble. Firefighters also have a stressful job, but when they respond to the scene of a

fire they respond as a team with their supervisors at their side as partners in the combined effort to "knock down" the fire. Police officers are usually alone and without the immediate support of management. Officers do not think of management as partners, but as adversaries. Police management treats patrol officers as if they did little to advance the goals of policing. For example, the salaries of patrol officers are often less than that of detectives. Subsequently, officers have turned to police unions for guidance and leadership rather than to police management. Little does management realize that they have sabotaged and hindered their relationship with patrol officers.

Present day police management measures organizational effectiveness by their community's crime rate as well as how quickly their patrol officers can respond to a call for service; the faster, the better. This has been accomplished by linking patrol cars to elaborate radio and computer dispatching systems. But management presses officers to be "in service" rather than "out of service" when dealing with people's problems. As television's Sargent Joe Friday from Dragnet would say, "Just the facts, Ma'am." From a management position he was basically saying, "I haven't got the time to deal with you lady. I've got a task to finish, please don't clutter my professionalism. Just give me the facts so I can move on to my next case."

Police management does not want their patrol officers to get overly involved with the public they serve. They believe that it's not professional, that it leads to corruption, and that officers will be less likely to take criminal action against people they have come to know and care for. For generations police management has believed that in order to prevent corruption and to be more professional, it was necessary to centralize authority, limit discretion, and reduce the intimacy between the police and citizens. For instance, since the 1940's there has been a constant reduction in the number of officers "walking the beat." Contrary to police management's beliefs, the more their patrol officers become involved in the community, the more likely the community is going to get involved in a crime prevention partnership with the police. Citizens are more likely to disclose information about crime to an officer they know personally than to an automaton that drives past in a patrol car.

It's almost as if the main purpose of policing is to be efficient and free of corruption. Police management seems to measure organizational effectiveness and value according to the above standards without realizing that those standards destroy the emotions, energy, and commitment of its patrol force. Management is afraid to take risks, namely to change its organizational goals. If policing were a private business that was wallowing, and

it refused to take risks, then it might very well go out of business. A poor manager in private industry expects to be removed and replaced. In policing, many managers are civil servants and their jobs are protected. Poor police managers are almost never removed or replaced. Hence, they are usually stagnant in their goals and entrenched in their values. Poor police managers do not have to take risks and change because there are only a few people in our society who are asking them to change.

Where do police managers come from? In most departments they come up through the ranks. In a larger department a "lousy street cop" is usually taken off the street. They are usually put inside at the booking desk or in the records room or in the garage pumping gasoline into vehicles. While inside they are provided with more of an opportunity to get ahead. Either because they can find more time to study for the tests, or because of their close personal proximity to administrators. It's easier to promote someone you know than it is to promote someone you don't. Besides, most good street cops have blemishes on their records, such as a citizen complaint. Cops working the desk can use an eraser to fix their mistakes.

Sadly enough, most police organizations have only one or two people doing all the decision making while everyone else is expected to carry out those decisions on the street. Add to this the efficiency goals of most police departments which require officers to dehumanize them-

selves in the name of time, and the end result is officers resenting management and its policies.

Police management has wasted valuable human resources in the name of efficiency. This organizational goal can destroy an officer's emotions, energy, and commitment, and may lead to stress related problems. Many officers discover that the greater their passion for involvement, the quicker the disillusionment. When officers do have problems with stress, there are usually no specialized helping programs available. The author estimates that there are probably 75 police stress programs for roughly 16,000 municipal police agencies across the United States. Ninety percent of those agencies average 100 employees or less. The vast majority of the departments have not allocated the necessary energy and resources to help officers with stress problems because their resources require that they put as many people as possible on the streets in order to quickly respond to calls for service. Until police management recognizes the problem, then police stress will continue to take its toll upon officers.

In the future, police managers will have to manage through values, rather than merely through policies and procedures. The challenge is to redefine the goals of police management policies and procedures in light of their effects on the officers who are required to achieve those goals.

Given the subjective focus of this study, it is appropriate for the author to introduce material that goes beyond the data generated from the interviewing process. From a purely objective and empirical research perspective, the following material is not specifically supported by the findings of this study. However, the subjective experience of stress is a valid psychological concept. Therefore, the author's personal and professional experiences can provide a rich source of additional data. It is at this point where the discussion heads away from the scientifically obtained data toward the author's own understanding of police stress.

The primary work experiences of police officers are centered around people in trouble, in conflict, or in violation of the law. They experience the meaningless injury and death of others. They see people at their most blameworthy moments. The police have been plunged into the role of caretakers for society's apathy, neglect and failure. Police officers often feel that the community in which they serve lacks human decency and morality. For many officers, human purpose and value become meaningless in a society that seems to be in a natural state of permanent chaos. After awhile, such a burden causes many officers to become emotionally exhausted or burned-out. Wisely, many choose not to get involved.

Almost every police officer possesses values that stress the sacredness of life and individual freedom. Yet,

in the name of these values, they are required to deprive individuals of their freedom and in rare circumstances, to even take citizens' lives. It is sometimes distressing to police officers when they are required to do such things. It is so much easier on the psyche of an officer if the world can be polarized into an "us versus them" situation. On a psychic level police officers have to prove to themselves that their work is ethical and correct according to their own values. Their values require them to care for and help people; and to respect individual freedom. Therefore, when officers are required to violate these values in the performance of their duty, it is natural for them to rationalize that those on the receiving end deserve what they get. Yet, they chose their work because of those values. Officers may then become involved in an intrapersonal conflict and struggle to better understand themselves, their role, and how it all relates to others.

The crux of the matter is that the police are intimately involved in the anxiety, fear, and violence that occurs to the members of our society. The working police officer experiences society's frustration, disappointment, and alienation. Officers feel that the higher the degree of personal investment in police work, the less the satisfaction and the greater the stress.

How do police officers measure their worth and value?
How many people do they have to arrest before their work

is done? How many speeding tickets do they have to write before motorists stop speeding? How many drug dealers do they have to remove from the streets before the drug epidemic is over? For many police officers, they resign themselves to the fact that no matter how hard they try, they're never going to win the game. If they were professional athletes and were told by their coach that they were never going to win a game, then their energy and motivation would be ruined. Why would an athlete ever want to put on a uniform and take the field if he or she knew that a game would never be won? To a certain extent, many officers feel the same way about their work and subsequently begin to feel insignificant and lousy about themselves. It is here that stress plays a critical role in the meaning that police officers make of their work.

At a psychic level, stress validates an officer's experience. Stress is the "purple heart" of policing. Stress becomes an officer's red badge of courage. Being "stressed out" means that an officer is a good cop. Stress is the epitome of good job performance. Officers often say to each other, "If you're a good cop, you get stressed. If you're a lousy cop, you don't!" Stress has become the currency through which officers exchange meaning. For many police officers, stress then becomes a life vest and keeps them afloat in stormy seas. However, as with any life vest that is worn for too long, it can become water logged and drag the person down.

CHAPTER 5

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

A quiet revolution has recently taken place in American industry and business. At the heart of this revolution is the acknowledgement by management that there is a direct link between management practices and employee health, productivity, and job satisfaction. Managers who appreciate the principle of "managing the whole person" encourage participation from employees and recognize their efforts. Managers who genuinely support their subordinates as people as well as valued employees foster good health and diminish the effects of potentially harmful stress.

The most frequently perceived occupational stressor by the participants in this study, namely Anger and a sense of betrayal with management practices and administrative policies that cause unnecessary distress, is directly related to the autocratic management practices of police organizations. In an autocratic system, management has little trust in subordinates. Employees are seldom involved in decision making processes. Orders are issued downward through a chain of command. Superior and subordinate relationships are characterized by fear on the part of the subordinate, and employees work under the threat of punishment.

For most police officers "stress" is synonymous with "management." From a personal perspective the author was affected by the participant's sense of betrayal on the part of management. One participant states, "My job is tough enough as it is. No, it's worse than that. It's impossible to do and escape unharmed. Why make it harder on us? Management doesn't serve our needs. We serve theirs."

It is probably safe to assume that, as a result of this study's data and the body of literature, the average American police department manages its personnel according to autocratic management practices. Whether this is intentional on the part of police management or an inevitable outcome of the functioning of a police organization is a moot point. As long as an officer perceives management as a threat, then management will continue to remain a stressor and the profession will have to deal with the effects.

The scientific field of police occupational stress has identified a myriad of occupational stressors. Many of those stressors are inherent in the nature of the work and are unavoidable. These unavoidable stressors are ingrained in the work, such as the threat of physical danger. Many police officers understand this concept and are not overly affected by this type of stressor, though they are sensitive to it.

Naturally, stressful experiences are a part of every person's life, but it is the meaning that a person makes of these stressful experiences that determine to what extent, if any, they are affected by them. Whether a stressor negatively affects an officer's health depends partly upon how that officer makes meaning of the stressor. For example, one participant aptly describes the meaning he attaches to his experience with the threat of danger; "The fear of being shot, or the fear of being beaten up, or the fear of being injured is, to me, not a true fear. I think that when police officers get shot and killed for a good long time after that it stays in everybody's mind. Maybe we tend to be a little more cautious, we tend to be more careful, and we tend to be a little more disciplined in how we approach people that we're not sure of or just generally how we handle ourselves. It's not to say that we become Gestapo.

Certainly I don't think that I am going to die. I say 'This may be the day that I die.' I don't get hung up on it. I don't dwell on it. You have to realize that you could die today, that you could get killed today, or when you get into the cruiser that it could happen. But you don't dwell on it. It's not something that causes a great deal of stress. My mother might worry about it. My wife might worry about that a lot. I don't worry about that."

It seems that the day-in and day-out routine of being an employee in an autocratic organization is more stress-

ful to the participants of this study than being a crime fighter facing death and danger. The overwhelming majority of police officers are never shot, stabbed, beaten, or run over by cars. Though, they do face these potential threats daily and some officers are affected by them. But, in both epidemiologic and clinical research on risk factors conducive to disease, both physical as well as psychiatric, the relatively minor, routine, and everyday stressors are emerging as the main culprits (Breznitz & Goldberger, 1982). Keeping this fact in mind it is critical to note that the results of this study have identified the frequency of stressors. And it is the frequency, as well as the severity of a stressor, that determines to what degree a person is affected by it.

Blanchard and Tager (1985) put forth the proposition that autocratic management practices can make employees sick. They acknowledge that autocratic management practices alone cannot make an employee sick, but the cumulative effects of poor management practices do wear down an employee's energy and enthusiasm to the point where illness often occurs.

Officers don't perceive of management as part of their support system. Researchers have demonstrated that support systems are crucial to an officer's health. Melnychuk (1985) reports that the immune system is directly influenced by nerve impulses from the brain as well as by

hormones that are increased by stress reactions. Stress hormones have the capacity to diminish our immune defenses (Robinson & Uttal, 1983). Lack of social support exacerbates stress reactions, while social support facilitates positive reactions (Haan, 1982). Officers recognize and understand the lack of support from the public. That lack of support does affect them and can be considered a significant stressor, but many officers accept this as an unpleasant fact of life. However, the perceived lack of support from management indirectly harms an officer's well being and is clearly avoidable.

As in any human relationship, the blow that comes from the hand that we least expect it from, is the one that hurts us the most. Officers eventually perceive themselves to be working under the constant threat of punishment from management and are ill prepared to meet threats from the side where they think it is safe.

Autocratic management practices, which by themselves are a significant stressor, also increase an officer's reactions to other stressors. If a person has a headache he or she is more likely to be sensitive to loud noises. In the same way, an autocratic management style increases an officer's sensitivity to other stressors, thereby increasing reactions. If police management styles become more democratic, participatory, and supportive, there could be an across the board reduction in negative reactions to many occupational stressors.

In this study 18 emergent stress themes have been presented by the author. The author believes that at least 7 of the 18 themes can be directly impacted by a change from autocratic to participatory management practices on the part of police organizations. These themes are:

- Theme 1. Anger and a sense of betrayal with management practices and administrative policies that cause unnecessary distress.
- Theme 5. Poor use by management of individual officer's talents and skills.
- Theme 6. Job dissatisfaction. (Boredom, long hours, low pay, stay with the job just for job security.)
- Theme 7. Few extrinsic rewards for good job performance.
- Theme 8. Little participation in decision making procedures that affect working conditions.
- Theme 11. Anger at the system for ignoring or denying that officers have problems; and a lack of resources for problems.
- Theme 16. Inappropriate training.

It should be noted that many themes overlap. It was not the purpose of the themes to clearly and specifically delineate between stressors. Rather, their purpose was to identify the perceived stressful experiences of the participants into common points of reference. Simply, what were the common interpretations and evaluations made by the participants of their work experiences? It was the shared meaning of their stressful experiences that has bonded the above seven themes into a single relationship

with police management. It is this relationship with management that is crucial if one wants to better understand what police work meant to the participants of this study.

Management reform seems to be an important task for the future well being of police officers. Participatory styles of management and organizational design produce greater worker satisfaction (Brewer, 1970; Day & Hamblin, 1970). The more autonomy police officers have, the more satisfied they are with their work (Greenberg & Smith, 1979). Simply, poor management styles amplify the effects of other occupational stressors while good practices diminish them.

In summary, the data generated in this study supports the body of literature that argues police stressors are most often associated with organizational and administrative practices (Kroes, Margolis & Hurrell, 1974; Kroes, Hurrell & margolis, 1974; French, 1975; Hageman, 1978; Aldag & Brief, 1978; Singleton & Teahan, 1978; Blackmore, 1978; Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Malloy, 1984; Gaines & Jermier, 1984).

Recommendations for Future Research

Much of the research literature has offered suggestions on how individual officers might protect themselves from the negative effects of stressors, rather than suggesting how police organizations themselves might buffer

them as well. The burden of change has been placed upon the individual without regard for other factors, particularly organizational ones.

It is assumed that an autocratic management style exacerbates other occupational stressors which in turn create additional strain for officers. Such additional strain dilutes an officer's coping capacity and opens the door for potential illnesses. Future research should analyze the effects of differing management styles on the health of police officers.

Future studies should compare the health of police officers who work in autocratic organizations with the health of other officers who work in democratic and participative police organizations. The long term goal should be to examine how police management practices might better help police officers escape from the avoidable stressors, and to buffer them from the unavoidable stressors that are inherent in their work.

In closing, the author would like to address the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology used in this study. The most difficult aspect was the fact that the author himself was the research instrument. Subsequently, it was tempting to cut corners and ignore the accepted standards of scientific research. There was also the danger that the process might have collapsed under the weight of the phenomenological world. The author was

required to exercise extreme discipline by not letting data pour in from everywhere. The author readily admits that he was unable to precisely pinpoint the origins of the data generated from the in-depth interviews. The participant's profiles and the emergent stress themes were the subjective construction of the author. On the other hand, there was no other way the author could have gained such in-depth access into the lives of police officers. The richness of the data generated by this study is the hallmark of good qualitative social research.

APPENDIX A

25 MOST STRESSFUL LAW ENFORCEMENT CRITICAL LIFE EVENTS

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>VALUE</u>
1. Violent death of a partner in the line of duty ...	88
2. Dismissal	85
3. Taking a life in the line of duty	84
4. Shooting someone in the line of duty	81
5. Suicide of an officer who is a close friend	80
6. Violent death of an officer in the line of duty ..	79
7. Murder committed by a police officer	78
8. Duty related violent injury	76
9. Violent job-related injury to another officer	75
10. Suspension	72
11. Passed over for promotion	71
12. Pursuit of an armed suspect	71
13. Answering a call to a scene involving the non-accidental death of a child	70
14. Assignment away from home for a long period	70
15. Personal involvement in a shooting incident	70
16. Reduction in pay	70
17. Observing an act of police corruption	69
18. Accepting a bribe	68
19. Participating in an act of police corruption	68
20. Hostage situation resulting from an aborted criminal action	68
21. Response to a scene involving the accidental death of a child	68
22. Promotion of inexperienced/incompetent officer over you	67
23. Internal affairs investigation against you	66
24. Barricaded suspect	66
25. Hostage situation resulting from a domestic disturbance	66

Total = 277

APPENDIX B

25 LEAST STRESSFUL LAW ENFORCEMENT CRITICAL LIFE EVENTS

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>VALUE</u>
1. Completion of a routine traffic report	13
2. Court appearance (traffic)	19
3. Issuing of a traffic citation	20
4. Vacation	20
5. Making a routine traffic stop	22
6. Overtime pay	22
7. Pay raise	23
8. Dealing with a drunk	23
9. Working a traffic accident	23
10. Court appearance (misdemeanor)	24
11. Call involving the arrest of a female	24
12. Assigned to a one-person car	25
13. Routine patrol stop	25
14. Call involving juveniles	25
15. Assigned to a two-person car	25
16. Making a routine arrest	26
17. Work on a holiday	26
18. Assignment to the day shift	26
19. Award from a citizens' group	27
20. Response to a "sick or injured person" call	28
21. Delay in a trial	28
22. Letter of recognition from the public	29
23. Overtime duty	29
24. Release of an offender by a jury	33
25. Departmental budget cut	33
Total = <u>591</u>	

APPENDIX C

WRITTEN CONSENT FORM

The Work of Police Officers: A Study Through In-Depth Interviews

1. I, Gary L. Berte, am a doctoral candidate at the University of Massachusetts. As a part of my doctoral dissertation I am conducting a research study which requires that I interview 20 police officers. I am interested in conducting this research study because I have been doing work related to the field of police occupational stress for the past several years. Through the use of this study I wish to explore how police officers make meaning of their work. This study requires that I interview 20 participants. Each participant shall be a working, full-time police officer. This study intends to explore the question of "What is it like to be a police officer?"

2. You are being asked to be one of the 20 participants in this study. I will conduct three interviews with you. Each interview will be ninety minutes in length. The first interview will center around the question of "How did you come to work as a police officer?" The second interview shall focus upon "What is it like for you to work as a police officer?" And the final interview will focus upon the question of "What does it mean to you to work as a police officer?"

While the above questions shall provide a framework for the interviews, my intent in conducting this study is not simply to seek the answers to these questions. My intentions are to explore the meanings that police officers make of their work. Therefore, these questions are used to stimulate discussion of your stories and the recreation of your experiences within the framework that these questions establish.

3. The interviews will be audio-taped and later transcribed by a secretary. My goal is to analyze the material from the interviews and compose a written report. The report will be primarily in your words. This report will be presented by me to my doctoral committee consisting of three University faculty members. My report shall be presented in both an oral and written form. A portion of the audio-tape may also be presented.

4. In all of my written and oral presentations I shall NOT use your name, nor the names of the people close to you; nor shall I use the name of your department nor the name of the place in which you live. All transcripts will be typed with initials to replace the use of proper names.

Corresponding audio-tapes shall be given the same protection either by deletion of the names from the tapes or by selection for use of only those portions of the audio-tape where names were not used.

5. While consenting at this time to participate in these interviews, you may at any time and for any reason withdraw from the actual interview process.

6. Furthermore, while having consented to participate in the interview process and having done so, you may withdraw your consent to have specific excerpts from your interviews used in any printed or oral presentations. I request a minimum two week notice from you in order that I may make the appropriate change.

7. In signing this form you are agreeing to the use of the materials from your interviews as indicated in this consent form. If I were to use the material in any other way I would contact you to gain your additional written consent.

8. In signing this form, you are also assuring me that you will make no financial claims against me for the use of the materials from your interviews.

9. In signing this consent form you are also stating that no medical treatment will be required by you from the University of Massachusetts or by me should any injury result from participating in these interviews.

Finally, at your request I will be happy to furnish you with the audio-tapes of your interviews and any copies of presented written materials from your interviews.

I, _____, have read the above statements and agree to participate as an interviewee under the conditions stated in this consent form.

Signature of Participant

Date

Interviewer

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