

*1999 Herman Goldstein Award for
Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing*

Case Title:

"NOT IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD"

Presented by:

Torrance Police Department

Case Coordinator:

Community Lead Officer
Richard "Andy" Anderson

"NOT IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD"

ABSTRACT

In the latter part of 1997, the Torrance Police Department was presented with an almost overwhelming neighborhood problem. The impact that this problem had on the quality of life within this neighborhood was clearly explained in a letter received by Torrance city officials from a resident living in Irving, Texas. The author, a relative of one of the neighbors, had just finished an extended visit in the area. From this visit, the author captured the feelings of fear that held this neighborhood hostage. The letter itself closed with the following statement, *"Please let me know what the police department and city services can do regarding this threat"* From this letter city officials turned to the police department and specifically the Community Lead Officer Program with a demand of resolution.

The indicated threat was an individual who had lived most of his life in this neighborhood. Starting with early drug experimentation that eventually resulted in this individual's bizarre and threatening lifestyle, he continually spread fear throughout the neighborhood with his dysfunctional and anti-social conduct. It should be noted, the subject was not a candidate for state intervention as he was not decreed legally insane. This necessitated his cooperation in all actions taken. This made the challenge at hand even harder.

The story that follows is about how Community Lead Officer Richard Anderson, using the SARA methods involved in community-based policing, was able to answer the plea, *"Please let me*

know what the police department and city sendees can do regarding this threat" and bring the quality of life back to this neighborhood. By coordinating the actions of various city and judicial personnel, private industry professionals and family members, Officer Anderson was able to bring this situation to a successful conclusion. A conclusion that led to statements of thanks from the residents of the affected neighborhood such as the following:

*"I cannot tell you and there are no words to express my thanks for your most appreciated assistance. You solved my problems and literally gave my life, home and sanity back to me. I will never forget your kindness, concern and wisdom. Please accept my heartfelt thanks and gratitude and may God bless you always."*¹

The Torrance Police Department is very proud to present this project in consideration for the 1999 Individual Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing.

¹ Appendix Exhibit "A "

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PROFILE:

A little about the project coordinator: Officer Richard "Andy" Anderson is a 28-year police officer with the Torrance Police Department in Torrance, California. During the period in question, Officer Anderson was assigned as a COMMUNITY LEAD OFFICER, working and solving long-term problems within the city. His law enforcement experience includes Patrol, SWAT, Field Training, Vice & Narcotics, Detective Investigation, Accident Investigation, Motors, D.U.I, and Services. The city of Torrance is 21.5 square miles, has an approximate population of 150,000 and is located approximately 20 miles south of the city of Los Angeles. Torrance services several large shopping malls, has a major industrial area and has an equal number of apartments and single family residences. It is an incorporated city with its own city manager, mayor and city council. Torrance also has its own Superior Municipal Court that supports the southern Los Angeles County area. The Torrance Police Department employs 248 officers.

The following is one of the cases Officer Anderson worked as a Community Lead Officer

SCANNING:

From the latter part of 1997 through most of 1998, Officer Anderson was presented with and successfully solved a problem concerning a dysfunctional, white, male, adult residing in the City of Torrance. Dating back to his youth, this subject had an extensive criminal history with the

Torrance Police Department. Drug usage throughout his teenage and adult years had left this individual extremely incapable and dependent. Residing with his mother had kept the subject somewhat in check, but with her demise in early 1997, this individual was left to fend for himself. Unable to cope with the responsibility of being alone, his behavior became increasingly bizarre and irrational and began having a devastating impact on the quality of life of the residents in his neighborhood.

This problem was brought to Officer Anderson's attention in October of 1997 by a letter that was drafted by private citizens. The letter expressed the citizens' concerns for the safety and well being of their families and neighborhood. It identified an individual who will throughout the remainder of this report be referred to as "STANLEY". The letter described Stanley's bizarre actions and the rising level of fear of those subjected to his antics. Described were incidents of Stanley dancing nude in front of open windows, wearing his dead mother's clothing and wig, screaming and calling for help in the middle of the night when no threat was apparent, acting like a crazed, wild man swinging a machete relentlessly about, playing with a doll that had a knife stuck through it and trashing his home without intent or purpose. A woman from Irving, Texas wrote pleading "PLEASE let me know what the police department **and** city services can do regarding this THREAT"²

Impacted by this letter, Officer Anderson began a work-up of this subject named "STANLEY". What was his problem? And why did a community feel threatened by this person? Officer Anderson discovered that Stanley lived alone in the house his mother had left him. This residence

was located in an affluent part of Torrance where homes are valued at \$400,000. and up. The homes and yards are well-groomed and it is a quiet area with very little outside traffic. In researching the department's premise file history, Officer Anderson noted that calls-for-service to the area were above the norm.³ Specifically, Stanley, who was now 46 years old, had been in trouble with law enforcement most of his life.

In viewing Stanley's residence, the validity of the neighbors' concerns was evident. The property contained a single story, single family, 3-bedroom residence with a rear, detached, 2-car garage. The glass from approximately 60% of the windows had been broken out by Stanley. The grass was overgrown and a large amount of junk, trash and debris had been collected and accumulated on the property including the driveway. There were no curtains on the windows, the house was in need of painting everywhere and the exterior doors had large holes in them.

Based on what he had learned thus far, Officer Anderson chose to make contact with Stanley. He found him in his driveway organizing his junk collection. Officer Anderson presented himself in an informal manner and explained to Stanley that he was the area C.L.O. working with the residents to better their quality of life. Officer Anderson was interested in establishing a rapport with this subject and was invited into Stanley's home for a drink. What Officer Anderson discovered upon entering Stanley's home left him "weak-kneed".⁴ The amount of trash, hazards and filth and the degree of deterioration were saddening. Officer Anderson thought anyone who would accept living in those conditions must have some degree of mental illness. He then spent about an hour talking with Stanley and establishing a rapport with him. He discovered through

conversation with Stanley that he had three daughters from two previous marriages and that his estate was presently in probate due to the death of his mother. Officer Anderson was even able to obtain the name of Stanley's attorney before concluding his visit.

ANALYSIS:

Using the S.A.R.A. principle, Officer Anderson moved into the analysis stage of his investigation. He began a work-up on the problems he had identified. Officer Anderson contacted and interviewed Stanley's attorney of probate and learned that Stanley had inherited an estate worth several million dollars involving five properties. He learned that this estate upon closure of probate would be in jeopardy due to Stanley's inability to oversee the estate's affairs. Officer Anderson identified Stanley's daughters through the attorney and learned there were no contingencies set aside for their futures. He also learned that Stanley had criminal matters presently pending through our local courts.

Using city resources, Officer Anderson contacted fire department inspectors, an environmental officer, the health department and building & safety personnel. He discovered that Stanley had previously been processed through the Torrance Police Department as a (5150 W.I.C.) mental health services candidate, but the city was unable to sustain his commitment. Officer Anderson researched the department's local computer history and verified the continued calls for service to Stanley's residence; the calls included drug offenses, disturbances and assaults. The calls were not being handled collectively which yielded only a temporary, band-aid fix each time. He determined this case and its problems were deep-seeded. While Stanley's mother was alive, the problem had

been mildly controlled, but with her death, there was no longer anyone to keep Stanley's behavior in check. Due to the ineffectiveness of the band-aid approach to this case over the years, it was felt this was a "classic" Community Lead Officer project that could greatly benefit from long-term problem solving methods.

Officer Anderson set up meetings with Stanley's family and the probate attorney to discuss goals for Stanley and the family estate. Also included were Stanley's criminal attorney of record and a civil attorney for the purpose of pursuing a conservatorship, and some older, long-term friends of Stanley's mother who seemed to have some positive influence over Stanley's behavior. Officer Anderson contacted the South Bay Superior Court and together with a designated conservatorship attorney met with the residing judge. They discussed their options and criteria for obtaining a conservatorship over Stanley and the family estate. Officer Anderson then negotiated plea-bargain powers from the city attorney's office that would enable him to deal directly with Stanley's attorneys and matters at hand. Officer Anderson concluded his analysis stage by hosting a meeting involving Stanley's neighbors that resulted in 15 homes being represented and an attendance of over 25 people.⁵

RESPONSE:

In stage three of the S.A.R.A. method, Officer Anderson began to implement his response plan. This included the use of S.M.A.R.T. (Special Multi Agency Response Team) which is comprised of individuals from different departments within the City of Torrance Government including the city manager's office, city attorney's office, police, fire, environmental, building & safety, health,

housing authority, parks & recreation and some other departments on a need-to-use basis. S.M.A.R.T. is specifically designed to address those issues within the city of Torrance that affect its development. The pivotal part of this team is the Torrance Police Department's Community Lead Officers and their roles within the community. The team is self-funded and is headed by the assistant city manager. Monthly meetings address the issues of concern which are then prioritized according to need. The C.L.O. unit utilizes this resource in almost every project it works and without it would be ineffective in its long-term problem solving endeavors.

In addition to S.M.A.R.T., Officer Anderson used the South Bay Municipal Court which held jurisdiction over legal matters in this case and the city attorney's office which empowered him to utilize plea-bargaining if needed. He worked with the civil probate attorney as well as the attorney of record for the intended conservatorship. Officer Anderson was supported by Stanley's criminal attorney in helping to dispense his criminal matters, the daughters (heirs to Stanley's estate, ages 7, 16 & 20) and close family friends. If successful, there would also be a need to hire contractors for restoration of the property in question.

Officer Anderson began by having meetings with Stanley in an attempt to gain his cooperation. When met with resistance, he coordinated the fire and environmental departments' inspections of Stanley's residence. Those inspections which were based primarily on health and safety issues resulted in complaints being filed with the city attorney's office alleging seven criminal counts.⁶ These violations consisted of property nuisance, maintaining junk, accumulation of debris, pest

harborage, fire hazard, etc.. In addition to the already pending matters against Stanley, these issues were handled by the same attorney.

To begin resolution of this matter, Officer Anderson attempted to persuade Stanley to enter into a conservatorship to control his financial matters; this was met early on with resistance. Officer Anderson then pursued getting the property and residence in compliance with city ordinances. He was able to accomplish this with Stanley's probate attorney and contractors. Officer Anderson arranged for visitations and outings for Stanley and his daughters. Continued support, building and maintaining a rapport with Stanley and supervising matters at hand made Officer Anderson's project a success. He also had to build a rapport and understanding with Stanley's family members to convince them he was working in their and their father's best interests. As cleanup continued, Officer Anderson brought into the picture the conservatorship attorney and worked at establishing a rapport between all involved.

Using the pending legal matters as leverage, Officer Anderson was able to negotiate compromises with Stanley that allowed for progress, including cleaning up the property in question. At first, Stanley accepted the changes and the attention given him slowly. With the continued support of Stanley's daughters, attorneys and friends, Officer Anderson was able to convince Stanley he needed to consider entrusting his future to a conservator. A court date was scheduled during which Stanley agreed to enter into a temporary conservatorship over his property. In January of 1998, Stanley entered this conservatorship and progress in securing his future and his well-being was made. He was temporarily relocated to a medical bed & board facility that provided all his

necessities and drug dependency treatment. This facility provided services to people who were in like situations and he was able to come and go as he saw fit. Stanley met new friends and was provided with a monthly spending allotment. During Stanley's relocation, the continued support and visitation by his daughters seemed to be the best prescription for improvement. Meanwhile, in his absence and under the direction of the probate attorney, Stanley's property was cleaned up. The house was completely renovated and landscaped (using estate funds) and put on the market for sale. Working with the civil attorneys, Officer Anderson was able to set up a living trust for the daughters. This would protect their inheritances and provide them with security in the future.

Using pending court matters as well as family support, Stanley was persuaded to cooperate with solving the problem he had created. In February 1998, Stanley reappeared before the Judge in regard to his conservatorship; he recognized the benefits of the treatment he had been receiving over the previous six weeks and agreed to enter into a final conservatorship. On February 18, 1999, Stanley entered the conservatorship over both his person and property.⁷ Based on his cooperation and accomplishments, the pending criminal matters against Stanley were dropped. Further, in working with the civil attorneys, probate was closed, the living trust was drafted and all civil matters relevant to this case were resolved.

ASSESSMENT:

In the assessment stage of this project, Officer Anderson examined the goals he had originally set out to achieve. His original goals identified the following problems:

1.) **A dysfunctional person in need of assistance and illegal drug use:** Officer Anderson was able to bring a quality of life back to this individual in both his health and well-being. Officer Anderson was able to restore this individual's relationships with his children. Through the efforts of this project, Stanley will no longer be a problem for society.

2.) **Neglected property:** Officer Anderson was able to clean-up intolerable conditions that impacted the community/neighborhood and restore a neglected property to an acceptable state.

3.) **Quality of life as it impacts the neighbors:** Through intervention, Officer Anderson was able to eliminate the problems that had been threatening this neighborhood. By relocating the person responsible for the problems, he was able to bring final resolution to this problem. He was able to restore the property in question to the neighborhood's standards.

4.) **Impact on the community:** Prior to Officer Anderson's intervention, there had been numerous calls for service to this location; following the intervention, there are no longer any calls for service by city departments. The crime and nuisances that once plagued the area no longer exist.

5.) **Fire/Health/Building & Safety issues:** These issues no longer exist due to the renovation of the targeted property. The relocation of the owner and resale of the property will eliminate recurrence.

In addition to the problems identified and resolved above, Officer Anderson was able to resolve other issues. First, a conservatorship for both Stanley's person and property was obtained. This will ensure that the dysfunctional subject will receive proper care for the remainder of his life as

well as protect his finances. Second, in the future, his heirs will also be protected. To ensure this and to provide fair administration of the dysfunctional subject's assets, a living trust was drawn up for his three children. This will allow them economic security later in life.

The evaluation process to determine the degree of success of this project was two-fold. First, periodic inquiries were conducted through the department's computer history file. Unlike the numerous calls-for-service at the onset of this case, the activity ledger now showed "NO ACTIVITY".⁸ These inquiries were done six months and one year after the case was closed. Second, follow-up contacts with the conservatorship attorney of record indicated Stanley was still pursuing his road to recovery. At six months and one year he was adapting quite well to his new surroundings. Third, Stanley's daughters were contacted at the same intervals and they were doing well and frequently had contact with their father. And finally, the neighbors (the original complainants in this matter) were contacted and it was learned that since the intervention, the removal of Stanley and the sale of his home, they have had no further problems on their street; their new neighbors have worked out very well. They also shared the fact that they are enjoying a quality of life they had not previously experienced.

In closing, the assessment stage of this project revealed that using the S.A.R.A. methodology of long-term problem solving enabled Officer Anderson to undertake this project and successfully complete his goals. This was truly a WIN-WIN situation that reinforced the effectiveness of Problem Oriented Policing.

² **Appendix Exhibit "B"**

³ **Appendix Exhibit "C"**

⁴ **Appendix Exhibit "D"**

⁵ Appendix Exhibit "E"

⁶ Appendix Exhibit "F"

⁷ Appendix Exhibit "G"

⁸ Appendix Exhibit "C"

AGENCY AND OFFICER INFORMATION

- 1.) This project was implemented at the Community Lead Officer Program level. This is a unit within the Department which is made up of 4 officers known as C.L.O.s and their command staff comprised of a sergeant, lieutenant and Captain. The unit is attached to the department's patrol bureau.
- 2.) C.L.O.s receive on-the-job training from their predecessors when they initially enter the detail. Each officer is sent to as many applicable P.O.P. training courses as possible throughout the year and attends the National Conference which is held in San Diego, California each year.
- 3.) The officers in the C.L.O. unit receive a premium pay increase of 5% of their base pay. They also wear specially designed chevron patches on their sleeves which distinguish them as C.L.O.s.
- 4.) C.L.O.s rely on every resource they can find. Our primary manual is the P.O.P.conference notebook along with related materials acquired through training schools.
- 5.) No issues/problems were identified with the problem-oriented policing model or the problem solving model. I found them to be very useful in developing my cases.
- 6.) Our program is designed to allow each C.L.O. the time to work his/her assigned caseload. We function the same as detectives in the investigative bureau. Our officers are uniformed and

drive black & white units, however they are generally left alone to handle their assigned responsibilities. Our department budgets for these positions which enables our C.L.O. unit to function separately from the other divisions.

7.) The project contact person for our department is:

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