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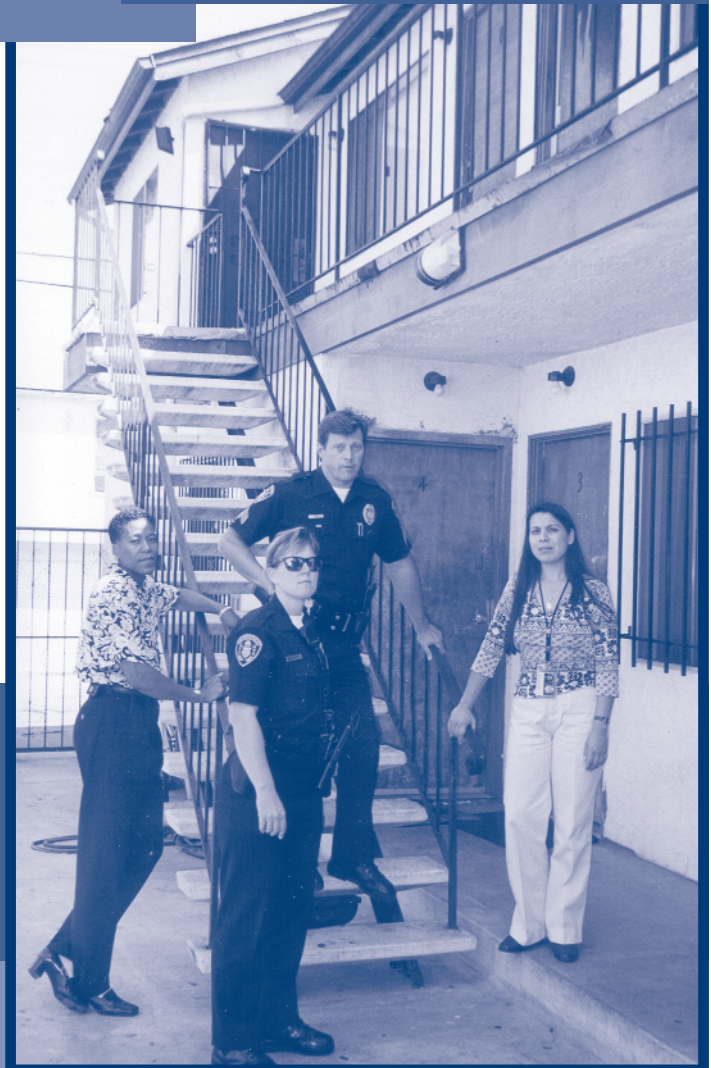
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Tackling Crime and Other Public-Safety Problems:

CASE STUDIES IN PROBLEM-SOLVING

By:

Rana Sampson and
Michael S. Scott



Burglary
Robbery
Drug Dealing
False Alarms
College-Related Crime
Graffiti

Cruising
Group Homes
Gangs
Prostitution
Park Crime
and more ...

Tackling Crime and Other Public-Safety Problems: Case Studies in Problem-Solving

Authors

Rana Sampson and Michael S. Scott

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Front cover photograph: (clockwise, starting from the left) Social Worker Recheal Stewart Brown, San Diego Sergeant Andy Mills, Community Mobilizer Monica Flores, and San Diego Officer Corinne Hard stand in front of a known drug dealing location undergoing abatement.

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Introduction

Police and citizens around the country have devised thousands of creative solutions to a wide range of crime problems. However, these thoughtful, often novel problem-solving approaches to improving public safety remain unknown to most police agencies and communities, because no comprehensive compilation exists. The authors and editors have developed this collection of case studies, a compilation of the results of police efforts to engage in problem-oriented policing, to address this critical unmet need. These case studies will be useful to those new to the practice of problem-oriented policing (POP), and to those more skilled. The case studies will illustrate for newcomers POP methodology and provide veteran problem-solvers with a body of high-quality efforts to draw upon in their work.

Problem-oriented policing evolved from 20 years of research, study and evaluation of police practices. The seeds for POP can be found in studies measuring the effectiveness of preventive patrol, rapid response and follow-up criminal investigation. Information gained from studies of community-police partnerships and of specific problems (e.g., domestic violence and police treatment of the mentally ill), along with the acknowledgment of police discretion and the increased move toward participatory police management, also contributed to POP's development.¹

Herman Goldstein first articulated the concept in a 1979 article in which he argued that the most commonly proposed improvements to policing fall far short of the mark. Most improvements focus on the means of policing (staffing, equipment, structure) rather than the ends of policing (the effectiveness of police response to crime and disorder problems).² Goldstein later more carefully and fully laid out what has become the basis for this new approach to policing.³ Summarizing, he states that "efforts to improve policing should extend to and focus on the end product of policing – on the effectiveness and fairness of the police in dealing with the substantive problems that the public looks to the police to handle."⁴

The focus on substantive problems is the essence of problem-oriented policing. This shift in focus from means to ends requires wholesale change in police organizations, and a move away from a command-and-control model. It requires a rethinking of recruitment, training, hiring, assignment, transfer, evaluation, promotion, and resource-allocation practices. But more importantly, it requires patrol officers to shift from a reactive, incident-driven model of policing to a proactive, problem-solving approach, an approach that focuses on substantive policing problems – alarms, assault, burglary, domestic violence, drug dealing, graffiti, homicide, larceny, noise complaints, prostitution, rape, and robbery.

¹For a thorough review of the research leading up to problem-oriented policing, see Eck, John E., and William Spelman. 1987. *Problem Solving: Problem-Oriented Policing in Newport News*. Washington, D.C.: Police Executive Research Forum.

²Goldstein, Herman. 1979. "Improving Policing: A Problem-Oriented Approach." *Crime and Delinquency* 25:236-258.

³Goldstein, Herman. 1990. *Problem-Oriented Policing*. New York: McGraw Hill.

⁴Ibid, p. 1.

Problem-solving projects, or problem-oriented policing projects, are officers' work product under this new approach. As well, in addition to line level personnel in the organization, sergeants, lieutenants, captains and others in a police agency are asked to engage in problem-solving to address the substantive problems in policing. The *results* of these projects are what is important, rather than the *number* of projects initiated. This is a shift away from traditional numerical measures of police success, e.g., the number of arrests made or summonses (citations) issued.

Problem-solving involves grouping like incidents, and understanding and treating these incidents differently than is done traditionally. For example, complaints of continued drug dealing on a street corner often lead to a police response, but traditionally, the response is limited to warning or arresting the offenders. In a problem-oriented approach, responding officers analyze the problem and apply a long-term, tailored solution. Arrest is only one of many tools they can use. Effectiveness is the main criterion for picking a tool. Outcome — the "what happened" in policing — is even more important.

A parallel movement to problem-oriented policing is community policing. Some suggest the two approaches are the same, disguised in different names. Others see them as disparate. Some proponents assert that their approach, whether it be problem-oriented or community-oriented policing, represents a philosophy, not a program.⁵ On the other hand, more narrowly, some see POP as merely a strategy, without recognizing its accompanying complexities. In this limited view, problem-solving is seen as the approach's sole component. Many experts in the field agree, however, that for community policing to succeed, officers must engage in problem-solving. Regardless of the conceptual framework, it is important that the police field begin to document and share the better problem-solving efforts of officers and communities.

A few attempts have been made to document problem-solving efforts, most detailing a single police agency's projects. Examples come from Baltimore County, Md.; Colorado Springs, Colo.; Edmonton, Alberta, Canada; New York City, N.Y.; Newport News, Va.; and Portland, Ore. A few police agencies have, at times, chronicled their problem-solving initiatives in departmental newsletters. Among such agencies are those in Chicago, Ill.; Fresno, Calif.; Hayward, Calif.; St. Louis, Mo.; St. Petersburg, Fla.; San Diego, Calif.; and Stockholm, Sweden. Some nonprofit organizations involved in crime-fighting have done the same. They include the Chicago Alliance for Neighborhood Safety and the Citizens Committee for New York City. Since 1988, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) has published and distributed *Problem-Solving Quarterly*, a newsletter that documents innovative problem-solving efforts by police and community members and recently PERF established an internet web site devoted to problem-solving. One particularly helpful parallel line of development to problem-oriented policing in the literature has been the *Crime Prevention Studies* series, edited by Ronald V. Clarke, an architect of the situational crime-prevention movement. In it, an international body of researchers document their efforts to understand and tackle specific crime problems, including fare evasion, auto theft and retail theft.

⁵It should be noted that Herman Goldstein does not see problem-oriented policing as a philosophy. In his view, problem-oriented policing represents a more concrete and potentially scientific approach to finding effective solutions to the pieces of police business.

What is Problem-Solving?

Problem-solving has specific meaning in the context of problem-oriented policing — a meaning that is quite different from its use in the corporate world. In *Problem-Oriented Policing*, Goldstein describes problem-solving this way:

The primary work unit in a police agency today for the officer assigned to general patrol is the incident. In the course of a typical day, a police officer will usually handle several incidents, such as the theft of a car, a barking dog, a dispute among neighbors, a robbery, a request for information, a report of suspicious circumstances, or a traffic accident . . . [Problem-solving] calls for recognizing that incidents are often merely overt symptoms of problems. This pushes the police in two directions: (1) It requires that they recognize the relationships between the incidents (similarities of behavior, location, [people] involved, etc.); and (2) it requires that they take a more in-depth interest in incidents by acquainting themselves with some of the conditions and factors that give rise to them.⁶

A proactive, problem-solving approach is markedly different from the traditional approach to addressing crime and fear in our communities. It involves tailoring solutions to unique neighborhood problems, based on thoughtful, in-depth analysis. It involves moving away from generic crime-control models or off-the-shelf solutions, because each community's crime problems are unique. If old solutions prove ineffective, the police seek new ones (e.g., when prostitution does not stop after the police shoo prostitutes off a corner once a week, the police try new solutions based on a thorough analysis of that problem's specific aspects). After implementing solutions, the police evaluate them. If the solutions are ineffective, they try other solutions.

The most difficult aspect of problem-oriented policing for police officers to grasp is carefully analyzing problems. Goldstein suggests the following:

[Analysis] means an in-depth probe of all of the characteristics of a problem and the factors that contribute to it – acquiring detailed information about, for example, offenders, victims and others who may be involved; the time of occurrence, locations and other particulars about the physical environment; the history of the problem; the motivations, gains and losses of all involved parties; the apparent (and not so apparent) causes and competing interests; and the results of current responses.⁷

Too often officers skip the analysis stage when targeting a crime problem. If they fail to analyze the problem, they cannot tailor the solution to the problem, and the prob-

lem will, in all likelihood, persist. If they are either unskilled in or impatient with analysis, the solutions they develop tend to be generic, and ineffective in the long term. For instance, if there is a high incidence of burglaries in a residential area, officers might immediately ask to have the trees trimmed and street lighting improved – a rather costly endeavor – instead of analyzing the problem carefully and comparing it with similar burglary problems, or comparing the area with areas where no burglaries occur. If officers' analytical skills are not supported by training and technical assistance, they likely will devise solutions that are not tailored to a given problem's exact parameters. Without analytical skills, officers are troubleshooters, not problem-solvers. Good problem-solving skills allow officers to seek solutions beyond the traditional. In other words, rather than assign an officer to a problem corner, police determine why the corner is a problem, and tailor specific solutions to the problem.

Police problem-solving is a process of continually looking at crime and disorder problems, analytically understanding those problems, drawing from a range of solutions, and assessing and reassessing over time the solutions' effectiveness. Doing problem-solving well requires training, skill and some research tools.⁸ Even in those agencies that purport to do problem-solving on an agency-wide basis, very often only *some* officers have received training in problem-solving. Most have not. Some of the efforts police personnel engage in which they refer to as problem-solving is of high quality, but much is not, and merely takes the form of more generic programs or targeted traditional responses. There are varying levels of sophistication, depending on the problem's complexity and the problem-solver's skill level.

Problem-oriented policing is still in its very early stages and so the projects that arise under this relatively new approach are not ones from which one can pronounce the success or failure of problem-oriented policing. As more agencies and police personnel develop experience with this approach it is likely that more rigorous projects will emerge. These early projects provide insight into the state of this approach and its potential for tackling public safety problems in communities.

Project Background

Beginning in 1995, and through most of 1997, through a National Institute of Justice (NIJ) fellowship, Rana Sampson collected information on high-quality problem-solving projects from around the United States and elsewhere. A former New York City police officer, Sampson worked in the early 1990s for PERF as problem-oriented policing coordinator and editor of *Problem-Solving Quarterly*. Since 1990, she has visited with more than 100 police agencies, assisting in their problem-oriented policing efforts and learning from their experiences. She is a frequent presenter at the International Problem-Oriented Policing Conference, has written curricula, and has served as a consultant to police agencies and communities on the subject.

⁸For problem-solving to occur on a department-wide basis, a police agency should, at the very least, encourage officers to take time to understand crime and disorder problems and to go beyond traditional responses. In addition, departments must support officers' efforts, provide assistance as needed, help carve out blocks of time for officers to problem-solve, and find ways to encourage problem-solving attempts.

To obtain material on problem-solving projects, Sampson sent police forces with 100 or more sworn officers a letter of invitation to submit information on their three highest-quality problem-solving efforts.⁹ Because so much work had been done in the area of drug abatement, she asked the agencies to send information on no more than one drug problem-solving effort. She wanted a wide range of crime, disorder and other public-safety problems. She received information on several hundred problem-solving efforts in response. She deferred to each agency as to what constituted their highest quality effort.

In addition, she culled project information she had collected from her own files, and solicited particular departments by phone to ensure that they sent information on high-quality efforts. She called departments with the strongest reputations for good problem-solving. Some agencies shared information on 40 or 50 projects.

In April 1997, Sampson enlisted the aid of Mike Scott, a former Madison, Wis., police officer who had assisted Herman Goldstein in the early formulation of the problem-oriented policing concept. Scott has been nationally recognized for his work in problem-oriented policing and has had opportunities to work on its implementation while he was at PERF as well as the New York City, N.Y.; Fort Pierce, Fla.; St. Louis, Mo.; and Lauderhill, Fla. police departments.

As editors of this effort, Rana Sampson and Mike Scott also looked at project information submitted to Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government for its Innovations in State and Local Government Award, information submitted to the International Association of Chiefs of Police for its Webber-Seavey Award, information submitted to PERF for its Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing, and the products of research from Great Britain's Home Office Police Research Group on topics such as auto theft, repeat victimization, and shoplifting. All proved good sources.

The editors also attended the annual International Problem-Oriented Policing Conference in San Diego, and followed up with officers, agencies and researchers. One editor contacted nonprofit organizations known for their anti-crime work and solicited submissions. These organizations provided information on several high-quality efforts.

The editors reviewed information on approximately 1,000 projects for quality. The editors looked for solid analyses, highly tailored and thorough or creative solutions, and valid impact assessments. They followed up by phone and letter on the most promising efforts in each of the subject categories. The editors ultimately settled upon 70 projects fitting these criteria. Of the 70, the editors chose approximately 50 to highlight for this publication because of the diversity of problem types these 50 projects represent. While trying to retain much of the original project descriptions' language and intent, the editors followed up with those involved in the projects, amending and adding to the material in the interest of clarity and completeness.

⁹Because the agencies enlisted in this effort represent the larger organizations in the police profession, there certainly are some smaller agencies whose work has gone unrecognized. The COPS Office is compiling some of those efforts now.

The efforts described here represent a broad range of crime, disorder and other public-safety problems, including burglary, domestic violence, drugs, false alarms, graffiti, neighborhood disorder, prostitution, robbery, and theft from vehicles. These efforts represent the best in problem-oriented policing uncovered through this particular collection process. While there are still gaps in some of the efforts, their strengths wholly outweigh their weaknesses, and as such, are extremely valuable case studies for anyone engaged or interested in problem-oriented policing to review.

Expected Benefits

These case studies will contribute to a body of knowledge from which police departments and community groups can learn. While problem-oriented policing is still in its formative stages, these early efforts present a strong foundation on which to build the profession's understanding and experience with problem-oriented policing. Police departments can use this compilation to develop a case-study approach to teaching problem-solving in police academies. In-service trainers can cite examples from this publication to explain problem-solving and problem-oriented policing. Practitioners can develop advanced problem-solving training around the efforts.

This collection of case studies will also be of great help to community groups. Communities are starting to redefine their role in crime-fighting and crime prevention, and recognize that their participation is an important factor in obtaining long-lasting solutions. The more sophisticated communities have started to rethink the role of block watches in crime-fighting and crime prevention, recognizing that certain skills are essential to tackling crime and disorder problems. These case studies will be a useful tool for community groups to learn how to more successfully address such problems.

The editors found that the body of knowledge in problem-solving is still very limited and highly experimental, but even at this early stage of its development, patterns are emerging in various communities in response to problems. This is evidence that departments are learning from one another, through either personal contact, training, conferences, or the literature. The editors saw many similarities in the submitted efforts, as was the case for a Fremont, Calif., sergeant tackling a domestic violence problem. In his problem analysis, he looked to research that a team of researchers and police did in Huddersfield, England, for insight into revictimization. While the Huddersfield effort was not a problem-oriented policing project, as a joint researcher-practitioner effort, it is certainly the kind of work to which problem-oriented policing should connect. The connections now being made, as in the case of the Fremont, Calif. sergeant, portend well for the field. The editors hope this collection of case studies, reporting on quality efforts from different communities, will help provide further information and inspiration for those concerned with tackling public-safety problems.

Chapter 1

Tackling Crime and Other Public-Safety Problems

Case Studies In Problem Solving

Apartment Complex and Other
Rental-Property Crime

Apartment Complex and Other Rental-Property Crime

Apartment Complex Crime in San Diego, Calif.

San Diego police officers Tim Hall and Cindy Brady surveyed their community for crime problems. Consistently, neighborhood residents complained about what they thought was disproportionate crime at a nearby apartment complex, informally known as "Blue Roofs" for its distinctive shingles. Some residents said gang activity in and around the complex made them fearful of going out, even during the day. Complaints focused on drug dealing, assaults and drive-by shootings.

Brady and Hall, working with the department's crime analysis unit, analyzed police data to see if in-house statistical information confirmed or refuted the community's perceptions of Blue Roofs activity. The officers asked the unit to look at a 0.4-mile radius around the complex for calls for service, comparing per-capita call rates. Blue Roofs had considerably more calls than both the nearby apartment complexes and the surrounding area, in general. The officers then asked the crime analysis unit to look at arrest records for area crimes, and found a lot of arrestees were Blue Roofs tenants or guests.

Seeking additional information, Hall and Brady talked with senior division officers, who told them the complex had been a problem for 20 years. In fact, senior officers warned the two that Blue Roofs was "a lost cause," according to Hall. One officer told them the Blue Roofs problems reminded him of those at a large complex called The Gardens, located in the division from which he had just transferred. Brady and Hall learned that Blue Roofs and The Gardens had much in common — the same owner, the same property manager, and nearly the same percentage of Section 8 (HUD-sponsored) units (almost 50%). Blue Roofs' 17 buildings had 312 units. The Gardens' 39 buildings had 504 units. The owner lived in Florida, leaving the property-management company to run the show at both complexes. Due to the differences in police call rates to these complexes compared with neighboring ones, the correlation of arrest rates to the complexes, and the similarities between the properties, the officers surmised that property-management styles accounted for the disproportionate crime at the properties. They aimed to improve management practices, believing this would have significant impact on both complexes (even though one of them was not even in their division).

Brady and Hall tried to discern what HUD knew about the problems at the properties, and what its investment was in them. They found that HUD, in an effort to keep Blue Roofs open to Section 8-vouchered tenants, offered the landlord an inducement in the form of a below-market-interest-rate loan, allowing the owner to take nearly \$17 million in cash equity from the properties. In exchange, HUD required \$2 million in phys-



ical improvements to the properties. The officers were confident that HUD, if fully apprised of the problems at the properties, would seek changes in property-management practices.

Hall and Brady contacted the San Diego Housing Commission and learned about property-management practices that correlated with well-run, safe apartment complexes. They also cultivated informants in the property-management company; this helped them assess the "truthfulness" of what the company told them, according to Hall.

The officers asked to meet with the company, seeking cooperation in improving the properties through changes in management practices, such as tenant screening, house rules, strict rental agreements, and consistent eviction practices. At the meeting, company officials said they were as concerned about the problems at the properties as the police, but HUD had their hands tied on such practices as tenant screening and rule setting. The officers caught the company in the first of a series of lies. Local HUD officials, officers learned, "encourage tenant screening, strict rental agreements and house rules because they help to provide safer living conditions for the residents," according to Hall. The officers asked HUD and the management company to meet with them to clarify policies and practices. The company admitted that the problem was not HUD; rather, it was the company's practices.

Brady and Hall asked the Blue Roofs tenant advisory council for support in improving the properties, but they got the impression that problem tenants populated the council, and did not represent the majority of law-abiding residents. The officers, over the course of the project, encouraged "credible" tenants to get involved with the advisory council, but each refused due to disinterest in working with the management company, according to Hall.

The officers invited the management company and HUD to the police department's landlord training class (inspired by and modeled after the one John Campbell created for the Portland, Ore., Police Bureau). With HUD's support, they asked the management company to replace its on-site manager, implement nondiscriminatory tenant screening, create house rules, tighten up rental agreements, post for private property, and track problem tenants, maintaining documentation if evictions resulted. In addition, they asked the company to hire competent on-site security. Hall and Brady had discovered that the current security guard had a criminal record and had fathered at least three children with three different complex residents.

The management company agreed to make these changes. Over time, the officers monitored the properties and found that the management company had not made any of the recommended changes. The company blamed implementation delays on HUD, and as a result, the officers arranged another meeting with HUD and the company. They arranged yet a third meeting with HUD and the company when they learned that the company had not replaced the on-site manager.

The company finally did arrange for a new manager, one they said had a lot of experience improving crime-ridden apartment complexes. When the officers checked out the complex this new manager had "single-handedly turned around," they learned it was "actually a very quiet retirement complex, with no history of problems," according to Hall. The management company quickly went through three more on-site managers, none of whom had the experience to handle the problems at Blue Roofs.

The management company finally retained a new security company, but failed to give the security officers any guidance on what to do at the complex. The officers felt ill-equipped to handle the problems there. On their first day of patrol, teenagers threw rocks at their cars. Brady and Hall learned that the management company had not distributed security-company brochures informing tenants of their responsibilities. The in-house informants told the officers that the management company was simply stalling on implementing changes, waiting for the officers to tire of the complex's problems and move on.

Hall and Brady developed alternative plans; voluntary compliance had proved infeasible. They would seek HUD's assistance with the owner in replacing the management company. If that strategy failed, they would look at abating the property, based on owner/management-company facilitation of nuisance activity there. As a last resort, they would ask the California Board of Realtors to revoke the management company's business license.

Brady and Hall met with HUD officials. Some thought the management company was completely incompetent, while others suggested giving the company more time. The officers asked to see HUD's management audit of the property, but HUD refused. The officers, through the police department's legal advisor, obtained the audit through a Freedom-of-Information-Act request. HUD had rated the management company as substandard in many important categories; however, HUD would not proceed against the company.

Having failed with less-coercive measures, Hall and Brady looked to nuisance laws for relief. The police abatement unit phoned the management company. Hall described the company's reaction: "The word *abatement* sent shock waves through the . . . management company, [and] within 24 hours, the owner's lawyer was calling . . . wanting to know what the owner could do to eliminate any problems at his properties."

HUD officials, Brady and Hall, the abatement team, the owner, and his lawyer agreed to meet. In advance, the officers, with other division officers' help, surveyed the complex to find out if the authorized tenants matched those actually living there. At the same time, they asked tenants about serious problems at the complex, so that they could inform the owner. The most shocking discovery came from several female tenants, who claimed that the only way they could get the maintenance men to do repairs was to have sex with or buy drugs from them.



During the meeting, Hall and Brady presented evidence of the management company's mismanagement, as shown by the disproportionate calls for service, arrest statistics, tenant surveys, and HUD audit. Knowing that the company had committed to screening tenants, the officers had done a background check on the four most recent tenants. All had criminal records or histories of problem tenancies that should have made them ineligible to live in the complex.

Finally, Brady and Hall showed a picture of the laundry-room lock, one the management company should have changed months before to reduce complaints from women who felt unsafe in the room. The officers said, "If . . . the management is incapable of changing a simple lock in a year's time, then they are incapable of managing these apartment complexes." The owner agreed. HUD fined the owner \$300,000 for outstanding repairs. At the owner's request, the officers gave him a list of unresolved problems and repairs.

Hall and Brady used several measures of success for this project. One was how long it took the management company to do repairs. The owner hired a HUD-recommended company that did more repairs in the first month than the previous company had done in the past year. The new on-site manager is no-nonsense, and is not afraid to walk the property grounds. Problem tenants are evicted, and gang and drug activity has lessened. Calls for service are down. Finally, anonymous reporting of crime has decreased.

After the initial project, other officers, guided by Lt. Guy Swanger, got involved. Interested in ensuring long-term success at Blue Roofs, Swanger kept an eye on the complex. After the gang and drug activity subsided, many of the complex's 500 children felt safe enough to meet and play outside. The complex had a lot of working parents, so many children went unsupervised after school and in the summer. Police were concerned that these children would get into trouble.

Wes Albers, the police community relations officer, noted that the police had provided much of the impetus and resources for restoring peace at the complex, but they "could not continue to be in charge of making sure that things [ran] well. That task was the responsibility of the company that managed the apartments, and the residents . . . It was now up to the community to stand up and become involved."

Lt. Swanger contacted the management, and they agreed to help. They donated an apartment as a community center. Several neighborhood groups and city agencies provided staff, lent or donated equipment, supervised athletic activities, and tutored the children, offering them alternatives to hanging out and getting involved in unproductive or illegal activity.*

Editors' note: This project is notable in several respects. The sheer size of the complexes, housing nearly 1,000 families, may have discouraged even the most determined of officers. It would have been easy for them to simply continue reactively fielding police calls there, without committing to a proactive response. The periodic setbacks in this case never dissuaded the officers from continuing to

*Sources: "The Blue Roofs," project description submitted in support of nomination for 1994 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing; personal communication with Detective Cindy Brady, October 1997; written material from Officer Wes Albers.



take the more-difficult proactive approach. The officers were very methodical, developing backup or contingency plans for each part of this one-year effort (e.g., if the management company would not turn itself around, they would convince HUD to help; if they could not convince HUD, they would test an abatement approach; if that did not work, they would bring in the California Board of Realtors). Also notable are the officers' efforts to shore up the management company's guardianship capacity. The officers exhausted every angle trying to get the company to change its practices, before resorting to more-coercive measures such as abatement.

Apartment and Rental Property Crime in Portland, Ore.

John Campbell, a resident of a quiet Portland, Ore., neighborhood, woke up one morning to a crack house on his block. He and his neighbors turned to the police, but police efforts to tackle the problem were not enough. They made arrests, but new dealers appeared. Campbell's frustration with the ongoing drug problem on his block led him to investigate how landlords and neighbors could better detect and stem crime at Portland's rental properties.

With the Portland Police Bureau's support, Campbell eventually developed an eight-hour training course for landlords and property managers to help them prevent crime (e.g., drug dealing, prostitution, etc.) at rental properties. For the course, Campbell conducted intense research on local and state laws and interviewed more than 40 people, including landlords, property-management staff, legal-aid attorneys, tenant advocates, narcotics detectives, district police officers, housing authority personnel, and others. After studying the problem, Campbell came to a series of conclusions about current practices and approaches to dealing with crime at rental properties. First, "the traditional policing approach of waiting for enough evidence to serve a search warrant often results in a solution that is too late to preserve community livability." Second, "most landlords are not skilled in the prevention of illegal activity on rental property, but are willing to learn." Underpinning his approach is the belief that most landlords "prefer to act responsibly, but lack the tools to do so."

According to Campbell, the landlord training program delivers two important messages: Effective property management can have a major impact on a community's health; and there are simple, legal and fair techniques for stopping the spread of crime at residential properties. The program is also designed to build a sense of community among police, landlords and tenants to ensure more effective cooperation and timely solutions. Since 1989, about 6,000 Portland-area landlords and property managers have received training, affecting over 100,000 rental units in Portland and surrounding communities.

Each course provides information on deterring crime at rental properties by using crime-prevention-through-environmental-design principles; using fair and nondiscriminatory applicant-screening approaches to weed out dishonest applicants; tightening rental agreements so that these deter crime; designing effective, ongoing management strategies; building a sense of community in multi-family housing; recogniz-



ing the warning signs of drug activity; and effectively intervening against drug activity (shifting the focus from criminal laws to civil laws as remedies). Finally, part of the course is devoted to discussing how landlords and property managers can effectively work with the police.

Campbell uses follow-up surveys to determine the course's effectiveness. In the 1989, 1990 and 1991 follow-up surveys, given six months after the course, 90 percent of the landlords said they had changed how they manage their rentals. Of those who had dealt with drug activity since taking the course, 95 percent said course information helped them solve the problem. Campbell has helped other communities around the country develop similar training, and he has developed a landlord training manual for general use.

Campbell believes that "to bring about a fundamental shift in approach to property management, a large number of landlords in a community must take the course." Many of the Portland trainees were prompted to attend by a letter from the police chief. In a number of communities, if police receive a complaint about drug activity at a rental property, they send a letter from the police chief to the owner, alerting the owner to the problem and inviting him or her to the next landlord training course.

Over the years since Campbell's training began, communities have modified his approach to meet their particular needs. For instance, Mesa, Ariz., police, taking some basics from Campbell's work, developed a "Crime-Free Multi-Housing Program," because most problem properties there are multi-unit, involving a different set of problems and dynamics. Mesa draws heavily on crime-prevention-through-environmental-design principles, as well as on apartment-watch efforts.*

Editors' note: This effort clearly has had national impact. The notion that "most landlords are not skilled in the prevention of illegal activity on rental property, but are willing to learn" has spread to many cities throughout the country. Landlord training gives officers and landlords a productive, collaborative, non-adversarial approach to stopping crime on rental property.

Apartment Complex Crime in Santa Barbara, Calif.

In mid-1994, Santa Barbara, Calif., police officer Kim Fryslie looked into problems at a local apartment complex. People had complained about disturbances, an allegedly illegal auto-repairs shop, littering, and illegally built dwellings. Fryslie contacted the owner, who resisted taking corrective action. Another officer, Michael Aspland, teamed up with Fryslie to work on the project. The officers learned that the owner had 34 other properties in the city – many of them apartment complexes, almost all in disrepair and draining a disproportionate amount of police resources.

*Sources: Project description submitted by Portland Police Bureau to Rana Sampson as part of NIJ-sponsored problem-solving project; "Keeping Drug Activity out of Rental Property," draft monograph, 1995, by John Campbell; "The Landlord Training Program: 1990 Performance Evaluation," January 1991, by Campbell Resources Inc.; correspondence from Campbell to Rana Sampson; conversations with Campbell and Portland Police Bureau personnel.

First, Fryslie and Aspland tried to learn more about living conditions at the properties. The owner had never hired a property manager, and tenant health-and-safety issues were ignored – many apartments were infested with cockroaches and rats. Apartments were illegally subdivided; as many as 10 people lived in two-bedroom units. Said one officer: "It was not uncommon to find three refrigerators in one kitchen, to accommodate various renters." Fire and building codes were ignored, many apartments had no smoke detectors, and little or no tenant screening occurred. Neighbors suffered due to excessive noise and litter coming from the complexes, and the officers found that the complexes' children "used abandoned vehicles left in [the] parking lots as [their] playgrounds." Tenants often complained to the owner; the officers said the owner "would promise the world, but . . . never deliver." Due to the problems at his complexes, the owner had a reputation as one of Santa Barbara's most notorious slumlords.

The officers reviewed old files to see how the city had responded to complaints about these properties. Both the fire and community development departments had spent thousands of dollars over the years seeking the owner's compliance for code infractions. On occasion, the owner would make repairs; for instance, illegal conversions would be undone, only to "reappear" months later. Police department records for the prior year showed arrests, high numbers of calls and criminal investigations, undercover operations, and raids. For instance, the officers found that 758 arrestees (on 1,185 charges) listed the owner's properties as their residence. Only 105 of the charges occurred before the owner bought the properties. In addition, tenants accounted for 121 outstanding misdemeanor bench warrants, compared with five before the new owner took over. Police had made no arrests of some properties' tenants in over 10 years; however, after the current owner took over, they made dozens.

Police records also indicated that neighbors and residents complained of a disproportionate amount of crime at this owner's properties, compared with similar properties. Community development records indicated "an extensive pattern of illegal dwellings . . . [and] other building-code violations."

Aspland and Fryslie asked the owner to accompany them on a "tour" of a "well-managed complex owned by another [landlord]." The owner agreed and, afterward, promised repairs and changes in management practices. However, nothing changed at his complexes.

The officers asked neighbors to keep logs of the problems at the worst properties for two months. The officers photographed the properties' deteriorating physical conditions. The photos also documented "rubble, construction materials and large household appliances," indicating the owner "was utilizing his properties as industrial storage sites." The photos documented running sewage, as well.



Table 1. Comparisons of Arrestees at 30 Properties

Property	Year Purchased by Owner	Number of Arrestees Who Listed Property as Their Residence Before Owner's Purchase	Number of Arrestees Who Listed Property as Their Residence After Owner's Purchase
#1	1975	0	42
#2	1975	0	0
#3	1977	0	24
#4	1979	0	12
#5	1982	0	178
#6	1983	0	22
#7	1984	0	49
#8	1985	0	9
#9	1985	1	55
#10	1986	3	235
#11	1986	0	34
#12	1986	0	58
#13	1986	2	9
#14	1987	0	60
#15	1987	0	6
#16	1987	2	87
#17	1988	4	53
#18	1989	2	12
#19	1990	0	0



Property	Year Purchased by Owner	Number of Arrestees Who Listed Property as Their Residence Before Owner's Purchase	Number of Arrestees Who Listed Property as Their Residence After Owner's Purchase
#20	1991	4	30
#21	1991	49	58
#22	1991	0	4
#23	1992	0	4
#24	1992	3	0
#25	1992	5	29
#26	1992	0	1
#27	1992	0	2
#28	1992	24	2
#29	1992	0	0
#30	1994	2	0

The officers shared the photos with other city and county agencies and suggested prosecuting the slumlord with an "unfair competition" charge, as his unlawful neglect of the properties gave him an illegal financial advantage over competitors running legitimate multi-family properties. The officers enlisted a deputy district attorney from the district attorney's fraud unit, who agreed to take on the case. (They later learned that the city attorney's office had tried to persuade the district attorney's office to prosecute on the same charge several years earlier, with no success.) The officers worked hard to put together a persuasive case for the district attorney's office.

The officers organized a task force that included representatives from the district attorney's office, city attorney's office, fire department, community development department, and public works department. The first step was to obtain additional documentation. Two officers were assigned to inspection teams armed with film, cameras



and camcorders. The teams took 600 photos. Officers prepared and had distributed bilingual notices to tenants advising them that the teams were there to improve their living conditions. The teams documented 750 code violations. One building had no stucco facade; rather, it had exposed and decayed wood-slat framing. The officers said, "The inspector told the press the only thing holding the building together [was] 'termites holding hands.'" Building tenants were relocated.

Media coverage fostered public awareness and support for the improvement of the properties. The *Santa Barbara News-Press* led off a key story about the properties and the task force's work with, "The mummified remains of a cat, its jaws frozen in an eternal meo-o-w-w-w, greeted Santa Barbara police officers Monday as they toured a termite-infested apartment owned by one of the city's most notorious landlords." The owner later said that his properties were in fine shape, and that he would live in any one of them.

Fryslie said, "A recent criminal-court ruling ordered management by a management company." Some properties have been renovated, and resident complaints at these properties have declined. The officers said improving the properties benefited both the police department and the community. They now have interagency "tools" more effective than the ones used before for dealing with slumlords and their problem properties.

However, this effort is ongoing. As a condition of the owner's probation, he must comply with all building codes and regulations. He continues to appear in court on probation violations, and recently, a judge ordered that he appear in court monthly to detail his progress in correcting violations.*

Editors' note: This project is notable in several respects. First, the officers, upon discovering one problem complex, took the extra step and inquired into the quality of management at the owner's other properties. Second, they looked at a range of data in assessing effective management: arrests, charges, calls for service, and building-code violations at more than 30 properties. Third, they compared past and current problems at the complexes, concluding that the new owner managed his properties in a way that made them criminal havens. Fourth, they used an unfair-competition charge, which perhaps more accurately captured the owner's unethical practices than other charges could; the owner reaped illegal profits by violating building codes, cramming tenants into properties, and creating a haven for criminals. As mentioned earlier, the officers used arrest data to analyze the problems at the complexes. While arrests usually are more an indicator of police targeting than of links between sites, the number of arrestees living at the properties was certainly disproportionate.

*Sources: "Slumlord Prosecution," project description submitted by Santa Barbara Police Department to Rana Sampson as part of NJ-sponsored problem-solving project; personal and written communications with Detective Kim Fryslie, September and October 1997.

Additional Editors' Comments on Apartment Complex Crime

For a number of reasons, apartment complexes and other rental properties, both public and private, present unique challenges to police. High density, design flaws, lax management practices, absentee owners, inadequate tenant screening, and declining maintenance all contribute to crime and disorder at these properties. The efforts in this section include approaches designed to address underlying conditions, as well as the problem itself.

Several other notable approaches surfaced in the research. The Glendale, Ariz., Police Department created an apartment complex unit specifically to address multi-family problem residences. A Madison, Wis., officer compared calls for service by apartment over a series of apartment complexes to get a more detailed understanding of hot spots and poor apartment- management practices. A Mesa, Ariz., police captain drew upon elements of the city's crime-free multi-housing program and tailored programs for crime-free mini-storage facilities, malls and mobile-home parks. A San Diego officer's effort led to state and federal changes for Section 8 properties, facilitating evictions of drug dealers.



Chapter **2**

Tackling Crime and Other Public-Safety Problems

Case Studies In Problem Solving

Drugs

Drugs

A Drug Problem in Delray Beach, Fla.

Mario's Market, a convenience store in Delray Beach, Fla., generated numerous calls for service for robberies and drug dealing. It was also the site for a lot of loitering and open-container violations. From April 1993 to April 1994, there were 55 calls to police. Hundreds of additional calls attributable to the store came in from the area immediately surrounding it. Many of the robberies at and in front of the store were committed against unsuspecting tourists who had stopped to use the store's pay phones. At any given time, there were 30 to 40 drug dealers, users, loiterers, and robbers outside the store.

Mario's Market rests on the main redevelopment strip in Delray Beach (recently designated an all-American city). The store had been a problem for 20 years, despite the redevelopment of many of the other blocks on the strip. Mario, the store's namesake, rented the property from private owners. Over the years, Delray Beach police officer Jimmy Horrell said, "Officers would respond to calls at the store, take reports from the victims, then leave the area without looking at what the real problems were."

Officers Horrell and Javaro Sims noticed that Mario's Market was open on all sides. No fencing surrounded the property. A drug house behind the store contributed to the problem. The tenants, relatively recent move-ins, would sell drugs in front of and, sometimes, *in* the store; they would run back to their house if officers were active in the area. The T-shaped alley behind the store provided easy ingress and egress for buyers, both on foot and in cars. A shady tree grew in front of the store, providing cover, and a trash receptacle under it provided a place to rest alcoholic beverages. The lighting was poor, the phones out front were a home-away-from-home for dealers, and the indoor video games provided night-and-day entertainment for those engaged in crime.

The officers started a walking beat in the area, concentrating some of their effort on reducing the dealing and robberies at Mario's Market and the surrounding properties. To document the extent of the activity, officers made videos of the dealing, did jump-outs and made arrests. Within the first month of the walking beat, Mario claimed he lost \$10,000 in beer sales. He was displeased with the officers, believing they were unfairly targeting him. In addition, Mario's son had been arrested several years prior for drug trafficking, and was serving time. As a result, Mario held no great affection for the police.

The police made three drug buys in Mario's Market. Although the officers could, based on these buys, bring a nuisance suit against the property owners, they held off in hopes of turning the store into a legitimate business.



Officers called the pay phones' owner, a businessman in a neighboring community, and asked that he remove the phones because they contributed to the drug dealing and loitering. The owner refused, saying he was making \$1,200 a month from the phones. The officers then asked for both Mario's and the property owners' assistance. They wrote a letter to the phones' owner, asking for their removal. The owner again said no, and added that he would sue the store for breach of contract.

The officers looked up the laws regarding pay-phone installation, and found that a wiring permit had to be obtained from the city to install one. In this case, there were no permits. So it would not appear like selective enforcement, the officers checked whether other pay phones along the strip had permits. None did, so they sent letters to the owners, informing them of the permit process and warning them that the phones would be removed unless a permit was issued.

The officers contacted the owner of the drug house behind Mario's Market, but she did not seem to care about the problem. Police made drug buys in the house, but the owner still did not act, even after multiple requests for her assistance. Having no success with the owner, the officers initiated a nuisance-abatement suit against the house. They knew the suit would take approximately one year; thus, they decided to try other tactics to make the property around Mario's inhospitable to drug dealers, users, loiterers, and robbers.

The officers notified the property owners of all the crime occurring there. They hoped this would encourage the owners, whether out of genuine concern or concern for their own liability, to improve conditions there. They gave the owners a list of all the calls for service on the property. Perhaps as a result, the officers got the store and property owners to agree to the installation of no-trespassing signs. To speed up the installation, the officers worked with the city sign department. They began making trespassing arrests, but some did not hold up in court because Mario excluded some of the trespassers only occasionally, not consistently. The officers then explained to the store's owners that consistency was necessary for the tactic to work.

The officers asked Florida Power and Light to install security lights around Mario's Market and behind it, near the house where some of the more entrenched dealers lived. The lights, called "Liberty City Lights," are bullet-proof; they were developed after the Miami riots and are designed to resist vandalism. Each light costs property owners \$18 per month.

The officers decided to put up barriers to stop cars from entering and exiting through the alleys. The alleys had become choice routes for consummating drug deals because they were not visible to passing patrol cars. With Chief Rick Overman's aid, the officers secured the fire chief's approval to block off part of the alley. On the officers' behalf, Overman wrote a letter to the transportation department, requesting that barriers be installed. Within a week, they were. The barriers cut off car access to the less

visible part of the property, and removed a substantial vehicle escape route. Buyers could still access the rear of the property by foot, so the officers next addressed that problem.

The officers got Mario and the property owners to agree to put up a chain-link fence behind the property. Although the owners agreed, they dragged their feet on installation, so the officers asked for the fencing company's name and followed up on their order, expediting the city permit the owners needed to install the fence.

Due to the officers' work, the drug dealing decreased. Some dealers began serving time, and others moved on because the location was no longer convenient. The officers began focusing on the remaining hard-core dealers, to whom the property still offered some "amenities."

The officers borrowed a hand truck to move the heavy trash receptacle (a meeting place for the dealers) out from under the shady tree to the other side of the lot. Those who wanted to lean or sit would now have to do so exposed to the hot Florida sun.

When the fence the officers installed started showing wear from dealers' scaling it, the officers repaired it themselves. When dealers continued to scale the fence, officers smeared axle grease on it. Officer Horrell said, "Even drug dealers don't want to get their clothes dirty." Drug activity slowed further as a result of these efforts.

Business appeared to be picking up at Mario's Market. New customers were asking for items not usually stocked. Beer had been the store's biggest seller in the past, but other items now needed to be stocked in greater quantity.

The officers wanted to secure Mario's continued cooperation, and they genuinely wanted the store to succeed. As a result, they offered to paint the store. The owners bought the paint, and the officers, with the help of probationers obligated to do community service, painted the store. Mario was quite enthused about the officers' work, and has since helped to ensure that the paint job withstands vandalism.

To scare off any remaining dealers, the officers installed a fake video camera (donated by a local TV-repair company), focused on the entryway. They constructed a protective box for the camera, and painted it to add to its realism. Mario agreed to disconnect the video games, eliminating an alibi for the loiterers. The phones were moved to the front of the parking lot, and now are for outgoing calls only, eliminating the attraction for dealers.

The officers wanted to ensure that traffic patterns in the large parking lot around Mario's Market no longer contributed to drug dealing. With the property owners' approval, they worked with probationers on community-service details to seal the gravel in the lot. They painted yellow lines delineating parking to force people to park,



eliminating the drive-through nature of this drug market. They put several handicap-parking spots in front of the store to keep drug dealers away, as the front tended to be the most vulnerable area for dealing. Thus, if someone bought drugs in front of the store, he or she was subject to a \$240 fine for parking in a handicap space. The officers also installed bike racks in the parking lot to block off a preferred route and stopping point for dealers and buyers. A local artist painted murals on the sides of the building and put up a new store sign, transforming Mario's Market from an eyesore to an attractive commercial establishment.

The officers went a step further and checked to see if Mario's Market had been an attractive drug and loitering hot spot due to a larger neighborhood problem. They worried that too many stores in the immediate area sold liquor, and that this contributed to loitering. The officers did a survey of the 12-block-long strip on either side of Mario's Market, and found that in this quite poor area, 1.5 million beers were sold each year, at an average cost of \$1 each. They turned that information over to the city's community development agency for further review, to see if zoning changes were needed for the effort's long-term success.

The officers ended the project with the property owners' and Mario's support. The dealers living behind Mario's Market were evicted as part of the nuisance-abatement process. The officers' work contributed to a reduction in calls for service on the block from 100-plus in 1994, to fewer than 10 in 1995. There were no robberies in 1995, and the 30-plus people who used to hang around the store no longer do so. At the close of this project, the officers were thinking about giving classes on ridding property of crime, and on owners' property-management rights and responsibilities, to the other businesses along the strip.*

Editors' note: This effort is significant in several respects. The officers looked at the problem differently than had been done before, finding that some of the physical conditions at the market contributed to the establishment of a high-activity drug market there. They worked creatively and persistently to change some of the "amenities" that supported the dealers. They also went to great lengths to turn the market's owners into capable guardians over the location, ensuring this effort's long-term success.

A Drug Problem in New York City, N.Y.

In an old section of Brooklyn, New York City, the Clinton Hill neighborhood had tremendous assets: landmark-worthy brownstone houses, an attractive park, nearby commercial strips, and a hardworking, racially diverse population. A local college added a dependable stream of young consumers to the community's economy. Public signs and well-tended gardens indicated the existence of many block associations and of other civic activism.

The residents' commitment to the community was strong, despite the abandoned and poorly kept rental buildings, and high levels of car thefts and break-ins, muggings,

*Sources: Project description submitted by Delray Beach Police Department to Rana Sampson as part of NIJ-sponsored problem-solving project; additional supporting materials sent by Officer Jimmy Horrell, including newspaper articles; conversations with Horrell, Officer Javaro Sims, Chief Rick Overman, and Mario; on-site visit to Mario's Market.

and drug activity. As drug dealing increased along a commercial corridor, resident anger at apparent police inaction grew. It took a tragedy to catalyze change.

A local convenience-store owner was murdered in his store, and neighborhood block leaders organized a mass meeting to find out what the police were doing. Unfortunately, residents did not think the police were prepared, and the meeting went poorly. As patrol officers stood in the back of the meeting hall, a yelling match ensued between residents and police department spokespeople. Relations between the two groups were at their worst.

Block leaders reached out to the Neighborhood Anti-crime Center of the Citizens Committee for New York City, due to its reputation for helping citizens and police get together to take back their neighborhoods. The Citizens Committee dedicated a staff organizer's time to helping the community go through a collaborative problem-solving process. A problem-analysis meeting was scheduled.

Block leaders prepared for the meeting by discreetly inviting a small, core group of concerned residents and identifying specific problem locations, offensive conditions and past efforts to solve the problems. Due to the rancor between residents and police, residents were urged to conduct this first meeting with limited police presence, so that issues could be aired and strategies developed to improve relations.

The meeting itself was the first positive outcome. Residents invited a couple of trusted community-oriented patrol officers, who helped to discern the nature of the problem. The meeting revealed that there were multiple privately owned, and a few city-owned, problem properties housing drug operations and/or addicts. One multi-family structure was identified as a major drug-dealing center, impervious to enforcement action for over two decades. It was a fortified drug house. However, much necessary information remained unknown.

The Citizens Committee helped everyone understand that there were key stakeholders, or guardians, of the locations whose input would be helpful. A list was generated, and the community leaders undertook a course of follow-up.

The Citizens Committee trained the residents to conduct property research (identifying landlords), and then linked them up with key guardians: the district attorney's narcotics eviction unit; legal technical assistance; the city's housing agency representative, who could work on drug-infested property; and trusted police narcotics investigators, who had good information about specific locations. The Citizens Committee also designed an inside-building survey form, and introduced the resident leaders to a Muslim patrol organization, which was invited to visit problem locations in an effort to get more accurate information about the narcotics trade and landlord-tenant issues.

The resident leaders asked these guardians to join them in a collaborative planning meeting, which the Citizens Committee organizer facilitated. The pieces of the puzzle



were now assembled, revealing that the police had never been able to get into the significant locations, especially the fortified one, because the landlords either colluded with the dealers or were unresponsive to police department contacts. A combined enforcement and legal strategy was hatched, and subsequent meetings kept everyone informed and on target with follow-up.

The block leaders committed to continued outreach and pressure on those landlords, such as the city itself, who were poorly managing their buildings but not allied with the dealers. And residents continued to provide information.

District Attorney Charles Hynes' office committed to pressing civil charges against landlords if they failed to secure their property appropriately after notification of problems and/or criminal activity. In addition, the community activists recruited a law firm (pro bono) to discuss whether, if criminal enforcement did not pan out, bringing a civil lawsuit for money damages was the best approach – similar to the Oakland Drug Abatement Institute strategy.

As a direct result of the collaborative analysis and meetings, the police received help from other city code-enforcement agencies to execute a new warrant at the most egregious location. Coordination continued between all parties after the search warrant revealed how extensive the drug-dealing operation was at the vacant, privately owned building.

Community members and police attended a housing court hearing and alerted the judge that the landlord's track record of failing to maintain the building warranted a case disposition that would serve community interests. The Clinton Hills neighborhood won. The judge legally bound the landlord to secure the property and maintain it crime-free, and authorized the police to have keys to the premises and check up on the landlord.

The landlord agreed to comply in court, but failed to do so. Residents, the police, and the district attorney took the landlord back to court, where the judge ruled against the landlord and granted the police permanent access to the premises for safety inspections. Illegal activity has never resumed at this vacant, and formerly fortified, building.

The community sought to build on this victory to publicize the value of working with the police and others, and to encourage efforts to clean up remaining problem locations. A media event was organized, celebrating everyone's hard work. The first court win proved to be just the beginning, as more buildings were successfully targeted, and block leaders and police communicated more openly and consistently.*

Editors' note: The Neighborhood Anti-crime Center of the Citizens Committee for New York City builds community capacity to tackle neighborhood crime problems. In this case, they helped the community collect information from the police, residents and government agencies, and helped the community through a civil-court process. Closing the property made a huge difference in building the com-

*Source: Narrative prepared by Felice Kirby of the Citizens Committee for New York City, submitted to Rana Sampson as part of NIJ-sponsored problem-solving project, and reprinted – with minor editorial changes – with Kirby's permission.



munity's capacity to take on other problem buildings. This project offers insight into the citizen's perspective on neighborhood crime problems. Citizens sometimes think that if a highly visible crime problem exists in the neighborhood, the police must be allowing it to grow and fester. They may misconstrue police inability to solve a crime problem as collusion in it. This distrust in police must be addressed and worked through for collaborative work between the community and the police to proceed. Oftentimes, in the initial meeting between the community and the police concerning a particular problem, time must be devoted to airing and discussing the community's distrust.

A Drug Problem in Portland, Ore.

Portland, Ore., Police Department Officer Kelly Krohn knew from his first days on patrol in the North Precinct that the corner of Mississippi and Shaver was Portland's drug capital. He was told that the problem had existed "for decades," and that if an officer was looking for a local fugitive or a fleeing felon, that corner was the spot to search first. Krohn and his partner arranged with a local landlord to have access to one of the nearby buildings, so they could get a better handle on how the drug dealing worked. The officers made several dozen arrests, but the impact was fleeting: The dealers found out the officers' shift and arranged their dealing for when they were off duty. As a result, the officers altered their shifts, but "soon realized that [they] were just spinning [their] wheels."

The landlord who helped them with building access wanted to open a restaurant at the corner, but the drug problem was a sure obstacle to attracting customers. The landlord complained to both City Hall and the media, which jumped at the chance to report on such a blatant drug market. The corner soon attracted national attention when it was shown in an ABC "World News Tonight" story. After the media attention, the mayor's office offered its support, and city agencies united to address the problem. Community residents pitched in, as well.

In one of the corner buildings, addicts used the second floor — ostensibly abandoned — to shoot up. The owner put a pit bull inside, ending the addicts' use of the floor. The first floor housed a restaurant and pool hall where drug sales were common. The establishments catered to life on the corner. The buildings department went in and documented many serious violations, and the restaurant was out of compliance with health department regulations. Within the year, the building was condemned and leveled.

Near the corner was a vacant lot that buyers and dealers used as an escape route. The lot's vegetation was high and dense. One day, after an overdosed addict was discovered in front of the lot, officers traced nearby drag marks into the lot, ultimately finding a carpeted shack hidden by 15-foot-high berry bushes. City crews leveled the shack and cut down the vegetation.

Several other features made Mississippi-and-Shaver a good drug-dealing location. Abandoned vehicles littered area streets and alleys, providing cozy and convenient



shooting galleries for addicts. The corner also sported a water fountain. Police surveillance determined that it was used exclusively by dealers for "refreshment," and by buyers to cook their drugs. Dealers used a couch outside one of the corner buildings as a place to "kick back" between transactions, allowing them to remain visible to would-be buyers. Officers tagged and towed the vehicles as hazards, and shut the fountain off. Neighborhood residents removed the couch during a community cleanup day.

Prosecutions became more focused, as well. The district attorney's office agreed to target corner offenders, and the state police crime lab instituted a quick processing procedure for all evidence seized at the corner, to reduce the possibility that delayed evidence processing would result in offenders' pretrial release.

Red traffic lights provided convenient stops for buyers, making it unnecessary for them to get out of their cars. The transportation office proposed changing the lights to flashing-red one way and flashing-yellow the other. However, the other solutions proved effective, and this one was put on hold.

According to officer reports, for the two years following the project, the corner remained relatively clean; dealers were no longer comfortably ensconced there. Calls for service, which had previously averaged nearly 100 a year, dropped to the low-to-mid-teens. Officer Krohn worried about the project's impact beyond the initial two years of success; some stronger area redevelopment efforts had not gone through, which he feared might leave local buildings unused, once again attracting drug dealers and buyers.*

Editors' note: This interagency effort highlights some of the physical factors that can make locations more suitable, and thus more attractive, to drug dealers. Running water is a necessity for addicts who shoot up, and its presence was a plus to those driven to use their purchases right away. The abandoned cars also allowed addicts to use drugs without delay. Dealer visibility helped to maintain a customer base; customers did not have to sneak into dark and dangerous alleys to buy drugs. The corner location allowed dealers to see oncoming police, and gave buyers a good view of the market. The couch provided comfort during down times, and the vacant lot offered a secure and unreachable escape route and hideaway. Taking away the physical amenities made the location less attractive to buyers and dealers, and they faced increased risk of apprehension.

Additional Editors' Comments on Drug Problems

During the mid- and late 1980s and early 1990s, police looked for innovative ways to tackle emerging and entrenched drug markets. Arrests did not stop buyers' interest and dealers' investment in drugs. Prison overcrowding made it unlikely that courts would impose significant jail time on offenders, unless for the most sophisticated trafficking. Police sought other means to control, disrupt, reduce, and/or eliminate drug

*Sources: Write-up of Mississippi-and-Shaver project, by Officer Kelly Krohn; Portland Police Bureau training videotape containing information on the project.



markets. Officers learned that some sites became drug hot spots for environmental reasons (e.g., vacant, open houses), and some due to an absence of capable guardians (e.g., properties with absentee landlords). During these years, certain strategies became almost standard in addressing the problem's different aspects. They included landlord training, tenant screening, eviction, knock-and-talk, eliminating or restricting dealers' access to and use of pay phones, enlisting other licensing or regulatory powers, using building- and other code violations, increasing lighting, diverting traffic, and applying public-nuisance, abatement, and other civil codes.

The efforts documented in this section addressed different types of drug markets and involved different strategies for closing them. In Portland, the market existed due to the environmental conditions, and police focused on removing those conditions. In Delray Beach, police transformed a disinterested guardian into a capable guardian. And in New York, the Citizens Committee galvanized the community (those the problem most affected), turning victims into neighborhood-change agents.

The editors found several other approaches worth noting. The Chicago Alliance for Neighborhood Safety, a nonprofit umbrella organization of neighborhood anti-crime groups, trains community groups in problem-solving and publishes a newsletter documenting sophisticated neighborhood anti-crime work; it has made significant contributions to addressing specific neighborhood drug problems. Gaston County, N.C., police took on drug dealing in mobile-home parks and, with the city attorney's blessing, hired a private attorney to bring a civil abatement and forfeiture case against the owner, who had turned a blind eye to the dealing.

A New York City police officer enlisted citizen informants living around a drug-infested park to watch and reveal where dealers stashed their drugs. Officers then seized the drugs, leaving the dealers accountable to their suppliers for the cost of the confiscated contraband. Portland police encouraged legitimate activities in a drug-infested park, to replace the illegal ones. A neighborhood-based Portland district attorney seeks search warrants based on detailed information from citizens. Portland and San Diego police send owners of problem drug properties a letter notifying them of the illegal activity, their responsibility in stopping it, the legal consequences if it continues, and the availability of assistance. In the vast majority of cases, owner notification is all that is needed, and no further drug complaints are registered.

St. Paul, Minn., police team up with health inspectors on drug raids to shore up or close drug houses. In St. Petersburg, Fla., in one effort, police used traffic counters to determine the drug market's activity level. After implementing strategies, they used the traffic counters again to determine if the market had shrunk. In Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, police published the addresses of fortified drug houses in newspapers and aired them on television to inspire action by absentee landlords. And in Philadelphia, Penn., one fearless group of community women bang pots and pans in the middle of a local drug market to disrupt illegal activity.



Chapter **3**

Tackling Crime and Other Public-Safety Problems

Case Studies In Problem Solving

Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

In 1989 and 1990, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, a city of over 600,000, began to take a closer look at its domestic violence problem. Domestic violence calls accounted for a significant portion of the police department's workload. Staff Sgt. Bruce Billings and Detective Jack Tetz identified domestic violence as a pressing social and police issue, and they wondered if more could be done. They found that nearly 40 percent of all domestic violence calls in Edmonton came from one police division (which gave it 66% more domestic violence calls than the next closest division), and that the police charging rate in this division was between 28 and 29 percent. Women were the victims in over 90 percent of the cases.

They also found that 21 percent of the domestic violence calls were repeat calls for service. In 13 percent of these households, there were three calls in a six-month period; in 6 percent, four calls; and in 2 percent, more than six calls. Police brought the vast majority of charges against batterers on weekends; most calls where police brought no charges also occurred on weekends. Analysis further showed that on weekends, women were most vulnerable late at night – police brought 52 percent of all criminal charges after midnight. Finally, Billings and Tetz found that in the vast majority of domestic violence calls – about 70 percent – constables were not filing any charges at all.

Billings and Tetz also looked into more than 20 domestic violence studies. One researcher suggested that women are assaulted multiple times (often more than 20) before they contact the police. Another suggested that children of physically abusive parents were at significantly higher risk of becoming abusive themselves. One study noted that women accounted for 40 percent of all homicide victims in Canada. Others examined the current police approach to domestic violence calls, and police reticence in charging offenders when assaults occur.

Tetz then conducted a detailed review of 700 domestic violence reports, finding gaps in reporting, insufficient information on prior violence in each household, misunderstandings of the law on the part of constables, and the need for greater follow-up on chronic repeats. Pulling together what they learned from the reports, the national and local research, and the patterns they discovered in reviewing individual cases, Billings and Tetz suggested several responses to the problem.

First, they proposed education and training for officers on the complexity and dynamics of family violence, and on what is needed to pursue prosecution. They found that many constables were not charging because they thought the complainant had to be willing to pursue the charges. Second, they recommended supervisory training on report approval, family violence investigations, and problem-solving approaches to domestic violence incidents. Third, they initiated a system to alert constables to repeat domestic violence locations and offenders.



Billings and Tetz also suggested changes to the recruit and field training officer curriculum. In addition, for purposes of dispatching, they recommended coding domestic violence calls as criminal (rather than as family disputes), elevating the perceived seriousness of the calls. Also, they recommended that dispatchers use the term "family violence" rather than "family dispute," because the latter tended to downplay the call's importance. In addition, they suggested that constables change how they write up domestic violence reports — providing more accurate descriptions of the criminal behavior and the victim's and offender's relationship — and that constables try to determine if prior violence has occurred. Finally, they recommended that an Edmonton police detective conduct intensive follow-up with repeat domestic violence households.

In 1991, a therapeutic approach was included in the response. A social worker was teamed with the detective for follow-up with repeat domestic violence households. Together, they tailored specific strategies for each case. This approach grew out of prior successful problem-solving interventions in domestic violence cases. "Case-tailored plans of action were devised to stop the violence, ensure victims' safety and connect both victim and perpetrator with the resources they required," states the 1994 *Research and Findings Report*.

In 1992, and again in 1994, the strategies were evaluated. The 1994 evaluation found that the collaborative team provided both a control and a support function for victims and offenders. In 1992, the evaluation found that 97 percent of victims who worked with the collaborative team made "positive changes in their lives, compared [with] 63 percent in a comparison group." Forty-seven percent left their abusive relationships, compared with 26 percent in the comparison group. By 1994, of the victims interviewed who were served by the collaborative team, 87 percent reported taking positive steps to change their situation. In 1994, evaluators interviewed victims who were served by the original collaborative team in 1992. Of the 24 interviewed, 15 said they were no longer in the abusive relationship.

Finally, the police charge rate has increased from just under 30 percent to 70 percent. In addition, the work done appears to have increased the confidence battered women's shelters have in the police. The shelters' clients now have higher reporting rates to the police than before.

The Edmonton police are doing additional work to further reduce instances of repeat family violence. Four collaborative teams work chronic cases. Due to the connection Tetz found in the research between physically abusive parents and children who grow up to be abusive, the police department established a collaborative experimental approach for investigating complaints of children at risk, teaming a constable with a child-welfare investigator. The initial results are promising: improved information exchange between police and child-welfare agencies, increased effectiveness in addressing abused children's needs, and reduced demands for follow-up services.*

*Sources: Project description submitted by Edmonton Police Service to Rana Sampson as part of NIJ-sponsored problem-solving project; conversations with Detective Jack Tetz; additional supporting material, including the 1992 and 1994 *Research and Findings Report*, by Edmonton Police Service and Community and Family Services, and 1989 report, *Family Violence: How Effective Are We?* by Jack Tetz.

Editors' note: This project is notable for the scope of the research put together by a detective and a staff sergeant. They looked at call data and individual cases, worked with advocates, and reviewed dozens of national studies on the problem before making recommendations for an improved response. In addition, the formal evaluations give credence to the response's impact. The vastly higher charge rate is certainly one measure of success. However, Billings and Tetz recognize that a more substantial measure is the changed behavior of offenders.

Domestic Violence in Fremont, Calif.

During an analysis of city addresses that generated repeat calls for service, the Fremont, Calif., Police Department staff was surprised to note how many of the repeat calls were attributable to domestic violence. In the initial analysis, the staff could also see how the incidents' seriousness increased over time — from arguments to batteries to assaults with weapons, and so forth. Some calls resulted from homicide. The staff could not readily detect any geographic or demographic pattern other than that women were the victims in 98 percent of the incidents. Responding officers most typically tried to mediate the immediate conflict, without resorting to arrest. Beyond preparing a case for prosecution, the police department did not follow up on the vast majority of the calls. Many officers admitted they were frustrated by their seeming inability to effect any lasting peace, and they felt these calls were both time-consuming and dangerous. They seemed eager for a better response.

Sgt. Mike Eads took on the domestic violence problem in hopes of developing a more effective police strategy. He was familiar with some of the research findings on revictimization in England, specifically the way the Huddersfield police responded to repeat burglaries (see "Burglary" section). Eads began to explore the possibility of developing a similar response to repeat domestic violence. He reasoned that officers might more effectively convey information to both offenders and victims if they recontacted them several days after the precipitating incident, when emotions were less likely to be running high. Victims might be more amenable to getting help, and offenders might be more amenable to counseling, or at least to appreciating the threat of arrest.

By January 1996, Eads had developed a new repeat domestic violence protocol. He piloted the protocol with a team of officers who constituted one-sixth of the patrol force. The protocol required the officers to file a complete police report on every domestic violence incident, and then to recontact the victim in person within seven days of the precipitating call. They were then required to contact the victim a second time within 28 days of the initial call. During each follow-up visit, the officer was to determine if the victim had suffered any violence since the last police contact. The officer was also to provide the victim and the offender with specific information about counseling services, and to reaffirm the police department's intention to support the victim and stop the violence. A local agency, the Shelter Against Violent Environments, provided services for both victims and offenders, and was prepared to work closely with the police officers. The victim was the primary focus, but officers were encouraged to reach out to the offender, as well. They were to be candid with the victims and



offenders and state their intention to keep checking in on the situation. They were also to document each contact. Each officer was responsible for tracking his or her own cases and coordinating activities with fellow team members to avoid duplication of effort.

Eads talked to the pilot officers weekly during the first year the protocol was implemented. The officers told him that, to their surprise, they were generally receiving favorable reactions from the victims. They had been concerned that many victims might find the follow-up visits too intrusive; however, no complaints were filed with the department regarding the protocol during the first year. The pilot ran through 1996 before being evaluated.

There were approximately 22 percent fewer calls for service in 1996 than in 1995 at locations that had generated three or more domestic violence calls. There were about one-third fewer locations generating three or more calls. Eads and the pilot officers thought these results were encouraging. The new protocol seemed more effective than the traditional police response.

With support from the Fremont Police Department, the Shelter Against Violent Environments received grant funding that allowed it to hire additional advocates and develop community education programs. Domestic violence advocates then worked out of the police department, supplementing victim outreach and teaching officers new intervention skills. The department gave them copies of all domestic violence reports filed.

In 1997, the pilot program was expanded to the entire patrol and investigative force, with training provided to all officers. Computerized dispatch records allowed dispatchers to advise patrol officers if the address to which they were responding was a repeat domestic violence location. Dispatchers also provided the name of the officer handling the follow-up. Officers intensified their intervention efforts at locations where calls were becoming chronic. In a few instances, they pursued prosecutions without the victim's cooperation, or secured restraining orders on both parties without either's consent. This approach will be expanded in the coming year.

An assessment of the first quarter of 1997 showed that calls for service to repeat-call locations (defined as those generating three or more calls in one year) declined 57 percent from the same period in 1996, and 66 percent from the same period in 1995. From January 1997 through Oct. 1, 1997, there was a 53 percent decrease in calls to repeat locations from the same period in 1996. Eads "recognize[s] that the decreases could be because the suspect and victim are no longer calling the police, or are moving out of the community." He concluded, "While this might be the case in some circumstances, it seems impossible for it to occur with enough regularity to result in a 53 percent decrease in repeat calls for service." The police department is working to develop yet more effective methods for responding to chronic locations.*

*Sources: "A Project Analysis: Domestic Violence Revictimization Prevention," Fremont Police Department, submitted in support of nomination for 1997 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing, July 18, 1997.

Editors' note: This project is notable for replicating an intervention strategy that proved effective in reducing burglary in England. It is also notable that the Fremont police seek restraining orders against both parties in some instances, forcing a separation for the parties' benefit. The police's more proactive posture seems appropriate, especially given the complex reasons why domestic violence victims and offenders are so reluctant to seek help.

A Domestic Violence Problem in Port St. Lucie, Fla.

In November 1992, Eve Casey** bought a house in the affluent neighborhood of St. Lucie West Heatherwood Estates, in Port St. Lucie, Fla. On Nov. 17, 1992, the Port St. Lucie police responded to Casey's house for the first time. The caller had reported a disturbance created by the presence of a man named Bob Green. The responding officers learned that Green was Casey's boyfriend. Eight days later, on Nov. 25, the police were called to the house again. They took Green into custody and admitted him to a detoxification facility. On Dec. 12, officers again responded to the Casey house, this time because of a domestic disturbance that caused property damage. The responding officers learned that Casey's ex-husband, James Casey, had created a disturbance over her relationship with Green.

Over the next 22 months, the police responded to the Casey house 54 times. Each time, the call was due to a domestic disturbance involving two or all of the above-mentioned people. (Before the problem was finally resolved, the police would respond to the house nearly 100 times.)

The police department was greatly concerned about these disturbances, as each call required that at least two officers and, in most cases, a supervisor respond. Police noticed that most of the disturbances were alcohol-related. The level of violence increased, and the police reported beatings, stabbings and self-inflicted injuries. It seemed only a matter of time before an officer or one of the three people involved would be killed.

Not only were these disturbances a police problem, but they were also a problem for the neighbors. They were aware of each disturbance, and thus, their quality of life was affected. The neighborhood homeowners association initiated legal action against Casey, requesting that she leave the community.

Sgt. Jeff Harsh, the evening shift supervisor for the St. Lucie West area, realized that the routine response to the Casey house had not resolved the problem. He began to analyze the problem in hopes of finding a long-term solution. He reviewed both the written reports concerning the people involved and the records of all dispatched calls to Casey's house. He then developed a chart showing the service-call dates, the case numbers, the incident types, the suspects, the victims, the weapons used or injuries sustained, the subsequent incarcerations, and whether alcohol was a factor in the incidents.



The analysis indicated that 25 of the 54 police responses to Casey's house resulted in written offense reports. Of those 25 cases, 96 percent were related to domestic problems. Green was the suspect in 76 percent of the cases, and alcohol was a factor in 64 percent of them. Twenty-eight percent of the incidents resulted in injuries, and Eve Casey was the complainant or victim in 64 percent of the cases. Police made 16 arrests, 15 of which were of Green. The analysis indicated that most of the problems involved Green and Eve Casey, and that alcohol was a major factor in the disturbances.

Harsh also discovered that there were no calls for service to Casey's house from June 1992 through April 1994. Green had been in New York during that time, indicating that his presence was the main cause of disturbances.

The solution to the problem was to prevent contact between Green and Casey and to help Green get treatment for alcohol abuse. The most feasible way to accomplish this was to convince a judge that Green posed a threat to Casey and to anyone else at her house, and that he needed extensive treatment for alcohol abuse.

In October 1994, Harsh met with the judge who presided over all of Green's misdemeanor cases. Harsh gave the judge a copy of his report on the problems at the Casey house. The judge agreed that the situation was bad and would only get worse if nothing were done to address it. Green was incarcerated at the time; the judge agreed to revoke his current bond and place a "no bond" order. The judge told Harsh to meet with the assistant state's attorneys prosecuting the case against Green. The attorneys also reviewed Harsh's report, and they asked him to testify on the state's behalf.

On Nov. 21, 1994, Green appeared before the judge in county court. Green agreed to a plea and was sentenced to time served. He was also placed on probation for one year, with the stipulation that he receive treatment at an alcohol rehabilitation facility. Additionally, he was not to drink alcohol or to live in or visit Casey's house.

On Nov. 22, Green appeared before a different judge for a bond-reduction hearing. Harsh testified at this hearing, basing his testimony on his analysis of the police reports. The judge found Green to be a danger to society, and increased his bond from \$5,000 to \$100,000. Green was unable to post bond.

On Feb. 27, 1995, Green again appeared in court for sentencing on another charge. He was sentenced to time served and placed on 54 months' probation. His probation included six months in a state facility, and a 54-month restraining order prohibiting any contact with Eve or James Casey at the Casey house.

Since Green's release from the county jail on Feb. 27, the police department has responded to the Casey house only once. Green had called Casey, causing a disturbance between her and her current boyfriend.

The violent relationship has ended, and the risk of serious injury or death to anyone involved has greatly decreased. Police officers no longer have to respond to repeated disturbances at the house, and are thus no longer at risk for injury.

A judge ordered Green to get alcohol-abuse treatment, but according to police, Green violated this condition of his probation and was subsequently sentenced to jail. As of late 1997, Green had not returned to Port St. Lucie, and the Casey house was no longer the source of so many domestic violence calls.*

**The names of the citizens involved have been changed to protect their identities. This narrative was prepared by Sgt. Jeff Harsh, and is reprinted — with minor editorial changes and updated information — with the permission of Harsh and the Police Executive Research Forum.

Editors' note: This project is notable for the sergeant's careful documentation of the nature and cause of the ongoing problem. This documentation established the link between alcohol abuse and the problem, and it convinced a court that more drastic action was required than would likely have been taken in response to isolated incidents of domestic violence. Although this initiative was not undertaken in the context of a department-wide domestic violence protocol, it is a good example of how a proactive and specifically tailored response can successfully intervene in a violent domestic relationship.

Additional Editors' Comments on Domestic Violence

Many police agencies are rethinking their approach to handling domestic violence incidents. While many adopted a mandatory arrest policy based on early research, some agencies' implementation fell far short of the mark. More recent research suggests that police should try additional strategies more tailored to each incident's particulars, and that mandatory arrest is not a panacea for all domestic violence cases. Many agencies are doing vastly more thorough investigations of such cases, and the use of photos documenting an assault's physical effects and videotapes of witnesses and victims is not at all uncommon in many jurisdictions now.

The efforts showcased in this section document three distinct approaches to dealing with the problem. Edmonton represents a comprehensive approach, Fremont tests intensive follow-up with repeat victims, and Port St. Lucie documents an officer's use of problem-solving in addressing one household's history of domestic violence.

The editors found several other notable approaches. Nassau County, N.Y., police give high-risk victims of domestic violence a personal alarm to carry with them at all times. Victims activate the piercing, high-pitched alarm if threatened or harmed. The alarm scares the abuser and alerts neighbors and others to call the police.

In Kansas City, Mo., offenders arrested for domestic violence must stay in custody for 20 hours — enough time for victims to gather children and belongings and move to a safe place. In Los Angeles County, sheriff's office volunteers phone victims of domestic violence two to three days after an incident to determine if additional follow-up is needed. In Kenner, La., both the victim and the batterer are required by court to undergo counseling on the first offense; in the interim, sentencing is deferred. In San

*Sources: "Problem-Solving Effort Targets Chief Aggressor in Domestic Violence Incidents," by Sgt. Jeff Harsh, *Problem-Solving Quarterly*, Vol. 8, Nos. 3/4, Fall 1995, published by the Police Executive Research Forum; personal communication with Harsh and Port St. Lucie Officer Rod Dobler, Oct. 8, 1997.

Diego, police do thorough domestic violence investigations, officers are trained to distinguish between self-defense (by the victim) and mutual violence (when both are offenders), repeat victims receive special attention, a domestic violence court is up and running, and prosecutors bring cases even when the victim is unwilling. In the past, as was the case in many other jurisdictions, a victim's refusal to go forward in court was seen as an impediment to prosecution.