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In 3rd District, 'Sasquatch Team' Enforces Its Own Code of Justice STREET COPS; PART 1

By Benjamin L. Weiser and Athelia Knight, Washington Post Staff Writers; Washington Post reporters Benjamin L. Weiser and Athelia Knight and staff pho
By Benjamin L. Weiser and Athelia Knight, Washington Post Staff Writers; Washington Post reporters Benjamin L. Weiser and Athelia Knight and staff photographer Linda Wheeler spent the past six months with Washington's 3rd District police officers. A total

Officer Larry Greene looks at the crowd on the corner and knows the enemy is here. After dark, near 14th and U streets in the heart of the city, somewhere in this street-corner gang is the addict and the pusher, maybe even the thief, the mugger, the armed robber, the rapist, the murderer.

Almost instinctively, Greene grabs the microphone from beneath the dashboard of his battered police cruiser, turns up the volume so that the voice of authority will resound down the street, and issues an ultimatum. "The Po-leese!" he cackles. "All of us Sasquatch team is out! Let's clear it. . . . "

Some people move along, most stay. There are 100 or more, six and seven deep along the sidewalk this night in December. Greene and another officer survey the field, picking their targets: the one wearing a red jacket and white hat, the one with a black skull cap and blue jeans, the guy with a tan waistcoat.

Moments later, the two officers enforce the law--their law, their way. They wheel their car to the curb, sprint into the scattering crowd, nab the three preselected suspects, escort them back to a transport cruiser, drive them to the police station, charge them with blocking the sidewalk, threaten them with $50 fines, collect $10 on the spot in a makeshift plea bargain and let them go.

Sasquatch, as the raid is called unofficially, is named after the legendary big-footed creature of the Pacific Northwest. In the two square miles that comprise the 3rd Police District in Northwest Washington, the big foot belongs to the police. Greene says a dozen officers have made hundreds of Sasquatch arrests in the last year and records show that there were 62 on eight days alone. The officers have dubbed their $10 fine the "Northwest Sidewalk Tax." They call their hall of justice "3-D Court." They enact the law on the street, then prosecute and sentence in the cellblock of their station, with no judges or lawyers to get in the way.

"What about their constitutional rights?" a colleague once joked with Greene, as street-cop justice was about to be administered.

"What Constitution?" came the reply. "That only goes for straight people, ain't it?"

Every day, on the streets of the 3rd District (known as 3-D), the police encounter hordes of drug addicts who buy heroin known as "Murder One" and "Black Tape" at $40 a packet in public view, right in front of children--some of whom get injured by discarded needles, right in front of working people waiting for the bus, right in front of old folks walking down the sidewalk with their groceries.

To Greene and some of his fellow officers, these junkies are an occupying force, immune to traditional methods of law enforcement and protected by the criminal justice system that seems to allow them to return to the streets even before the paperwork is done. These officers resort to less traditional means--the roundups, the mock courtroom at the cellblock, the informal plea bargain resulting in a permanent arrest record.

"It's harassment. I'll even admit that," says Greene. "[The junkies] are harassing the good citizens. The only thing we can do is harass them right back . . . . The government took all our tools away." Reasons one of his bosses: "If we went by the book every time, we would lose control out here."

For Greene, the "book" is only a guideline--"all it is meant to be"--in his daily struggle for control of the street corner. Not everyone who reports for duty at the red-brick precinct station at 17th and V shares his approach. Yet they all share his concern as they patrol the most compact, intense and--block for block--violent of Washington's seven police districts.

Here, in one year along 200 crowded blocks in the center of the nation's capital, from Harvard Street on the north to L Street on the south, from Connecticut Avenue on the West to Fourth Street on the east, the latest statistics show there were 36 murders, 856 assaults, 1,347 robberies and nearly 10,000 arrests--all either the worst or second worst crime figures in the city.

"Every night is Saturday night," says Bernard Crooke, a former 3-D commander. "If you can police in 3-D, you can police anywhere in the United States."

The street cops who patrol this one small pocket of downtown protect 70,000 people--some of Washington's poorest (along the 14th Street corridor and in the Shaw neighborhood), some of its richest (near Dupont and Logan Circles), and some of its newest (along Columbia Road where Hispanic immigrants have settled in large numbers). Their runs take police to fancy hotels and prostitutes' "trick pads," to foreign embassies and soup kitchens.

The problems are different from one block to the next, and never cease. One veteran likened his tour in 3-D to "20 years of combat duty." The 380 officers assigned to the district must constantly adapt, rebound and improvise as they move through the dense and disparate streets. Their world has produced its own code of justice. And it has produced Larry Greene.

The former Vietnam tank commander's official assignment covers 17 blocks, touching the northwest side of Logan Circle. But Greene is forever dashing up and down 14th Street from Thomas Circle to Chapin Street. The 32-year-old Greene lives on only about four hours of sleep

a night and, at times, seems as weary of the street people as they are of him. After 10 years, he is fed up with 14th Street, tired of that narrow crime-ridden strip he calls his "trouble alley." At times, he says, he wouldn't even mind being injured if he could retire on disability.

Still, Greene has the energy of a rookie in the body of a veteran. He has eaten too many dinners of candy bars and Cokes. Like many officers, he has arrested many people in 3-D more than once. He feels he can tell who is innocent and who is guilty merely by how they act. He believes "revolving-door justice" swings back to hit police officers first. He has a crisis mentality; his first priority is survival.

"There's federal law, there's District law, and then there's my law," says Greene. "I'm about the formalities later."

He is the quintessential "bad boy" cop. He badmouths his superiors, and they badmouth him back. He exceeds the speed limit, and he gets caught for it. He runs into crowds of junkies saying, "I'll lock you up just for being!" (His colleagues remember another officer who provoked junkies and was killed by a drug pusher two years ago.) Greene, who suffered a fractured skull and broken finger last year in fights with suspects, feels that a nonaggressive officer has his "tail between his legs." He has been in more than a half-dozen scout car and motor-scooter accidents, and when he was admonished for receiving too many citizen complaints, he claims he went on a one-man work stoppage for two years, answering only easy calls and making few arrests. Later, when he again felt the support of his superiors, he renewed his old drive. " 'Bout time you started locking people up," he recalls his sergeant saying, welcoming him back.

An officer like Greene survives at 3-D in spite of himself. Greene is an exception whose exploits are viewed with both admiration and disdain. Yet he is tolerated and his productivity makes his bosses look good.

During several weeks this year, Greene made a dozen arrests, stopped a rape in progress, helped solve a kidnaping, and organized several Sasquatch roundups that produced a drug informant, a murder suspect, illegal handguns, and narcotics. He also resuscitated an overdose victim, mediated several family fights, counseled a child playing with matches and sent a drunk man home in a cab.

He races down congested streets, whipping Car 98 around turns and crashing over unexpected bumps. He has been known to speed down 14th Street on winter nights when the road is icy, hit his brakes hard and skid "98" in rapid but graceful pirouettes. Greene calls them "Double Donuts." Some colleagues have named him "M.O.," for "mental observation" case. To a few, at least, it is a term of endearment. "I know the way Larry drives, and I hope when I get my a-- kicked, he drives his a-- off to get there," says officer Russell Brigham.

Greene's nature has translated into something much more fundamental: He usually is the first to arrive on calls and few officers have a better reputation for backing up their colleagues. Other officers await his arrival on dangerous missions.

"Greene is everywhere," said officer Harold Wooten. "There's a shooting, Greene is there. There's a stabbing, Greene is there. He's always on the scene. You begin to wonder who is this guy or how many are there?"

One night, when there were not enough officers to run a Sasquatch roundup, Greene drove his car onto the sidewalk, scattering addicts. "That's exactly what I think of them--animals," he says. "I'd just like to shoot 'em and get rid of 'em all." But several weeks later, Greene was on Swann Street, saving a heroin addict's life.

Her name was Juanita. She had overdosed on heroin and lay unconscious at the top of a narrow flight of stairs. Greene started to work on her. He slapped her side. "Come on, baby, don't forget how to breathe," he said. "They forget how to breathe," he explained to the girl's mother. He continued to slap her side. He told a child to fetch some snow. "Come on, baby, breathe!" Greene said. He sprinkled the snow on the woman's stomach and around her neck and rubbed it in. Soon, there was a deep, rumbling sound and the woman roused. When an ambulance arrived, Greene was credited by the medics with saving the woman's life. "Juanita," the woman's mother said as she was led off to the hospital, "You thank this man, he's police . . . . "

"He's always doing it. He thinks he's a medic," said Geraldine Stewart, Greene's long-time partner. Greene's trunk is filled with bandages, hospital tape, peroxide, and distilled water. In April, he was driving to another call when a stabbing report came over the radio. Greene detoured to the scene, examined the victim, wrapped her in tape and gauze, and left for his original assignment. When other officers arrived, they were baffled to find their victim already treated.

Greene's relationship with Stewart is as strong as a sibling's, despite a less-than-promising start. At their first meeting five years ago, Greene thanked Stewart for helping him with some paperwork by patting her thigh. She hit him in the face.

Eventually they reached an understanding. "We became the best of friends," Stewart says. Greene helped ease her through difficult times. A black woman raising children alone, Stewart recalls feeling out of place in a policeman's world: "Everyone was looking at me to run away from a fight or not to defend them." Other officers harassed her and labeled her a "honkie lover." One night her tires were slashed. Greene was furious. He gave her money to repair the car and confronted the officer responsible for the vandalism. He gave her emotional support; she cooled his hot temper. Stewart recently was transferred inside the station, and Greene eagerly awaits her return. "I wouldn't trade her for anybody," he says.

Twenty-five years ago, the 14th and U area was thriving with nightclubs that featured celebrities such as Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald. The political fabric has been just as rich: Stokely Carmichael's Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee was located here, as was Pride Inc., the black grassroots organization that helped launch Mayor Marion Barry's career. But over the years after the explosion of 1968, the riots and looting, many merchants fled the area. Parts of the neighborhood are gradually being rebuilt now, but the corner is still essentially a decaying, burnt-out shell with abandoned buildings and a legacy of drugs.

Sasquatch began here more than a year ago when a man approached Sgt. Joe Williams in his police car. "Officer," said the man, "I am so glad to see you here. This is the first time I didn't have to ride an extra stop to get off the bus."

Williams recalls: "The crowd was so big he'd ride a block out of his way . . . . People have a right to be able to get off at a bus stop without being in fear." He ordered Greene and others to begin issuing warnings and locking up people.

Thus began Sasquatch. "The name is mine. I gave it," says Williams. "There's no big problem with it and the main thing is to be sure you're not getting anyone who may be innocent." The officers eagerly carried out the mission. They started enforcing the city's rarely used "incommoding" law, a regulation that prohibits people from blocking the sidewalk.

The key to their enforcement has been repetition. "When we feel like it, we go down there and hit 'em, handle a couple of them, then hit 'em again," explains Greene. Sometimes "the whole block goes."

Records show there were 40 Sasquatch arrests on seven dates in January and 22 last Thanksgiving Day.

At the precinct station, the suspects are offered the standard Sasquatch plea bargain: Leave 14th Street until morning, the incommoding charge will be reduced to disorderly conduct and the $50 fine to $10--to be paid like a parking ticket. The police cannot remember anyone refusing the offer.

Most officers involved in Sasquatch agree that it does disperse crowds. But enforcement of the incommoding law in this way is questionable. Police regulations state: "The incommoding laws were not intended . . . to keep . . . 'undesirables' moving or to keep groups of people from gathering . . . Here the streets are for people . . . all the people--even 'undesirables,' as long as they are not breaking the law."

"There ain't no way in hell you can tell me they are doing anything they're supposed to be doing," says officer Thomas Childs. "The officers are trying to take it on themselves to help out the community, so the kids can walk the street, so the ladies can get on the bus unmolested."

The officers also point out that their Sasquatch roundups turn up illegal guns and other weapons, illicit drugs, defendants wanted for more serious crimes and new police informants.

Not all of the officers who take part in the Sasquatch raids are as enthusiastic as Greene. "I'm involved because my partner wants to be involved," says one veteran who requested anonymity. "I'll watch . . . I don't really approve of them and don't know how legal they are. I get the feeling some of those caught up there weren't those they gave the warning to."

Under police rules, officers must first give a warning, then allow a several-minute grace period

before moving in to make the arrests.

Wayne Simpson, a muscular officer who moves through the crowds like a one-man wrecking crew, takes a few steps back if he doesn't like the way a Sasquatch is being executed. "That wasn't done right," he said after one roundup last January. "There was no warning. [They] didn't give them [time] to go nowhere."

Although Simpson faithfully backed up his colleagues on the street that day, he chose to wait in the 3-D lobby until the arrests were processed. "If I feel something is shaky," he says, "I'd rather stand off than get involved. It's just my way of doing things."

Sasquatch ended several months ago, according to Greene, although 3-D officers continue to conduct roundups to disperse the crowds on 14th Street.

December 28, officer Dale Hughes drives to the corner of 14th and U and sees a crowd that stretches from Pamela's Deli to the Republic Bar. He nods disapprovingly and asks: "What is this bull----?"

Greene takes it as a signal that it is time for action. "I got a run," says Greene, "and then we'll come back and Sasquatch."

About a half-hour later, Greene is back. Hughes is gone, but another officer, Wilson Barreto, is here.

Sometimes Greene begins with a polite "Good morning, gentlemen. Don't block the sidewalk." Other times he warns sternly: "If I catch you twice, you'll pay $50 to Mayor Barry's reelection campaign."

Tonight Greene announces simply over the PA system: "Quit incommoding the sidewalk or it'll be $50." He scans his audience, saying to himself, "I got to pick me someone."

Greene settles on a man with a red parka and white hat and makes mental notes of the man's clothing so he will remember. Barreto makes his selections. They circle the block and race back. With a third officer backing them up, they make three arrests. Each officer takes credit for one.

At 3-D, two of the three prisoners admit hearing Greene's warning. "I heard, I heard," one says.

"You get out of town--I'll drop it down to $10," Greene proposes, making the standard offer. Both prisoners accept.

"You won't catch me up there no more," the second man says.

The third prisoner, frail and elderly, sits quietly. His hands shake slightly as the cuffs are removed. He unfolds a wallet and gives Greene some identification. His name is Walker. He says he is a laborer who had been waiting to catch a bus to visit a relative when the police had

arrested him.

Greene notes that the man is 57 years old. He believes Walker. "Not a needle mark on him, and junkies never live that long," Greene observes. It appears they caught an innocent bystander in their Sasquatch. Greene practically orders one of the other prisoners to help Walker: "You pay him out."

The other prisoner shakes his head. "Ain't this something. I'm going to call the Better Business Bureau," he says. But he agrees to pay Walker's $10 fine in addition to his own. No matter who pays, Walker's name remains on the arrest book.

"I'm thankful that I'm out, sir," Walker says. He has not realized that in his case merely standing in the wrong place at the wrong time in the 3rd District resulted in a permanent arrest record.

Greene puts Walker in the back seat of his cruiser and drives him back to the bus stop. As Walker steps out, he again thanks Greene. "Have to use somebody to be an example," he says. "I understand."

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STREET COPS PART 2 3-D Captain Demands Minimum Arrest Quota

By Athelia Knight and Benjamin L. Weiser, Washington Post Staff Writers; Washington Post reporters Athelia Knight and Benjamin L. Weiser and photograp

By Athelia Knight and Benjamin L. Weiser, Washington Post Staff Writers; Washington
Post reporters Athelia Knight and Benjamin L. Weiser and photographer Linda Wheeler spent the past six months with Washington's 3rd District police officers. A total of 18

When the list of arrests by 3rd District patrol officers was read at roll call one night last year, James Alexander's name was at the bottom. For six straight weeks he had failed to make a single arrest. For one thing, the 10-year veteran hated going to court--a time-consuming follow-up to most arrests. Unless an obvious case presented itself, Alexander's personal policy was to avoid making arrests.

His captain, Michael Canfield, also has a policy: Officers should arrest lawbreakers. That's their job. And until Alexander fulfilled the minimum quota of two arrests every six weeks that Canfield sets for all his officers, he would be punished, assigned the worst hours in the police department, the unpopular weekend shift, a sort of K-P duty that rookies usually fill.

"It just destroyed my morale," Alexander recalled. He realized there was only one way to get back into the captain's good graces. Canfield wanted cases. He would get them.

For the next six weeks Alexander combed the streets of 3-D in the heart of downtown Washington, searching for any and every possible arrest. He made three disorderly conduct cases, a gun case, a marijuana case, a drunk driving case, two stolen property cases, an arrest for bootlegging, one for a "disorderly" craps game, even one he says a sympathetic officer gave him. Officer Anthony Patterson questioned the merit of one of Alexander's arrests and tried to get him to drop the charges. Alexander would not budge.

"He had to go out and lock somebody up," Patterson says. "I said, 'God damn, just think what else he would do if threatened with losing his days off.' "

When the six-week period was over, Alexander had made 15 arrests. He even finished second in the "Officer of the Month" competition, an award bestowed on the cop with the highest arrest totals.

Several days later, Alexander was on his scooter when Canfield and two sergeants rode up. "The captain will let you have your days off back," he says one sergeant told him. Then he heard Canfield's voice: "If I ever take your days off again, the next time you see weekends, you will be

retired--or fired."

"I told him I'd do everything in my power to make his life miserable," recalls Canfield. The warning was not to be taken lightly. For Canfield has unabashedly demanded a minimum arrest quota from each of his 60 officers.

"I told my lieutenants the minimum I'll set . . . . I want two arrests within a six-week period, and five tickets a day," Canfield says. "It is a very reachable goal . . . . I'm not asking them to make two illegal arrests." CC anfield heads one of the three C sections of police officers that make up the 3rd District's 188-member uniformed command. He says arrests mean his officers are doing something to stop rising crime.

"It really frustrates me," Canfield says. "Every other business in society can require quotas. The dirty word in this department is quotas. In every job, you have an acceptable level of productivity . . . . No official will come out and say, 'This is the minimum amount acceptable.' "

Not everyone agrees with his policy, and the quota has sparked a heated debate among officers and officials at 3-D.

"We're not producing anything," says Capt. Joseph Maddox, who commands another 60 officers at 3-D. "This is not a business . . . . It's part of the justice system and it should be concerned about the application of principles of justice and not . . . industrial principles of management."

While many officers prosper under Canfield's system, others say that his artificial standard promotes quantity over quality and can result in questionable or unnecessary arrests, known as "hummers." They say that quotas, which are contrary to accepted D.C. police department policy, violate fundamental notions of justice and fairness.

"There are many, many ways to evaluate performance, and quota systems would be the least desirable," says Robert Angrisani of the International Association of Police Chiefs. "They are not accepted as a general practice that we know of anywhere."

At the end of last year, Canfield sent warning letters to 15 of his officers who failed to meet his quota. Those he considered extremely unproductive lost prized perks and cherished job assignments.

"Sure it's controversial . . . . It's the thing the department's tried to get away from," says William Freeman, a lieutenant who works with Canfield. "It used to be the old saying when a person got a ticket: 'Are you making your quota tonight, officer?' But for this district . . . and for the amount of crime out there, if you don't bring in a lockup, you're not doing your job."

The equation--how arrests affect the crime rate--is the heart of the dispute over quotas.

"They assume a mathematical relationship between the number of arrests and crimes committed," says Maddox. "Arrests have some function, but we don't know the point of

diminishing returns. The officer might be in here on some nickel-and-dime arrest while someone's getting raped on his beat."

"It's all a numbers game; it's shuffle the numbers--how many people you locked up," says Arnold Moore, a veteran who failed to meet Canfield's quota last year.

"In roll call, the sergeant might say, 'We had 17 robberies yesterday.' Then he'll say, 'You did good yesterday. You made eight arrests.' Now those eight arrests were not robbers. They had nothing to do with the robberies. But the fact you made eight arrests made you look good."

One thing no one disputes is that Canfield puts his words into action. His lieutenants and sergeants believe their boss is unlike any other Washington police official. "He doesn't act like the old traditional captain. He gets out on the street and gets involved," said Lt. Robert Sheaffer.

Each night, his lieutenants handle the paperwork; he packs his shotgun under his car seat and eagerly sets out with his officers in their search for arrests.

Canfield is often the first to arrive if an officer needs assistance. He is not reluctant to make an arrest himself. Sometimes his presence overwhelms officers. Some complain that when they try to negotiate solutions, Canfield overrules them. Mimicks one officer, " 'Lock 'em up!' That's always his damn words."

Canfield says his requirement is conservative. "Less aggressive officers ignore stuff," he says. "We've got to get rid of our white hats. Our job is to introduce people to the criminal justice system, not to persuade them not to be introduced."

As a college student, Canfield proposed in a paper that police need not carry guns because, as he put it, "everything could be solved through verbal communication" and "there was no need to use violence.

"Boy, was I wrong," he says now.

He is combative, confrontive, at times almost bellicose. He tells his officers: "Try anything as long as it's legal." Last summer, he came to the rescue of residents of the Seventh Street area who angrily complained that their neighborhood had become a haven for drug users.

"I passed the word: 'I need volunteers. I'm going to attack Seventh and S,' " Canfield recalls. The widely publicized operation netted hundreds of arrests.

"The citizens loved it," Canfield says. "They were clapping and yelling. It was like victory in France."

But when Canfield turned on the fire hydrants, drenching pill pushers and pedestrians alike, Chief of Police Maurice Turner ordered it stopped.

Canfield says: "We can rationalize as much as we want, but in the final analysis, society pays us for one thing--to incarcerate people for violating the law . . . . If you can't find two people in six weeks who have violated the law, then we'd better send you back to the academy and show you some more arrest techniques."

This attitude has pitted Canfield T against some 3-D officers who believe police work is too subjective for such arbitrary requirements, that the emphasis on numbers has replaced good judgment.

Bobby Walker, who was disciplined by Canfield for failing to meet the quota last year, says: "To me, it's a bad way for an officer to feel that he has to go out and lock up somebody to get recognition from his superiors."

Arnold Moore agrees. "I don't fit the criteria of numbers. At the end of six weeks, I won't have a lot of arrests. Sure I will lock up your robbers, your murderers. But I don't lock up the guys drinking in the alley."

One officer who seems unconcerned about the requirement is William T. Carbone, whose 88 arrests in 1981 (including 25 felony arrests) easily exceeded the quota. "If you do your job, no one bugs you," says Carbone. "If you want to hide for eight hours, that's fine, but it comes down to statistics. It proves it."

Canfield says of Carbone: "If I want compassion, I'll get a less aggressive officer. If I want retribution--Carbone."

Carbone says it is difficult not to make the quota. "I tell people, 'If you've got a scout car, stay in your area. Something's going to happen.' All you've got to do is wait."

Maddox says he would rather not wait for crime to happen. He deploys his officers where their presence is most likely to deter it.

He stays in his office, peering with a cartographer's precision over neighborhood maps of 3-D, ascertaining block-by-block crime patterns to determine where he will place his officers.

Maddox has a philosopher's view of law enforcement. He is studying for his master's at Georgetown, practices yoga, and often quotes from Plato and Aristotle. Maddox likens 3-D to the universe: It is in a perpetual state of disorder.

Maddox's 1981 statistics show that while his officers were on duty, reported crime decreased by 3 percent. When Canfield's officers were working, reported crime went up 4 percent.

"We're not paid to get involved in statistical analysis of crimes versus the prevention of crime," Canfield says. Criminals "don't understand this philosophical nonsense."

The debate spills into the streets. One of Maddox's officers, Donald Arnett, suspects crime

deterrence theories merely "move the crime around. You don't prevent [criminals] from going across the street and doing it there."

Whether Canfield or Maddox is correct, the fact is strategies change as work shifts change. A third captain who directs beat officers, Bruce MacDonald, has no articulated philosophy, yet his officers exceeded last year's arrest totals of Canfield's and Maddox's squads.

Deputy Chief Rodwell M. Catoe, who runs 3-D, disagrees with Canfield's quota system. "Quotas are dangerous," Catoe says. "When you set a quota, the officer can not do his job objectively . . . . Suppose the officer makes two arrests the first two weeks? What does he do the next four?"

Catoe said he and Canfield "have never been able to bridge" their different views of arrest requirements.

Officers who oppose Canfield's quotas sometimes feel the pressure.

"I guess I'm frowned on by officials," said Dwight A. Hunter, whose 27 arrests last year barely satisfied Canfield's standard. "An officer like me is termed 'complacent'. I'll admit I make the minimum number of arrests, two to three [in the six-week period], but I'm there when they call for help."

Russell Jackson says he once questioned an arrest a former partner made to end a family argument that Jackson believed could have been resolved through mediation.

"I totally felt the arrest wasn't justified. When we got to the station I said it was a bad arrest. I told him he should let the guy go. [It] was our presence there that was making the scene erupt . . . . He told me in so many words to 'kiss off.' " Jackson refused to work with the officer again.

Several officers, none of whom would speak for the record, described a kind of underground support system that exists to help officers with low arrest totals. Word will spread at roll call that an officer is low in productivity. "Everybody basically knows about it," explained one. Other officers who come upon minor disorderly complaints, he said, will "call the officer that's lowest in arrests and give him five cases."

Several veterans contend that in order to improve their arrest figures, some officers abuse the city's disorderly conduct law, which was enforced in thousands of cases last year.

One officer said it is easy for the police to "make somebody disorderly about something." Says a veteran: "If you run into a bad streak, . . . then you got to go out and 'hum' some poor son-of-a-bitch to make the quota." Another described the tendency to "overuse the pen" in writing up charges, adding "a little something [that] shouldn't be there.

"I've maybe thrown a verb in that made it look like more," the officer said, "not just the thing he was disorderly for . . . . It's a [criminal] record and it shouldn't be there."

Of the 1,480 persons citywide who challenged their disorderly conduct arrests last year, 52 percent were dismissed by the D.C. Corporation Counsel's office before the cases even went to court. But disorderly conduct cases account for only a small portion of 3-D's 10,000 arrests--one-quarter of the total made in Washington last year.

Canfield's leading officer, Gregory McClure, arrested 129 people in nine months last year, including 27 felons, for an average of more than 14 arrests per month. "It makes me feel good," says McClure. "I don't want to retire in 20 years and say that was a good 20 years of doing nothing."

Roy Derr, Canfield's sixth-highest arrest-maker, cites a financial incentive for his 64 arrests in 1981. The $4,000 he received in court overtime increased his $20,000 salary by 20 percent.

"Anyone who says they don't need money is a liar," says Derr. "If I get a chance, I love getting that money from court." CC anfield says that his top arrest-C makers--McClure (129 arrests), Carbone (88), Robert Moss (71); Richard Buresch (66); Clayton Leboo (65); and Derr (64)--at least temporarily removed more than 400 people, including 100 felons, from the streets of Washington last year. Canfield insists those arrests--and his enforcing of quotas--must have helped reduce the crime rate.

Some of the officers at the bottom of his list heeded his warning. After losing his weekends, James Alexander met Canfield's quota and ended up making 28 arrests for the year.

Bobby Walker stubbornly refused to go along. As a teen-ager, Walker was charged with auto larceny and given probation. He says his life turned around after that. He joined the first Job Corps police academy class and, at 21, was hired by the D.C. police department.

He says he knows how harmful an arrest record can be. Wherever possible, Walker believes people should not be arrested. He says that despite the large number of disorderly conduct arrests that are dismissed in court, the original arrest record remains on the books. When Walker encounters a disorderly situation on the street and suspects "the most [the person] will get is nothing," he says he will not make an arrest.

Last year Walker made seven arrests. "Disgraceful," declares Canfield, "an indication of a complete lack of responsibility."

Canfield sent Walker two letters of warning, which Walker threw away.

Walker's friends, sensing an impending confrontation, offered him credit for their arrests. Walker declined. Finally Canfield stripped the 12-year veteran of his neighborhood patrolling beat, leaving him unassigned, jumping from car to car like a rookie.

Walker, perpetually defiant, says that if there has been a failure of standards, it is Canfield's, not his.

"The only way my arrest numbers will increase," he insists, "is if I run into an increased number of situations where . . . I deem people need to be arrested."

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'The Code of Silence': a Harsh Reality STREET COPS; PART 3

By Benjamin L. Weiser and Athelia Knight
Washington Post Staff Writers

About 7 a.m. on Sept. 12, 1978, officer Leonard Campbell saw someone dart into an alley off T Street. He and seven other 3rd District officers had been chasing a narcotics suspect who had just escaped. Within minutes, the eight street cops were combing the dark strip full of stones and debris. They found the man hiding under an oil tank.

The suspect's hands were still cuffed behind his back. Two officers lifted him to his feet. It was then, Campbell later alleged, he saw Elwood Anderson--the officer from whom the man originally escaped--run up and kick the suspect in the chest.

"Man, what's wrong with you? Don't kick him again," Campbell recalls shouting as he pulled Anderson away.

Campbell said the prisoner, Gregory Akers, was doubled over in pain. The other six officers seemed stunned--by Campbell's interven-tion. Campbell recalled, "They looked at me all funny."

Anderson told Campbell he had slipped and had not kicked Akers. He apologized and asked Campbell not to report the incident. But to Campbell, the scene was eerily reminiscent of another alley and another time 25 years earlier when his brother had been the victim of a police beating. No one had said anything about it; there had been no report, no investigation, no justice.

Campbell was torn over whether he should report the incident. "It was one of the hardest decisions I have made . . . . It was just like being on a jury. I kept going over it . . . . The invisible code that we have, it did come to mind."

He says he contacted a friend, another 3rd District officer, who had once reported police brutality to his superiors. "He gave me the best answer anyone could. He told me . . . that if I did report it, I would be on my own . . . . 'You're going to be blackballed. They're going to give you the max for anything you do. They'll never forget. You'll have to live with it. But, on the other hand, can you live with yourself?'"

Within an hour, Campbell had filed his complaint.

By making allegations against another officer, Campbell had breached what his friend, officer Nathan Smith, calls the unspoken "code among policemen that you don't tell on each other." It is a code of silence, a mutual protection pact that has very practical origins.

Four years after violating the code, Campbell is still paying.

The code seems to stem from a much more basic truth: that survival is the first priority of police work. Day after day in crime-ridden areas such as 3-D, where it is not uncommon for officers to find themselves alone in an unfriendly crowd or dangerous alley, they must be confident with the knowledge that their colleagues always will back them up.

"We don't have no one to call on but each other," says Smith.

Word quickly spreads if an officer is perceived to be undependable, as someone who must be watched closely. Officers do not want to have to worry about each other when danger may be only seconds away.

"I know what it's like to have been in a battle . . . and to hear the yelp and the wail of a scout car coming to your assistance. I also know the feeling of not hearing it," says Lt. Kenneth Brown.

"The trust you build up . . . survives after a period of time and . . . permeates the entire unit, district to district--the entire city--and spills over into adjoining jurisdictions," says Brown. "Most guys look at it as 'Hey, we must stand together. We're the thin line, more or less, between lawfulness and lawlessness, survival and nonsurvival.'"

It is this need for trust that created the code of silence.

Detective Lowell Duckett says, "When you raise your right hand the first day on the job it means : 'I will tell no evil, see no evil and hear no evil.' The bond is there because of the nature of the job."

An assistant U.S. attorney says, "Most police officers have a sense that it's us against them, that the community doesn't appreciate them and doesn't support them. They get so much hostility, and so much distrust, that they become a kind of little family, and the family is the most important thing."

After Campbell's complaint was filed, 3-D officials launched an investigation.

Anderson said he had not kicked Akers.

All six officers in the alley said they had not seen Anderson kick Akers.

Akers himself--a 25-year-old American University student who had been arrested for allegedly carrying a bag of Preludin pills--said he had not been kicked.

Campbell was the sole accuser.

Fellow officers and police officials faithful to the unwritten code began a campaign of harassment against Campbell. To them, Campbell says, he was no better than the stool pigeons, the squealers, the lawbreakers police routinely paid to turn in friends.

Campbell was ostracized, temporarily removed from the street and assigned to clerical chores. He says he received anonymous phone calls at night, and that one member of his squad would have no more to do with him. "I'll work with anyone," the officer said, "but the snitcher."

"Those officers were going to let me burn for telling the truth, for doing what was right," says Campbell.

Says an officer not involved in the Anderson case: "If there is one thing this job teaches you, it's how to lie. If you don't, they'll burn you. So if I see an officer get out and smack somebody, my statement is, 'I was too busy to see what was going on.'"

Lt. William Freeman says that all officers know right from wrong but that most will eventually find themselves in situations where emotions take over. Last year, there were 122 citizen complaints citywide of physical abuse by police. While officials could not say how many had merit, they cited a 1979 study that showed 92 percent of the complaints filed between 1975 and 1978 were unfounded.

Freeman says he doesn't know if the allegation against Anderson is true, but if it is, he understands.

"Call it a fit of anger, a fit of frustration, whatever you call it, it was a normal human response," says Freeman. "You chase a guy three to four blocks--where do you put the anger? He put it in his foot."

Another official, who declined to be identified, says he once covered up for one officer accused of beating a prisoner because he empathized with the officer's momentary rage. He says he gave instructions that the officer's candid version of the incident be revised.

"I said, 'We have a problem here. It'll look bad for the investigation. You'll have to talk to this man . . . If he doesn't change his statement, he'll get into trouble.' He turned in a new report the next day."

Campbell understands the temptation to overreact. There were times when he could not control his temper, when he had to step back and allow another officer to take over. Once, he felt like jumping on a prisoner who spit in an officer's face. Another time, a drunk woman hit him and he angrily grabbed her, only to feel her young children wrapping themselves around his legs. "I caught myself," Campbell recalled. "Her kids were crying, 'Please don't kill my mother.' I told her to go."

Campbell knows that police are not supposed to be "thin-skinned," but he counts himself a human being first.

"I've seen the things police sometimes do to people on the street, and it wasn't the right time or place to talk about it." But kicking Akers, he says, was different. "It wasn't necessary. The guy never said anything. He was still handcuffed."

Even several months after the incident, after the police department charged that there was an elaborate cover-up by Anderson, Campbell's "snitcher" reputation stood. Rookies who knew nothing about the original incident kept their distance from him, Campbell recalled. "They didn't even know me, and they wouldn't work with me because of 'the word.' "

"The word" is a fact of life at 3-D. It crosses racial lines, age barriers--all barriers--and manifests itself in the intense struggle on the streets. There are other 3-D officers for whom "the word" became a legacy.

One young officer said he confronted his older partner last year after the veteran pushed a prisoner down a flight of stairs. "I don't like what you did," the younger officer said privately. The veteran replied, "You could say you just came out the door and didn't see anything." Word of the confrontation spread, and the inexperienced officer was immediately tagged as someone who could not be trusted.

Officer Thomas Childs complained to his superiors about two colleagues who tied a belt in the shape of a noose around a prisoner's neck. The reaction was "as if I had done something wrong," Childs recalled. His nightstick was taken and later returned to him in a manila envelope, reduced to sawdust, a sign of warning and contempt.

Officer Bobby Walker saw two officers beat one of his prisoners in the face. He reported the incident to a lieutenant. The lieutenant took the prisoner into an office. "I don't know what happened in that lieutenant's office," Walker recalled. "When he came out of that room, the prisoner wouldn't identify anyone." Walker was disciplined for failure to safeguard his prisoner.

"It taught me," says Walker, "that if you're not ready to stand up and lose it all . . . to keep your mouth closed. I've seen a lot since then, and I've never brought it up."

Leonard Campbell says he had his first contact with police brutality in 1957 when, at the age of 5, he and his 12-year-old brother were confronted in an alley by two white police officers, both of whom appeared to have been drinking. One of the officers challenged Campbell's brother to a fight, saying, "If you lick me, I'll let you go. If you lose, I'll lock you up."

Terrified, Campbell ran home. When he returned with his sister, the alley was empty. They called the police station. They were told that Campbell's brother had been "locked up for disorderly conduct." They found him at the police station with puffed eyes and a bruised face. "They had really done a job on him. They had beat his head with a phone book," Campbell recalled.

To avoid further trouble, Campbell's father signed a paper dropping the matter.

Campbell said when he found himself in another alley 25 years later, watching Akers try to catch his breath, listening to another officer tell Akers, "Be a man, act like a man," seeing Akers struggling to straighten up, all he could think of was his brother.

"The only reason this exists here," Campbell said, "is because we allow it to."

When the 3-D investigation began, Campbell said in his statement, "I clearly observed officer Anderson kick the prisoner."

Anderson spoke to investigators under a grant of total immunity from prosecution. Then he disputed Campbell's allegation.

"Maybe he misconstrued what had happened in the alley, or was too quick to judge . . . , " Anderson said in his statement.

Campbell was shown the accounts of the six officers in the alley. "Nobody saw nothing but me. They had made me out to be the liar." Not only had the white officers backed up Anderson's account of the incident involving Akers, who is black, but Campbell was upset to learn that the few black officers had as well.

Akers' seven-page statement was shown to Campbell. "Anderson was running towards me," Akers had said. "He appeared to be losing his balance. Next thing I knew, he was kinda sliding toward me horizontally. He lost his balance . . . . I flinched because I couldn't jump back . . . . Anderson was laying on the ground, but he had not touched me . . . . "

Campbell flipped through the statement as a police official stood nearby. "Officer Campbell, you said he was assaulted. The victim said he wasn't."

Campbell says he was astonished by Akers' written version of the incident.

"I don't care what he said. He was assaulted . . . . I'm positive what I saw."

At one point, Campbell left the room to regain his composure. A black sergeant peeked out of his office and motioned him in, Campbell recalls, and whispered, "Campbell, whatever you do, stick to your guns." The sergeant checked the hallway again before allowing Campbell to leave.

"I felt like I was in the rural south somewhere," Campbell says. "It dawned on me by the questions. They were trying to make something seem like an accident that wasn't an accident . . . I explained, 'I'm a police officer. I saw this happen. I was five feet away.' "

One of the black officers who had been in the alley told Campbell later: "I called it as I saw it".

Campbell said coldly, "It should have been your mother he kicked that way."

The few who supported Campbell refused to do so openly. "What you did, I'm glad you did. I couldn't have done it," one said. Others refused to include him in their activities, telling his friends, "We're doing this after work, but don't tell Campbell . . . . "

Campbell recalls the time a 3-D sergeant, unaware of Campbell's role in the Akers affair, was talking with him when the phone rang. Campbell heard his name mentioned. "Oh, this is the guy," Campbell recalls the sergeant saying. As he hung up, he turned to Campbell: "You can't go on the street like that because your beard's too long, your hair's too long--I might give you a '750' discipline notice ." Campbell was assigned clerical duties that day.

It was a difficult period for Campbell. He spent many hours at home alone. At the police station, he became more and more isolated. Recalls Lowell Duckett: "He was having to walk beats by himself, guys would ostracize him and give him the 'West Point' silent treatment. But the sense that he had done something that needed to be done overcame those obstacles. They might not trust him, but they would respect him."

If there was any positive aspect to the experience, Campbell says, it was that officers would think twice about touching a prisoner when he was present.

By Sept. 27, 1978, 15 days after the incident, police officials and federal prosecutors had reviewed the case and concluded that Campbell's allegations were without merit. The case was closed.

Soon after, Campbell was summoned by a top official at 3-D, who asked whether Campbell would submit to a lie detector test. When Campbell asked for time to consider it, he says his boss blew up, accusing Campbell of trying to "hold up" Anderson's pending promotion to sergeant with allegations that were "worth nothing."

"Right there I knew where I stood," Campbell recalled. "He's the top. Whatever I do, I'm out on my own." Campbell's closest friends advised against his taking the lie detector test. "Don't do it, man. They'll throw stuff in there," one warned him, fearing that Campbell had become the target of the investigation and might be set up with tricky questions.

Campbell replied, "I feel if I don't take it, it'll hurt the case more."

He reported on schedule to the examiner. But, as he waited to be hooked up to the machine, the test was canceled. Campbell was furious. He had been taken to the brink, he realized, to see how long he would stick to his story. But he had called their bluff.

Not long after that Campbell was radioed in his scout car and asked to meet another cruiser. He was introduced to officials from Internal Affairs, a specialized unit that handles inquiries into charges of police misconduct. Campbell was told the case had been ordered reopened by then-Chief of Police Burtell M. Jefferson. A short time later Campbell received a grand jury

subpoena. He looked up the D.C. code numbers listed on the subpoena in order to determine the nature of the investigation. He found the words "obstruction of justice."

On Nov. 28, 1978, Akers recanted his statement. He now said he had been kicked and that Anderson had contacted him shortly after the incident and offered the following deal: If Akers was willing to lie about the incident, Anderson would pay him a small sum of money and "take care of the Preludin pills case when it came to testify" at the trial.

Akers outlined an elaborate scheme. Anderson would use the code name "Cowboy" and Akers would use the name "Touche'." Akers said he consented to the proposal because he feared retribution and had "no friends" at 3-D. He said he had concocted a statement for the police and made a duplicate for Anderson.

Anderson was indicted June 6, 1979, on charges of assault and obstruction of justice. The indictment alleged that Anderson had "endeavored, by means of bribery, misrepresentation, intimidation, force and threats of force" to obstruct the police investigation into the the beating. Anderson pleaded innocent.

On June 17, 1980, a D.C. judge ruled that since police originally had given Anderson immunity from prosecution for his account, much of the government's case could not be used against him. More than a year ago, the U.S. attorney's office took the case to the D.C. Court of Appeals. The government lawyers argued that if Anderson were found to have subsequently lied, it should erase the immunity grant. The matter is pending. If tried and convicted, Anderson faces a prison term of up to four years. Anderson was suspended from the force without pay. He stands by his original account of the incident and declined to comment for this article.

Sometimes, just the perception that an officer has told on a colleague is enough to violate the code of silence.

One young officer worked hard to gain the respect of his more experienced colleagues. He was determined to show restraint and not make the mistake of coming on too strong with his own value system.

"I just lay back. I don't jump up and say, 'Can I drive?' . . . . I don't touch the radio. I just wait. If the veteran does not touch the radio for a while then I take that as a signal that I can.

"I don't want to step on anybody's toes . . . . I realize I have a lot of to learn."

One day, however, his partner, unhappy at a minor error made in processing an arrest, pushed a prisoner down a flight of stairs. He confronted the veteran later. "I don't like what you did. It wasn't right. The guy didn't do anything to deserve it. It's just wrong."

The veteran replied, "You could say you'd just come out the door, and didn't see anything."

The young officer said, "If the sergeant asks me, I don't have any choice but to tell him I

told him as long as me and him ride again I didn't want to see it happen. He knew where I stood. I knew where he stood."

Several officers heard about his outburst and spread the word. It did not take long for the young officer to gain a reputation.

But there was something the young officer never told his partner, nor the other officers who were so quick to pass judgment.

Before he had warned his partner he would refuse to lie, he already had been asked about the matter. Knowing he would be working and depending on these same officers for years to come, he recalled having mustered up the only possible answer: "I told him I'd just come out the doorway, and didn't see what happened."
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Tracking a Pint-Sized Prostitute STREET COPS; Part 4

By Benjamin L. Weiser and Athelia Knight, Washington Post Staff Writers; Washington Post reporters Benjamin L. Weiser and Athelia Knight and photograp
By Benjamin L. Weiser and Athelia Knight, Washington Post Staff Writers; Washington Post reporters Benjamin L. Weiser and Athelia Knight and photographer Linda Wheeler spent the past six months with Washington's 3rd District police officers. A total of 18

Detective Gerald Robertson has seen many prostitutes in his time, and this one, like most, was obviously fluent in the second language of 14th Street: lies.

He first had noticed her on Thomas Circle about midnight last Jan. 5. She had the right strut, the right style--that black cowboy hat, leather boots, the white fur jacket.

Robertson drove closer. Beneath a street light, he could see her features: Her brash demeanor was that of a hardened prostitute. But her face, visible beneath a curly wig, was that of a child.

He called her to the car. Her hands were shaking. Pouting, she plunked herself in the back seat.

She identified herself as "Michelle" and said she was 23.

Robertson marveled at the brazen response.

He could tell the girl was young. But he did not learn until later that she was just 13, one of the youngest prostitutes the D.C. police had ever encountered.

"I just came out," she told him. "That's all I want to do, make one trick and go into the house and pay the rent."

He listened as she rattled on about her wig being real hair and the purple spot under her left eye being mascara. She lied about her parents being dead, about which school she attended. She lied about her address and about not having a pimp. She was intractable. Over the next four hours, she gave Robertson five different ages and three different names.

When he challenged her, she said, "Sir, I don't lie."

Robertson sighed. He wanted to avoid arresting her for prostitution, giving her a criminal record that would put her on a treadmill she might never get off. For the time being, that would mean allowing her to walk away. But he would be back.

"You're out here dressed as Annie Oakley. I've got to find out who you are," he told her as she got out of the car. "A little thing like you might get stomped on."

Robertson wrapped himself in his leather jacket and for the rest of the night stalked the girl, listened to her lies, contacted her sister, and searched for her pimp. He worked with a rare intensity, for there was a child on the streets.

If removing child prostitutes from 14th Street were as simple as finding them, Robertson's job might be a lot more satisfying.

Robertson can understand giving a criminal record to a seasoned prostitute. It's a nightly ritual between consenting adults--the hundreds of women who work 14th Street, and the 20 officers who cruise it to catch them.

But Robertson, who has an 11-year-old daughter, believes that young girls are not criminals. They are victims of crime: abuse and neglect. Instead of arresting these children, he takes them into "protective" custody, talks to them, tries to learn who is exploiting them, and sends them to court as legally ungovernable.

"If my daughter was out there and I couldn't get to her, I'd want somebody to at least have the initiative to try to do something about it," says Robertson.

Yet the D.C. Corporation Counsel's office says that, unless he is searching for a missing person, Robertson cannot arbitrarily remove children from 14th Street if he is unwilling to issue criminal prostitution charges. The city prosecutor invariably dismisses such cases outright, allowing the girls to go free.

"The law is very clear," says Nan R. Huhn, chief of the Corporation Counsel's juvenile division. "You can't just see a girl standing on 14th Street, say, 'She looks young,' and pick her up. You can't exercise police power because you're concerned about someone. We're not in a situation where the police are the kids' parents."

Robertson says he is not sure laws to protect children actually achieve that purpose. "I assume they do have their so-called 'rights,' " Robertson says. "However do they have a right as an 11-, 14-, or 15-year-old, to be out there working as a prostitute, endangering their health and well-being? We have the right to prevent it . . . . Somewhere the line has to be drawn."

There isn't always a lot of satisfaction from working on the 3rd District prostitution squad. A dozen times a night, a thousand times a year, undercover officers disguise themselves as businessmen or conventioneers and drive their unmarked cars along the "Street of Dreams," waiting for a proposition, arresting an unsuspecting prostitute. Female officers dress as prostitutes and when men proposition them, they give a routine signal to backup officers that they have enough evidence to arrest the john.

In the end, judges usually order the johns to write essays as punishment and the prostitutes

generally are fined and sentenced to a few hours or, at most, a night in jail.

"I dislike locking up the women--to me it's a moral issue," says Winston Starke, an officer in the 3-D prostitution squad. "I like going out there and arresting the bad guys--the robbers, the rapists."

The officers seek other rewards. Richard Skirchak, a 12-year veteran, says he looks forward to the extra overtime pay for court appearances that accompany most arrests. "If I had to go to court for nothing," he says, "there'd be a lot less arrests made."

Robertson long ago concluded that adult prostitution arrests are made so the police can prove to the public that something is being done about the problem. When he sees the signal that a john has been caught, he gleefully drives up, singing, "Turn out the lights, the party's over."

He would rather concentrate on cases of child prostitution. In 1976, he helped launch the police department's first juvenile prostitution unit. To him the "bad guys" are the pimps who exploit the girls. His greatest challenge is persuading juveniles to get off 14th Street for good.

"If we turn around just one or two a year, if we do nothing else, I feel like we've accomplished something," says Robertson's partner, George Johnson.

As far as Robertson is concerned, that kind of persuasion should not require sending in the undercover officer just to prove she is a criminal.

"Allow her to commit a crime, just so we can lock her up and get her into the system? That's sick," Robertson says.

"We should deal with these people the very day we see them. No matter how you look at it the kid is a victim. . . . We're taking this child out of an environment that, whether she created it or someone created it for her, is not in her best interest . . . . In my mind, she isn't intelligent enough to know what her best interests are . . . . I've never had any qualms about snatching a kid off the street."

Learning about a 13-year-old prostitute is more than just arresting and re-arresting the ladies of the evening. It means hours of waiting and sitting and checking and going into hotels where she might have stayed, and when the manager says, "Most of the girls we had are gone now," it means asking again, giving a description, having someone suddenly remember, and getting a room number.

It means checking with the more seasoned prostitutes who had seen her on the sidewalk and hoping--correctly, as it turned out in this case--that professional jealousy might prompt them to supply Robertson with information about their pint-sized competition.

Robertson likes to tell the prostitutes he encounters: "I'm the best pimp you'll ever have. You don't have to pay me anything."

Despite a life of lies, these women will be honest if it is in their interest. For example, Robertson routinely hears if one of their customers is carrying a gun or if they have been assaulted.

And when a group of Michigan pimps muscled its way into Washington last October and placed a half-dozen new prostitutes on Thomas Circle, infuriating the local streetwalkers (there were threats of shootings and the turf battle became known as the "October War"), the word was passed to the police. One raid later, the Michigan pimps left town.

Robertson takes down in notebooks much of what he hears and shares it with the other detectives. If three women give the same phony address, it might mean they work for the same pimp. It is a cast of characters that Robertson and all the detectives know well.

There are veteran prostitutes, like the portly woman who stands at Corcoran and 14th, who have grown to recognize the undercover officers and successfully avoid arrest. And there are others, such as the glittery Hannah Thompson who has been arrested 50 times.

Robertson banters with the women, collecting bits of gossip and the nightly chatter of the street. He also examines letters and diaries confiscated by police. One prostitute, in a letter from her pimp, was told: "You have pledged yourself to me for a lifetime. You do not think, for when you think you will make a mistake. I am the thinker and you are the performer. There is no limit as to how far we can go together . . . . Some day, you may own your very own real estate."

The prostitute-pimp relationship often can be violent. One night last January, detective Johnson and Sgt. Al Simmers found a woman in the emergency room at a Washington hospital. She was being treated for a concussion and head injuries inflicted by her pimp after she tried to leave him. "I'm afraid he'll try to kill me, or really beat me bad," she told them. "He's known on the stroll as 'Crazy T' and, believe me, he fits the bill."

Johnson and Simmers sent the complaint to a judge in Prince George's County and the pimp, who had been free on probation, was sent back to jail.

The prostitution squad tries to break the bond between pimp and prostitute, but such victories are rare. With juveniles, it is even more difficult.

"That's the biggest problem," says officer Patrick Dennis. "Their parents never took the time to say, 'I love you.' . . . Some pimp out there did ." Dennis says he feels a particular anguish: A distant relative of his once was a prostitute; another was a pimp.

After Robertson's initial meeting with the young prostitute on Jan. 5, he decided to contact some veteran streetwalkers he knew. By the evening's end, he had learned a lot about the girl.

She had been seen on the "Boulevard," as the prostitutes call 14th Street, for just a few nights. She was born in 1968, as her birth certificate later showed. She had dropped out of a local junior high school. Her pimp, a man called Shawn, had recruited her at a McDonald's ("Mac's House of

Beef," the police called it). She was staying in a hotel just west of Thomas Circle.

Robertson and Simmers parked outside the hotel and waited for her.

"Speak of the devil," Robertson said as she reappeared. He called out her real name.

She turned around immediately. But when she saw Robertson, she denied that was her name.

"You ain't going back," Robertson said.

With the girl pleading not to be locked up, Robertson escorted her to his car.

"Been working the street long?" he asked on the way to the police department's youth division.

"No."

"How many tricks?"

"Eight."

"What do you charge?"

"$25 and up."

"Where do you turn your tricks?"

"We usually do it in a car."

When they arrived, Robertson took her to a paneled room. He closed the door. He told her: "I don't like the idea of you going out there working as a prostitute. We have two options: jail, or your mamma . . . . "

"I'm sick of being in the house," she told him.

"You're stupid being out there, giving your money to some dumb-dumb."

"I spend my money on me," she protested.

They talked for hours. She rolled her chair back and forth, muttering impatiently as Robertson asked questions. She would answer, and Robertson would interrupt periodically, saying, "You're lying to me, darling" or "Girlfriend, I told you not to lie."

Robertson checked police records and discovered that she was a chronic runaway: 11 times from home; 43 days from school last semester. He learned something else: This child already had a pending criminal charge--burglary.

"This must be my lucky night," she said. "Ain't this a bitch?"

"Let's get to the part where you decided to be a whore," Robertson said. "Whose idea was it?"

"It was my idea."

"I hope you enjoy jail--Whose idea?"

" . . . Shawn's. He wanted to be my pimp. He liked me very much . . . . "

"When did you turn your first trick?"

"Saturday . . . . "

"Who took you out and told you how?"

"I had a girlfriend . . . . She showed me a couple of places. She pointed out the cops . . . . I be smart about it. Every time I see them I go the other direction."

"You didn't move fast enough tonight."

She later said, "I'm not out there every night. That don't make you a prostitute. I only do this when I want to."

"What will Mamma think when she hears you're a whore?" Robertson said. He asked about her designer jeans.

"I bought them with my godmother's money."

Robertson rolled his eyes. "What would she think if she knew these jeans were on a prostitute?"

Robertson asked why she was a prostitute, and she said it was the money. "There's things that I want, and see. When I see things I like I can't get it 'cause I ask my mother--I can't even ask her to give me $3."

At about 3 a.m., Robertson decided that his rehabilitation project was going nowhere. He had hoped for more with her because she was so young and presumably still impressionable. He realized he was trying to counter an attitude in hours that had taken 13 years to develop.

At one point, Robertson tried to reach her family. He spoke with her sister who explained that their mother felt the girl was out of control.

"Mamma says she cannot handle you no more," Robertson said. "A judge is going to have to handle you. You'll be working on my streets no more."

As she was led away, she asked: "Are prisoners allowed soda?"

"Your little girl's on 14th Street again," another officer told Robertson the following night. He made a few calls and learned the city prosecutor had dismissed his "child in need of supervision" case against her. She had been released that morning.

Robertson went to 14th Street and again picked her up. The next morning, her case again was dropped, but a judge agreed to hold her pending her burglary trial in juvenile court. On Feb. 9, she pleaded guilty and until sentencing was sent to Cedar Knoll, the city's facility for delinquent children.

In May, she escaped from Cedar Knoll, and was recaptured a month later.

Last week, on the day of her sentencing, the prosecutor told the judge she had again escaped--and is still missing.

If she goes back to 14th Street, Robertson says he will be waiting: "Unless I get an order from someone higher up, telling me that I can't pick up these children, I will continue."

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Crime-Fighting Theater in 3-D STREET COPS; PART 5

By Athelia Knight and Benjamin L. Weiser, Washington Post Staff Writers; Washington Post reporters Athelia Knight and Benjamin L. Weiser and photograp
By Athelia Knight and Benjamin L. Weiser, Washington Post Staff Writers; Washington Post reporters Athelia Knight and Benjamin L. Weiser and photographer Linda Wheeler spent the past six months with Washington's 3rd District police officers. A total of 18

Three officers ordered the suspect to spread his arms and legs against the car. They searched him and pulled a dozen syringes from his pocket. One took the needles and began snapping them in half, dropping them to the ground one by one.

"This is your trial," another officer said. "How do you plead?"

The voice was that of Sgt. Claude S. Malcomb, otherwise known as Cowboy.

The man turned and looked up at his accuser, his street judge, but said nothing.

"I find you guilty," Cowboy said. "I want you out of the area."

Cowboy is a formidable force and is meant to be. He is one of the most effective players in the anticrime theater used to police the large crowds of suspected drug addicts who spill off the corners onto 14th Street. Five days a week, Cowboy gives a command performance intended to provide criminals with a dramatic look into the future, their futures, if they continue to break the law in the 3rd District.

"The theater is so useful," says Lt. Ronald Harvey, who runs the 35-member drug squad. "It's communicated to the crowd . . . . It is a psychological test of willpower."

The number of drug officers on the street is at best about a third as big as the crowd that usually hangs out near 14th and U streets. Each arrest made will temporarily remove a criminal from the street, but it will also tie up several officers for the hour or so it takes to process the prisoner and complete the paper work.

The police know they must somehow be able to convince the street people not only that the officers are in control but that their presence has not diminished. In recent years they have resorted to psychological warfare--sometimes spontaneous, other times carefully rehearsed--to help combat 3-D's two biggest problems: drugs and prostitution.

"It's all perception. The mind is incredible," says Capt. Michael Canfield. "It seems like sometimes we accomplish a lot more by changing people's perceptions of what law enforcement

is trying to do for them than actually getting down and doing it, that is, making arrests."

Canfield recently erected wooden barricades to block easy access to 14th Street in an attempt to confuse, if not harass, the nightly influx of drivers seeking prostitutes or drugs. He says his plan has worked: Traffic is diverted, crime is down, and some nights, 14th Street is practically empty.

"The citizens now believe that one piece of wood keeps those people out. It's just a goddamn piece of wood on a sawhorse," Canfield says. "The psychological implications are overwhelming. We've given the public a sense of security. This is just in the embryonic stage. If a guy saw Clint Eastwood with a .44 in his hand, they'd get out of the way."

Although the technique has not been used here on such a large scale before, psychology has always been an important part of police work--from the stereotypical "good-guy, bad guy" interrogation routines to what Canfield calls "bizarre behavioral modification" used to settle some domestic disputes.

Officer Wayne Simpson says he once gave a street divorce, which had no legal force, by so surprising the battling spouses that the situation was diffused. Simpson says he told them: "Raise your right hand . . . . By the power vested in me, I grant you a divorce . . . . Get your stuff and leave."

Officer Russell Brigham says, "I've always been a firm believer that the job is 98 percent bull----. You have to make people think you're doing something for them even though you haven't. When you leave they think the police have done a good job . . . . I call it bull----. It's psychology."

The key to Cowboy's success is that he keeps people guessing. Sometimes he'll stare a man down, and then calmly say hello. Other times, he'll ask a suspected junkie if he is holding drugs, then search him to find out. He might pick out someone and arrest him for a minor infraction.

Sometimes, Cowboy just mentions that he has seen him a lot lately.

"It's a game," says Cowboy.

Other officers help build up his reputation by threatening to call in "the Cowboy" if the crowds give them trouble. He has become so legendary that some Washington pushers have named a brand of heroin after him. Cowboy is now so feared that another dealer allegedly placed a $1,000 contract on his life.

Many junkies and pushers believe the tall Virginian has a special sense for detecting who is "dirty," street language for possessing drugs. Much of it is show: Cowboy often is tipped off by one of his partners observing the drug transactions from a nearby rooftop.

"Nobody scares the Cowboy," said Harvey. "He wreaks havoc."

One night last February, there were about 100 men and women on the corner of 14th and W

when Cowboy pulled his cruiser to the curb.

He glanced up and three men walked away. Taking the keys out of the ignition, he reached for the door handle. Dozens more headed north on the 14th Street sidewalk. As he got out of the car, several scurried into Dottie's, a carryout near the corner. A couple dozen darted down W Street. Two jaywalked across the street.

Cowboy stuck his hands in his front pockets and followed the last few stragglers up 14th.

In about 30 seconds, he had cleared the corner.

As recently as two years ago, Cowboy was considered a burned-out street cop waiting to ride out his remaining years. But that was before "Operation Burbank," perhaps the most dazzling display of theatrics ever performed by the D.C. police department, cast Cowboy in a leading role.

In the fall of 1980, after Deputy Chief Rodwell M. Catoe took command at 3-D, he asked his officials to develop a plan to disperse the late-night crowds. Catoe said: "We aren't getting more men. We aren't getting new laws. We are faced with a situation that the community is totally unhappy with."

Canfield suggested psychological warfare as a means of combatting the crowds and says the goal was "to harass them, to make it so uncomfortable for them to deal overtly."

He outlined several options, including staging a gunfight in which a uniformed officer would pretend to shoot a cop disguised as one of the junkies. The idea was rejected as being too dangerous. So Canfield came up with an acceptable alternative: They would shoot the crowds with cameras.

Canfield needed someone to supervise the 10-member Burbank unit. His choice was almost as creative as the plan itself: a uniformed sergeant named Claude Malcomb.

"I gave him a little responsibility and, boy, did he take a turn around," Canfield says. "He went from the bottom all the way to the top. He turned out to be one of the most aggressive. My God, it was like pouring water on magnesium, adding a catalyst."

Canfield obtained surplus military equipment, including high intensity lights, portable generators, megaphones, walkie-talkies, binoculars, and sophisticated cameras.

The officers mounted the cameras in full daylight on the top of street lamp posts on 14th Street and aimed them at the sidewalk. They passed the word that everything--legal or illegal--would be filmed by the police and used as evidence against the addicts and pushers.

The police, however, almost never put film in the cameras.

One November night, about 6 p.m., Canfield, Cowboy and the Burbank officers converged on

500 people gathered in a vacant lot near 14th and U streets. The police department's tractor trailer was parked directly in front of the crowd. The high intensity lights were clicked on. Cameras and a dish antenna were set up. A few officers in flak jackets carried shotguns. One displayed a Geiger counter and said the device could detect drugs. Several others walked among the crowd and took pictures.

Canfield announced: "Chief Catoe wants this block."

Within 30 minutes, the lot was empty.

"It was like herding cattle," Canfield says.

The Burbank squad, in addition to moving the crowds, also made 389 arrests, seized $103,225 worth of illicit drugs and recovered 27 handguns and two rifles during the first six months of its existence.

After a while, the crowd got used to the van and the lights and Operation Burbank lost its effectiveness. Canfield left the squad. Gradually, the Burbank officers merged with the 15-man drug enforcement unit. Today, the unit concentrates more on investigations and less on theatrics. Except for Cowboy.

Cowboy's success on the street depends on making his presence continuous, certain yet unpredictable. It is vital that he keep his word.

One night Cowboy entered a small U Street carryout and told the owner he suspected him of selling heroin. While Cowboy didn't have enough evidence to arrest him, he warned the owner to quit dealing or he would personally be back to put on the handcuffs. A few weeks later, the owner was caught selling heroin to an undercover cop. Cowboy returned and clamped on the cuffs, knowing the story would obviously spread on the street.

Another time a slew of suspected drug buyers and sellers claimed to be waiting for the bus on 14th Street. He stayed around long enough to put all of them on the bus when it arrived.

Like many officers, Cowboy acknowledges that the drug crowd that has invaded 3-D technically is conducting its illicit business in public space.

Yet Cowboy says he is more concerned about the residents of 3-D. When their ground is invaded, when their back yards are filled with syringes and debris, when their sidewalks and streets are blocked for passage, the issue of the crowd's rights becomes somewhat secondary to him. He asks rhetorically, "Whose rights are being invaded?"

Cowboy is a tough sergeant who is constantly urging his officers to get out on the streets. Yet he can often do alone what takes several of them to accomplish: move the crowds into particular blocks and corners so that other drug squad officers, hiding in homes and abandoned buildings and roofs, can watch drug buys through binoculars. When they see a drug deal go down, the

officers converge on the crowd in small groups, called "rip teams" or "jump-out squads," and arrest as many suspected drug sellers and buyers they can catch.

Cowboy does have his critics.

Alvin Brown, a 14th Street sidewalk vendor known as "The Hat Man," has observed Cowboy and said, "He feels that since he's the police that gives him the right to do anything."

Duane Brown, who lives nearby, said, "He looks at too much Starsky and Hutch."

Most of the residents give Cowboy better reviews.

Louise McCloud, a grandmother of three, recalls when a 9-year-old neighborhood boy ran crying to her last winter. He had been making a snow man, bent to pick up another handful, and came up with a needle containing heroin embedded in his palm. She rushed him to Children's Hospital. It was just another of a long string of such incidents. She has tried pouring ammonia and Clorox in her hallway to keep the junkies out and has repeatedly hosed down her front steps to make it an uncomfortable place for them to sit.

"The majority of the people thank God for Malcomb," she said. "They say, 'Cowboy is out there. We can go out and claim our steps now.' "

One February day, officer James V. Francis watched a man sell heroin near a parking lot on the corner of 14th and W streets NW.

He radioed the seller's description to Cowboy and another officer, David Willis.

Cowboy and Willis drove up to the curb. "That's him shadowboxing right in front of you," Francis radioed. Cowboy saw the slim, curly haired man who was bouncing back and forth on his feet, jabbing his fists in the air. He was the man they wanted. Cowboy knew if he went for the man directly, he might escape. Cowboy is a good actor, but a lousy runner, especially in his boots.

Cowboy shouted out of the car window to another man standing near the shadowboxer, "Mr. Jones, Mr. Jones."

Cowboy got out of his car, averting his eyes from the man he actually wanted, but never took his eyes off "Mr. Jones."

"Mr. Jones, I got a warrant for you," Cowboy said. "I been looking for you all day."

Then, with a spin, Cowboy grabbed the unsuspecting shadowboxer from behind. He was placed under arrest and searched by Willis, who found two packages of heroin.

Some onlookers mumbled insults at Cowboy's performance. "Show respect. Show respect to the

Cowboy," Willis said.

Meanwhile the second man, whom Cowboy had used as part of his ploy, innocently showed Cowboy some identification, saying, "My name ain't Jones."

It was 4 p.m. on a Friday. Cowboy cruised the 14th Street corridor. A crowd of 20 to 30 people, smaller than usual, had gathered on both sides of 14th Street near W.

Cowboy watched as his drug squad colleagues ordered the crowd to move on.

"Ain't nothing out here tonight," said Leroy Croghan, a sergeant riding with Cowboy.

"You wait," Cowboy said, "things are going to be rolling."

A couple hours later, the crowd had grown. A knot of 50 people had gathered at 14th and W. Cowboy drove his car to the curb and rolled down his window. He shouted, "Is everybody clean?"

The crowd scattered, some crossing the street and others walking up the block.

Cowboy left an empty sidewalk. But he knew that as soon as he drove off, people would amble back.

As much as the psychological warfare and the intimidation are effective when the police are present, Cowboy knows the crowds are as determined as he.

One night in May, Cowboy watched a crowd spill off the sidewalk and onto the street. He stopped and scanned the corner. This summer, he said, he expects "an avalanche."

Tomorrow: Operation Groundhop
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Pushing Behind the Crowds STREET COPS: PART 6

By Athelia Knight and Benjamin L. Weiser
Washington Post Staff Writers

Third District detective Johnny Mathis had worked seven intense years to hit the drug trade where it counts--the concealed network of intermediaries, the ever-elusive suppliers who seem to have completely insulated themselves behind the crowds on 14th Street.

High on the list of local suppliers Mathis wanted to arrest was a man who had twice beaten him in court: Ronald (Heavy) Hinton.

Hinton was suspected of supplying large quantities of Preludin pills, a heroin booster known on the streets as Bam. Several teen-agers interviewed by Mathis alleged that Hinton had given them the pills to sell.

Mathis knew that the key to cracking the multimillion-dollar drug problem in Washington was to persuade one of the street pushers to become an informant, a snitch, to turn on his suppliers and give names and details that would help Mathis close off the pipeline.

His break came in August 1980, when he got a tip that John Henry Tate III was selling Bam on the street. Mathis had arrested Tate two times before. As a teen-ager Tate had been a "runner" for local drug pushers, who would give him pills to sell on commission. Both times Mathis had tried to turn Tate into an informant. Both times Tate had adamantly refused.

Tate was now out on parole and had become a pusher himself. Mathis wanted to find out who was supplying Tate. Maybe, if Mathis tried hard enough and the right circumstances presented themselves, this time the 25-year-old Tate could be persuaded to switch loyalties from his criminal colleagues to the police.

When Mathis confronted Tate he did not resist arrest.

"Basically his bubble had burst," Mathis recalled. "The thought of jail for some reason scared him."

"I can't go back," Mathis recalls Tate saying.

Mathis had heard this plea many times before, and began applying leverage. "Man, you're going to have to do something," Mathis said, realizing Tate understood the alternative being proposed. If Tate cooperated, Mathis said, he would try to get Tate a new identity through the federal

witness protection program after the investigation ended.

For five hours, Mathis played on the agony of the choice he was putting before Tate.

"It made him feel less than a man. He would be setting up people who were his friends," Mathis says. "We would tell him that these guys got him into this . . . . He had to make a decision in his life. We stayed on him. It took us about a month."

Tate finally agreed to cooperate, and the police began an investigation they called "Operation Groundhog," which they hoped to finish by Groundhog Day 1981. Groundhog would go where Tate would lead them--and Mathis hoped it would lead them to local drug suppliers, including the man who taught Tate the streets as a teen-ager: Heavy Hinton.

Tate's decision to become an informant for Mathis was born of necessity; and it reflected a combination of luck and skill on Mathis' part. The relationship between the cop and the two-bit drug dealer grew stronger as each stage of the investigation became more complicated.

Tate spent the next nine months in the same criminal environment he had worked most of his life--arranging narcotics sales with nearly a dozen suppliers. This time, however, Tate would be "a walking, talking legal wiretap," as one detective put it, who would conduct business while Mathis secretly listened to every word. And instead of receiving the $300,000 Tate claimed to be earning as a pusher, his payoff eventually would be freedom, a new name, a new identity, a new life.

He became such a valuable informant that he regularly walked undercover police officers into dangerous drug organizations in Washington and in Philadelphia, producing 16 arrests, and stopping--for a while at least--a major supply of Bam from reaching downtown Washington.

Mathis and the other police officers who worked on the case knew they had considerable clout over their informant, who continued to work under the threat of jail. But Tate had the ultimate power. For he could, through design or carelessness, blow their cover and perhaps get an officer killed.

The officer with the most to lose was Robert D. Swygert, the undercover cop recruited for the investigation. Swygert had been selected in part because Mathis needed a black police officer to infiltrate their targets, many of whom were black.

Swygert recalled: "If I even thought he Tate was going to set me up, I was going to protect myself. He was going to be the first to go." For the 3rd District drug squad, and especially for Johnny Mathis, Groundhog was a big opportunity. Mathis, 30, had spent most of his adult life busting runners and street-level pushers in Washington. He had cruised the drug corridors and learned the names of every suspected junkie and dealer he encountered, memorized their language and their procedures. After each arrest, he worked for countless hours trying to convert the suspects into informants, the police department's most valued instruments of infiltration--and also its most risky.

The 3-D drug squad has a confidential list of informants (called "Special Employees"). Each is given a number, and when they call with information, they identify themselves by their code. For tipping off the police to a routine drug buy, perhaps an arrest of a person holding several bags of heroin, an informant can receive $30 from the police. That is less than the D.C. police department's citywide drug squad pays, so the snitches sometimes threaten to take their information downtown.

Still, there are so many people who want to be informants at 3-D that the detectives cannot always handle the tips and have to ask the informants to call back later.

"They have a need. We have a need," says Lt. Ronald Harvey, who runs the 3-D drug squad. "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. The trust goes as far as the need." In late summer of 1980, 3-D's newest informant, John Henry Tate III, provided a list of 17 Bam dealers and suppliers in Washington and Philadelphia. On trips to Philadelphia, Tate pointed out the street dealers and the offices of doctors writing illegal Bam prescriptions and the pharmacies that filled them.

It was important that as few people as possible knew about the investigation so there was no chance of its being leaked on the street. Mathis discussed the details only with two other detectives and his two supervisors, keeping Tate out of the 3-D station, and meeting him outside 3-D or at the U.S. attorney's office.

As the investigation progressed, Tate's role expanded. Soon the detectives were listening to him. Tate suggested an acceptable cover for Swygert: the officer would pose as a Richmond drug dealer, trying to make connections. And when the operation got off to a slow start, and Mathis feared that the word might be out that Tate was working for the police, Tate counseled him to be patient.

For the first couple of days, Tate and Swygert cruised the streets. He told Swygert how each of the dealers operated and what he could expect. He showed him "Joe Brown's Alley" at Sixth and S streets NW, named because Brown allegedly controlled all the Bam sold there. He pointed out the runners and jugglers, persons who sold drugs for dealers such as Heavy Hinton.

Swygert was still uneasy about Tate. "He got shook up," Mathis recalled. "But it was hard for him to believe that everything would be all right. It was his life on the line."

By this time, Mathis' faith in Tate was growing.

"I began to trust him," Mathis recalled. "A lot of times we would say, 'We're going home. You go out and arrange some buys for tomorrow.' The next morning, he would call and tell us a buy was set for a certain time."

Because police officers generally carry .38s, Swygert traded in his gun for a .32. He discarded his holster and stuffed the gun under his belt. He decided if he was going to pose as a Richmond

dealer, he had to act the role. He developed a southern accent, asked a friend who had lived in Richmond to give him details about the drug areas and the color of the police cars there. He drove to Richmond one day to be sure, and even subscribed to a Richmond paper to keep up with the local news.

Tate insisted that Swygert was wasting his time on needless information. Tate told Swygert that dealers rarely ask a lot of questions because asking questions create suspicions.

"They never asked about Richmond," Swygert said.

On Oct. 31, the first undercover buy in Operation Groundhog was made. Swygert and Tate made most of the purchases from the Bam dealers. Once a 16-year-old youth who worked for one of the suppliers got in the car with Swygert. Before he counted out 200 Bam tablets worth $1,500, the young pusher placed a foot-long knife in clear sight. "I guess he wanted me to know he wasn't taking any chances," said Swygert.

Though Mathis insisted all the drug buys be made on the streets so officers could watch, Swygert found that things did not always go as planned. One dealer insisted Swygert come into a dimly lit club to make his purchase. "When I walked in, an iron door closed behind me," Swygert recalled. "There was a guy at the door and another guy over in the corner. It was the first time that I had conducted a buy with my left hand. I kept the other one on my gun the whole time."

Swygert did such a good job playing the role of a drug dealer that one supplier invited him to snort cocaine with him. Swygert was willing to buy drugs in order to show his good faith, but not to use them. He begged off, saying he was an alcoholic.

Swygert would spend a half-hour unwinding before going home. He had to separate his two identities, his two lives. "Just because I purchased $2,000 worth of drugs from Joe Brown didn't mean I didn't have to fix the faucet at home," he said.

Swygert's unusual working hours concerned some of his friends and relatives. "My brother called and asked me, 'Did you get fired?' "Heavy Hinton was not going to be easy to catch. He never handled any Bam on the streets, though Mathis was told Hinton arranged the time and place for the drug buys his runners made. Hinton usually sent a teen-ager to deal with Tate and Swygert.

On May 14, 1981, Tate telephoned his one-time mentor at home to arrange a buy. As Mathis secretly taped the conversation, Hinton complained that the streets were too dangerous for him, and said he would send his pregnant girlfriend to deliver the pills.

Mathis knew he finally had enough evidence to arrest Hinton, but decided to wait until they could move in on the other suspects. This time they would try selling Bam; another undercover officer would pose as a bitter ex-employe who wanted to unload thousands of Bam tablets that he claimed he stole from his old company.

On June 6, four months after the original Groundhog deadline, Tate showed up at the 3-D drug

squad office for the first time since his arrest. He undressed and had the recording device taped to his body.

Mathis had borrowed 40,000 Bam tablets from a pharmaceutical manufacturer in Connecticut and had reserved a local motel room that the police had equipped with a hidden camera. While the undercover officer waited at the motel, Mathis gave Tate last-minute instructions. Tate went off to meet four dealers, with Mathis following closely in another car, listening on the wire.

When Tate met with the dealers, one of them voiced suspicions about the plan. Heavy Hinton and another dealer decided they would go with Tate to the motel and report back to the others.

Hinton waited in the car while Tate took the other dealer inside. The dealer was caught on hidden cameras counting out $17,836 for 5,700 tablets, and was arrested. Mathis picked up Hinton at the motel parking lot, and charged him with selling Bam three weeks earlier.

By the end of the day, 10 persons were arrested by Mathis and the 3-D drug squad; six more were later arrested in Philadelphia. A few days later, an informant reported to police that a $25,000 contract had been placed on Tate's life. Tate was placed in the witness protection program, and has a new identity.

Within a month all 10 of the local suppliers, including Ronald (Heavy) Hinton, pleaded guilty as charged, and were sent to jail.

Mathis, says officer David Willis, became known as "the Golden Boy" of the drug squad. "He was the number one head honcho."

He had gone behind the drug crowds of 3-D, and gotten a pusher and his suppliers. One year later, the addicts are still on the streets, the supply of drugs has not slowed, and Mathis and the drug squad are looking for their next informant.
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'Hours of Boredom . . . Minutes of Terror' STREET COPS; PART 7; Last of a series

By Benjamin L. Weiser and Athelia Knight
Washington Post Staff Writers

Officer Wilson S. Barreto was sent to investigate the "unconscious person" at the Roosevelt Hotel. Barreto knew that was the "police way of saying it's a dead person and I'm not going to eat my lunch on time."

Barreto dreads these calls. He drove to the eight-story brick building at 16th and V streets. Once the Roosevelt had been a stately and grand hotel. Now it has become the last address for many of the 365 senior citizens who live there. Someone was always passing on at the Roosevelt.

Room 622, a brightly lit efficiency, was in disarray when Barreto arrived. Tables and chairs were overturned; clothes were strewn about; the body of an 80-year-old man lay on the floor. Barreto, a former medic, guessed the man had suffered a stroke while eating and had groped for something to hold onto, knocking over furniture as he fell.

Barreto has seen 30 to 40 bodies a year. The murders are bad enough but the "naturals," he says, revive his fears of growing old. Just weeks before, he had gone to the bedside of an 84-year-old woman whose landlord had turned off the heat. Barreto recalled how it had angered him to the bone as he walked into that cold room in the middle of the night and found her barely alive in her bedclothes, blue in the face. She later died.

Now he pondered the body before him. He joked uncomfortably: "It'd really be a surprise to everybody if he took a breath!"

It would be at least an hour before the homicide squad arrived to determine how the man had died. It would be longer till the morgue man arrived with his Playtex "Hand Savers" to remove the body. Until then, Barreto's task was to guard the body. He considered the grim nature of his assignment: Who would want to steal a dead body?

He covered it with a blanket. He looked through some papers and discovered the man had a $95,000 savings account. There was a bottle of aspirin on the bathroom shelf, a hospital tag on the man's wrist, a pair of glasses on a night table, an empty jar of honey and a container of Coffeemate on the kitchen counter. Barreto sat in a chair and almost dozed off.

The ringing of a telephone jarred him. The lobby manager said the maids had found another body--in Room 523. "H"H ours of boredom filled with "H minutes of terror" is how Lt. William

Freeman describes working as a street cop in the 3rd District. It means sitting quietly, reacting to the radio, flinging your coffee out the window, driving at breakneck speed, praying a child won't dart in front of you, screeching to a halt, leaping from the car, discovering the burglar is a cat.

It means fear of the unexpected, meeting too many people at the worst moments of their lives, seeing too much of the aftermath, and denying that all the emotion has taken a personal toll.

"You start boiling, you start simmering, and all of a sudden, some guy comes up and calls you a [name] and you've knocked him down--instant ventilation," says Capt. Michael Canfield, who supervises 60 officers. "There are very few legitimate avenues of ventilation."

The police department has only three staff psychiatrists--just one works full-time--to counsel roughly 4,000 officers. Few 3-D officers say they have sought formal treatment.

"I've got 10 'time bombs,' " Canfield says of some of his officers. "We got a certain percentage we can't put on the street because they might violate the law."

Deputy Chief Rodwell M. Catoe says that in the two years he has commanded 3-D, he has temporarily removed at least five police officers from street-duty because he fears what might happen if they carry a gun. Catoe estimates that 7 to 15 percent of his 380 officers have difficulty handling stress.

"They are nervous. They are indecisive. They are insecure. They are ineffective when it comes to dealing with other people's problems because they can't deal with their own," says Catoe.

Each officer has a different way of dealing with the extreme levels of stress associated with police work:

Michael Hodge, a 10-year veteran, has a punching bag in his basement. Besides his wife, it gets the most attention when he arrives at home.

"I'll walk in, kiss her hello, and I'll say, 'I'm going down to the bag.' It gets nothing but low blows for 15 minutes," Hodge says.

"I don't think you'll find anyone who [isn't at some point] scared to death." Hodge says when he is frightened, "I'll have a cigarette and go off to the side until I stop shaking."

Officer William Carbone recalls when he and his partner, Roy Derr, shot and killed a man who tried to run them down.

"I was scared. It was the first time, including Vietnam, when I was scared," Carbone said. "I just wanted to go home and take a shower and go to sleep and say, 'Don't nobody call me till next year.' "

Officer Deborah Weinsheimer says she does not allow herself to worry about the fear. She and

her partner, Duke, a 70-pound police dog, are the first to investigate burglaries on the midnight shift. More than once Weinsheimer has pointed her revolver at a looming figure in the darkness, only to find she is aiming at her own reflection. "I see myself in a mirror and scare myself half to death," she says. To unwind, she and her husband Frank, also a 3-D officer, often take Duke on long walks.

Lt. William Freeman says it took him 10 years to confront his alcoholism, a problem exacerbated by his job.

"A policeman's not supposed to be upset . . . . He's not supposed to get angry. He's not supposed to cry," Freeman says. "I stuffed it. I put it down deep inside me."

Joe V. Williams, whose wife left him three years ago, says, "You think about the officers who drink or who commit suicide. When the hurt is there, all of those things enter your mind . . . . I really think that if I wasn't on the department I'd still be married."

Officer Wayne Simpson repeatedly advises Barreto, his partner, to stop agonizing. "I feel as though the more you worry about things, the worse it will seem. I just don't let nothing worry me. I just don't care about it," says Simpson.

Freeman is skeptical about such advice. He says a close friend on the force used to tell him: "It's all a joke . . . look at all this going on around me as a big joke . . . . Back off a little bit and don't get involved." Freeman's friend died of a heart attack at the age of 41. BB ecause a large proportion of D.C. B police officers joined the force in the early 1970s, a number have reached the midpoint of their careers, which generally last 20 years.

For many, it is the beginning of "burn out," the result of too many changes in schedule, not enough sleep, an accelerated bodily deterioration that prompts 10-year veteran Glenn Cornell to claim that "officers age two years for every year."

"I'm sharp as a tack, but lately little things slip my mind that never would. People have bodily functions regularly--we never do. Your body clock never knows. It runs full speed ahead continuously . . . . I don't sleep well in the day. The phone rings. Dogs bark. The neighbor has someone putting up a gutter. A big truck goes down the road. It's hell to rest."

Some officers work it off in the gym or during 3-D's highly competitive athletic leagues or in the equally cutthroat game room. After work, Russell Jackson parks his van at a shopping mall near his Upper Marlboro home and listens to the stereo in the dark.

Ten 3-D officers started a kind of fraternity and refer to themselves as the "Village People" (named after the raucous, multiracial singing group). The VPs include black, white, male and female officers and are sometimes misunderstood by police officials and their colleagues.

"They think we're a bunch of trash, I guess, because we're different," says Dwight A. Hunter. "I think it's because we march to the beat of a different drummer. We don't fit the mold of the

average police officer."

"They're supposed to be crazy as hell," said their captain.

"I don't even want to speculate," said their sergeant.

"I'm sure there are more who want to join," says VP Deborah Harris.

The Village People, unlike most police officers, spend much of their after-hours time unwinding together, partying and playing practical jokes. They drive to the shore to eat crabs or hold beach parties, frequent downtown bars and, occasionally, drink beer on the roof of the 3-D police station.

"We are the kind of people who could go to a party and talk about something other than shop," says William Yates, the group's president.

Not all their families understand them either. VP Anthony Patterson says his wife told him: " 'You're too goddamn educated to be hanging out with those guys.' She'd tell me . . . I had to get the 'weeds' out of my life. She'd refer to the boys as 'weeds.' "

The Village People were among the officers called on to assist in recovering bodies from the Air Florida plane crash last January. That night, some of them got together for several hours.

"It was a sense of hopelessness. You knew 50 yards away people were trapped, that people could still be alive . . . . It was good to talk . . . ," Hunter recalled.

Such communication, however, is unusual between officers. Many say they also have trouble talking to their spouses.

One officer said he managed to avoid telling his wife that he was working on the prostitution squad.

Another, Lt. James Dotson, says, "There is one particular officer I've gone through three wives with. I ended up counseling them more than him."

Simpson's first wife walked out on him, declaring, "I'd rather be an old man's sweetheart than a young man's fool." FF reeman said he had been on the F force for just a few years when he learned through several informants of a drug dealer who had threatened to kill the first police officer he saw.

Freeman says he was turned down for one of the first "no knock" warrants, which, at the time, allowed police officers to enter residences without identifying themselves.

Freeman, then 24, and his 21-year-old rookie partner went to the suspected drug dealer's Southeast Washington apartment and properly identified themselves as police officers. The man

fired on them, wounding Freeman in the neck and killing his partner.

"It took me about three days for the shock to wear off. When it hit me, it hit me like a ton of bricks. I wanted to go someplace and I wanted to cry my guts out and say 'Why'd it happen?' There was nowhere for me to go."

His wife, Linda, remembers his eventual deterioration on the job, his spending too much time away from home, his binge drinking, his angry outbursts when she started to probe.

His behavior earned him the nickname of "Wild Bill."

It was only a few years ago that Freeman finally confronted his disease, and reformed. Today he counsels other officers, watching for the same danger signals--the discarding of emotion, the handling of every case in the same manner.

"The guys will come in, and sit down, and . . . finally they'll get around to what they've got to say, and it's really neat to see the relief on their face, to know that it's okay to feel that way, there's nothing wrong with that, it's okay to be a human being." DD etective Lowell Duckett says D many police officers withdraw so far into their own world they don't even recognize that they might have a problem.

"I hate to refer to the community this way but, a policeman's like a Tidy-Bowl man," says Duckett. "And he sits in this toilet all day long, moving items out of the way--alcoholics, drug addicts, abused wives, abused husbands, people who are unemployed . . . . So when we step out of that toilet and ask, 'How do we smell?', you say, 'You stink.' But we can't smell it because we're in it." MM arch 2. 2:13 p.m. The RooM sevelt Hotel. Barreto and the man from the D.C. morgue wrapped the bodies found in rooms 622 and 523 in large canvas bags and placed them on stretchers. Barreto had spent five hours with the bodies--one several days old, the other a week--inspecting them, moving them, carrying them, and finally rolling them on stretchers to the freight elevator.

On the first trip down, the elderly elevator operator said quietly: "Little old man died. He said he wanted to leave here."

After the second trip, the operator said: "That's it, I hope. If they all die, I'll be looking for another job."

Barreto, sweating heavily, could hardly wait to leave.

The station was less than a block away. Barreto parked his car and headed for the bathroom. He stood in front of the sink and scrubbed his hands vigorously. 3-D UPDATE

Here is what has happened to some of the people mentioned in this series.

Officer Larry Greene, who last February saved the life of a heroin addict on Swann Street, says

he has been told that his request to become a police dispatcher may soon go through.

Juanita, the addict whose life Greene saved, died of a drug overdose on June 19 in Maryland.

The 13-year-old prostitute whom Detective Gerald Robertson snatched off 14th Street -- and who later escaped -- is still missing.

Lt. William Freeman scored high on the recent captain's exam and looks forward to being promoted.

Det. Robert D. Swygert, who posed as a drug dealer in the 3-D Groundhog investigation, has gone undercover again and is playing a different role somewhere in the city.

Canine officer Deborah Weinsheimer's partner Duke was named "Top Dog" in a recent police dog competition.

After 10 years, Wilson Barreto has decided to resign from the force.
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