

The Corruption Process of a Law Enforcement Officer: A Paradigm of Occupational Stress and Deviancy

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The public does not want all laws enforced. In the closed society of law enforcement institutions, police discretion, the conspiracy of silence, the lack of an administration with integrity, and susceptible law enforcement officers contribute to the development of corruption from occupational deviance. Corruption in law enforcement agencies may have similar roots in business, law, medicine, and other professions. Understanding the law enforcement corruption paradigm may therefore be helpful in correcting and curbing corruption in other professions.

Law enforcement officers are usually both respected and suspected, hated and loved, feared and courted for favor, maligned and praised. They wield tremendous power and are capable of depriving persons of their freedom, reputation, and life.¹

The majority of law enforcement officers are competent, honest, professional, and psychologically stable, but there are some who may use their shields as a license to steal and/or kill. Law enforcement leaders are, at times, in a quandary

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as to how much corruption exists in their agencies. While most law enforcement departments try to employ the best individuals possible, the hard question is what happens when they become corrupt.

The public is expected to put its faith and trust in law enforcement officers. These men and women are called on to protect the lives and rights of others. The Oath of Honor places on them a high code of ethics for their public and private lives:

On my honor, I will never betray my badge, my integrity, my character, or the public trust. I will always have the courage to hold myself and others accountable for our actions. I will always uphold the constitution and community I serve.²

These noble ideals in the law enforcement Oath of Honor stand in stark contrast to

the practical realities of law enforcement work on the streets and the corruption process that develops in some officers.

Rookie officers learn to be law enforcement officers by watching what other officers do, how they act and behave. One veteran law enforcement officer describes the corruption process that ensues as follows:

Young naive rookie assigned with veteran training officer, first experience with the gray area of ethics is usually getting free or half price beverages or meals. Recruit then learns how to use creative writing in completing duty reports, crime reports, and any other incident reports. The nervous, scared recruit is taught how to cover his or her ass in any situation. Us against them. This period is crucial to the corruption process, because veteran officers cover up rookie indiscretions and help save his or her job while he or she is on probation.

Being introduced to drinking on duty in bars by veteran officers is one of the first tests to see if the rookie will take a drink on duty and be trusted as one of the guys.

Getting free bread, milk, newspapers, donuts from delivery trucks early in the morning, a veteran officer indoctrinates young officers on the ins and outs and justifies to a young recruit that it is all right to get away with what you can. Officers spend their day looking for any type of deals. Before a rookie realizes it, it becomes a way of life: become lazy and do what you can to get out of work.

Gradually, black and white (right and wrong) start to blend into gray, as the rookie is indoctrinated. The phrases, "Others do it," "The insurance company will pay for it," and "Us against them" become commonplace. A mind set is implanted.

Rookies go through many phases during their early development. One is the John Wayne syndrome. They become callous, crude, vicious, greedy, and egotistical. Another syndrome is Badge Heavy: officers arrest people for almost no cause, violating their rights without a second thought.

A common practice for the 25 percent (of police officers) who do work is looking for a

DWI close to going off duty to get the overtime for extended tour and court the next day and future court dates connected with the case.

After a period of months, the job stress, shift changes, and veteran indoctrination, and the young rookies are usually changed forever. Because they have been taught how to get around the rules and regulations to suit the situation, the notion of Professional and Proper Procedure is lost. This process is of course different in each officer depending on their psychological makeup and personal background.³

Evaluation of Corruption Among Law Enforcement Officers

Specific areas of corruption can be enumerated in various categories. In personal life, these include: maintaining a lifestyle beyond one's means; running with the wealthy crowd; drinking, gambling, and/or drug abuse; having sex with bosses or politicians (for favors); letting the job affect one's marriage; getting involved with pornographic materials; working part time (against policy); limiting life to the "police" world; booking horses or numbers with officer or ex-officer; pulling tickets for friends; owning a bar with one's spouse; accepting gratuities (from bar owners, lawyers, etc.); and going to police bars where "anything goes."

In professional life, areas of corruption may include: discharging a weapon and covering it up; doing damage to city vehicles and not reporting it; throwing away parking citations on city or personal vehicles; carrying unauthorized weapons, a drop gun, knife, or illegal drugs in case you need a bail-out; leaving the zone and lying about it; coming to work late and/or leaving early; stealing overtime; abusing sick time; making an example of rookies when they challenge the system; using

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police computers and obtaining confidential reports (to sell the information); receiving a finder's fee (e.g., from a plate glass, insurance, or towing company, etc.); rolling drunks for their money; taking guns or drugs off people and keeping or selling them; planting drugs on people ("snow flaking"); visiting friends or sleeping while on duty; investigating burglaries and stealing what one wants; paying bosses or politicians for favors or receiving kickbacks; treating the court system as a joke; giving professional courtesy to those violators carrying PPA (Police Patrolman's Association) or FOP (Fraternal Order of Police) cards; using the badge to get into sports events; taking property from stolen cars; using unauthorized bullets in service revolver; writing phantom parking tickets on vehicles, or giving tickets to specific classes of people (e.g., "red necks," young males with long hair, etc.); making any and all arrest reports fit the elements of a crime ("testifying"); making improper arrests; damaging property or the cars of "lowlifes" (e.g., cutting the tires on the vehicle of someone who has given you a hard time, towing cars in reverse gear or with the parking brake partially set); doing "creative" report writing (lying, phony insurance claims); cultivating attitudes such as The End Justifies the Means, the Code of Silence, Don't Rock the Boat, Be a Part of the In Crowd; and making an example of rookies when they challenge the system.⁴

In many law enforcement agencies, the misuse of power by and the ineffectiveness as well as the relative absence of competent and ethical leadership tend to

demoralize the workers and predispose them toward cynicism and breaches of public trust, and therefore they fail to adhere to their code of ethics. The arbitrary use of their police powers occurs as a means of resolving their conundrum, giving them a sense of control over the lives of others and consequently a sense of control over their own lives. Some law enforcement officers may justify corrupt practices because "no one cares, and why should we?" and have other law enforcement officers support their beliefs. No one seems satisfied with contemporary law enforcement, least of all the law enforcement officer. Policing may thus be seen as indeed an impossible mandate.

Definitions

In this article, personal integrity is defined as "sincere devotion to honesty, justice, and goodness" and implies an adherence to a personal code of conduct. For law enforcement officers to accomplish their job, they should have personal integrity. Personal integrity is a rigid adherence to a personal code of conduct. Failure to adhere to that code indicates lack of integrity. Lack of integrity infers a breach of trust, commonly known as corruption. Although corruption is indeed a breach of public trust, it may be more fully defined as dishonesty facilitated by an individual's abuse of authority for wrongful gain or for a benefit to self or others. The person need not actually realize a gain or benefit, but merely intend it.⁵ In the remainder of this article, police corruption will be defined as the use of one's status as a police officer for wrongful gain or benefits.

The Corruptive Process

The corruptive process and occupational deviance in law enforcement have their counterparts in other professions. Corruption occurs in all professions and occupations. There is a crisis in medicine, as managed care places the physician in the ethical dilemma of providing high quality care while facing a shrinking level of reimbursement. Managed care, with its business ethics and "bottom line" mentality, is being substituted for medical ethics and the noble ideals of the Hippocratic oath. Managed care is changing the way physicians practice as well as the way physicians think and, consequently, changing their medical judgment. Patients lose their loyalty to an individual physician, and the loyalty becomes transferred to the insurance company that promises to refer them to "great" physicians or "world class" physicians. This makes it easier for the subversion by the physician of his or her ethical relationship to patients as there is a shift in the physician's need to please the managed care organization rather than the patient.

In the legal profession, the glut of attorneys along with intense competition is forcing some lawyers to reevaluate the way they practice law. Some lower their standards, cut corners, overbill, mingle business and personal funds, and plea bargain in cases to the detriment of the clients; some lie to clients, miss deadlines, practice corporate law to the detriment of the masses, and often, ultimately leave the profession for other occupations. The intensity of the anger that attorneys face, the manipulation and cor-

ruption that they encounter, as well as the stress of practice, incline some attorneys to abandon personal integrity.

An attorney may feel that it is useless to ever attempt to alter public perception of the mass media's scathing portrayals of attorneys; this may leave some attorneys feeling that it is useless to "buck the system." The prevailing climate may encourage less conscientious or compromising individuals to enter the profession. Additionally, the promise of a large verdict and press coverage lures many attorneys to engage in unlawful solicitation of accident victims, families of victims of airline crashes, or the like. Overburdened state bar associations are often ill-equipped to deal with such violations of barratry laws, and the attorney learns that unethical solicitation is perceived as a "victimless" crime, when the morality of the entire legal system is lowered to a level of belief in a "universal greed."

In law enforcement, there are obviously more opportunities for corruption than in the other professions.

Many (law enforcement officers) realize that while they were required to enforce all current statutes, the public does not tolerate the full enforcement of all laws; while they were held responsible for eradicating drugs and apprehending drug dealers, their ability to cope with the drug problem was substantially limited; while they were expected to act in an impartial and an apolitical manner, the infiltration of politics in policing compelled them to use compromising deals, deceptive means, and collusion with criminals.⁶

The traditional sphere of corruption in the police has been thought of as the abuse of authority, kickbacks, opportunist-

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tic thefts, shakedowns, protection of illegal activities, the “fix,” direct criminal activities, and internal payoffs. Law enforcement officers often justify breaking the law to enforce the law when they pay off informers, reduce charges to insure convictions, allow “fences” to operate, and partially enforce or fail to enforce certain laws.⁷ However, corruption in law enforcement involves more than these areas.

Generally, there are two types of law enforcement ethical problems that lead to corruption: (1) those involving integrity and (2) those involving hard choices in law enforcement agencies. Heffernan and Stroup state that:

The problems usually related to integrity include—taking bribes, giving perjured testimony, or using street-law justice on suspects through the use of illegal force. These problems are unethical and generally not acceptable to other law enforcement officers.

The second problem involves difficult choices in law enforcement with ethical evaluation of the morality of the uncertain choices, i.e., the extent of law enforcement discretion, the level of deception permitted in law enforcement investigations, the selection of whom to target in an undercover investigation, when to use deadly force and decisions involving affirmative action.⁸

In choices related to these types of problems, there is the constant threat of the end justifying the means and subjective ethics influencing the judgment of those individuals whose ethical standards have been eroded, or were never intact. The cries of the statesmen in the ancient Roman Senate of “*Cui bono?*”—whose benefit?—are echoed in this type of self-serving ethical choice.

Discussion

Law enforcement work is, or should be, one of the most ethical professions in society. In the United States, the role of the law enforcement officer signifies a variety of complex functions that include crime fighting, peace keeping, community and social service, problem solving, and more importantly, maintaining order. In the United States, law enforcement is expected to be conducted in a democratic manner.⁹ The ethical standards of a particular law enforcement agency are a reflection of the standards of its leader.

In a democratic society, the conflict between the freedom and privacy of the individual, on the one hand, and social control, on the other, is one of the most difficult tasks. The heart of the conflict is not over the ends but rather the means by which society can operate an effective social control mechanism, while maintaining the freedom and privacy of the individual. Ethical considerations determine the resolution of this conflict.¹⁰

Despite advances in the scientific aspects of criminal control, law enforcement officers continue to face difficult moral (and ethical) choices. These include whether or not to make an arrest, whether to use deadly force, to prosecute, to permit participation in plea bargaining, to impose punishment, and from an organizational standpoint, whether to adhere to law enforcement policy, cooperate and comply with the orders of supervisors, and whether to treat the public fairly. In these areas, individual and institutional ethics become major problem areas. While the results of such choices continue

to cause serious conflict, the moral (ethical) grounds for these choices have seldom been explored.¹¹ Institutional ethics can be determined and applied by the leader of the institution who is subject to many pressures including political pressure.

The conflict areas in law enforcement that may lead to corruption include the processes of administration and management, police discretion, the public not wanting all laws enforced (with politicians and citizens attempting to adversely influence law enforcement agencies), the "code of silence," and racism and sexism.

Inadequacy of Administration The lack of proper supervision and the improper use of authority are salient factors that contribute to the vulnerability of a law enforcement officer to corruption. "Authoritarian managers continue to have an adverse impact on the quality of justice administration"; and frequently, "Discipline is maintained by a tyranny of proceduralism that ensures absolute compliance with agency rules of operation. Regulations, for all practical purposes, are effectively used to silence the nonconformists who dare to deviate from the administrative lines."¹² It becomes almost impossible to be a law enforcement officer without violating some procedure or regulation, and this violation can be used against that officer under this type of authoritarian manager as a means of intimidation, for control or punishment of that officer. This becomes a primary tool used to maintain the code of silence. This can also become a means of selective attrition of law enforcement officers who are honest or who do not go along with this type

of leadership, with a resultant shaping of the law enforcement agency toward and maintenance of corruption from one generation to the next.

Unethical law enforcement leaders, operating without integrity, may come to view authority as an opportunity to reward friends and to punish enemies; to see their role as giving orders rather than supervising, training, and counseling workers; and to view loyalty to themselves as more important than ethical values. Furthermore, such leaders "in pursuit of excellence," treat supervision as a means of finding subordinates doing something "wrong" instead of supervising them to do the right and ethical thing and communication as a method of exchanging favors within the "in group." Such practices, when used to enhance the personal interests of a small number of the "in group," have led to the demoralization of the "out-group."¹³ This type of unethical leadership tends to lead law enforcement officers to ignore their oath of office, to overlook the ethical principals and code of ethics that they were taught in the academy, to abuse discretion, and to use corrupt means as a way of reconciling impossible demands.¹⁴

It is believed that law enforcement officers who are frustrated, angry, and resentful over the lack of respect shown to them by supervisors may attempt to compensate by acting in an overly authoritarian way on the streets, where they feel free to express their feelings without fear of retaliation. Further, as job dissatisfaction increases among officers, their tendency to act out against citizens on the

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streets on the basis of race or national origin increases.¹⁵

Because of frustration with unfair departmental rules and regulations and a leadership without integrity, many law enforcement officers find a solution in corruption as a means of getting back at their department.¹⁶ Their frustration becomes an excuse to justify corruption in their own minds, with the ends justifying the means.

The product of an unethical type of management destroys morale, rewards misplaced "loyalty," and encourages the "courting" of an unethical management to be part of the "in-group." It also destroys initiative, places a stress on personal integrity, and leads to corruption.¹⁷

Ambivalence of Police Discretion

Another complex problem in law enforcement that may lead to corruption is the ambivalence of police discretion. "Discretion is the authority to make decisions of policy and practice. In policing, discretion often includes command or patrol authority to decide which laws shall be enforced, and when, where, and how. It also includes authority to decide which means of helping the helpless, maintaining order, and keeping the peace are best suited to particular circumstances."¹⁸

Law enforcement officers are given discretion because no set of rules and regulations or laws can cover every possible circumstance.¹⁹ Not every criminal statute should be enforced strictly. The lower ranking officers should not have, but do have, more discretion than higher ranking officers. This may predispose to corruption in the case of, for example,

lower ranking officers who are involved in community policing.

Ideally, law enforcement officers should not have discretion in general law enforcement policy, but should have the discretion to apply policy to the facts and circumstances of each particular case.²⁰ The problem is to know the limits of individual discretion and to have the personal integrity and wisdom to act within the limits. This challenge requires an ethical law enforcement officer to make the proper choice.

Public Indifference The general public and politicians are also involved in conflict areas leading to corruption in law enforcement. Law enforcement officers generally will use the full extent of power and discretion given to them, and citizens generally encourage this by accepting whole-heartedly the belief that these officers must have unquestioned authority if crime is to be controlled. However, this authority, power, and discretion is often used not to enforce the law but to extort money or favors from those individuals in the public who either want to avoid the law (in gambling and liquor violations, traffic offenses, etc.) or who desperately need more of its protection.²¹

Citizens also become involved in law enforcement corruption. It is evident that the roots of law enforcement corruption go much deeper than the presence of "unenforceable" laws and regulations. "Underlying almost every kind of corrupt law enforcement activity found during investigation was the need of the public for service and the freedom of the law enforcement officer to decide whether to provide it or not."²²

The provision or nonprovision of service by the law enforcement officer can be lucrative for the unethical officer. For example, an officer in community policing performs many non-law enforcement functions, ranging from managing domestic disputes to confronting children and teenagers on the streets to helping store owners on their beat. As a result, law enforcement officers frequently find themselves in situations requiring the exercise of discretion, which they can use to extort money, other favors, or future "IOUs" in return for performing or not performing a service. The possibilities for harassment, street-law justice, and withholding services are limited only by the level of integrity and the imagination of the officer.

When law enforcement officers testify in court, the slightest "spin" of their testimony can make or break a case. How they react to a suspect running from the scene of a crime can mean the difference between that person's life or death. How they handle those situations, which they confront daily but which never result in official action, will be dictated by how they view the public and secondarily by how the public sees them.²³ The officers, with their discretion, can influence a jury to convict an innocent person, to acquit a guilty individual, and in the extreme, to permit a citizen to literally get away with murder.

Law enforcement officers come into constant contact with the good citizen and the criminal or "underdog." Ethical officers treat them both in the same manner; the unethical officers treat them in a way that is contingent upon what the citizen,

criminal, or underdog may be able to do for the officers in the present or the future. Used to the idea of exercising total discretion, unethical law enforcement officers often do as they see fit and feel little need to consider the impact of what they have done. The temptation to be corrupted by one's own feeling of power is a natural consequence.

Political Intervention Political efforts at influencing the law enforcement leaders or their officers may have many negative consequences. Many officers have access to confidential information about the city's leaders and politicians, whether it is official law enforcement records, information obtained from informants, or mere rumors. Consequently, law enforcement officers and politicians often have a standoff: if, for example, a politician makes accusations of corruption or creates "waves" within the department, he/she may find personal problems or adverse information about himself/herself being publicized. Politicians, criminals, and citizens may also want to be involved with law enforcement officers so that they might influence the officers in the event of future adverse involvement with those officers or in the pursuit of the goals of the citizens or politicians.²⁴ Politicians want law enforcement discretion to favor politicians, and many citizens want as much as they can get from the officer.²⁵

A veteran law enforcement officer succinctly spelled out the problem of discretion: "We all know what was right or wrong, legal or illegal. The only difficulty involved resisting temptation for personal gain or peer pressure to be one of the

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boys.”²⁶ It is evident that discretion is a primary factor in the start of the “slippery slope” to corruption.

The Code of Silence Another significant problem in police corruption is the “code of silence.” This code is a barrier to the elimination of corruption and is related to the law enforcement officer’s tendency to become isolated from anyone other than law enforcement officers.²⁷

The Code or Conspiracy of Silence is based on the implementation of a “code” that defines the standard of practice, whether legal or illegal, accepted as part of an officer’s behavior. The Code sanctions activities that fall within the Code and are not to be shared with outsiders: “They don’t understand.” It is a system whereby officers lie for each other; if someone “rats out,” then that person can be “ratted out.”

There is also frequently a cover-up or “whitewashing” of corruption investigations in law enforcement agencies because many leaders “have their own skeletons to hide.” This leads to inauthenticity (marginalized integrity) in that law enforcement agency, which involves positive overt appearances coupled with negative underlying realities. Inauthenticity takes place in the form of an official cover-up. Subsequently, there is confusion about what the truth is concerning the real extent and cause(s) of public issues, concerns, and accusations.²⁸ When the leadership of a law enforcement agency states one thing and does the opposite in its investigation, this action leads to cynicism in the agency’s individual law enforcement officers.

Because of the nature of law enforcement work, an intense group loyalty develops among officers. When law enforcement officers develop a commitment to what they perceive as a higher purpose, it is their commitment rather than their personality that becomes a primary determinant of their behavior. Group loyalty often overcomes a law enforcement officer’s sworn oath and duty. It makes allegiance to fellow officers—even corrupt ones—more important than allegiance to the ideals of the law enforcement agency and the community. The code of silence is strongest when corruption is more frequent. Officers who report law enforcement misconduct are ostracized, harassed, called “rats” and “finks,” become targets of complaints and even physical threats and attacks, and are made to feel that they will be abandoned on the streets in a time of crisis. This enforcement of the code of silence feeds corruption because it makes corrupt law enforcement officers feel protected and invulnerable.²⁹ Because of this loyalty to their peers, law enforcement officer also tend to become isolated from the rest of the community.

Dr. Edward Shev, a veteran psychiatrist for the Sausalito, California, Police Department, noted that: “Because of their work, cops are routinely subjected to temptations he calls the three B’s: booze, broads, and bribes (and today, drugs).”³⁰

The mentality of the ends justifying the means, or situational ethics, is one of the factors that increases this vulnerability. For instance, during the investigation of corruption in the Chicago Police Department (1970 to 1976), it was evident that all possible types of law enforcement cor-

ruption existed. All of these types of corruption, with the possible exception of premeditated theft, were considered to be "within the code" and consequently subject to the code or conspiracy of silence. They included: "mooching, chiseling, favoritism, prejudice, shopping, extortion, bribery, shakedown, perjury and premeditated theft."³¹

From this list, it is evident that "victimless" crimes such as prostitution, possession of drugs not for sale, and gambling are more likely to encourage law enforcement corruption, as law enforcement officers are more inclined to look the other way when confronted with this criminal activity or take money and not make an arrest. It is easier for officers to invoke the code of silence in this type of crime.

The feeling of entitlement (the "fringe benefits" mentality) is also a factor that contributes to the corruption process of a law enforcement officer. A law enforcement officer reported that he "got the idea that a cop was pretty much entitled to what he could get. No one sat around and theorized why payoffs and shakedowns were okay, but it was clear to him that everyone verified the idea the police deserved extra money and that the public was happy to pay it. Those cops who wouldn't take money or accept favors were allowed to go their own way as long as they kept quiet. If not every officer took money, few ever dared break the conspiracy of silence."³² Examples of those law enforcement officers who dared to break the code of silence and suffered as a result are Frank Serpico and Joe Trimboli (the "new Serpico"), law en-

forcement officers for the city of New York, who attempted, in separate generations, to have anyone in a position of authority in their law enforcement agencies act upon evidence of corruption. An example of the suffering endured by those who became part of the "leper colony" is the Serpico adventure, in which the hero ended up with a bullet in his head and subsequently became a recluse.³³

A small percentage of law enforcement officers involved in a post-officer-involved shooting trauma (POST) experience "a thrill" after exposure to violence or shooting incidents, which may incline the officer to subsequently rush into hazardous situations, consciously or unconsciously, in an effort to recreate the thrill.³⁴ These individuals have a tendency to become involved in "street-law." (In addition, some law enforcement officers rush into hazardous situations as a means of committing suicide in a "noble" way.)

Large law enforcement agencies frequently have individuals who have been involved in numerous shootings, many times more than the average officer. At times, the shootings and the patterns of shootings are not adequately investigated by that law enforcement agency through Internal Affairs, which leads that officer to become a "legend in his/her own time" and in his/her own mind, with a resultant tendency to become involved in similar shooting incidents. Other law enforcement officers who are involved in numerous shootings, however, are excellent officers who are, unfortunately, in the right place at the right time (for a law enforce-

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ment officer) and consequently become involved in critical incidents.

Law enforcement officers may also break laws to protect each other. The limited videotape of the beating of Rodney King by Los Angeles police officers was a high-profile example. However, less visible, more subtle examples happen every day: offering favors for friends, filing fake disability claims, or roughing up a suspect in the back seat of a squad car.

Racism and Sexism Racism and sexism are also problems for many departments and officers. Integrating law enforcement departments has been very difficult, and minorities, including women officers, have always had a rough time of it.

The abuse of women law enforcement officers by their fellow officers can be extreme. Some female law enforcement officers have experienced a growing pattern of sexual harassment inside the station houses: everything from male officers making sophomoric and threatening jokes at the women officers' expense to grabbing the women's crotches and breasts. Some of this behavior is actually criminal assault. Women officers are an unprotected minority. They comprise less than 10 percent of the nation's law enforcement officers; even fewer women populate the leadership positions where evaluations are made and discipline decided. Harassment of women officers is something the public seldom sees.³⁵

Etiology of Corruption in Law Enforcement

Law enforcement agencies do not have a monopoly on corruption. Where law

enforcement corruption exists, it has its parallel in other agencies of government, in industry, in labor organizations, and in other professions. "It is indeed ironic that one of the lessons learned from studying police corruption is to better gauge corruption in other components of the criminal justice system."³⁶ The etiology of corruption in law enforcement serves as a paradigm of corruption in other areas including law, medicine, and business, as well as other professions. This corruption involves the individual with his own unique personality structure on which is superimposed the effect of social pressure, peer pressure, the institution's code of ethics, opportunity, the code of silence, and discretion.³⁷

Development of Police Corruption

As with any social problem, corruption within the criminal justice system is not merely a "few rotten apples in a barrel," but it is the product of socially patterned behavior originating from sociological causes.³⁸ Corruption within the criminal justice system is an occupational crime, arising from opportunities that are unique to the work.³⁹ Individual law enforcement officers with their own personal codes of ethics are placed into a law enforcement institutional system wherein isolation of the officers and dehumanization of citizens occur in a closed society with its own ethical standards, partly determined by a code of silence. The values of the institutional subculture (the law enforcement agency) then become a potent motivator of behavior. Parenthetically, "police bashing" by the media may help contribute to the development of the

closed society of a law enforcement agency.

For criminal activity to become acceptable within organizations, especially law enforcement agencies, it is necessary to account for those factors that must be present for criminal activity to become acceptable.⁴⁰ New employees who find illegal activity to be the standard will tend to go along with crime as just another aspect of their jobs. Organizational crime also frequently occurs in instances where members do not consider themselves a part of the community in which they live. Criminal activity is widespread because it is often learned and/or encouraged within the corrupt organizational structures that constitute some law enforcement agencies. Further, an organization's cultural value system justifies and excuses such behavior.⁴¹ It appears likely that a community has the type of law enforcement services it desires or tolerates.

As previously noted, law enforcement officers have a tendency to dehumanize citizens, and consequently not to identify with them, in part because law enforcement officers usually see citizens at their worst. They have a tendency to dichotomize people as "assholes" (citizens) or "cops." The realities and severe stress of law enforcement work bolster the corruptive features of law enforcement cultures. Officers may tend to identify the criminals they must confront every day with the community that they must serve and to close ranks against a hostile environment.⁴² Dehumanization functions to achieve freedom from fear via blindness to the humanity of others. At an extreme, dehumanization facilitates killing with in-

difference,⁴³ as in the killing of "gooks" in Vietnam.

One significant aspect of law enforcement corruption is related to "victimless crimes" such as gambling, prostitution, liquor laws, vagrancy, possession of narcotics, and minor traffic offenses. It is easier for an officer to "look the other way" when investigating a "victimless crime," and consequently he or she will be more susceptible to the pressure of corruption and the code of silence.

Failures of Discretion Failure of discretion is also a significant factor in corruption among law enforcement officers. The principle ethical considerations for legitimate law enforcement discretion are to have sufficient and legal authority for making the discretionary decision along with notification and extent of the guidelines for discretion. Discretion can be authorized or unauthorized. Some crimes have no discretionary alternatives (e.g., major crimes).⁴⁴ An example of law enforcement discretion apparently inappropriately applied is the case of a 62-year-old woman who was charged with disorderly conduct and obstructing official business for putting a total of 15 cents into two parking meters for other people, after allegedly being warned by the arresting officer not to do this. The arresting officer testified that the woman was arrested because she yelled at him. "She continued yelling, I had to struggle with her to get her hands behind her back."⁴⁵

In discretionary situations, the process for arriving at a judgment is, in effect, moral (ethical) reasoning, for which law enforcement officers must be both ethical and trained in its use. It becomes a ques-

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tion, when discretion is applied, as to whom law enforcement officers serve: society, the state, the law, themselves, victims, their own ego, or street justice? "To insist on strict enforcement of law and policy at the expense of the possibility of justice for individuals is to see the law enforcement officer as an arm of the state rather than an arm of society. That is, the use of discretion by police to prevent injustices is the one aspect of their job that gives precedence to its moral content rather than its formal demands for law enforcement. It is this aspect which makes police work more than rote administration of law, and thus, more than a mere execution of the will of the State. Police discretion is an institutionalized capacity to resist the will of the State from within certain situations."⁴⁶ This, however, may become another definition of corruption, depending on the ethical principles of the individual officer. It may also be considered applied democracy within a free society in which voluntary compliance is the accepted practice.

Law enforcement discretion can occur in situations in which an officer decides whether to give a ticket for driving five miles over a speed limit, to an extreme case in which a corrupt officer could let a person get away with murder. A corrupt officer can avoid responsibility by using the "never saw it" or "never heard of it" defense in misapplying discretion.

Most law enforcement officers stop at a certain level of deviance or abuse of discretion, on the basis of that particular law enforcement institution's definition of limits. An officer may become involved in corruption to be "one of the boys," to

retain his job, because of greed or feelings of entitlement, or because he/she fears retaliation (e.g., it wouldn't be safe working with a corrupt partner, if the uncertain law enforcement officer didn't go along with the corrupt officer). No matter how great the pressure and temptation, corruption is still a personal choice, and they (law enforcement officers) are responsible.

Some law enforcement officers become jaded and cynical at the nuances and hypocrisy of the selective enforcement of law by the administrations of their law enforcement agency. Officers see the application of discretion by the leader of their law enforcement agency and tend to develop a mentality in which the "end justifies the means," acting on what they consider to be the greater good—usually their own good. This principle of utilitarianism basically indicates that the rightness or wrongfulness of an action is determined by the consequences of that action and not by anything intrinsic in the act itself.

Neutralization Theory Another possible contributory factor to explain law enforcement corruption is the Neutralization Theory, which focuses on rational explanations formed before crimes are committed that allow individuals to escape guilt feelings that would otherwise prevent them from engaging in criminal acts. Within law enforcement agencies, such rationalizations include denying responsibility (the criminal behavior is not the fault of the law enforcement officer), denying victimization (dehumanization), authorization (appeal to higher authorities), and condemning condemners.⁴⁷ De-

humanization, in which citizens are considered to be "assholes," is a significant component of the Neutralization Theory. An "asshole" is commonly defined by law enforcement officers as a citizen who behaves or acts flagrantly against his or her own interests, for example, by taunting or baiting officers. The definition may vary depending on the integrity of the officer.

There is an emphasis in the Neutralization Theory on the learning of both criminal and noncriminal norms in intimate groups. It is organizations and their cultural values that influence the behavior of individual employees in the work environment. Patterns of criminal activity differ greatly between different cultures and under different leaders. Institutions actually select and shape the social character of their members. Success in these settings mandates that members accept (internalize) the expectations of institutional leaders.⁴⁸ "Elite deviance" makes it easier for lower ranking individuals or employees to accept bribes, violate human rights, and to engage in drug dealing and other corrupt practices. The institution becomes the lengthened shadow of the man (leader).

The rationalizations for corruption and criminal behavior are frequently formulated within small subgroups of the law enforcement agency (crew corruption), frequently led by higher ranking officers. These subgroups take on a separate life of their own, distinct from the primary organization, with their own corrupt standards. The criminal acts and rationalizations are all agreed to by group members before any crime is undertaken. Conse-

quently, criminal behavior becomes a socially acquired, formal and deliberate attribute of that institution.⁴⁹ There is a change in the current type of law enforcement corruption in contrast to the past, when there was an emphasis on pads and payoffs (the "pad" being a notebook that contained, usually in code, the names of individuals who would be visited regularly for purposes of collecting the "payoff"). The "new corruption" involves groups of law enforcement officers, with various degrees of organization and sophistication, actively seeking opportunities to "score" from burglary, larceny, robbery, protection rackets, and drugs.⁵⁰ Officers, in their closed institution, internalize the standards of their leaders, and this sets the stage for corruption supported by leaders who lack integrity and an ethical sensibility. Conversely, with ethical leaders, officers will tend to develop into ethical officers.

Some authors believe that cynicism (not power) is the impetus for law enforcement corruption. One career law enforcement official has said that "It seems rather futile to try to convince police to be honest when better educated, better paid and more respected members of the criminal justice community are involved in graft, bribery, payoffs, and other forms of corruption."⁵¹ It follows from this that if cynicism is the impetus for corruption, then efforts to resolve law enforcement corruption will fail unless other institutions are changed at the same time. This pernicious point of view leads to a belief that because others are corrupt, then corruption becomes legitimate. The corrup-

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tion of others becomes a license for corruption by all.

The Impact of Stress The stress that individual law enforcement officers encounter is extraordinary. Symptoms that in themselves constitute a diagnosis of personality disorder may actually be secondary to overwhelming stress and to an individual's attempts to cope with that stress. Borderline Personality Disorder symptomatology, in particular, reflects this possible adaptation. The pattern of irrational and intense interpersonal relationships characterized by alternating between extremes of overidealization (of fellow officers) and devaluing (of citizens) impulsiveness in self-damaging areas (spending, sex, substance abuse, and theft), affective instability, inappropriate intense anger or lack of control, suicide threats, gestures or behaviors marked by persistent identity disturbance (in self-image, long-term goals, types of friends, and preferred values), and chronic feeling of emptiness can be seen in these overstressed officers.⁵² The effect of the overwhelming stress encountered in law enforcement work exhausts the adaptive capacities of some officers, resulting in a demoralization and brutalization in which former values become meaningless. The values of the law enforcement agency are then much more likely to be reflected in the values of these stressed individual officers. If this law enforcement agency's values are corrupt, they are much more readily assimilated by the brutalized and stressed officers. Completed suicides are also seen in these stressed officers, as well as in those who are under investigation for corruption.⁵³

Incidence of Corruption in Law Enforcement Departments

The extent of corruption in law enforcement is more than just a few "rogue cops" in the "rotten apple theory."⁵⁴ It is more likely to be an institutional problem. This does not, however, lessen the importance of focusing on how the recruitment, selection, training, and management of law enforcement personnel resources may contribute to the development of law enforcement corruption.

The institutional problems in law enforcement are expressed through its individual law enforcement officers. The percentage of law enforcement officers within an institution who are corrupt is a reflection of the leadership of that institution. Law enforcement agencies in larger cities have a greater tendency to have higher percentages of corrupt officers than smaller departments in which the institutional leader can more closely scrutinize individual officers. It is obviously difficult to get accurate statistics on the incidence of corruption in law enforcement agencies. No law enforcement agency would want to advertise the extent of corruption that exists within its agency. As an example of creative thinking, the Internal Affairs Division of one law enforcement agency classified approximately 1,500 corruption allegations in one year as law enforcement impersonation cases.⁵⁵ However, there are some indicators of the extent of corruption in law enforcement agencies. One psychiatrist who worked extensively with law enforcement officers in Sausalito, CA, reported that in his experience:

Working cops can be classified into three definite categories. The "natural" cops constitute only 5 percent of all police; these are men and women who intuitively know how to handle both the work and the pressures of being a cop. Their own personalities form the basis for the confidence and discretion that police work requires daily, and they seem to absorb the cop's detailed knowledge and training almost as if they knew it all beforehand.

The second category comprises 60 percent of all police, the "treatable" cops. Most of the time these persons perform their duties well, but they have to work hard to master all the skills of being a police officer. More importantly, each man or woman in this majority has a breaking point, an aspect to his or her personality that may jeopardize police and citizens in a situation of intense pressure or just the right combination of forces. Yet, these basically healthy cops can perform as capable as the "naturals" if they are encouraged to recognize their weaknesses and to overcome their tendency to overreact under the pressures that affect them adversely. (These individuals need leadership and supervision.)

But the real dangerous police are the 35 percent who make up the third category. They are the "untreatable" men and women—the bad cops. Their personalities are not suited to police work and they are unable to learn about themselves or accept treatment that would allow them to function adequately as police officers. One cop in three is untreatable and the actions of this minority are usually responsible for the bad reputations of police in many communities.⁵⁶

These untreatable law enforcement officers are inflexible, repressive, and psychologically unstable.⁵⁷ A law enforcement shield with this third group is not an emblem of righteousness but a license to steal. The political pressure to hire individuals in this third category, coupled with the civil service protection afforded to this third category as well as the lowered employment standards, will tend to affect negatively the percentages in the

first and second category. How the leaders of the law enforcement agency handles its officers will determine the percentage of the various types of officers left in that agency, particularly in the third category.

Obviously, not all law enforcement officers are corrupt. If such activities as free meals are excluded, a significant number of law enforcement officers do not engage in any corrupt activities. But, with extremely rare exceptions, even those who engage in no corrupt activities are indirectly involved in corruption because they do not prevent or report what they know or suspect to be going on around them.⁵⁸

In some large urban departments, the reported extent of corruption in investigations is staggering: "... a 1972 study revealed that one out of three police in Chicago was guilty of a criminal act; one out of four in Boston; and one of five in Washington, DC. These crimes included assault, theft, shakedown and extortion, and acceptance of bribes. Despite efforts to purge police criminals, these proportions probably have not changed appreciably in the last five years."⁵⁹

Other indications of the incidence of law enforcement corruption include the Knapp Report, which states that as many as one-half of all New York (City) Police Department (NYPD) officers were corrupt. "At the time of the commission's investigation, police corruption was found to be an extensive, department-wide phenomenon indulged in to some degree by a sizable majority of those on the force and protected by a code of silence on the part of those who remained

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honest.”⁶⁰ In addition, according to one report, 100 of the 1,046 Miami police officers have been, or currently are being, investigated on corruption related matters, and officials are predicting that as many as 200 officers may face investigation.⁶¹ Further, a study in 1987 indicated that 20 percent of the officers in that department used marijuana while on duty, twice a month or more often. Furthermore, 10 percent of the officers reported they had used nonprescription controlled substances (defined in the study as including hallucinogenics, stimulants, or barbiturates) while on duty.⁶² Also, “Jordan (local U.S. Attorney for New Orleans) and several other watchdog groups estimate that between 10 and 15 percent of the 1,500 officer police department is crooked.”⁶³

As an example of ethical problems in law enforcement, and a possible indication of corruption, the charges of excessive force in the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in the years 1986 to 1990, with 8,450 sworn law enforcement officers resulted in 1,800 complaints against individual officers, who represented 21 percent of the force. Of the 1,800 officers against whom complaints of excessive force had been made, more than 1,400 had one to two allegations; 183 (or 2%) of the officers had 4 or more allegations, 44 had 6 or more, 16 had 8 or more, and 1 had 16 allegations. However, of the total of 2,152 citizens’ allegations of excessive force, only 42 were sustained. The city of Los Angeles paid in excess of 20 million dollars in judgment settlements and jury verdicts against LAPD officers alleging excessive use of

force.⁶⁴ Corruption and brutality are often linked. Corruption-prone officers were more than five times as likely to have 5 or more unnecessary force allegations against them than the other officers in a random sample in one law enforcement agency.⁶⁵

The true incidence of corruption is unknown because there is “institutional reluctance to uncover serious corruption with no outside pressure to counter it.” Consequently, avoiding headlines, putting up with corruption, and maintaining the status quo becomes more important than eradicating corruption. This institutional cover-up sends a message to law enforcement officers who are most susceptible to the temptations of corruption that corruption is tolerated in law enforcement agencies, despite any contrary protestations.⁶⁶

Patterns of Police Corruption Patterns of police corruption fall into three categories: corruption for power, corruption for money, and corruption for the ends of “street law” enforcement. The personal integrity of an individual may corrode gradually as he/she moves into corruption.

When the individual law enforcement recruit is accepted into the law enforcement agency, he/she undergoes training to learn how to be an officer. What happens to cause some individuals to become corrupt? Corruption is an occupationally induced problem rather than an occupational hazard.⁶⁷ The moral and ethical character of an individual recruit has a great deal to do with the course of his or her law enforcement career and ability to resist the erosion of values, the cynicism

that comes with law enforcement work along with its institutional isolation.⁶⁸ Family upbringing, education, religion, and community values shape the character of any individual. Consequently, standards of selection should not be lowered in law enforcement agencies.

The attitude of the training officers of a law enforcement agency, and in particular the field training officer, is a primary factor in shaping the subsequent attitudes and behavior of the rookie officer. The field training officer's attitude is, in turn, a reflection of the attitude of the leader of that law enforcement agency. Law enforcement officers learn to be officers primarily by example and by observing how other officers act and what they do as officers.

One scenario, which may be observed in large metropolitan law enforcement agencies, is that the rookie officer observes the field training officer getting free or half-price coffee and donuts, and this sets the stage as to how the rookie will subsequently view himself/herself as an officer. Furthermore, the attitudes toward the public that is manifested by the administration of a law enforcement department are subtly (and not so subtly) inculcated into rookie officers by the field training officer, as well as by what the rookie officer actually sees in the behavior of other law enforcement officers.

The mundane experiences of home, wife, and children are superseded by the excitement of law enforcement work. An overly authoritarian attitude develops in some officers as part of a way of relating to citizens ("assholes") whom the rookie starts to perceive as dumb, ignorant, hos-

tile, and always at their worst. The rookie now is able to further dehumanize citizens. This authoritarian attitude is frequently taken home from work by the officer as he/she "matures," and the resultant attitude may begin to erode his/her marriage and family life.

Drinking frequently becomes a way of socialization with other officers and is used as a means of reducing the excitement and hyperalertness that occurs on the officer's tour of duty. The belief that the law enforcement officer's family "does not understand" what the officer is undergoing opens the door for involvement with the cadre of willing sexual objects that are available to the officer.

The heady experience of being "the man" or "the woman" (when citizens are seen as fearful, deferential, and angry at the power and discretion of the law enforcement officer) becomes intoxicating and is a way of relating not only to citizens but also to family. Along with this way of relating to citizens is the realization that officers are given special privileges and gifts from citizens who want to obtain, in return, the officer's discretion in applying the law. The officer develops a cynical attitude in which a *quid pro quo* or barter mentality originates. The officer now has an attitude of entitlement, in which he/she expects that citizens will be deferential because of what he/she can do or not do.

Many officers are able to maintain their personal integrity. Other officers become "passively" corrupt (i.e. "stealing" overtime, taking "gifts" given to them by citizens or by other officers who have stolen these gifts from burglarized stores, etc.).

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Other officers become more aggressively corrupt as their ethical and moral senses decline. They become the “meat eaters”—those law enforcement officers who actively seek out illegal activity and pursue their search for money and power. Bribes, payoffs, theft, burglary, sexual misconduct, vigilantism and “street-law” enforcement, selective enforcement of the law, violating constitutional rights, planting evidence, robbing drug dealers and citizens of money, drugs, and weapons, and in the extreme, committing murder, become the norm for some of these “meat-eaters.”⁶⁹

Psychological Implications Not all law enforcement officers become corrupt or unable to function because of the stress of being “the man” or “the woman.” Some officers, however, because of the stress and corruptive process involved in law enforcement work, develop diagnosable psychiatric conditions, for example the symptomatology of a Borderline Personality Disorder discussed previously. In some officers, the lack of empathy, the attitude of being interpersonally exploitative, arrogance, and the sense of entitlement of officers, as well as the belief that one has special powers or abilities (including police discretion), fulfill the diagnostic criteria of Narcissistic Personality Disorder as outlined in the DSM-IV.⁷⁰ This narcissism that develops in some officers as a result of their law enforcement work is another factor that predisposes them to corruption. Other types of characters and individuals who are encountered in law enforcement work in addition to those with Borderline and Narcissistic Personality Disorder symp-

tomatology include the following types. *The Antisocial Personality* These are the “untreatables,” the so-called “meat-eaters” who profit by victimizing others. Right and wrong have no meaning for such an individual. These individuals are shrewd and have no conscience. This is the type of individual who comes upon an unreported robbery scene and steals whatever he/she can; or hears of a burglary while on patrol and races to the robbery scene to steal what is available. Such individuals must be weeded out of the police force by psychological testing and background investigations, as well as by observant academic instructors and field training officers. Once the law enforcement officer has been sworn in, the code of silence starts immediately: “You are one of us.” The Antisocial Personality type of officer accepts the code of silence and his/her badge as a “license to steal.”

The Passive-Dependent or Inadequate Personality These are the so-called “grass-eaters” who cannot trust themselves under any pressure from peers or in positions of great temptation. They have a price; these individuals rationalize their behavior “because others do it.”

The Treatable These individuals conform to the requirements of their profession, but resent their conformity because they see others getting away with dishonest activity. They function in a state of tension between their consciences and what they would like to get away with. These individuals need support and leadership to encourage them to perform their duties lawfully. These individuals are “treatable” and can be helped by effective

leadership to become good law enforcement officers.

The High Quality These are individuals of integrity and good character. They are self-disciplined, honorable, honest, and are not corruptible. These are model law enforcement officers.⁷¹

Statistics for these categories in law enforcement departments are difficult to obtain. A veteran law enforcement officer, retired from a 75-man suburban department, estimated that 1 to 3 percent of law enforcement officers in his department would be categorized as antisocial personalities; 60 to 65 percent, the passive-dependent or inadequate personality; 30 percent, the treatable; and 1 to 3 percent would be high quality officers.⁷² Those officers with Borderline and Narcissistic Personality Disorders symptomatology would primarily be in an antisocial personality or untreatable category, but with some appearing also as passive-dependent or inadequate personality types.

Recommended Remedies The causes of corruption are rooted in the interrelatedness of an individual's attributes, immediate environment, and sociological and institutional structure and values.⁷³ The interrelatedness is between individual personality traits, organizational environments, and the influence of the larger culture on personality and organizations. No matter how carefully prospective law enforcement officers are screened and evaluated, there will always be those who pass through the selection process and eventually become involved in corruption, or who were already corrupt when

hired—an example of the “rotten apple” in the barrel.

Law enforcement agencies need adequate salaries, high standards for selection, the ability to attract high quality candidates possessing personal integrity, and training programs both for the rookie and the veteran law enforcement officer. To avoid the erosive effects of corruption, law enforcement officers need leadership that does not tolerate corruption and procedures for accountability of officers, for investigations of citizens' and other officers' complaints, and for unusual behavior or circumstances, with an ethically principled sense in both supervisory and patrol personnel, as well as an ethical political institutional environment.⁷⁴ The leadership of the law enforcement agency needs to be isolated and protected from the whim of politicians, to be free from the fear of being fired or neutralized if he/she does not go along with the wishes of politicians. Ideally, he/she should be under civil service protection.

The individual law enforcement officer needs to be able to apply discretion in an ethical, equitable, and just manner. He/she needs to be a “street corner” expert in ethics and morality. He/she needs to be mature, both ethically and psychologically.

Law enforcement departments must ensure that only officers of the highest standard of integrity are hired. The law enforcement agency must then train these individuals adequately and monitor their activities to prevent the erosion of the officers' integrity. In one study involving the NYPD, 24 percent of the officers who had been dismissed or suspended had a

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prior criminal arrest record. Approximately 20 percent of the suspended or dismissed officers should not have been admitted into the department, based on information in the officers' personnel files at the time of hiring.⁷⁵

All law enforcement agencies want to recruit the best possible candidates, those who possess integrity, and have them maintain their integrity. Establishing and applying standards in the recruiting of officers is of the utmost importance in maintaining the integrity of a law enforcement department. Candidates should be mature, psychologically stable, ethical, and preferably graduates of a four-year college. Polygraph screening, as done by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, is exceedingly important. Those who are involved in the hiring process must maintain these criteria of personal integrity. Candidates should be able to see citizens as individuals and not dehumanize them. Not all candidates have such integrity, nor do all individuals who are involved in the hiring process.

The past behavior of an individual is the best predictor of his or her future behavior. Other noteworthy indicators are prior drug use and possible damage to the brain, disinhibition and erosion of the candidate's ethical sense, induced by drugs (e.g., MDMA, LSD, and PCP), trauma, and alcohol. A juvenile record, relationship to authority, respect for the law, job history (e.g., misconduct in former jobs), and financial records⁷⁶ are also factors to consider. The way an individual handles his/her anger and aggression is a salient factor that needs to be explored. Family history is exceedingly

important in determining possible identifications and dynamics in an individual (e.g., family history of criminal activity).

The Importance of Occupational Standards The ideal standard for hiring is the absence of a history of deviant behavior and absence of alcohol and drug abuse. Every indication of deviant behavior should be evaluated as fully as possible. The evaluation of an individual psychologically needs to be done by a fully qualified psychiatrist or psychologist. Background investigation should be obtained on the psychologists and psychiatrists doing the evaluations. These evaluators should be knowledgeable about law enforcement work and the demands it makes on a person.⁷⁷ The evaluation of law enforcement candidates should consist of the psychological test data, a full social service history, the clinical interview, and the personal history, to establish a person's psychological stability and suitability to be a law enforcement officer.

Once an individual is hired as a law enforcement officer, the department has the responsibility of reinforcing standards and individual values. The law enforcement leader is the individual responsible for a law enforcement department's values, standards, leadership, and supervision.⁷⁸ The former head of the Internal Affairs Department of the NYPD, John Guido, who put more police officers in jail than any other law enforcement officer, put it quite succinctly when he spoke on the etiology of corruption. "There was a breakdown in leadership. It all comes down to the same thing—leadership. And the biggest deterrent to corruption is the

certainty of being punished.”⁷⁹ The personality and style of the law enforcement leader are the factors that determine the moral and ethical tone of an organization. At times, the leader contributes to the disturbances and the problems of a department because his or her personal stresses, strains, lack of ethical sense or integrity, and corruption interfere with organizational imperatives. The leader of the law enforcement agency should be a mature, seasoned individual with a fully developed sense of integrity and ethical sense. It is difficult for a law enforcement officer who has come up through the ranks to become the leader of that same law enforcement agency. Unless there is great confidence that the agency is free from corruption and favoritism, the appointment of a member from the ranks of that law enforcement agency would tend to perpetuate the problems. The leader of a law enforcement agency, likewise, should not name his or her own successor, nor is it good policy for the acting leader to be appointed leader.

There is no guarantee that an individual of good moral and ethical background will remain so under the stress of law enforcement work. There are many factors that determine an individual's commitment to his/her own ethical standard and personal integrity. There must be a strong message sent to the individual officer, by the law enforcement leader, of the necessity of a commitment to ethics and personal integrity. A law enforcement leader with a lack of personal integrity is not able to demand personal integrity from the officers under him.

The Need for Reinforcement and Evaluation There is a need for positive and negative reinforcement of behavior to ensure adherence to the policies and procedures of the law enforcement department. Integrity should become more important than the appearance of integrity.⁸⁰ There should be no compromise.

The officer's evaluation process and the evaluation of citizen and peer complaints against individual officers are two primary methods of maintaining adherence to the standards of the law enforcement department after an officer is hired. Any proposal for dealing with corruption must, therefore, provide a place where officers as well as the public can come, with confidence and without fear of retaliation, to report complaints against law enforcement officers. There must be confidentiality in reporting complaints. There should be no anonymous “heads up” calls from Internal Affairs warning a suspected officer of an investigation. Internal Affairs needs to do more than “damage control.” There must be a reduction in opportunities for corrupt activity. Petty graft opportunities must be reduced as much as possible, so that a law enforcement agency can change the current attitude that such graft is an accepted part of police work, making it more difficult for an officer to accept or solicit graft of a more serious nature when the opportunity presents itself.

The code of silence and the “us versus them” mentality must be altered by the law enforcement agency, changing law enforcement culture and its attitude of concealing and perpetuating corruption. The law enforcement agency must de-

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mand integrity from its officers and create an atmosphere in which dishonest officers fear honest officers and not the other way around. Photographs of officers should be taken every five years and a copy maintained both in the personnel department and in Internal Affairs for ready identification of officers who solicit bribes.

Ultimate Responsibility It is the responsibility of the leadership and management to ensure that supervisors are made aware of behavior that is indicative of individuals with possible problems involving corruption. Officers who are engaged in corrupt activities may also be those who chronically manifest other questionable behavior, including the abuse of sick leave, tardiness, failure to meet commitments such as court appearance, inability to speak clearly or coherently (suggesting alcohol or substance abuse), and implausible excuses for suspicious and/or unusual actions. It is especially important to alert new supervisors of the importance of these indicators of possible corruption. There are cases in which supervisors are aware of these indications, but ignore them because of friendship with the officer or because the officer is considered an outstanding officer. "Corruption will flourish when questionable conduct is ignored."⁸¹ Allegations of corruption of law enforcement officers can be a career threat to their supervisors; it is difficult to be promoted when there are ongoing scandals involving officers under your supervision. The code of silence must be eliminated. Another problem is that when some officers are promoted to supervisory positions, they basically become semiretired and

lazy. Monitoring young law enforcement officers on the street requires work; if the rookie is put up on charges, there are many reports to done. A corrupt supervisor will "look the other way."

The internal audit process, staffed by experienced officers of integrity, is paramount for identifying corrupt practices. When corrupt practices are identified, it is necessary for the investigating officers to evaluate the supervisors' performance as well, to determine whether the supervising officers did not adequately supervise or whether the supervising officers are involved in the corruption. The officers who are in Internal Affairs, either by themselves, on orders, or through collusion with their supervisors, can determine whether a criminal case is made, prematurely closed, or concealed.

The repertoire of corruption is finite. There are only a limited number of ways of being corrupt as a law enforcement officer. Knowledge of the methods of corruption are imperative to be able to evaluate the current functioning of a law enforcement department and its individual officers. As an example, "For the past century, police corruption scandals in New York City have run on a regular twenty year cycle of scandals, reform, backsliding and fresh scandals." This started in 1894 with the Lexow Commission, approximately 20 years later came the Curran Commission, in 1932 was Samuel Seabury's investigation, in 1950 the King's County District Attorney's investigation, in 1972 the Knapp Commission, and the latest was the Mollen Commission in 1994.⁸²

Some measures to eliminate police corruption include the followings:

1. Leaders of a law enforcement agency must keep in close contact with the officers involved in the internal audit process to ensure that the policies and procedures of the agency are being administered and followed correctly and equitably.

2. All complaints about individual law enforcement officers should be thoroughly investigated. Every investigation should be completed, even if the officer in question resigns. Resignations for the "good of the agency" should be evaluated.

3. A permanent, independent monitor of law enforcement departments with subpoena power, access to law enforcement records, and the ability to administer oaths is indicated to investigate charges of law enforcement corruption not being adequately handled by the internal audit process in a law enforcement agency in which command accountability has never existed or has deteriorated.⁸³

4. Probation periods of one year for new law enforcement officers are typical for law enforcement agencies. A longer period of probation, 18 months to two years, would be more helpful in uncovering problem officers, thereby enabling law enforcement agencies to eliminate those who are unsuited for law enforcement work.

5. All officers should be reevaluated after every five years of service for psychological stability, with an accompanying background investigation, including an evaluation of the standard of living of the individuals in comparison to his or her

standard of living at the time of admission to the law enforcement department, taking into consideration alternate sources of legitimate income.

6. Those individuals who work in areas of law enforcement that have a high potential for corruption should be monitored even more closely. These include officers in drug enforcement units, undercover operations, vice squads, and those involved in handling and storage of evidence in property rooms. Discretionary practices need to be monitored closely by supervisors to prevent abuse. Discretionary practices at the lower levels of the chain of command, in particular, need to be monitored closely. Those individuals who are corrupt must be indicted and dismissed from the department.

7. Positive and negative discipline should be consistent, impartial, immediate, and definitive. This becomes difficult because of the present judicial system, resulting in a consequent decreased ability to remove problem officers, with resultant impairment of a law enforcement department's ability to maintain its level of integrity. The ability of a department to dismiss a corrupt officer may be defeated by the code of silence, peer pressure, and civil service rules. "Without a well functioning disciplinary process and an aggressive removal process, all other procedural safeguards and anticorruptive initiatives are merely paper tigers."⁸⁴

Another measure designed to instill new ethical leadership into a law enforcement department would involve the formation of a National Police Academy at a graduate level, wherein college graduate law enforcement officers who have com-

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pleted their training and at least one year of service would be accepted into a one- or two-year Master's Program designed to instill in the officers the professionalism and the knowledge, awareness, and ability to combat involvement in corruption. These officers would then return to their respective law enforcement departments, supported by grants from the Federal Government and changes in civil service regulations, to assume leadership roles, to help their respective law enforcement agencies control corruption. An offshoot of this plan would be a modified program similar to an officers' candidate school that could be accomplished on a part-time basis.⁸⁵

The most important factor in the prevention of corruption in a law enforcement agency, besides the personal integrity of the individual enforcement officer, is a leader who is mature, seasoned, stable, with personal integrity and a strong personal ethic. Ideally, he or she should also be an attorney, to understand and more effectively deal with the more subtle forms of corruption in law enforcement and to prevent contamination of that leader's department.

Conclusions and Future Implications

The integrity and ethical behavior of a law enforcement agency is contingent upon its administration for the selection of prospective officers, their training and supervision, and monitoring their behaviors, ethics, and development as law enforcement officers. The law enforcement Oath of Honor should be prominently displayed in each law enforcement station.

Officers should be required to sign off on the Oath every six months, to help the individual law enforcement officer develop a mind set of integrity. Only the most mature individuals who have integrity should be accepted as officers, and even more, only the most mature and ethical individual should be the law enforcement leader. As Emerson said, "The institution is the lengthened shadow of the man." The law enforcement leader and his or her ranking officers are responsible for the conduct of those whom they lead and for the factors that lead to corruption in law enforcement that need to be changed, modified, and monitored on an ongoing basis. An understanding of the corruption problem among law enforcement officers will serve as a paradigm for evaluating, understanding, correcting, and preventing corruption in other occupations and professions.

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