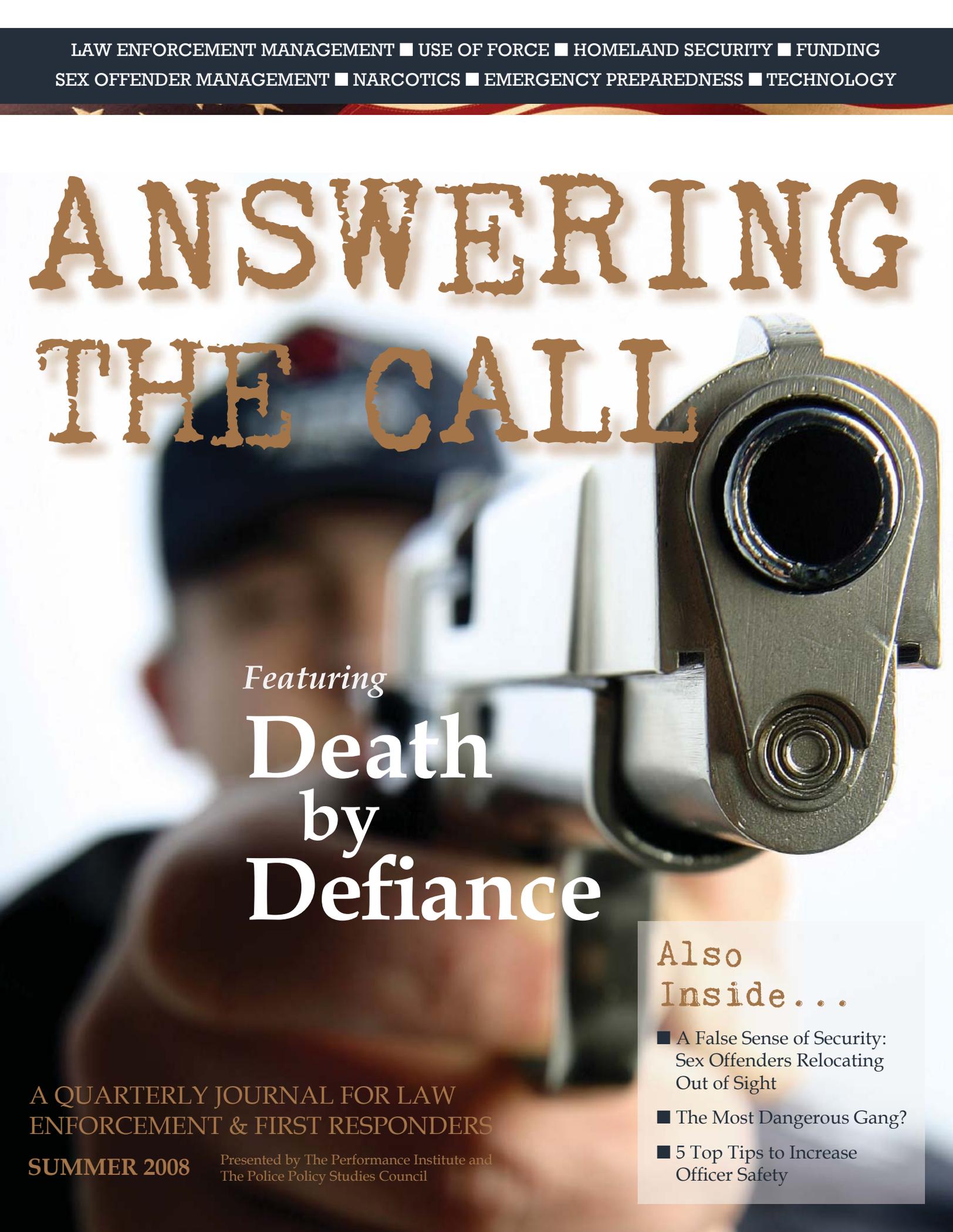


ANSWERING THE CALL



Featuring

Death by Defiance

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL FOR LAW
ENFORCEMENT & FIRST RESPONDERS

SUMMER 2008

Presented by The Performance Institute and
The Police Policy Studies Council

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- A False Sense of Security:
Sex Offenders Relocating
Out of Sight
- The Most Dangerous Gang?
- 5 Top Tips to Increase
Officer Safety

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Colleague,

Law enforcement officers are granted the option of employing use of force during certain circumstances. These occurrences can range from a routine traffic stop going awry to controlling an unruly college crowd after a team loss. The key is learning where to draw the line between necessary and excessive use of force. When the level of force is not justified, law enforcement officials and departments can be subject to intense public scrutiny.

Law enforcement stories continue to permeate the evening news as police officers are constantly asked to justify their use of force actions. Many of us are now familiar with the case of Sean Bell, the 23 year-old unarmed man who was shot while leaving his bachelor party. In a court of law, the three officers involved with the incident were cleared on manslaughter and reckless endangerment charges. This case has garnered national attention and has once again brought the debate about use of force and police brutality to the forefront.

As many jurisdictions look to prepare their officers for critical incidents, some agencies are taking a proactive approach to understanding use of force policies and the ever changing legal liability landscape. Many are also taking steps to develop and implement a comprehensive yet sensible and easy to follow use of force policy.

In 1999, the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) developed the Metropolitan Police Department's Force Investigations Branch to investigate their use of force incidents. The catalyst for this program was a series of articles printed in the Washington Post revealing the deficiencies of the MPD's internal tracking and investigation of use of force occurrences. Today, their investigations help identify trends in police activities, such as: police-related firearm discharges, deaths of persons in police custody, officer suicides involving a service weapon and pursuits resulting in fatal injuries. The trends identified help the department recognize where new policies and trainings are needed. In 2006, the MPD noticed an increase in the number of firearm discharges at moving vehicles. As it is against MPD policy to discharge a firearm at a moving vehicle, the increase in such incidents led to the Metropolitan Police Academy, which provides training to members of MPD, adding additional hours of regulation and recertification training.

While many police departments are now following the MPD's lead, there are many things to think about when implementing policy change. It is necessary to assess the legal landscape, look to the latest trends in force reporting, calculate agency liability and risk and determine what types of lethal and less-lethal options are appropriate for your jurisdiction.

The Performance Institute and Police Policy Studies Council work with law enforcement agencies from across the country. Almost every agency says that at some point their agency and officers face a use of force circumstance. While we can't provide all the answers for every situation, we understand that implementing change can be difficult and strive to be a forum that offers tips and tactics. We hope these free or inexpensive tips for your agency will help to better manage use of force situations.

This Journal does not assume itself to provide all the answers. But Answering the Call is founded upon the basic principle that every additional piece of knowledge and information available to the first responder community will improve their ability to keep America safe and achieve their mission.

Sincerely,



Amy Shioji, The Performance Institute

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Cover Story:
Death by Defiance

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The CARVER + Shock Vulnerability Assessment Tool

April 20, 1999 marks the tragic day of the Columbine High School massacre, where 12 students and one teacher were brutally murdered and another 23 injured. Since then, there have been 24 school shootings at high school and college campuses around the country, with the tragedy of Virginia Tech resulting in the biggest loss of students and faculty with 33 casualties. Out of 258 K-12 school-associated violent student deaths, 44% were caused by shootings, 30% were murders/suicides and 14% were from stabbings.¹ School shootings have impacted the US and these tragedies are not far removed from our minds as school and campus security concerns continue to permeate the news.

For law enforcement and campus security personnel there is a great need to prepare and assess the risk of this growing threat. Threats such as terrorism, gangs, homemade explosive devices and mass casualty events continue to rise, and schools must proactively analyze and mitigate any weaknesses in their ability to respond to such an event. One way to evaluate your school's vulnerability is through the CARVER + Shock assessment tool.

The CARVER + Shock Vulnerability Assessment Tool evaluates potential vulnerabilities and unidentified weaknesses in threat assessment planning and can be modified to teach K-12 and campus security entities how to mitigate risk. CARVER stands for the following components: Critically, Accessibility, Recuperability, Vulnerability, Effect and Recognizability. Lastly, Shock represents the combined health, economic and psychological impacts of an attack and allows school security personnel to uncover several key pieces of information.

¹ National School Safety and School Services

1. **Know Yourself:** Analyzing your entire facility is important in determining risk. Obvious risks are important, but there are often underlying threats that can be just as significant.
2. **Know the Threat:** It is important to identify who or what the threat is and when and why they will possibly attack.
3. **Know Your Environment:** Be able to provide as much detail as possible about the physical environment as well as the non-physical.
4. **Determine What the Enemy Knows About You:** This is a preliminary piece of the puzzle. It may help predict if an attack will occur.

The CARVER + Shock Vulnerability Assessment is unique because it can thoroughly evaluate the vulnerability of your school security. By conducting a CARVER + Shock assessment on your school's security plan, you can determine the most vulnerable points in your infrastructure and focus the appropriate resources to improve the most susceptible points to prevent and minimize devastating attacks.



■ Schools must proactively analyze and mitigate any weaknesses in their ability to respond to Threats such as terrorism, gangs, homemade explosive devices. ■



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False

Sex Offenders Relocating Out of Sight

Sense of Security

Residency restrictions for sex offenders are gaining popularity around the country. These ordinances which were created to benefit and protect children are in fact providing a false sense of security for communities by driving sex offenders off the map in order to find a location to live.

In recent years, states such as Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee and most recently Nevada as well as multiple cities in other states have adopted and implemented residency restrictions for convicted sex offenders. In 2006, Georgia adopted one of the nation's toughest restrictions which prohibited sex offenders from living within 1,000 feet (1/5 mile) of any schools, churches, swimming pools or places that children might gather. In

Iowa, a new state law prohibits sex offenders (whose crime involved children) from living within 2,000 feet (2/5 mile) of a school or day care facility. Other cities and towns throughout the country are implementing their own restriction zones which include libraries and museums.

Even though the laws have the right goal in mind – to protect children – they have had the adverse effect of in some cases making it impossible for convicted sex offenders to find a legal place to live. They also have made it tough for law enforcement officials to track registered sex offenders due to the housing shortage. In order to find housing, sex offenders relocate to a new city or turn to their cars, motels and even in some cases under bridges and parking lots to live. The real outcome of these ordinances is not always a safer place to live but a community that has sex offenders “disap-

pearing” with law enforcement officials in the dark about their locations.

It is understandable not to want sex offenders living around children but what are the true outcomes of creating such strict laws? Is it really safer for children and communities? Or have these laws become counter productive?

An Iowa newspaper reported that “the law results in frequent moves - many of which are not reported to law enforcement - and a more transient lifestyle by sex offenders, making it more difficult to track their whereabouts and diminishing the credibility and reliability of the state's sex offender registry. That the number of unaccounted-for sex offenders in the state has more than doubled since the law took effect provides evidence of that and as a result, the law requires manpower for enforcement that is disproportionate to the protection it provides and takes resources



away from other important areas.”¹ This was stated after Des Moines law officials reported that after restrictions were implemented in 2006, 400 of the 6,000 registered sex offenders are now listed as “whereabouts unknown” or “living in a non-structure location.” Comparitively, in 2005, there were only 140 under those classifications.²

In 2004, the Colorado Department of Public Safety conducted a study which concluded that there was no correlation between sex offenders’ living distance to places where children congregate and re-offenses. Minnesota Department of Correction came to the same conclusion in a study conducted in 2003. Further more, additional studies have concluded that

1 http://www.siouxcityjournal.com/articles/2007/12/09/news_opinion/editorial/004c9dc2164eb2e5862573aa0083af57

2 Iowa Residency Rules Drives Sex Offenders Underground

■ In 2004, the Colorado Department of Public Safety conducted a study which concluded that there was no correlation between sex offenders’ living distance to places where children congregate and re-offenses. ■

housing restrictions lead sex offenders to isolation due to a shortage of housing options, financial and emotional stress, and to an overall decrease in stability.³

Advocates for these restricted residency laws have the best intentions in mind and believe they will decrease the likelihood of sex crimes against children.

3 [www.nacdl.org/sl_docs.nsf/issues/sexoffender_attachments/\\$FILE/Levenson-1000feet_rule.pdf](http://www.nacdl.org/sl_docs.nsf/issues/sexoffender_attachments/$FILE/Levenson-1000feet_rule.pdf)

However, from the studies mentioned above and the increase of registered sex offenders’ whereabouts becoming unknown, there is little evidence that suggests these laws decrease recidivism and that housing restrictions are the answer. In fact, the housing restrictions make communities feel safer in the short term but don’t actually create a safer environment in which to live.



DEATH by defiance

By *Thomas J. Aveni, MSFP*
THE POLICE POLICY STUDIES COUNCIL

A ground-breaking new study offers fresh, critical insight on how officers make deadly force decisions

Introduction

While many professions embody a preponderance of decisional absolutes, there are professions that require a significant amount of discretionary latitude. Law enforcement officers are entrusted with a considerable degree of discretion, which is essential in navigating a world of human behaviors and circumstances that are often ambiguous. However, such latitude often creates greater hesitancy and indecision while an officer attempts to determine the “appropriate” response to a given situation.

Most of the recent research pertinent to the use of deadly force by police has been focused on what police do more than upon why they do it. Social scientists who have wandered aimlessly into this research realm have done so largely ill-prepared to discover anything of practical value. When they’ve attempted to determine “why” police use deadly force, they seem to fall victim to their own lack of personal insight about the nature of policing.

Not surprisingly, race has been explored exhaustively as a factor in the “disproportionate” police use of deadly force.

But, as a research variable, race has almost always been manipulated without meaningful context.¹ One is left to wonder why this tendency persists. This study embedded officer and suspect race as research correlates simply because their inclusion has become almost obligatory.

While many previous social science research endeavors have focused keenly upon the issue of “stereotype congruence/incongruence” in officers’ decision-making processes, we sought to embark on a study that would delve deeply into the generally overlooked micro-issues that are the very essence of the police decision-making process. These issues all fall within the realm of situational context and suspect behavioral cues.

In developing the methodology for our study, we conceded that where race appears to play a critical role in police decision-making, it may well be attributed to behavioral nuances that are perceived as being defiant and even threatening by

police. Weitzer and Tuch (2004)² presented evidence that members of ethnic minorities often feel as if they’ve been mistreated by the police (see also Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). The implication has been that the police are racist and that officers use excessive force against minority suspects. In response, it has been suggested³ that black people may engage in more confrontational behavior toward police officers, perhaps adding to a cycle in which hostility toward police might prompt more severe applications of force by police.

Does defiant behavior toward authority contribute to the frequency of police shootings – especially under ambiguous circumstances? That question appears to be a legitimate one to ponder since “death-by-defiance” (to police) seems to be of predictive value when situational and behavioral cues are extreme in nature. One component of this study attempted to quantify whether defiance

1 Correll, J., Park, B., Judd, C.M., & Wittenbrink, B. (2002). The police officer’s dilemma: Using ethnicity to disambiguate potentially threatening individuals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83, 1314-1329

2 Weitzer, R., & Tuch, S. A. (2004). Race and perceptions of police misconduct. *Social Problems*, 51, 305-325

3 Reisig, M.D., McCluskey, J.D., Mastrofski, S.D., & Terrill, W. (2004). Suspect disrespect toward the police. *Justice Quarterly*, 21, 241-268.

(i.e., non-compliance to officer/deputy commands) contributed to the officer/deputy perception of an imminent threat. After a literature review of relevant research, we decided to establish a different research pathway and not rely on the synthesis and/or reinterpretation of previous studies.

The genesis of this study actually stems from consideration of an ACLU allegation⁴ made on their website in 1998: 25% of all suspects shot by police are “unarmed and not-assaultive.” One of the three corroborative studies⁵ cited by the ACLU was conducted by Marshall Meyer (1980). Meyer analyzed data provided by the Los Angeles Police Department from 1974-78 and reached a myriad of interesting conclusions about the LAPD’s use of deadly force. While noting disparities in the number of black suspects shot by LAPD, he noted; “In almost all instances, the suspect’s act precipitating a shooting incident is the final act that caused the officer to fire, that is, that act but for which the shooting would not have taken place.” pg.101

Believing that Marshall Meyer’s observations were at the heart of a very complex set of dynamics, the Police Policy Studies Council (PPSC) sought to conduct an experimental research project, focusing on specific micro-behavioral issues that seem to precede an officer’s use of deadly force. The Michigan Municipal Risk Management Authority saw sufficient value in the scope of this project to agree to provide a portion of the needed funding, with PPSC picking up the bulk of the remaining expense. The study, once structured, was named, “A Critical Analysis of Police Shootings Under Ambiguous Circumstances.”

⁴ <http://www.aclu.org/police/abuse/index.html>

⁵ Meyer, M.W. (1980), “Police Shootings of Minorities: The Case of Los Angeles”, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 452, pp. 98-110.



Study Overview

To undertake this study, actors were hired to facilitate filming 80 scenarios of three types; (1) Robbery-in-Progress, (2) Burglary Alarm Activation-in-Progress and (3) an officer-initiated “Suspicious Incident.” The “Alarm Activation” scenario always evolved into a “Burglary-In-Progress” upon the officers “arrival.” The officer-initiated “Suspicious Incident” usually evolved into a “Mugging-In-Progress.” The actors utilized as “suspects” in these scenarios were “young,” “old,” “black,” “white,” “male” and “female.”

There were 307 officers/deputies from six agencies participating in this study, engaging a total of 117 “unarmed” suspects. In examining whether there was correlation between officer’s attributes (race, sex, age, experience, type of duty location) and an officer’s action, we found that no significant correlation exists. Nor was there any significant correlation between officer action and order of scenario videos, subject race or subject sex.

This study found significant correlation existed between officer action and action of the subject (shoot, surrender with object in-hand, and surrender without object in-hand), acting quotient, and video setting (burglary, robbery, and mugging). Also, significant correlation existed between an officer’s action and two attributes of the subject – subject’s age and subject’s dress.

Officers/deputies participating in this study were more likely to shoot when the subject was young (rather than old), in punk dress (rather than business dress), and when the acting quotient was high (rather than low). Officers were also more likely to shoot in robbery scenarios than in muggings and more likely to shoot in mugging scenarios than in burglary scenarios. Lastly, officers are more likely to shoot when a subject’s action is “shoot” than when a subject’s action is “surrender without,” and more likely to shoot when a subject’s action is “surrender without” an object in-hand than when it is “surrender with an object in-

DEATH BY DEFIANCE, *Continued on p. 10*

FEATURES

This apparent anomaly is explained by the high correlation found in scenarios which had been assigned high “acting quotients” (AQ) for the amplitude of critical acting variables. The higher the acting quotient, the higher the correlation was for officers shooting “unarmed” suspects.

■ OFFICERS/DEPUTIES PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY WERE MORE LIKELY TO SHOOT WHEN THE SUBJECT WAS YOUNG (RATHER THAN OLD), IN PUNK DRESS (RATHER THAN BUSINESS DRESS), AND WHEN THE ACTING QUOTIENT WAS HIGH (RATHER THAN LOW). ■

Acting Quotient (AQ)

In an effort to pursue more meaningful data interpretation – primarily to explain (or predict) certain anomalies in the way that participating officers reacted to specific scenarios, we scored acting qualities for “values” that appear to add varying levels of “compelling quality” to each scenario. For instance, if an actor turned more quickly toward the camera in one scenario than another, a participating officer might react to that turn with more belief that it represented the initiation of a threat than if that turn had been less rapid. Likewise, if the actor turns with his/her hands at waist level – where a secret weapon is believed to have been accessed, the officer might be more inclined to shoot than if the actor turned with his/her hands held

high, in more of a “surrender” posture. AQ values are scored cumulatively and it is assumed that a higher AQ cumulative value (3-4) will result in a higher frequency of “unarmed” suspects being shot than in scenarios with lower AQ cumulative scores (0 - 2.5). For example, a turn characterized by E,LH,PC, CH would have an AQ score of 3.5.

Actor’s Quotient Values

Actor’s Action	Symbol	Value
Tepid Turn	T	0
Energetic Turn	E	1
High Hand(s)	HH	0
Low Hand(s)	LH	1
Upright Stance	U	0
Partial Crouch	PC	.5
Full Crouch	FC	1
Open Hand(s)	OH	0
Half-Closed Hand(s)	HC	.5
Closed Hand(s)	CH	1

An anomaly that wasn’t fully considered until the research project began was the realization that the actors behaved differently in those scenarios in which they were given a handgun and instructed to turn and fire at the movie camera. None of the five actors identified themselves as recreational shooters – or even gun owners. All were given an orientation with the .38 Smith & Wesson M640 revolver used in the “armed” scenarios. The actors were not instructed in the intricacies of “combat shooting,” they were merely familiarized with function and safety of that specific handgun. It came as a surprise that when later reviewing each filmed scenario, actors behaved noticeably differently with the handgun in-hand. They tended to turn with more of a body crouch, with their shoulders forward and knees somewhat bent. In addition, a grimace was somewhat noticeable on actors’ faces when turning with a handgun. There may have been a prac-

tical reason for that, since the full-flash “Hollywood Blanks” utilized for effect were loud and bright during night-time filming. Whatever influenced the actors to grimace, it added more visual emphasis to their turn toward the camera. The combination of crouching and grimacing contributed to a more “intense” look when actors turned with, and fired, a handgun.

It is essential to note that suspect hand movement – even that which seemed tepid, as he/she turned toward the camera, was almost always too fast to determine the nature of any object being held in the suspect’s hand. Suspect hand movement, as viewed from the camera lens, almost always encompassed 4-5 feet of an arc of movement toward the camera. With that much viewed distance of hand movement being covered in one second or less to achieve (1) at least 90% completion of a full turn or (2) the suspect firing his/her first shot at the camera, the latency period of saccadic eye movement falls far behind the rapid movement of the hands. This visual phenomenon becomes apparent when rapid movement is perceived as a blur or a “smear” of motion. Subsequently, it was often difficult for participants to discern when a suspect’s hands were not holding any objects until rapid hand movement terminated. This tends to explain why some participants shot suspects who turned to “surrender” with empty hands. The manner in which some suspects turned and the context in which they were viewed (i.e., the type of crime that they were perceived committing), often compelled participants to shoot before there was any certainty about whether the suspect was armed.

In addition to movement of the hands, another substantive hand-variable was noted after all scenarios were filmed and reviewed. Actors were not instructed when to “open” their hands when turning toward the camera into a “surrender” position. Subsequently, some actors initiated their turns toward the camera with open hands while others initiated turns with clenched hands.

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Even with the rapid hand movement evident in all scenarios, the difference was almost always readily apparent. And, the difference is significant to trained eyes. An open hand is perceived as a much less threatening hand since it is almost immediately recognized as an “empty hand.” An empty hand is perceived as a weaponless hand. A clenched hand, especially when viewed in rapid movement, exudes significant behavioral ambiguity. A rapidly moving clenched hand is much less likely to be viewed innocuously if the situational context is severe.

For the scenarios involving the (actor’s) use of deadly force (which was 1-in-3 of all scenarios), we gave an orientation to the actors relative to using a Smith & Wesson M640 revolver in .38 Special caliber. The revolver was being loaded with “full-flash” Hollywood blanks for each scenario that involved the “suspect” using deadly force.

What this study did not originally account for was the manner in which actors appeared “stimulated” whenever they acted out scenarios that involved them holding/firing a handgun. They appeared to turn (toward the camera) at roughly the same pace, but they more frequently turned in a crouching posture with hands more clenched. Even facial expressions changed in substantive ways that might be perceived as being “more aggressive.” Actors often appeared to grimace in anticipation of the loud report and flash of the blank cartridges that were fired from the handgun. But, to a trained observer, that same grimace might be perceived as an expression of defiance and determination.

Empty-Hand vs. Object In-Hand Suspect Variations

In an attempt to determine the nature in which suspects might be shot while unarmed, we filmed two variations of the unarmed scenarios. In all three types of scenarios (burglaries, muggings, robberies), actor/suspects were filmed with firearms in one variation, innocuous objects



(cell phone, flashlight, police ID wallet) in another variation and empty-handed in yet another variation. Due to the eye’s (saccadic) latency period in tracking rapidly moving objects, it was believed that objects held like weapons would in fact be confused for weapons when actors were moving rapidly, and under the low light conditions in which all scenarios were filmed. Since at least 71% of all “mistake-of-fact” police shootings occur at night (Aveni, 2002), this research element was deemed critically relevant.

“Death by Defiance™”

Death by Defiance™, or DBD, may have been the most important derivative of our deadly force study. The forensic and police training implications are many. DBD, as defined by our study, is a synergistic behavioral phenomenon occurring (1) where and when non-compliant behavior (2) is viewed as being hostile within what appears to be a felonious context (3) eliciting the police use of deadly force when a threat of death or serious bodily harm is perceived as being imminent to that officer. An officer’s perception of imminent danger can be reasonably construed when (1) the officer has issued concise audible commands (e.g., “Police – don’t move!” or “Police, show me your hands!”) yet is met with defiant behavior construed from direct non-compliance of said commands. If, given substantive situational context,

the officer senses (non-compliant) furtive movements that appear consistent with the initiation of a lethal threat, the officer might reasonably believe that the preemptive use of deadly force is appropriate.

To characterize Death by Defiance™ as concisely as possible, we’re offering this definition: **A justifiable police homicide that occurs after a flagrant level of furtive, suspicious or otherwise reckless behavior is viewed concurrently with a subject exhibiting non-compliance to stated and/or exhibited police authority. When such behavior is confronted within substantive situational context, and the officer senses that the subject’s (non-compliant) actions appear consistent with the initiation of a lethal threat, an officer might justifiably use deadly force in a pre-emptive manner. Thus, the subject’s defiant behavior becomes a compelling determinant of the officer’s use of deadly force.**

As one might imagine, the nature and depth of this study is difficult to synopsise in a short article. Likewise, the implications of this study (e.g., training, administrative, investigative) are too many to enumerate here. However, the Police Policy Studies Council offers the full 44-page text of this study for FREE download on the PPSC website (www.theppsc.org). If anyone wishes further information about the study, or about its direct training and forensic applications, feel free to contact the study’s author directly at tom@theppsc.org.



The most Dangerous Gang

Mara Salvatrucha, better known as MS-13, has been labeled as the “most dangerous gang in America.” Today they have established a national presence with 150 cliques in 42 states and the District of Columbia. MS-13 has an estimated member population of 6,000 to 15,000 in the United States with an additional 250,000+ members in Central America.

MS-13 originated in Los Angeles in the 1980s when many Salvadoran refugees fled to the Rampart area of Los Angeles to escape their homeland’s malicious civil war. Throughout the years they have developed neighborhood cliques and organized crime circles. Today, MS-13 is known to be involved in many criminal activities: human and drug trafficking, murder, rape, kidnapping, robbery, carjacking and vandalism. These activities came with a pattern of behavior – extreme violence – as seen in the many news reports which reference the use of machetes and severed body parts. These descriptions in combination with violent pictures and videos found on the internet make it easy to believe that MS-13 is the most dangerous, but are they really?

Sgt. Richard Valdemar would say no, but attests that “they are part of the most dangerous gang in America.”

Sgt. Valdemar retired from the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department after spending most of his 33 years on the job combating gangs. For the last 20 years, he was assigned to Major Crimes Bureau. He was also cross-designated as an FBI agent for 10 years of his career when he served on

the Federal Metropolitan Gang Task Force. From 1995 until his retirement in 2004, Valdemar was a member of the California Prison Gang Task Force, helping prosecute members of the Mexican Mafia.

Sgt. Richard Valdemar suggests that “MS-13 is not any more dangerous than any other Southern California gang but because they are on both coasts they are getting more attention from the press. However, the larger concern is that MS-13 is subservient to the Mexican Mafia prison gang – the most dangerous gang in America.”

The “Mexican Mafia,” “eMe,” or “La eMe” is a Mexican-American criminal prison gang in the United States. The eMe formed in the 1950s from incarcerated Chicano (Mexican American) street gang members at the Duel Vocational Institute state prison in Southern California. The founding members formed the gang to create protection from other inmates. Within a few years the gang grew and began running organized criminal activities from inside the prison, most notably the prison narcotics trade. In the late 1960s, law enforcement gained knowledge of the gang, and in an effort to break up the gang, officials separated eMe members by relocating them into different state prisons. This had an adverse effect, allowing the separated members to recruit new members at the new institutions. Their numbers continued to increase as members were released from prison, and recruitment began outside prison walls. Once outside prison walls, the Mexican Mafia gained control over narcotics distri-

bution and began “taxing” drug dealers. They also gained authority over Sureños gangs in LA. Sureños, a Spanish name for southerners, are groups of Mexican-American gangs of which MS-13 is a part of.

In 1992, riots broke out in L.A. following the Rodney King decision. According to Valdemar it was during this rioting that members of the Mara Salvatrucha gang were attacked by other Hispanic gang members. The reason? They were told that they were not Sureños. Valdemar says “they then petitioned the Mexican Mafia shot callers to become Sureños ... this made the Mara Salvatrucha a Sureño gang and authorized the use of the number 13 after their name. It also made them loyal soldiers of the Mexican Mafia and bound by the eMe code of conduct”.

Valdemar’s conclusion that MS-13 is one of the operating arms of the Mexican Mafia prison gang contradicts that MS-13 is the “most dangerous in America.” He suggests that the Mexican Mafia is the more dangerous gang.

Although the MS-13 gang has taken the spotlight within mainstream America the public needs to be aware of the dangerous Mexican Mafia prison gang. Regardless of which one is more dangerous, both have ties to each other and are continuing to expand nationwide. In order to effectively decrease gang activity across the United States, it is critical that enforcement officials stay up-to-date on gang associations, trends and issues facing us nationwide.

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Find Out How to Ensure Officer Security and Safety in Use of Force Situations

5 Top Tips to Increase Officer Safety

When an officer's shift begins, there is no way to foresee the end result. It could be business as usual, or in a single moment, there could be a life-altering event. Detective Kevin Stephens of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department recently taught a course on Maintaining Officer Safety at The Performance Institute's 2008 National Summit on Gang Violence where he discussed the importance of officer safety and survival on the job. By following these five simple tips, seasoned veterans and rookies alike can ensure their own personal safety.

1. Stay Alert and Be Observant

Being alert and staying observant are the simplest tips for maintaining safety on the job. The more people there are in a given area, the higher the risk of violent crimes. Approaching every situation with a sense of urgency and vigilance reduces the risk of the element of surprise. While it may not be possible to predict the move of every suspect, it is always possible to control one's own actions and response.

2. "Perfect Practice Makes Perfect"

According to Detective Stephens, if an officer takes responsibility for their own training, on and off the job, this allows for a professionally sound performance every time. As Stephens puts it, "perfect practice makes perfect." Unfortunately, there is only so much instruction in academy training. It is the follow-through that can make all of the difference.

3. Mastering Tactics

Applying the "survival mindset" is also a good way to ensure extra safety measures. "There are many tactics used and one is not necessarily better than another," believes Stephens. "By following the 'survival mindset,' you are incorporating some of the most sound survival tactics." The first part of the "survival mindset" is mastering the academy skills. This includes knowing all aspects of the job. The most important aspects are tactical knowledge, including firearm proficiency, legal framework and codes of conduct.

4. Physical Skill

Physical skill is also of great importance while on the job and another component of the "survival mindset," says Stephens. It may mean putting in extra hours at the gym while off duty, but the end result could mean the power to save your own life. Cardio fitness is a must. Having the stamina to run after a suspect or out-manuever someone in a chase is critical. Muscular strength is also desirable. If you are dealing with someone twice

your size, but out of shape, your extra strength may make all of the difference. Keeping in top physical shape by exercising and keeping a balanced diet is one of the simplest ways to stay on top of your personal game while in the field.

5. Mental Sharpness

The final piece of the puzzle is exercising mental skill. Knowing the training manual even after years on the job is helpful, but there are other ways to keep in top mental condition. Creating a mental checklist of what to look for and running through crisis rehearsals is a simple way to stay mentally focused and ready to handle any challenge that may arise.

The world of law enforcement is rapidly changing. Laws change, tools change, and even criminals change. With this evolution, officers must continue to change as well. While there is always a new technique to be tried and there are no "full proof" methods of safety, the elements of the "survival mindset" are solid tips to keep safety in mind.

■ If an officer takes responsibility for his/her own training, on and off the job, it allows for a professionally sound performance every time. ■

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Aimpoint T1 Micro



By Thomas J. Aveni, MSFP
THE POLICE POLICY STUDIES COUNCIL

Anyone following past installments of the “Surviving the NightShift™” series here in Answering the Call has probably recognized our concern about the frequency of deadly encounters under adverse light conditions. While equipment selection alone won’t solve many of the operational dilemmas facing law enforcement personnel, choosing the right equipment can certainly help to address some of the most pressing concerns. One such concern is the extreme degree to which officer gunfight hit ratios diminish under low light conditions. Some of our prior research has suggested that gunfight hit ratios decline by as much as 24-30% at night, and that so-called “night sights” haven’t delivered everything they had promised to.

In close proximity encounters, especially those under challenging light conditions, “threat focus” becomes an irresistible force. Train people, as we do, to visually acquire conventional sights to deliver accurate fire against an adversary, after-action debriefs

rarely suggest that officers are acquiring metallic sights in close range encounters. Since the vast majority of police encounters are close proximity scenarios, this has remained a problem seldom properly addressed.

In addressing concern about diminished (low light) hit ratios, we’ve seen a definite trend toward lasers (most notably on handguns) and electronic sights (long guns) in recent years. This trend is sustainable simply because it is tactically sound and financially justifiable. Any implement that can afford an officer almost instantaneous sight acquisition, under the most challenging light conditions, is well worth considering. Less understood is the added benefit of being able to maintain “threat-focus” at times when threat identification is an evolving concern. Since human vision can only maximize image clarity on one focal plane at a time (i.e., near or far, but not both concurrently), use of a sighting device that allows constant visual threat-focus is an operational capability that is long overdue.

The Aimpoint T1 Micro

Aimpoint, a company with a long-established reputation of mil-spec quality and product innovation, recently introduced the Micro family of electronic sights. The T1, H1 and R1 are all from the same family of micro sights by Aimpoint. However, this product review is focused upon the very versatile T1 Micro product, which is perhaps best suited for most law enforcement applications.

The T1 Micro is a small and very well-designed 4MOA red dot sight. Perhaps just as importantly, it’s also very light, weighing less than 4ozs. Making sustained usage easier, it utilizes the readily available, coin-size CR2032 battery that is easily found at hardware and drug stores. The battery life of the T1 is rated at 50,000 hours, which is why some users advocate never turning it off. If you were to opt to leave the T1 Micro “on” at all times, the battery could be expected to last through more than five years of continuous use. The obvious advantage of this capability is not having to worry about turning this device on or off, before

or after operational and/or training use. Of course, as with any other critical electronic device, having a readily available spare battery is advisable.

The Aimpoint T1 Micro can be used on rifles, shotguns, or handguns, and even on large machineguns like the M240 and M249. The T1 can be used on virtually anything with a Picatinny or Weaver rail.

The T1 has 12 brightness settings, which is impressive for a device this size. The T1 has the protective coatings on the lenses to protect night vision devices that might be used behind it. It's important to note that these coatings aren't on the H1 and R1 versions of the Aimpoint Micro. The T1 Micro also has a very tough non-glare flat black external finish.

The T1 factory mount is simple and has a very low profile. In fact, it is so low you can expect to get a desirable co-witness of the iron sights on some rifles (e.g., M1A and AK variants with an UltiMak optic rail).

The T1 offers substantive benefits when mounted on a rifle for close range target engagement. If you wish to mount the T1 on a flat top AR15/M4 rifle, for use as your primary sight, you'll probably want to use the taller LaRue mount that is now available directly from Aimpoint (LaRue part #LT660). The tall mount raises the optic high enough so that you can use it as a primary optic on a flat top AR rifle/carbine. If your AR15/M4 rifle configuration includes a top handguard rail, the T1 can be mounted there and still deliver rapid target acquisition. If using the Aimpoint T1 Micro with the tall LaRue mount, you'll still have the benefit of a partial (lower 1/3) co-witness capability.

One of the touted advantages of using a sighting system like the Aimpoint T1 is the afforded ability to shoot with both eyes open. That ability, in addition to the aforementioned capability of being able to maintain visual threat-focus, makes the T1 Micro a very worthwhile firearm accessory. If you wish to find more information about the Aimpoint Micro, or about



LEFT: The Micro with the standard, low-profile factory mount, won't align high enough for use with an AN/PVS-14, but it will provide an adequate co-witness with the front sight
RIGHT: Size comparison between the Aimpoint CompM1 sight and the Aimpoint T1 Micro

where to purchase one, visit the Aimpoint website at www.aimpoint.com.

Unique features of the Aimpoint Micro T-1:

- Ideal for rifles, carbines, shotguns, submachineguns and handguns
- Weight 3.7 oz. (105g) including mount
- 1X (non-magnifying) parallax free optic
- Compatible with all generations of Night Vision Devices (NVD)
- 6 night vision compatible settings and 7 daylight settings - one extra bright for use with laser protection glasses or in bright desert sunlight.
- Integral Picatinny-style base allows easy attachment to any rail.
- Patent pending mount is keyed to the sight body to absorb recoil.
- New ACET technology allows 50,000 hours (over 5 years) of constant operation from one battery
- 4 MOA dot
- Hard anodized non-reflective finish.
- Submersible to 80 feet (25 meters)
- Precision adjustments for windage and elevation. Top of protective caps

fits into holes on adjustment screws - no other tool required.

- Use as a stand alone sight or "piggybacked" on larger magnifying, thermal, or night vision optics.

Standard features for all Aimpoint® sights:

- Unlimited field of view
- Parallax-free and unlimited eye relief
- Unaffected by extreme weather conditions
- Rugged, durable construction
- No hazardous materials
- No laser emission that could be harmful to your eyes
- Mechanical switch for speed and reliability
- Increased aiming confidence

■ The T1 Micro is a small and very well-designed 4MOA red dot sight. ■

THE PARTING SHOT

Thank you for reading the latest edition of Answering the Call. It is our hope that the articles provided you with innovative ideas and vital information. We work with first responders and law enforcement across the country to gather the most current information to be offered in every issue. We appreciate the suggestions from those individuals who are on the front lines everyday. It is always a pleasure to hear from you, our readers. Many of your suggestions have been implemented to improve Answering the Call. As always your work is important to us and we look forward to the opportunity to hear from you. Case studies, articles, and ideas are often highlighted in the "Comments from the Field Section." Please submit your ideas in writing to Amy Shioji at Shioji@PerformanceWeb.org or by mail at: The Performance Institute, attn Amy Shioji
1515 N. Courthouse Rd. Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22201

We look forward to reading about your important work and how it can benefit your colleagues in the first responder and law enforcement communities.

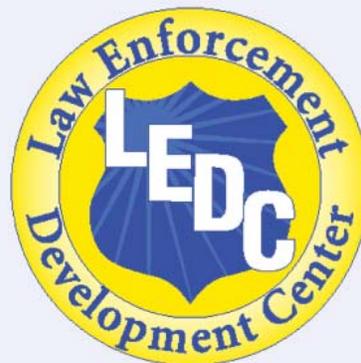
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Until next time!

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The 2008 Homeland Security Summit	Washington, DC	September 8-10, 2008
The 2008 National Law Enforcement and EMS Recruitment, Retention and Diversity Summit	San Diego, CA	October 6-8, 2008
Gang Violence Summit	Washington, DC	October 20-22, 2008
Prisoner Re-Entry Summit	Washington, DC	November 5-7, 2008
Deadly Force Management™ (PPSC)	Spokane, WA	November 18-20, 2008
The 2009 Advanced Law Enforcement Recruitment and Retention Conference	Washington, DC	January 12-14, 2009

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