A Primer on

CRIME DISPLACEMENT & DIFFUSION OF PREVENTION BENEFITS

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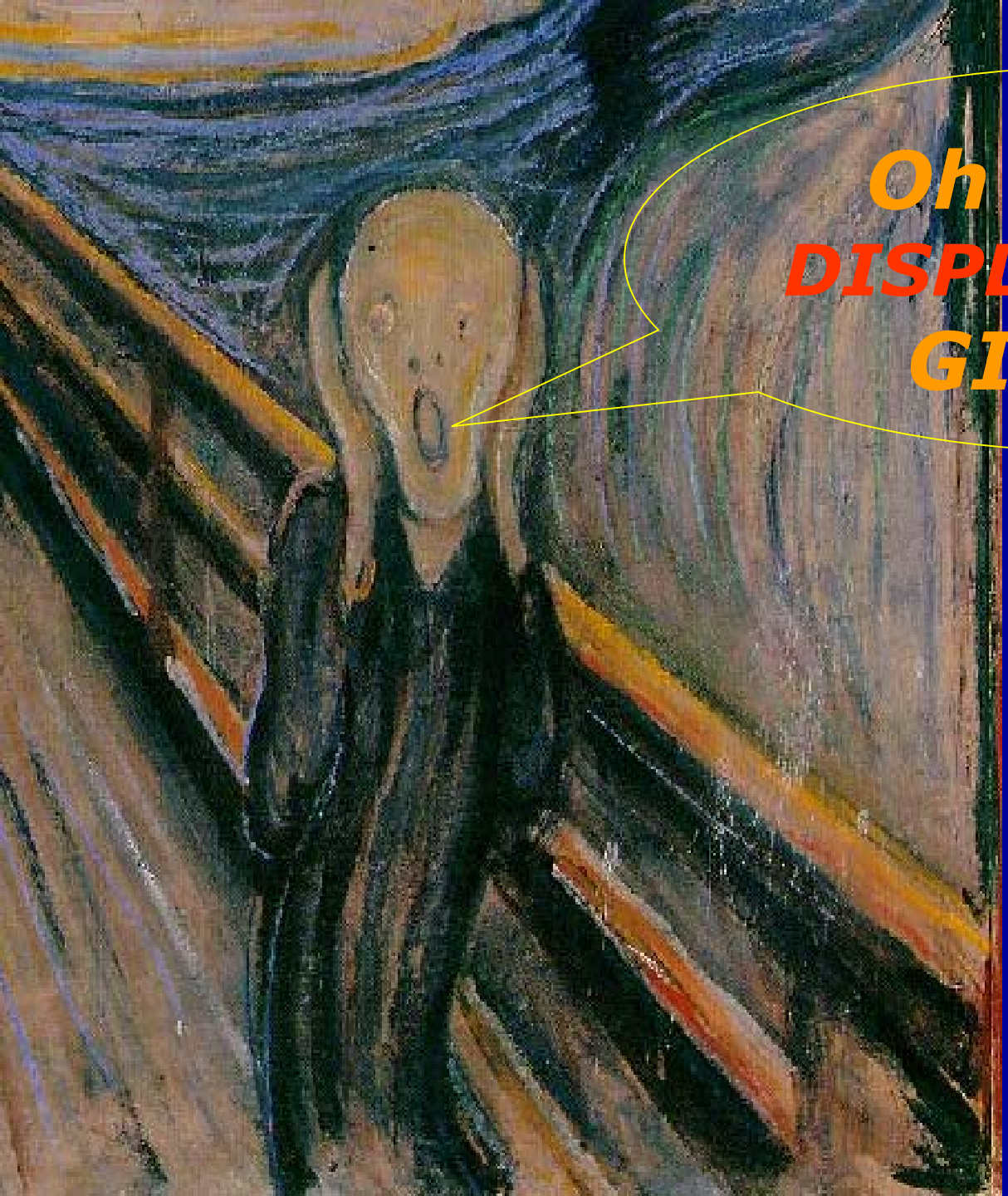


Oh *#@%!
DISPLACEMENT!
GIVE UP!

Overview

1. Questions
2. Myth
3. Theory
4. Evidence
5. Prediction
6. Evaluation

BASIC QUESTIONS

- If we intervene at a place, what keeps offenders from moving to other places?
- If offenders have propensity to offend, then won't they keep offending?
- Don't we see offenders adapting to enforcement?

ORIGINS OF DISPLACEMENT MYTHS

- Sociological & Psychological theories claim offenders are compelled to commit crimes
- Practitioners often have limited, if not pessimistic, expectations
- Liberal-conservative alliance
  - Only deep societal changes matter (liberal)
  - Only offender removal matters (conservative)

POPPING THE MYTHS

- **Evidence lacking** on utility of societal changes or offender removal!
- Myth **ignores choices** made by possible offenders
- Myth **ignores laziness, ignorance**, and over emphasizes compulsion
- Myth **ignores evidence about displacement** itself
- Myth **cannot account for diffusion of benefits**

MYTH CANNOT EXPLAIN…

- Why crime can decline.
- Short term fluctuations in crime.
- Stability of hot spots and cold spots.
- Why offenders do not displace in advance of interventions.
- Why offenders spend so much time not offending.

THEORY

- Displacement and Diffusion
- Types
- Choices and familiarity

THEORY – Adaptation

- **People make choices**
  - Ignorance and uncertainty
  - Limited energy
  - Malleable perceptions
- **Seek easy, familiar, and understood risk**
- **Avoid difficult, unfamiliar & uncertain**
- **Desistance – complete cessation**
- **Deterrence – partial cessation**
- **Diffusion of Crime Prevention Benefits – added curtailment**
- **Displacement – shifting**

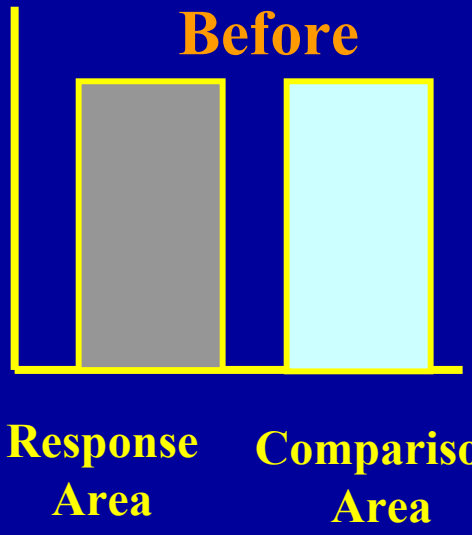
THEORY - forms

- Spatial – geographic shift
- Temporal – time shift
- Method – procedural change
- Target – target switch
- Crime Type – form switch
- Perpetrator (?) – offender replacement

THEORY - familiarity

- If offenders will displace,
- Then they will displace to
  - Places, Times, Methods, Targets, & Types
- That are most like the old ones
- Unfamiliar has greater uncertainty for
  - Risk, Reward, and Effort
- If non-crime is more familiar then little or no displacement

MEASURING DISPLACEMENT & DIFFUSION



EVIDENCE

- Multiple reviews of displacement literature in the 1990s –
- Never 100%
- Often no displacement detected
- If displacement, prevention still effective
- Evidence for Diffusion

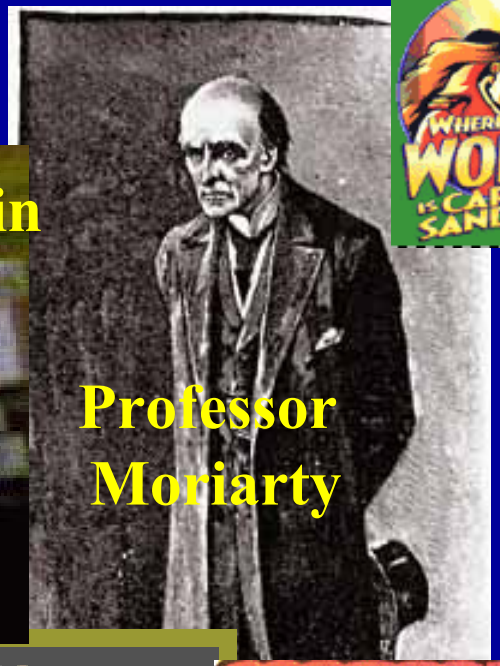
Some Criminals Always Displace, all the time.

Cruella de Vil

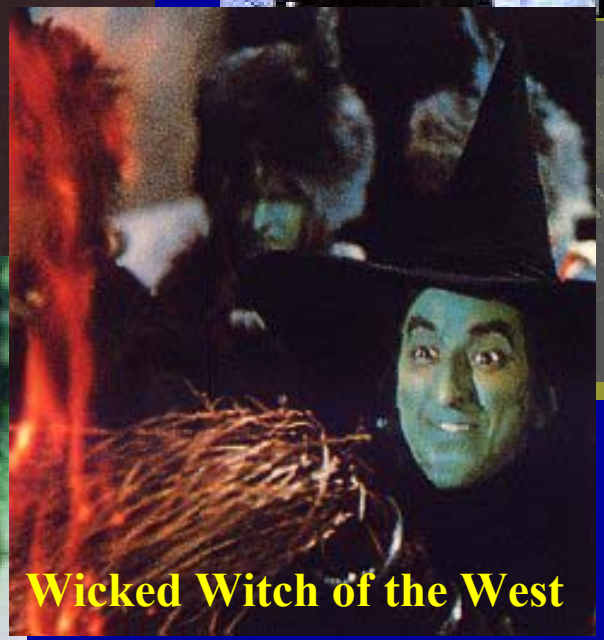
Freddy Kruger

Dracula

The Penguin



Professor Moriarty



Wicked Witch of the West

T-X

But most don't!

PREDICTION

- If displacement is to most familiar, then
- Knowledge of offenders could allow prediction.
- Displacement to existing crime locations.
- Most similar crime types, targets, and methods.
- Build this into planning the response.

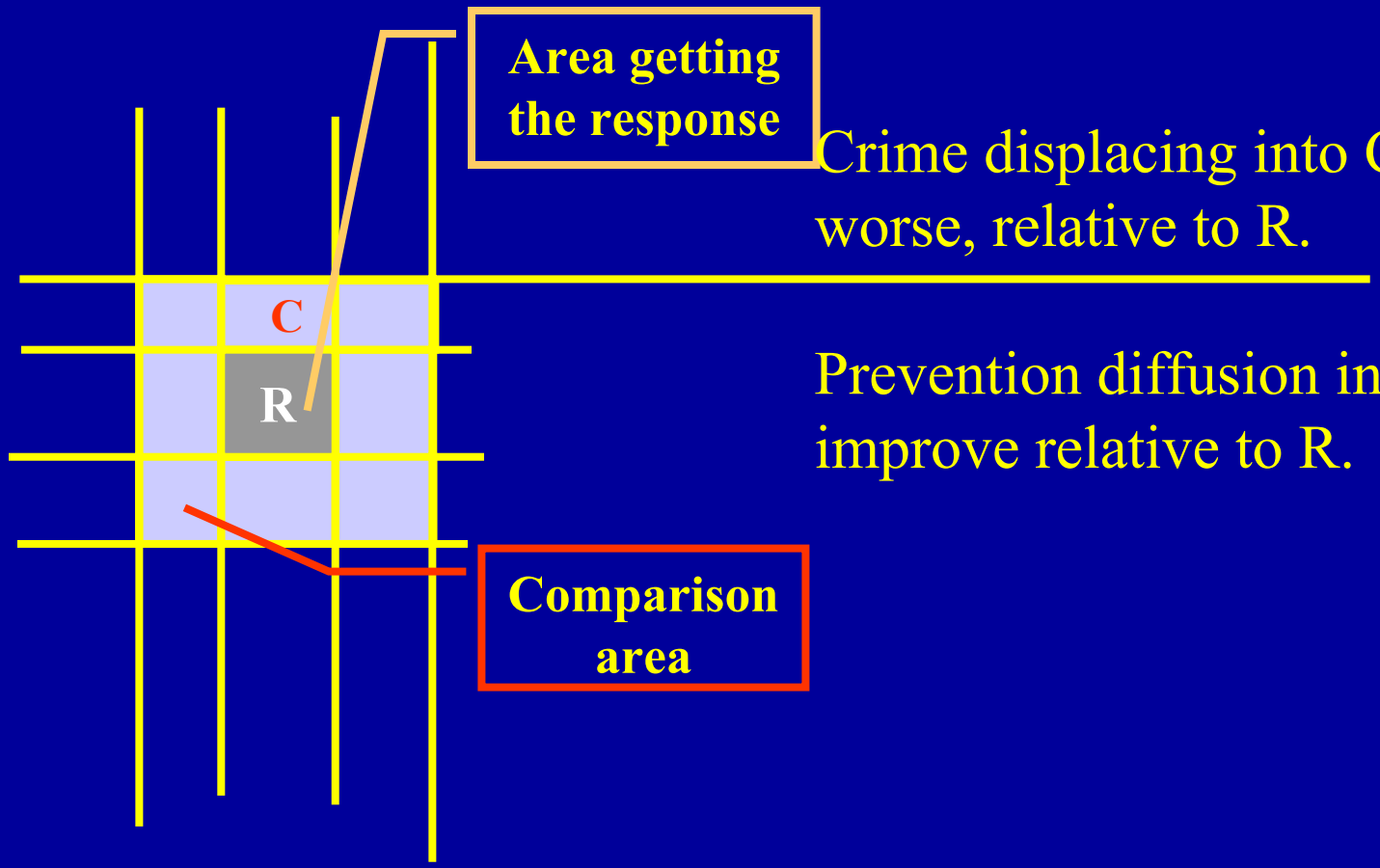
Some (reasonable?) Speculations

- Offenders will waiting for crackdowns to end rather than displace
- Method displacement more likely than other types
- Opportunity blocking may have more diffusion and less displacement than enforcement
- Diffusion can be increased by increasing uncertainty of response scope

EVALUATION

- Displacement or Diffusion can contaminate comparison area
- If displacement, response will look more effective than it really is
- If diffusion, response will look less effective than it really is

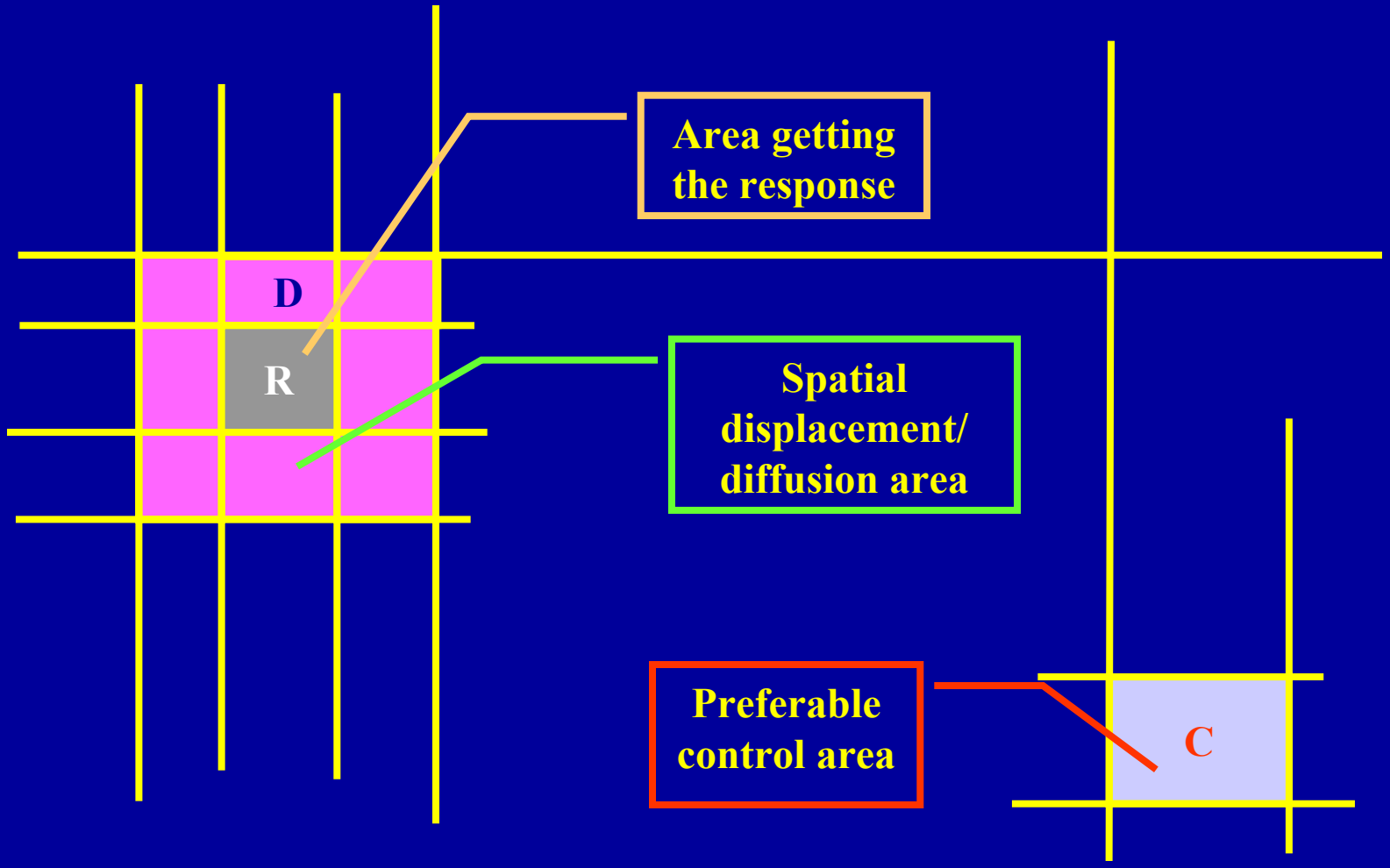
EXPLANATION FOR CONTAMINATION EFFECTS



Crime displacing into C makes C get worse, relative to R.

Prevention diffusion into C makes C improve relative to R.

PREVENTING CONTAMINATION



CONCLUSIONS

- **The inevitability of displacement is a myth**
- **Diffusion of benefits possible**
- **Can to plan for and prevent some displacement**
- **Need to account for displacement & diffusion in evaluations**


Oh Great
The End