

**PHOENIX POLICE DEPARTMENT  
MARYVALE PRECINCT  
WOODMAR REVITALIZATION PROJECT**

Abstract

In September 1997, Officer Scott Masino was assigned as a liaison to the Woodmar townhouse complex. This complex is located within the Maryvale Precinct in the City of Phoenix. Drag sales, gang activity, and declining property values have long plagued the complex. Conventional law enforcement had failed to be a long-term solution for the problems identified in the complex.

Officer Masino began by making contact with the board of directors for the Woodmar complex. Although a large majority of the units in the complex are not owner occupied, the board of directors identified the same problems that had been suspected by the officers working in the area. Officer Masino initially attempted to bring about some change in the criminal activity within the complex utilizing concepts of CPTED. All improvements were immediately destroyed by the criminal element operating within the complex. Enforcement programs were initiated within the complex. Although there was an initial effect on crime in the complex, the criminal report and arrest levels returned to normal within a month. Gang members were frequenting the common areas in the complex and drug sales thrived.

In September 1998, Officer Masino recognized that the problems of the complex were not decreasing. In addition to his regular meetings with the board of directors, Officer Masino began spending four hours of each shift walking in the complex and talking with the residents. In doing this, he realized that the problems were being caused by a small number of people, many of who did not live in the complex. Officer Masino enlisted the assistance of narcotics and gang enforcement detectives in an attempt to target these individuals. Over the next few months, drug buys were made from subjects loitering in the common areas and identifications were made utilizing information gained by Officer Masino during his walks through the complex. The names of the subjects were checked through the street gang files and an additional criminal syndicate investigation was initiated. Beginning February 5, 1999, a total of nine

search warrants were served with drug and criminal syndicate charges filed against eighteen subjects. In addition, restraining orders were served on non-residents, ordering them to keep out of the common areas in the complex.

To date, criminal activity has dropped off in the complex dramatically, and stayed at low levels. Increased liaison has been made with the board of directors and a police/community office has been established in an apartment overlooking the alley where the drug sales took place. Officer Masino continues to monitor activity in the complex, but it appears that his problem solving skills have driven the drug sales from the complex and returned the expectations of a safe environment to the residents of the complex.

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Description

The Woodmar Townhouse complex is a 160 unit townhouse complex located in the middle of the Maryvale Precinct on the west side of Phoenix. The complex was built originally in the late 1970's, the original sales price for townhouses in the complex was around \$40,000. During the time since the complex was built, the quality of life in the complex has steadily deteriorated to the point that the current sales price in the complex is around \$ 12,000. Open-air drug sales were common and most units in the complex were rentals. In fact, there is currently only a 5% owner occupied rate. Calls for service in the complex were high, drawing manpower from other areas of the precinct to react to the crime inside the complex. Gang activity in the complex was also apparent. A homeowner's board of directors manages the complex.

As the small area, which encompassed the complex, was affecting the quality of life in the surrounding neighborhoods, officers from the precinct were called upon to develop plans to counter the crime trends in the complex. Precinct officers quickly identified drug sales and gang activity as the problems plaguing the townhouses. Several enforcement programs were implemented to combat the drug sales, only to have the drug activity return within days of the program's conclusion. As the subjects involved in the drug sales were involved in gang activity, utilization of undercover officers to develop drug sales cases was difficult.

After the failure of strict enforcement programs, Officer Scott Masino was assigned to develop a program utilizing available resources to impact the problem. Officer Masino utilized the SARA model of problem solving to guide him with his program. In the scanning phase, most of the problems had already been identified and were well known. Instead of taking this at face value, Officer Masino began working with the board of directors of the complex to get their input as to the problems the complex was facing. From

this, Officer Masino determined that the homeowners also held the original suppositions made by the officers regarding the criminal problem.

Officer Masino began his analysis of the problem. He attended numerous meetings of the homeowner's association and worked with the homeowners to improve the environmental design of the common areas in the complex. Security lights were installed and driveways were blocked with gates. In each instance, the drug dealers who frequented the complex destroyed the improvements. Officer Masino decided that he needed to meet and discuss problems with the residents in the complex. In order to accomplish this, Officer Masino spent a minimum of half of each shift walking in the complex. This allowed him to interact with both the homeowners and the residents in the complex. At first, there was an obvious distrust of Officer Masino by the residents. Not only was the normal distrust of Police present, but the residents in the complex were predominantly African-American and Officer Masino is White. Officer Masino decided that, in order to gain the confidence of all people frequenting the complex, he would employ a very tolerant attitude with minor breaches of the law. This allowed him to speak freely with the residents and criminal element alike, as they did not perceive him as a threat. During the same time period, beat officers and off-duty officers employed by the homeowner's association to patrol during high activity times were still performing enforcement action.

By the end of approximately two months, Officer Masino was able to identify many of the people frequenting the complex for criminal purposes. He determined that about fifteen to twenty subjects, most of whom did not live in the complex, were responsible for a majority of the criminal violations. A good deal of his identifications came from learning street names of the subjects and searching computer files to complete the identifications. The most glaring violations Officer Masino became aware of were the drug deals occurring predominately in the common areas of the complex.

During the response phase, Officer Masino contacted Detectives Derek Elmore and Darius Potts from the department's Drug Enforcement Bureau to enlist their assistance in dealing with the drug sales problem. Also included in this meeting were two detectives, David Mendoza and Terje Boe, from the Street Gang

Unit. Detectives Elmore and Potts committed to attempting to make hand to hand buys from the dealers in the complex, with Officer Masino providing support and immediate identification of the suspects.

Detectives Mendoza and Boe recognized some of the subjects identified by Officer Masino as members of a criminal street gang and initiated an investigation into the dealing with regard to the involvement of the gang members. For the next two months, detectives purchased narcotics from eighteen different subjects. The subjects were identified with the assistance of Officer Masino and the identities were forwarded to Gang Unit detectives for their investigation into the criminal syndicate. All but two of those subjects were identified as belonging to the same criminal street gang.

The information gathered in the investigation was forwarded to the Maricopa County Attorney's Office and all eighteen subjects were indicted by a grand jury. Two narcotics search warrants were issued and six search warrants were issued to obtain indicia of gang membership in the criminal syndicate investigation.

On February 5, 1999, officers from several departmental units gathered to serve the search warrants and attempt to locate the subjects charged with sale of narcotics. Officers from the Special Assignments Unit (SWAT) made entry into three units within the complex on search warrants, with officers and detectives from the Gang Unit, Maryvale Precinct Neighborhood Patrol Unit (bicycle squad) and Maryvale Precinct Directed Enforcement Unit providing support. Maricopa County Sheriffs Officer detention officers stood by to assist with bookings and the City of Phoenix Neighborhood Maintenance and Zoning Enforcement Department assisted with unit inspections after the units were secured. Four subjects wanted for sale of narcotics were arrested during service of the warrants, as well as six additional subjects wanted on various outstanding warrants. Subjects arrested for sale of narcotics not residents of the complex were served with restraining orders forbidding them from loitering on common areas within the complex.

Immediately after the service of the warrants, detectives from the Drug Enforcement Bureau conducted a demand reduction operation at the location. During this operation, detectives posed as drug dealers and

arrests were made on subjects attempting to purchase narcotics within the complex. This operation netted nineteen additional arrests.

As of the date of this writing, twelve of the eighteen narcotics sales suspects have been arrested.

The results of the program were immediate. The open-air drug sales that were prevalent among the gang members frequenting the complex ceased to occur. The large groups of gang members no longer stand in the alleyways of the complex. Most importantly, criminal reports taken in the complex, as well as total arrests in the complex decreased drastically. During the twelve months prior to the program, there was an average of twenty-five criminal reports taken and sixteen arrests made within the complex per month, however, the three months since the program, there have been an average of eight criminal reports written and three arrests made in the complex.

There is still much work to be accomplished within the complex to improve the quality of life for the residents. The next step is to work with the owners of the units within the complex to improve the appearance of the common areas and interiors in the complex. This will be necessary in order to increase the value of the units. Exterior lighting has been improved and access to the surrounding alleys has been limited to control the flow of traffic. Contact with the board of directors has been maintained and the board still employs off-duty officers to provide security in the complex during peak activity times. In addition, the apartment complex bordering the townhouse complex has donated an apartment for use as an office by the precinct. This office has been remodeled and marked as a police department community office and will be utilized as an office for the community action officers in the area as well as a safe location for beat officers to write their reports. This apartment overlooks the alley where the majority of the drug dealing was accomplished.

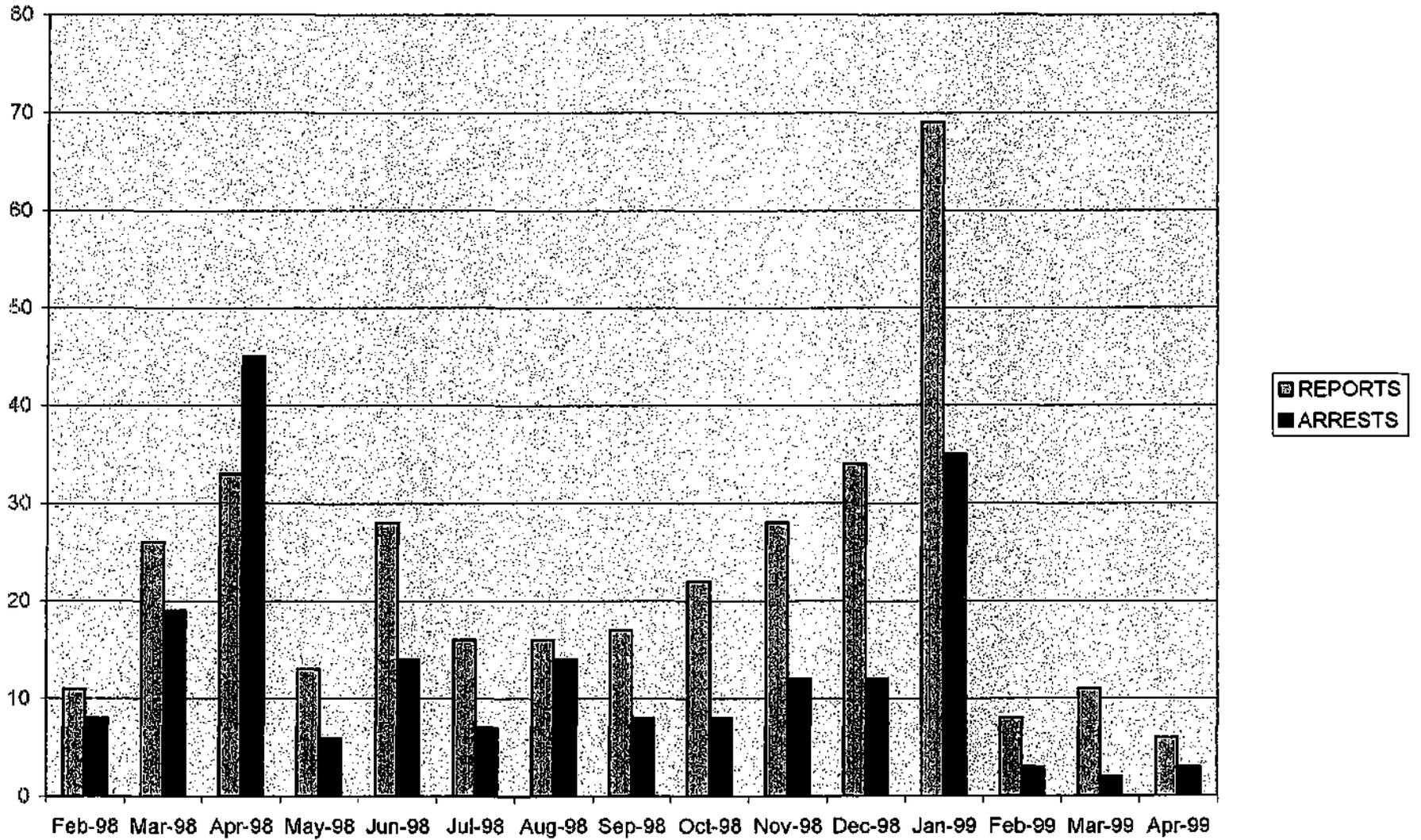
Agency and Officer Information

Officer Scott Masino is assigned as a Community Action Officer with the Maryvale Precinct of the Phoenix Police Department. His duties include identifying long term solutions to community problems. He has been assigned in a community policing capacity for several years, utilizing the SARA model of problem solving on a regular basis. In fact, the Phoenix Police Department provides training in problem solving using this model to all of its community policing staff. Officer Masino was given no additional incentives to work on this problem. He often changed his scheduled work hours in order to meet with the various contacts in the program. He utilized his own time and that of the detectives to the fullest in this endeavor. With the exception of the final search warrant service, no overtime was expended in the achievement of the goals of the program. During the service of the search warrants, court award funds (RICO seizures) were utilized for a small number of the personnel involved.

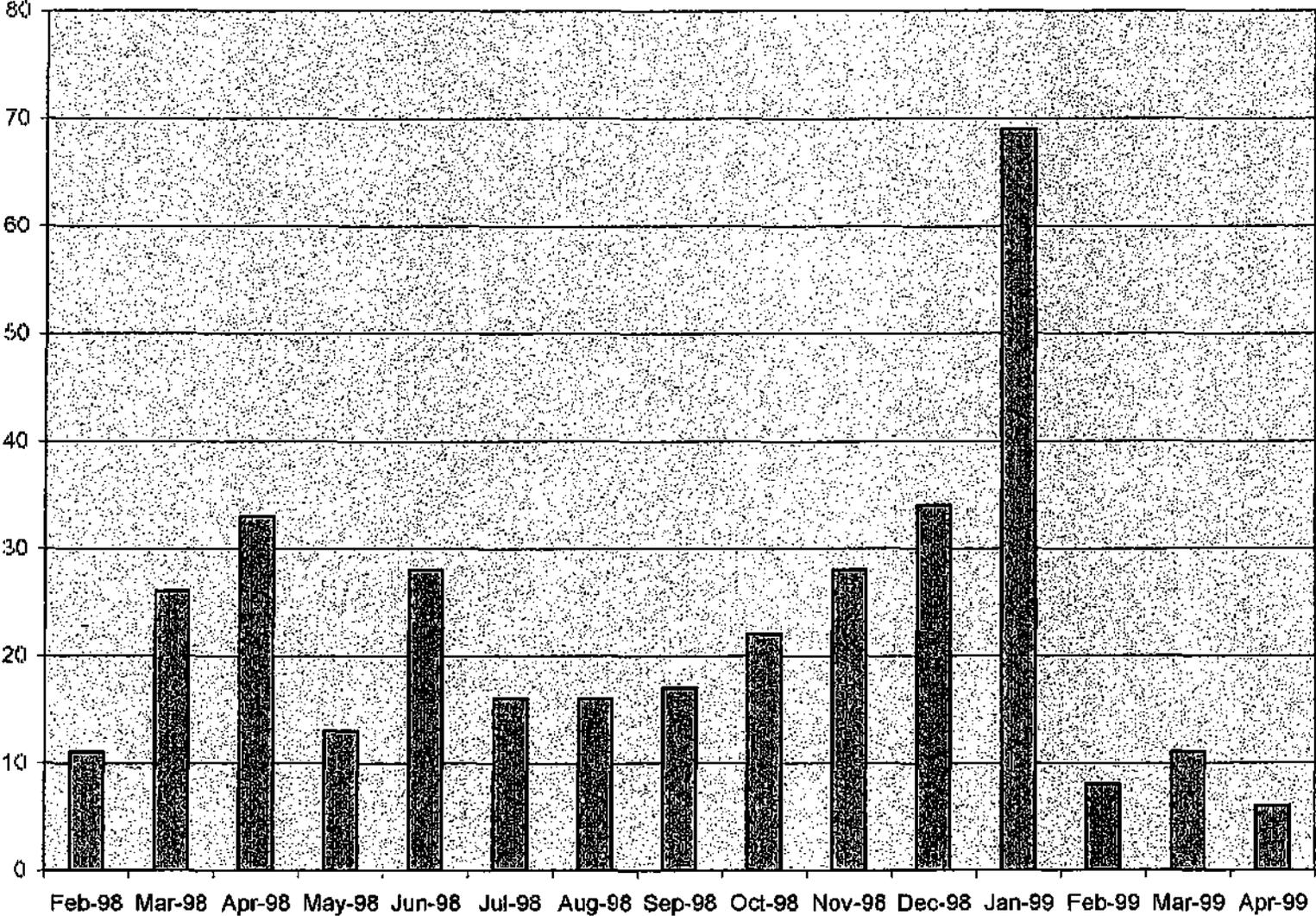
Contact Person:

Lieutenant David M. Kelly  
620 W. Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85003  
(602)495-6815  
(602) 5344530 Fax

# WOODMAR STATISTICAL DATA



REPORTS



# ARRESTS

