COPS
COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Problem-Oriented Guides for Police
Problem-Solving Tools Series
No. 3

Using Offender Interviews to Inform Police Problem Solving

by Scott H. Decker

Center for Problem-Oriented Policing

Got a Problem? We've got answers!

Log on to the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing website at www.popcenter.org for a wealth of information to help you deal more effectively with crime and disorder in your community, including:

- Web-enhanced versions of all currently available Guides
- Interactive training exercises
- Online access to research and police practices
- Online problem analysis module

Designed for police and those who work with them to address community problems, www.popcenter.org is a great resource in problem-oriented policing.

www.PopCenter.org

Problem-Oriented Guides for Police
Problem-Solving Tools Series
Guide No. 3

Using Offender Interviews to Inform Police Problem Solving

Scott H. Decker

April 2005

About the Problem-Solving Tools Series

The problem-solving tool guides are one of three series of the *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police*. The other two are the problem-specific guides and response guides.

The *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police* summarize knowledge about how police can reduce the harm caused by specific crime and disorder problems. They are guides to preventing problems and improving overall incident response, not to investigating offenses or handling specific incidents. The guides are written for police–of whatever rank or assignment–who must address the specific problems the guides cover. The guides will be most useful to officers who

- understand basic problem-oriented policing principles and methods,
- can look at problems in depth,
- are willing to consider new ways of doing police business,
- understand the value and the limits of research knowledge, and
- are willing to work with other community agencies to find effective solutions to problems.

The tool guides summarize knowledge about information gathering and analysis techniques that might assist police at any of the four main stages of a problem-oriented project: scanning, analysis, response and assessment. Each guide

- describes the kind of information produced by each technique,
- discusses how this information could be useful in problem solving,
- gives examples of the previous use of the technique,
- provides practical guidance about adapting the technique to the specific problem being addressed,
- provides templates of data collection instruments (where this is appropriate),
- suggests how to analyze data gathered by using the technique,
- shows how to interpret the information correctly and present it effectively,
- warns about any ethical problems in using the technique,
- discusses the limitations of the technique when used by police in a problem-oriented project,
- provides reference sources of more detailed information about the technique, and
- indicates when expert help in using the technique should be sought.

Extensive technical and scientific literatures cover each of the techniques dealt with in the tool guides. The tool guides aim to provide only enough information about each technique to enable police and others to use it in the course of problem-solving. In most cases, the information gathered in the course of a problem-solving project does not have to withstand rigorous scientific scrutiny. Where greater confidence is needed in the data, police might need expert help in using the technique. This can often be found in local university departments of sociology, psychology and criminal justice.

The information needs for any single project can be quite diverse and it will often be necessary to employ a variety of data collection techniques in meeting these needs. Similarly, a variety of different analytic techniques may be needed to analyze the data. Some of the techniques may be unfamiliar to police and crime analysts, but the effort invested in learning to use them can make all the difference to the success of a project.

For more information about problem-oriented policing, visit the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing online at www.popcenter.org or via the COPS website at www.cops.usdoj.gov. This website offers free online access to:

- the *Problem-Specific Guides* series,
- the companion *Response Guides* and *Problem-Solving Tools* series,
- instructional information about problem-oriented policing and related topics,
- an interactive training exercise,
- an online access to important police research and practices, and
- an online problem analysis module.

Acknowledgments

The *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police* series is very much a collaborative effort. While each guide has a primary author, other project team members, COPS Office staff and anonymous peer reviewers contributed to each guide by proposing text, recommending research and offering suggestions on matters of format and style.

The principal project team developing the guide series comprised Herman Goldstein, professor emeritus, University of Wisconsin Law School; Ronald V. Clarke, professor of criminal justice, Rutgers University; John E. Eck, professor of criminal justice, University of Cincinnati; Michael S. Scott, clinical assistant professor, University of Wisconsin Law School; Rana Sampson, police consultant, San Diego; and Deborah Lamm Weisel, director of police research, North Carolina State University.

Nancy Leach and Cynthia Pappas oversaw the project for the COPS Office. Rebecca Kanable edited the guide. Research for the guides was conducted at the Criminal Justice Library at Rutgers University under the direction of Phyllis Schultze.

The project team also wishes to acknowledge the members of the San Diego, National City and Savannah police departments who provided feedback on the guides' format and style in the early stages of the project, as well as the line police officers, police executives and researchers who peer reviewed each guide.

Contents

Introduction

There is a long tradition in criminal justice research of interviewing active offenders, but very little of this research has focused specifically on police problem solving. This is unfortunate because active offenders provide substantial amounts of information about each of the elements of the crime triangle: victims, offenders, and places. Such information should prove useful for strategic problem-solving interventions, because it yields information about crime patterns in general that may not be obvious when examining one case at a time. The information from such interviews may enhance existing problem-solving projects or generate new ones. The information can also improve officer safety.

The distinction between offenses and offenders is important because it highlights the two different kinds of knowledge–strategic and tactical–that can be gleaned from interviews of active offenders. You can learn about one important leg of the crime triangle by studying *offenders*. Information from such interviews provides important tactical information for responding to one specific individual or specific patterns of behavior. Such information is useful in responding to that individual and others who may behave like this person. Studying *offenses* provides information of strategic value for responding to patterns and trends in general. This guide attempts to bridge the gap between police and researchers by underscoring the common purposes both groups have, and pointing out the problem-solving value to be gained from interviewing active offenders.

Information from active offenders is particularly important because in some cases, it comes from offenders who have not been caught. In other cases, information

from active offenders can inform you about offenses other than those for which the offender was arrested. Robbery provides an excellent example. Interviews with active armed robbers revealed that these offenders experienced a large number of victimizations that they did not report to the police.[1] Often these victimizations were retaliation for earlier robberies and sometimes produced an escalating series of crime sprees. However, these victimizations have implications for the broader community because these offenders often "take matters into their own hands" and retaliate for their victimization, harming innocent members of the community, making the community less safe in general, and greatly increasing fear of crime. This is a key element of the SARA model as it more fully elaborates on the nature of crime problems and their genesis.

> Active offenders can provide a wealth of information about crimes, motives, and techniques. This information extends well beyond the crimes for which offenders are arrested or under investigation. Such information can be valuable to the police in problem-solving approaches to crime.

This guide falls into two parts. The first part provides a summary of the most important findings from offender interviews, while the second provides concrete recommendations on how to set about conducting offender interviews for problem-oriented policing projects.

What Offender Interviews Have Found

Much is known from offender interviews conducted in prison. There is some evidence that active offenders have different patterns of offending and different perceptions; they may be more forthright and provide more valid information than offenders in prison or jail.[2] There is a large and growing body of evidence regarding how active offenders perceive their tactics, motives, targets, and offense patterns.

Research with active offenders has focused on five categories of offenders:

1. drug dealers and users,
2. residential burglars,
3. armed robbers,
4. gang members, and
5. gun offenders.

This guide highlights key findings from these interviews that apply directly to problem-solving. The central finding from this work is that the context of offenders' lives–their lifestyles–are important to understand their offending. Interviews with active offenders consistently underscore the role that their values, relationships, and activities play in their involvement in crime. These key findings provide a foundation for implementing strategies to interview active offenders.

Drug Dealers and Users

There is a large body of research with drug users and drug dealers. One study focused on serious heroin drug users in New York City.[3] The researchers interviewed and observed heroin users in flophouses, street corners, cars, and treatment centers in an effort to put the users and their lifestyles into a broader context. They examined the reasons for drug use, the search for drugs, and the experience of being "high." Many of the heavy heroin users held jobs, kept relationships together, and met a variety of social obligations. This broader context of lifestyles and values can yield clues about behavior and associations that can help you better understand how offenders structure their lives and mix offending with more conventional lifestyles. Such understanding can lead to more effective policing, through Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) as well as problem-solving.

Two examples illustrate this important point:

• First, even the most serious drug users have significant involvement in other activities, many of which are law-abiding. Interviews with heavy (powder) cocaine users in San Francisco found significant involvement in legitimate activities including careers, families, and neighborhood activities.[4] Even among the most serious of drug users, patterns of "normal" life could be found. You can use information such as this to look beyond apparently law-abiding lifestyles, as well as to leverage relationships and reduce drug use by paying more attention to middle and upper-middle class drug use. Most "down and out" drug users retain some

commitments to family, neighborhood, or employment. These are important links for problem-solving.

• Even serious drug users go through periods of abstinence. Drug markets that have dried up, or become too expensive or too uncertain because of violence or police presence often impose these periods of abstinence externally. Nearly as often, however, serious drug users impose abstinence upon themselves, refraining from drug use because they know that they have "hit bottom" or are close to the edge.[5] These periods of abstinence–regardless of the source–are opportunities for you to link offenders to services, as well as to use additional problem-solving techniques such as the involvement of probation and parole, drug treatment, and community services. These findings also point to the positive results from drug crackdowns that produce temporary reductions in drug availability. During these periods you–and others–must be willing to link offenders to services.

A researcher working in Harlem interviewed hundreds of Puerto Rican drug dealers.[6] He identified extreme poverty, rapid social change, and political and cultural isolation as key forces that lead to drug selling. Many of the drug users and sellers he interviewed shared values consistent with the American Dream: they were highly motivated, ambitious, and enterprising. Officers committed to problem-solving can find ways to involve non-governmental organizations (including faith-based groups), families, and other groups such as drug treatment organizations, job placement services, and community resources to address these issues. These interviews underscore the extremely high levels of victimization experienced by individuals involved in drug dealing, and

how that victimization further isolates them from law-abiding roles and relationships. This is the sort of information that you can employ to good advantage.

An important question to emerge from this research is how can police officers engage community services or involve other agencies in the effort to solve these community problems. Here are four suggestions:

- **Work through existing coalitions and task forces.** Weed and Seed,[7] the Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JAIBG) program,[8] and Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN)[9] are three initiatives that exist in most communities. These initiatives provide both resources and contacts that police committed to problem-solving can employ. Other coalitions may include faith-based and non-governmental organizations currently partnering with police.

- **Engage city, state, and county offices.** The use of additional public services (trash, nuisance abatement, code enforcement, social services, child welfare, EMS, fire protection) is an obvious choice here.

- **Involve the family.** Decades of research have documented that the family is the single most important institution in preventing and responding to crime. The extent to which you engage families in problem-solving is a measure of the extent to which you have engaged their most important allies in solving problems.

• **Involve the juvenile court.** It is well understood that the conditions that create involvement in crime among one family member are likely to be replicated among other family members. By engaging in problem-solving activities with older male siblings in families you may find that such activities pay dividends with younger brothers and sisters.

Interviews with active offenders have been supported by the U.S. Justice Department since the mid-1980s. The National Institute of Justice implemented the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring system[10] in the jails and pre-trial detention facilities of the largest cities in America. In this program, recent arrestees provided urine samples for drug analysis, and were interviewed and asked about their drug use, drug treatment, and participation in gangs and drug sales. These data reveal a variety of important findings. First, the interviews offer insights into the diversity of offenses and risky behaviors–including unprotected sex and shared needle use–that arrestees engage in. Second, arrestees are generally truthful about their drug use, particularly when self-reports are compared to urinalysis. Third, these interviews dispel the myths that offenders use a single drug and that drug abuse is confined to a specific category of offenders. In many cities, more than half of all arrestees–regardless of charge–test positive for drugs. Finally, these data reveal that arrestees have a large volume of contacts with the criminal justice system, few of which result in more formal processing. These are lost opportunities for problem-solving and intervention.

Residential Burglars

Research with active residential burglars may offer the most provocative lessons for policing. Three key projects, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, were conducted in Odessa (Texas),[11] Delaware,[12] and St. Louis[13] using active residential burglars for their source of information. These studies document that residential burglars have a variety of motivations, most of which are linked to their desires to engage in a lifestyle focused on partying and keeping up appearances. These offenders maintain a focus on short-term goals and engage in behaviors that entrap them in more offending.

Residential burglars are both victims and offenders. Their victimization is related to their involvement in offending and is more generally related to their lifestyle. Lifestyle issues have proven important in a number of different cultural and comparative contexts.[14] As a consequence, these victimizations should be of interest to you. Few offenders report their victimization to the police. Fear of reprisal, fear of detection, or fear of not being taken seriously all lead to under-reporting of victimization among active offenders. Such under-reporting is often treated with a "wink and a nod" by police, because offenders "got what they deserved." Yet in the case of residential burglars (and other offenders), these victimizations create the motives for new offenses. Some of these crimes are the obvious result of their own offending, as their victims (many of whom are offenders themselves) seek redress outside the legal system to right the wrong that was done to them. By engaging in such behavior, offenders circumvent the criminal justice system and invoke punishment themselves.

Why should anyone care about the victimization of one offender by another offender? One answer to this question would be that such victimizations and the mayhem they create add considerably to community disorder. These studies underscore the diversity of offending that burglars engage in. While each of these studies was focused on burglars, they all found that their subjects were not strictly burglars. These "burglars" also engaged in robbery, drug sales, car theft, and a variety of other offenses. If you see arrested burglars strictly as burglars, you may miss key features of the broader context of offending and lifestyle that may lead you to find the burglar in a drug investigation or a gun case.

Armed Robbers

The findings from research with armed robbers underscore the versatility of offending patterns among robbers, the high levels of victimization among armed robbers, and the role of lifestyle pressures among this group of offenders.

In one study conducted in St. Louis, individuals who robbed drug dealers were interviewed.[15] It was found that while robbery is the "purest" of offenses with regard to motive and intent (cash), robbers engage in a variety of other offenses. The robbers interviewed engaged in a number of activities–legal and otherwise–that enmeshed them in a lifestyle that they have difficulty leaving. These individuals also had very high rates of victimization, a pattern similar to that for residential burglars and drug sellers.

In another St. Louis study, it was found that armed robbers also engaged in a number of other offenses including burglary, drug sales, auto theft, and assault.[16] A pattern was observed whereby offenders would engage in a minor form of offending, be victimized, and retaliate by engaging in a robbery. This pattern increased their level of offending, both in terms of frequency and seriousness.

Few of these offenders chose to report their victimization to the authorities. The failure to report victimizations clearly was linked to involvement in offending. The conclusions indicate that encouraging offenders to report their victimization is a key to preventing future offending. Lacking legal recourse, many offenders take the law into their own hands, circumventing legal means, and thereby increasing the odds of engaging in additional crime.

Gang Members

Interviews with active gang members have been conducted since the start of the 20th century. Federal funding resulted in a number of studies looking at the impact of policies, the motivations for joining and offending, and potential solutions to the gang problem. These interviews provide a picture of gang members that reinforces that of the drug users and dealers, burglars, and armed robbers.

Gang members engage in a variety of offenses-a phenomenon that researchers call "cafeteria-style offending."[17] Cafeteria-style offenders pick and choose from the wide variety of offending options. One week, these offenders may be burglars, the next day they may be robbers, and that afternoon they may steal a car. It is a

mistake to regard such individuals as specialists, yet such perceptions are understandable as you typically see these individuals only with regard to the offense for which they were arrested. It is also clear from this research that gang members experience a large volume of victimizations. Gang membership is also transient. Most youth who join a gang tend to do so for relatively short periods of time. During the periods of time that they are active gang members, their levels of offending and victimization were elevated compared to both their time before joining the gang as well as after leaving the gang.

One of the notable features of gang membership is the level of bragging about gang membership. As stories are told over and over again, they attain "mythic" status. Sorting through the talk and bluster about gang activity becomes an important issue because so much of it is simply that, talk. One way to do this is to bring multiple sources of data to bear on the same issue. In this regard, you would bring as much information to bear on an investigation involving a gang member as possible. This would include school records, parental interviews, juvenile court information, field interrogation cards, division of youth service records, and interviews with family and associates.

Gun Offenders

There have been a number of interviews with offenders involved in firearm use. These studies reinforce what was learned in earlier studies including the versatility of offenders, high levels of victimization, and easy access to firearms.

In one study, nearly 1,900 prisoners were interviewed in 10 state prison facilities.[18] Fifty percent of the prisoners were classified as gun criminals. Three-quarters of the people interviewed owned at least one gun, and of that group, three-quarters owned handguns. Not surprisingly, a majority of the prisoners had used a gun in the commission of a crime. Most inmates reported that they owned a gun for protection, owned small, inexpensive weapons, and had a preference for large caliber, high quality firearms. It is important to note that informal and illegal means dominated the methods by which inmates obtained guns, and most reported that a gun could be obtained within a matter of hours. This picture of the illegal firearms market is consistent with a view of the street gun scene as very informal, word-of-mouth, and easy to access for offenders. It also reinforces the view that offenders are not easily deterred by the chance of arrest and penalties for illegal possession of firearms.

Interviews of incarcerated male juveniles and inner city males showed that gun possession was common among these groups.[19] Not surprisingly, involvement in drug sales had important effects in increasing gun carrying. Self-reports of gun carrying were also high among those not involved in drug sales. Taken together, these reports suggest the importance of monitoring gun acquisition by those at risk for involvement in gun violence either as victims or offenders, even at a young age. Other research supports the conclusion that there are strong relationships between being involved in drug sales, gang membership, and gun ownership and use.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (now the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives) initiated a 17-city program several years ago. This program was designed to comprehensively trace all crime guns, and

provide the results of those traces to local law enforcement officials for better prosecution and enforcement activities. A major part of the initiative was to conduct interviews with all offenders illegally possessing a firearm, as well as their associates. This information was to serve both as background for future investigations, as well as to form a backbone of knowledge for police problem-solving efforts. Interviews revealed that females made many straw purchases for felons who could not purchase a gun, and ATF now includes multiple purchases of firearms made by females as a category of concern.

The Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI) was a problem-solving initiative funded by the National Institute of Justice in 10 cities to address a local problem of their choice. Based loosely on the approach in the Boston Gun Project, these cities formed task forces, identified gun problems, and formulated strategies to address problems. The majority of cities did choose gun crime as their problem. In Detroit, simple gun possession became a focus for the intervention as problem-solving research demonstrated that individuals charged with carrying a concealed weapon or unlawful use (typically charged as city ordinance violations) often were arrested in more serious assaults as well. Rochester, N.Y. focus group interviews documented the easy availability of guns coupled with the knowledge that gun prosecutions were increasing. Despite this, few offenders reported a willingness to give up their guns, owing to the danger on the streets. Detention interviews conducted in Indianapolis demonstrated that arrestees were familiar with several of the initiatives that had been put in place and were in some ways amenable to the messages about reducing gun carrying. St. Louis detention interviews documented a high

level of knowledge regarding gun penalties, particularly the higher penalties imposed by federal prosecution compared to the state of Missouri. When asked whether they feared punishment from the criminal justice system or being caught without their guns on the street, arrestees were evenly split. This finding indicates the need to increase the credibility of the threat of arrest, prosecution, and imprisonment among offenders.

Summary of Findings From Interviewing Offenders

What are the key findings learned from this approach?

- **Offenders are versatile.** There are few specialists out there. Most offenders employ a cafeteria-style approach to offending, that is, offenders engage in a variety of offenses and are opportunists. This is particularly important for narcotics investigations where interviews with active offenders have demonstrated that drug offenders are involved in multiple offenses. Indeed, there may be no group that is more versatile than drug-involved offenders.

- **Offending has peaks and valleys.** Even the most active offender takes periods of time away from offending. In addition, there are cycles in the offending careers of individual offenders as well as in the overall patterns of offending. These patterns vary by day of week, time of day, nature of companionship, age, gender, and economic conditions.

- **There are several keys to understanding the motives of active offenders.** These include partying, keeping up outward appearances, group processes, self-protection and retaliation. Few crimes are committed to meet pressing economic needs such as rent or car

payments. Co-offending is a constant to most offending, particularly among youth whose crimes are overwhelmingly committed in a group context.

- **Lifestyle plays an important role in offending.** Interviews and observations with active offenders hold the promise of uncovering more of that lifestyle than simply interviewing offenders in prison. In particular, the "code of the street,"[20] a set of values about being tough, not backing down, and protecting one's reputation; is much more evident in interviews with active offenders than it is in interviews conducted in prison, or in reviewing police and court records.

- **Victimization among offenders is very high and motivates much offending.** There is little loyalty among offenders, many of whom victimize each other or don't partner well with each other for the long term.

- **Offenders do respond to sanctions or the threat of sanctions, but only in a limited way and under certain circumstances.** The viability of threats is linked to lifestyle issues and limited rationality. Traditional methods of deterrence rarely work among committed offenders, and innovative techniques such as those used in the Boston Gun Project or the Indianapolis VIPER initiative are necessary.

- **Offender careers have a beginning and an end.** Hastening the end, postponing the beginning, and reducing the peaks each require different strategies but each will pay dividends. The age-crime curve comes in to play here, and understanding the lifecycle of offenders is important.

Concrete Advice on Conducting Offender Interviews

The tradition of interviewing offenders has a long history in research and potentially strong application in policing. Really, police use interviews every day in investigations, custody, and on the street. What this guide provides is a set of procedures for you to utilize. We have identified 11 specific areas of concern:

1. Establishing the goals of interviews.
2. Choosing offenders to interview.
3. Determining who should conduct the interview.
4. Finding appropriate subjects.
5. Convincing subjects to participate.
6. Maintaining field relations.
7. Conducting interviews.
8. Sorting out the truth.
9. Analyzing the interview results.
10. Presenting the findings.
11. Applying the interview results to tactical and strategic problem-solving.

The Goals of Interviews

The goal of interviewing active offenders seems obvious: gain information that can help solve or prevent crimes. Things are not always as straightforward as they seem. The first decision to make is whether the goal of the interviews is to provide either tactical or strategic information. In tactical situations, information is gathered to meet short-term needs or ongoing investigations or

activities. For strategic purposes, information from active offenders can be most useful in understanding motives, target selection, co-offending, or disposing of stolen goods. Using the knowledge gained through interviews with active offenders can function much like strategic intelligence in military settings. In addition, such information can play a useful role in planning and training.

Identifying what to ask can be the most important part of the process. The first place to start is with questionnaires that may have been used for a similar purpose. Most researchers are willing to share their questionnaires. It is important to consult someone experienced in making up such a questionnaire for advice on ordering of questions, how to ask questions, how to use "probes," and follow-up questions. It is also important to pre-test the questionnaire with several subjects before it is used for real.

Who to Interview

Determining who to interview is important as well. Not every suspect, person of interest, or arrestee can be interviewed; there simply isn't enough time or personnel available. High-rate offenders, particularly when they are not in a custody situation, can be among the most useful sources of information for strategic purposes. The field is an excellent site to conduct such interviews. Some custody situations, particularly shortly before release on bond or on municipal warrants, can also be productive. Just as the military debriefs captured enemy soldiers, you need to gather information from active offenders when they are in vulnerable situations and likely to talk, such as while recovering in the hospital, and facing sentencing or trial.

Many offenders may offer more information post-conviction, perhaps under conditions of community supervision, regarding other offenses than prior to conviction. It is important that interviews not focus simply on the characteristics of the current offense. Many burglars know a good deal about drug markets, the fencing of goods, and other forms of street crime. It is important to glean this information from them before they are released. In many cases, offenders are more willing to talk about offenses other than those that they are in custody for.

Interviewing active offenders provides a much closer look at offending than prison interviews. The offenders who end up in prison are a selective group, in a sense they are the "failures," the criminals who get caught. Interviewing active offenders makes it much more likely that the information about motives, techniques, and associations will be closer to the offense, and therefore more valid. Research has documented that active residential burglars who have not been caught go about the business of burglary differently than individuals who have been arrested and convicted. Having a routine and sticking to it was seen in interviews as the key to being successful. Such interviews and observations are important because they paint a different picture of offending than emerges from solely relying on police sources. Police respond to the most serious of offenses and offenders, often missing individuals at the earlier stages of their involvement in crime and with the criminal justice system.

† As a general proposition, in the United States police may interview offenders about their general offending patterns and habits without triggering the requirements to notify suspects of their constitutional privileges against self-incrimination and access to legal counsel. You should seek local legal advice if you have questions about the legality of your interview plan.

Who Should Conduct the Interview

Much of the research that has been conducted with active offenders has shown that the choice of interviewers is very important. The two primary choices are to have police conduct the interviews in-house and contract with another group to conduct the interviews. There are advantages to both. For example, the police may be skilled at interviewing and have knowledge of details that could lead them to probe offenders in more detail.† On the other hand, skilled outsiders may present less of a threat to offenders and gain more information. If you contract the interviews to a research firm or university-based team, clear and specific instructions regarding what is expected should be provided, and a questionnaire should be negotiated between the parties. The advantages of partnering with researchers to learn more should not be ignored. There are a lot of programs that operate in this manner such as the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring system (ADAM) and Project Safe Neighborhoods. If you do commission the interviews to another group, be sure to specify the kinds of information that you are most interested in. This can be accomplished by reviewing questionnaires prior to starting the research process. Ethical concerns may dictate that non-sworn personnel conduct the interviews in cases where officers are involved in active cases that include potential interview subjects.

The choice of interviewer is as important as the choice of the subject to be interviewed. Clearly, the value of subject knowledge is critical on the part of the interviewer. Equally important is the commitment to and ability to think strategically, searching for the appropriate

applications of the information gleaned in the interview. The ability to probe for in-depth information, challenge a subject on inconsistencies or apparent falsehoods, and link across different kinds of crime are important qualities in an interviewer. Typically, these qualities are found in a veteran detective, though not always. Matching the race and gender of interviewer and subject is not critical, though it is desirable.

How to Find Appropriate Subjects

The police typically have no shortage of appropriate subjects: offenders with long histories of offending or subjects who associate with such offenders. However, you may want to expand the area where you search for appropriate subjects. Bodegas, convenience stores, car washes, fast food restaurants, vacant lots, street corners, areas in and around emergency room waiting areas, probation offices, alleys, and basketball courts may be appropriate "catchment" areas for you to seek out such potential subjects. In a sense, this advice represents an exhortation to meet offenders "on their own turf," where they are likely to feel more comfortable, and more importantly, be more likely to cooperate.[21] Interviewing offenders while in custody can provide useful information, but even greater gains can come when the circle in which interviews are completed is widened to include their haunts.

Convincing Subjects to Participate

This is the key issue, a make or break proposition in the process of gaining useful information. Most of the successful research with active offenders has offered them incentives to participate, either in the form of cash (which seems to work best) or vouchers. In the research community, the principles of informed consent and Human Subjects Protection[†] must guide such activities. Typically, the police are not in a position to offer such incentives. Many researchers have found that offenders often are anxious to talk about their own feats and those of others. After all, many offenders have a tendency to brag about their exploits or things they know of, but find few vehicles they can use to do so. The tradition of offering some compensation for information has a long history in policing in the use of confidential informants, but there can be other avenues in which enticements to discuss offending can be offered. You should consult with local legal counsel to ensure that any inducements offered to offenders do not violate laws, policies, or professional ethics.

Informed Consent

Offenders interviewed should understand the purposes of the questions being put to them; the likely consequences to them for answering, refusing to answer, or answering falsely the questions; what, if anything, they will receive for their cooperation; their right to refuse to participate; and any other information that will enable them to provide informed consent to participate.[††]

[†] For U.S. federal guidelines on Human Subjects Protection, see the Code of Federal Regulations (28CFR46.101-124).

[††] The U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (28CFR46.116) offers guidance on the requirements for informed consent.

Maintaining Field Relations

Once offenders have agreed to talk and provide information about crime patterns and techniques, it is important that communication be kept open. Some researchers reported that offenders would show up at their university after hearing from a friend that a study of burglary, robbery, or gang members was ongoing. Keeping subjects involved in an ongoing basis can pay particular dividends when the need for tactical information regarding a specific offense arises, and such subjects can play helpful roles in such operations.

Conducting Interviews

It is important that as much information be recorded in an interview as possible. Most researchers tape record their conversations with offenders and have them transcribed for analysis at a later time. This may prove to be impossible for many interactions between police and offenders, however taking good notes with appropriate detail is important. It is also important that the location in which the full interview is conducted does not place offenders at undue risk. Conducting interviews in plainclothes may allay some offenders' fears, and it certainly will not tip off the offender to others as an informer. Most researchers have found that doing interviews in public places was counterproductive, and some degree of privacy provided a safer and more useful set of information. It is important to note that these are interviews rather than interrogations.

Interviews can be conducted in groups, following a focus group methodology, or individually. There are some who argue that when offenders are interviewed in a group setting that there is less bragging and exaggeration, because others in the group will contradict someone who exaggerates. In addition, group interviews, particularly in a custody setting, can dispel fears about being labeled a "snitch" or a "stool pigeon." Others have found that interviewing one individual at a time is more likely to provide in-depth information and allows for a more "orderly" interview. There is no correct answer to this dilemma, however some advice can be offered. First, if the nature of questions is about group offending, such as gang activity or burglary, group interviews may make more sense. If the activity is more likely to be committed by one individual, then individual interviews may suffice.

Sorting Out the Truth

Researchers are sensitive to the claims that offenders may not always be truthful, by either bragging about offenses they did not commit or concealing offenses they did commit. Researchers generally have been careful to try and find means by which they can validate what they are told. This has been done several ways:

- Sometimes this is done through repeated interviews and observations with the same research subject to look for the consistency of what the subject has said.
- On other occasions, interviews with different individuals regarding the same event are compared to determine the extent to which they are telling the same "story."

- A third method of validating responses is to compare offender responses to what is known from other groups regarding their behavior. Other groups can include police (using arrest records or field interview cards), schools, juvenile court workers, and other adults in the community.
- Observations can be combined with interview techniques to determine whether a set of responses corresponds to other things that the researcher learns through observation.
- In some instances, researchers have used official records, lie detectors, or urinalysis to assess the extent to which their subjects were telling them the truth. What has generally been found from such validation efforts is that like most people, offenders are not always truthful in reporting their behavior. In some instances offenders reported more crime and more arrests than official records checks revealed.[22]

The ability of researchers to obtain valid information is enhanced by a number of factors. The first factor is the ability to enter the interview or observation setting with some knowledge of the behavior or community that they are trying to study. A second factor that enhances the reliability of such information is the use of multiple measures of the same concept. For example, an offender may be asked about gun ownership in a number of ways and on a number of occasions. The combined information will likely yield the most valid picture of gun ownership. Researchers can also rely on what is known from other sources of information about the specific behavior of interest. In this manner, crime reports, previous research, and a broader set of interviews with associates of the individual of interest may prove fruitful.

Analyzing the Interview Results

Interview results from a single offender are often quite useful. The real benefit from such interviews comes when several of them can be pieced together to form a larger picture of an offense. For example, the work by Wright and Decker (1994) with active residential burglars established patterns by which burglars got rid of the proceeds of their crimes, demonstrating the main categories of action as well as the variation within those disposal types. There are a number of software packages that can be used quite easily to sort through interview results, determine patterns, and create classifications. Such software can be used to analyze the text of police reports, where such reports exist in computerized text format. Here is an area where assistance from crime analysts can greatly enhance the utility of the analysis. These tools can help you to wring the greatest utility from information that can be costly to collect.

Presenting the Findings

One of the important things to do with information collected from active offenders is to transmit it to others within the police department, as well as other police departments and agencies of the justice system. Probation, parole, and prosecution may all find some utility in such information in the monitoring of offenders or preparation of cases. It is likely that police agencies face, to a large degree, some common issues. The goal of collecting such information is to end up with a product that is useful and can be applied in a wide variety of circumstances. Nothing detracts from the utility of information like having it presented in an unintelligible or overly complicated

manner. Summaries with key points in bulleted form, a simple graph or two, and suggestions about action steps are the surest way to ensure that information becomes action.

Like any analysis, findings should be presented around key concepts and themes. These concepts and themes should be drawn from the focus of the problem-solving initiative. Summaries of what an individual subject said are generally less helpful than summaries of what all the subjects said about a particular subject. Many researchers have found that discussing their findings and conclusion among themselves, and then with their research subjects has been very productive.

Applying the Interview Results to Tactical and Strategic Problem Solving

The products of interviews with active offenders can be quite useful. As noted above, one of the key issues that has been learned from these interviews is the role that lifestyle plays in offending. Interviews and observations hold the promise of uncovering more of that lifestyle than simply interviewing offenders in prison. Such interviews and observations are important because they paint a different picture of offending than emerges from solely relying on law enforcement sources. In addition, interviews have shown that offenders do not always perceive the cues in ways that we expect. Determining their perceptions can be the key to successful interventions.

There are numerous examples of differences between the picture of offending and offenders that police and field research have revealed. Paying attention to interviewing and more thorough debriefing of offenders can help counterbalance such biases, and provide information that would lay the groundwork for better problem-solving.

The work of the Plano, Texas police department is a good example of the application of these principles.[23] Having determined that underage drinking was a problem in Plano, an officer assigned to problem-solving conducted interviews with clerks in package stores. These interviews revealed a lack of fear of being caught for underage drinking, coupled with limited knowledge of the laws governing sale of alcohol to underage minors. This information was used to pilot an informational campaign to raise awareness of the law and penalties attached to the laws against the sale of alcohol to minors. Sales to minors decreased significantly. In Lancashire, Great Britain, police officers observed a serious problem with cocaine and crack use. Interviews were conducted with the 10 individuals most involved in such drug use and offending such as robbery, burglary, and auto crimes. These interviews determined that there was a lack of connections between offenders and treatment. As a consequence, police worked to fix the gaps in the system of linking offenders to treatment services, as well as hold these individuals accountable for their behavior. A 30 percent reduction in crime was recorded.[24]

The successful Boston Operation Ceasefire used interviews with active gang members to determine preferences for guns and assess the role of drug dealing in gangs.[25] The results from these interviews changed the focus in gun interdiction strategies and led to the use of directed patrol against gang drug sales when shootings erupted.

Numerous other examples of the successful use of interviewing active offenders by police agencies can be found. These examples include many POP projects that have received recognition for their impact. They include the use of interviews with prostitutes in the Lancashire Constabulary[26], with "johns" and prostitutes in Buffalo[27], and with burglars in Chula Vista, California.[28] In each case, these projects illustrate the feasibility as well as the impact of such an approach. Interviewing active offenders can enhance existing POP projects or generate new ones. In either case, the information gleaned from active offenders can provide important strategic information to change interventions or generate new responses.

Endnotes

1. Wright and Decker (1997); Jacobs (2000).
2. Wright and Decker (1994, 1997); Jacobs (1999, 2000).
3. Johnson et al. (1985).
4. Waldorf, Reinarman, and Murphy (1991).
5. Johnson et al. (1985); Waldorf, Reinarman, and Murphy (1991).
6. Bourgois (1995).
7. www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/
8. http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/jaibg/
9. www.psn.gov/
10. www.adam-nij.net/ This program was suspended in early 2004.
11. Cromwell, Olson, and Avery (1991).
12. Rengert and Wasilchick (2000).
13. Wright and Decker (1994).
14. Wiles and Costello (2000).
15. Jacobs (2000).
16. Wright and Decker (1997).
17. Klein (1995).
18. Wright and Rossi (1986).
19. Sheley and Wright (1995).
20. Anderson (1999).
21. Wright and Decker (1997), Wright and Decker (1994), Decker and Van Winkle (1996), Jacobs (1999), Cromwell, Olson and Avery (1991).
22. Wright and Decker (1994).
23. Plano Police Department (2003).
24. Lancashire Constabulary (2003a).
25. Boston Police Department (1998).
26. Lancashire Constabulary (2003b).
27. Buffalo Police Department (2001).
28. Chula Vista Police Department (2001).

References

Anderson, E. (1999). *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City.* New York: Norton and Company.

Boston Police Department (1998). "Operation Ceasefire. Deterring Youth Firearm Violence." Submission to the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing. Accessible at www.popcenter.org/Library/Goldstein/1998/98-08(W).pdf

Bourgois, P. (1995). *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Buffalo Police Department (2001). "Workable Solutions to the Problem of Street Prostitution in Buffalo, N.Y." Submission to the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing. Accessible at www.popcenter.org/Library/Goldstein/2001/2001.pdf

Chula Vista Police Department (2001). "The Chula Vista Residential Burglary Reduction Project." Submission to the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing. Accessible at www.popcenter.org/Library/Goldstein/2001/2001.pdf

Cromwell, P., J. Olson, and D. Avery (1991). *Breaking and Entering: An Ethnographic Analysis of Burglary.* Newbury Park, California: Sage.

Decker, S., and B. Van Winkle (1996). *Life in the Gang: Family, Friends and Violence.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Jacobs, B. (1999). *Dealing Crack: The Social World of Streetcorner Selling.* Boston: Northeastern University Press.

———— (2000). *Robbing Drug Dealers.* Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Johnson, B., P. Goldstein, E. Preble, J. Schmeidler, D. Lipton, B. Spunt, and T. Miller (1985). *Taking Care of Business: The Economics of Crime by Heroin Abusers.* Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books.

Klein, M. (1995). *The American Street Gang.* New York: Oxford.

Lancashire Constabulary (2003a). "The Tower Project. Blackpool Community Safety Project." Submission to the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing. Accessible at www.popcenter.org/Library/Goldstein/2003/03-59%20(F).pdf

———— (2003b). "Operation Kerb: Multi-Agency Problem Solving Approach to Street Prostitution in Preston." Submission to the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing. Accessible at www.popcenter.org/Library/Goldstein/2003/03-56%20(F).pdf

Miller, J. (2001). *One of the Guys: Girls, Gangs, and Gender.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Plano Police Department (2003). "Underage Drinking: More Than a Minor Issue." Submission to the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing. Accessible at www.popcenter.org/Library/Goldstein/2003/03-27%20(F).pdf

Rengert, G., and J. Wasilchick (2000). *Suburban Burglary: A Tale of Two Suburbs.* Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas.

Sheley, J., and J. Wright. (1995). *In the Line of Fire.* New York: Aldine.

Waldorf, D., C. Reinarman, and S. Murphy (1991). *Cocaine Changes: The Experience of Using and Quitting.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Wellford, C., J. MacDonald, and J. Weiss (1997). *Multistate Study of Convenience Store Robberies: Summary of Findings.* Washington, D.C.: Justice Research and Statistics Association.

Wiles, P., and A. Costello (2000). *The Road to Nowhere: The Evidence for Traveling Criminals.* U.K. Research Study 207. U.K. Home Office Briefing Note. April.

Wright, R., and S. Decker (1994). *Burglars on the Job: Streetlife Culture and Residential Break-ins.* Boston: Northeastern University Press.

————(1997). *Armed Robbers in Action: Stickups and Streetlife Culture.* Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Wright, J., and P. Rossi (1986). *Armed and Considered Dangerous.* New York: Aldine.

About the Author

Scott H. Decker

Scott H. Decker is Curator's Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice and Fellow, Center for International Studies at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. His main research interests are in the areas of gangs, juvenile justice, criminal justice policy, and the offender's perspective. He is the research partner for Project Safe Neighborhoods in the Eastern District of Missouri and the Southern District of Illinois. He is completing an evaluation of the Juvenile Accountability Incentives Block Grant and SafeFutures programs in St. Louis. His most recent books include *Life in the Gang* (Cambridge), *Confronting Gangs* (Roxbury), *Policing Gangs and Youth Violence* (Wadsworth), *Responding to Gangs* (National Institute of Justice), and *European Street Gangs and Troublesome Youth Groups* (Alta Mira Press). Decker received a bachelor's degree in social justice from DePauw University, and a master's and doctorate in criminology from Florida State University.

Recommended Readings

- *A Police Guide to Surveying Citizens and Their Environments*, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1993. This guide offers a practical introduction for police practitioners to two types of surveys that police find useful: surveying public opinion and surveying the physical environment. It provides guidance on whether and how to conduct cost-effective surveys.

- *Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers*, by John E. Eck (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2001). This guide is a companion to the *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police* series. It provides basic guidance to measuring and assessing problem-oriented policing efforts.

- *Conducting Community Surveys*, by Deborah Weisel (Bureau of Justice Statistics and Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 1999). This guide, along with accompanying computer software, provides practical, basic pointers for police in conducting community surveys. The document is also available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs.

- *Crime Prevention Studies*, edited by Ronald V. Clarke (Criminal Justice Press, 1993, et seq.). This is a series of volumes of applied and theoretical research on reducing opportunities for crime. Many chapters are evaluations of initiatives to reduce specific crime and disorder problems.

• *Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing: The 1999 Herman Goldstein Award Winners.* This document produced by the National Institute of Justice in collaboration with the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and the Police Executive Research Forum provides detailed reports of the best submissions to the annual award program that recognizes exemplary problem-oriented responses to various community problems. A similar publication is available for the award winners from subsequent years. The documents are also available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij.

• *Not Rocket Science? Problem-Solving and Crime Reduction*, by Tim Read and Nick Tilley (Home Office Crime Reduction Research Series, 2000). Identifies and describes the factors that make problem-solving effective or ineffective as it is being practiced in police forces in England and Wales.

• *Opportunity Makes the Thief: Practical Theory for Crime Prevention*, by Marcus Felson and Ronald V. Clarke (Home Office Police Research Series, Paper No. 98, 1998). Explains how crime theories such as routine activity theory, rational choice theory and crime pattern theory have practical implications for the police in their efforts to prevent crime.

• *Problem Analysis in Policing*, by Rachel Boba (Police Foundation, 2003). Introduces and defines problem analysis and provides guidance on how problem analysis can be integrated and institutionalized into modern policing practices.

• *Problem-Oriented Policing*, by Herman Goldstein

(McGraw-Hill, 1990, and Temple University Press, 1990).
Explains the principles and methods of problem-oriented
policing, provides examples of it in practice, and discusses
how a police agency can implement the concept.

- ***Problem-Oriented Policing and Crime
  Prevention***, by Anthony A. Braga (Criminal Justice
  Press, 2003). Provides a thorough review of significant
  policing research about problem places, high-activity
  offenders, and repeat victims, with a focus on the
  applicability of those findings to problem-oriented
  policing. Explains how police departments can facilitate
  problem-oriented policing by improving crime analysis,
  measuring performance, and securing productive
  partnerships.

- ***Problem-Oriented Policing: Reflections on the
  First 20 Years***, by Michael S. Scott (U.S. Department of
  Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services,
  2000). Describes how the most critical elements of
  Herman Goldstein's problem-oriented policing model have
  developed in practice over its 20-year history, and proposes
  future directions for problem-oriented policing. The report
  is also available at www.cops.usdoj.gov.

- ***Problem-Solving: Problem-Oriented Policing in
  Newport News***, by John E. Eck and William Spelman
  (Police Executive Research Forum, 1987). Explains the
  rationale behind problem-oriented policing and the
  problem-solving process, and provides examples of
  effective problem-solving in one agency.

- ***Problem-Solving Tips: A Guide to Reducing Crime***

and Disorder Through Problem-Solving Partnerships by Karin Schmerler, Matt Perkins, Scott Phillips, Tammy Rinehart and Meg Townsend. (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 1998) (also available at www.cops.usdoj.gov). Provides a brief introduction to problem-solving, basic information on the SARA model and detailed suggestions about the problem-solving process.

- *Situational Crime Prevention: Successful Case Studies*, Second Edition, edited by Ronald V. Clarke (Harrow and Heston, 1997). Explains the principles and methods of situational crime prevention, and presents over 20 case studies of effective crime prevention initiatives.

- *Tackling Crime and Other Public-Safety Problems: Case Studies in Problem-Solving*, by Rana Sampson and Michael S. Scott (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2000) (also available at www.cops.usdoj.gov). Presents case studies of effective police problem-solving on 18 types of crime and disorder problems.

- *Using Analysis for Problem-Solving: A Guidebook for Law Enforcement*, by Timothy S. Bynum (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2001). Provides an introduction for police to analyzing problems within the context of problem-oriented policing.

- *Using Research: A Primer for Law Enforcement Managers*, Second Edition, by John E. Eck and Nancy G. LaVigne (Police Executive Research Forum, 1994). Explains many of the basics of research as it applies to police management and problem-solving.

Other Problem-Oriented Guides for Police

Problem-Specific Guides series:

1. **Assaults in and Around Bars.** Michael S. Scott. 2001.
   ISBN: 1-932582-00-2
2. **Street Prostitution.** Michael S. Scott. 2001. ISBN: 1-932582-01-0
3. **Speeding in Residential Areas.** Michael S. Scott. 2001.
   ISBN: 1-932582-02-9
4. **Drug Dealing in Privately Owned Apartment Complexes**.
   Rana Sampson. 2001. ISBN: 1-932582-03-7
5. **False Burglar Alarms.** Rana Sampson. 2001. ISBN: 1-932582-04-5
6. **Disorderly Youth in Public Places.** Michael S. Scott. 2001.
   ISBN: 1-932582-05-3
7. **Loud Car Stereos.** Michael S. Scott. 2001. ISBN: 1-932582-06-1
8. **Robbery at Automated Teller Machines.** Michael S. Scott. 2001.
   ISBN: 1-932582-07-X
9. **Graffiti.** Deborah Lamm Weisel. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-08-8
10. **Thefts Of and From Cars in Parking Facilities.** Ronald V.
    Clarke. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-09-6
11. **Shoplifting.** Ronald V. Clarke. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-10-X
12. **Bullying in Schools.** Rana Sampson. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-11-8
13. **Panhandling.** Michael S. Scott. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-12-6
14. **Rave Parties.** Michael S. Scott. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-13-4
15. **Burglary of Retail Establishments.** Ronald V. Clarke. 2002.
    ISBN: 1-932582-14-2
16. **Clandestine Drug Labs.** Michael S. Scott. 2002.
    ISBN: 1-932582-15-0
17. **Acquaintance Rape of College Students.** Rana Sampson. 2002.
    ISBN: 1-932582-16-9
18. **Burglary of Single-Family Houses.** Deborah Lamm Weisel.
    2002. ISBN: 1-932582-17-7
19. **Misuse and Abuse of 911.** Rana Sampson. 2002.
    ISBN: 1-932582-18-5

20. **Financial Crimes Against the Elderly.**
Kelly Dedel Johnson. 2003. ISBN: 1-932582-22-3
21. **Check and Card Fraud.** Graeme R. Newman. 2003.
ISBN: 1-932582-27-4
22. **Stalking.** The National Center for Victims of Crime. 2004.
ISBN: 1-932582-30-4
23. **Gun Violence Among Serious Young Offenders.** Anthony A.
Braga. 2004. ISBN: 1-932582-31-2
24. **Prescription Fraud.** Julie Wartell and Nancy G. La Vigne. 2004.
ISBN: 1-932582-33-9
25. **Identity Theft**. Graeme R. Newman. 2004. ISBN: 1-932582-35-3
26. **Crimes Against Tourists.** Ronald W. Glensor and Kenneth J. Peak.
2004. ISBN: 1-932582-36-3
27. **Underage Drinking.** Kelly Dedel Johnson. 2004. ISBN: 1-932582-39-8
28. **Street Racing.** Kenneth J. Peak and Ronald W. Glensor. 2004.
ISBN: 1-932582-42-8
29. **Cruising.** Kenneth J. Peak and Ronald W. Glensor. 2004.
ISBN: 1-932582-43-6
30. **Disorder at Budget Motels**. Karin Schmerler. 2005.
ISBN: 1-932582-41-X
31. **Drug Dealing in Open-Air Markets.** Alex Harocopos and Mike
Hough. 2005. ISBN: 1-932582-45-2
32. **Bomb Threats in Schools.** Graeme R. Newman. 2005.
ISBN: 1-932582-46-0
33. **Illicit Sexual Activity in Public Places.** Kelly Dedel Johnson. 2005.
ISBN: 1-932582-47-9
34. **Robbery of Taxi Drivers.** Martha J. Smith. 2005.
ISBN: 1-932582-50-9

Response Guides series:

- **The Benefits and Consequences of Police Crackdowns.**
Michael S. Scott. 2003. ISBN: 1-932582-24-X
- **Closing Streets and Alleys to Reduce Crime: Should You Go
Down This Road?** Ronald V. Clarke. 2004. ISBN: 1-932582-41-X

Problem-Solving Tools series:

- **Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers.** John E. Eck. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-19-3
- **Researching a Problem.** Ronald V. Clarke and Phyllis A. Schultze. 2005. ISBN: 1-932582-48-7
- **Using Offender Interviews to Inform Police Problem Solving.** Scott H. Decker. 2005. ISBN: 1-932582-49-5

Upcoming Problem-Oriented Guides for Police

Problem-Specific Guides
Domestic Violence
Mentally Ill Persons
Student Party Disturbances on College Campuses
Vandalism and Break-Ins at Schools
Drunk Driving
Bank Robbery
Witness Intimidation
Drive-by Shootings
Runaway Juveniles
Exploitation of Trafficked Women
Disorderly Day Laborers in Public Places
Child Pornography
Crowd Control at Stadiums and Other Entertainment Venues
Traffic Congestion Around Schools

Problem-Solving Tools
Analyzing Repeat Victimization
Forming and Sustaining Problem-Solving Partnerships with
    Businesses
Risky Facilities

<u>Response Guides</u>
Crime Prevention Publicity Campaigns
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
Shifting and Sharing Responsibility for Public Safety Problems
Video Surveillance of Public Places

Other Related COPS Office Publications

- **Using Analysis for Problem-Solving: A Guidebook for Law Enforcement.** Timothy S. Bynum.
- **Problem-Oriented Policing: Reflections on the First 20 Years.** Michael S. Scott. 2001.
- **Tackling Crime and Other Public-Safety Problems: Case Studies in Problem-Solving.** Rana Sampson and Michael S. Scott. 2000.
- **Community Policing, Community Justice, and Restorative Justice: Exploring the Links for the Delivery of a Balanced Approach to Public Safety.** Caroline G. Nicholl. 1999.
- **Toolbox for Implementing Restorative Justice and Advancing Community Policing.** Caroline G. Nicholl. 2000.
- **Problem-Solving Tips: A Guide to Reducing Crime and Disorder Through Problem-Solving Partnerships.** Karin Schmerler, Matt Perkins, Scott Phillips, Tammy Rinehart and Meg Townsend. 1998.
- **Bringing Victims into Community Policing.** The National Center for Victims of Crime and the Police Foundation. 2002.
- **Call Management and Community Policing.** Tom McEwen, Deborah Spence, Russell Wolff, Julie Wartell and Barbara Webster. 2003.

- **Crime Analysis in America.** Timothy C. O'Shea and Keith Nicholls. 2003.
- **Problem Analysis in Policing.** Rachel Boba. 2003.
- **Reducing Theft at Construction Sites: Lessons From a Problem-Oriented Project.** Ronald V. Clarke and Herman Goldstein. 2003.
- **The COPS Collaboration Toolkit: How to Build, Fix, and Sustain Productive Partnerships.** Gwen O. Briscoe, Anna T. Laszlo and Tammy A. Rinehart. 2001.
- **The Law Enforcement Tech Guide: How to plan, purchase and manage technology (successfully!).** Kelly J. Harris and William H. Romesburg. 2002.
- **Theft From Cars in Center City Parking Facilities - A Case Study.** Ronald V. Clarke and Herman Goldstein. 2003.

For more information about the *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police* series and other COPS Office publications, please call the COPS Office Response Center at 800.421.6770 or visit COPS Online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.

www.cops.usdoj.gov