Good Cop – Bad Cop:
Problem Officers, Law Enforcement Culture, and Strategies for Success

Laurence Miller
Independent Practice, Boca Raton, Florida

Police officers are the only professionals mandated by society to use discretionary coercive physical force as a necessary component of fulfilling their duty to maintain public safety and uphold the law. If community policing is to prevail as an effective and credible style of law enforcement, the legitimate use of competent police authority will continue to be a vital issue. This article analyzes the types of officer problems and problem officers that can harm community policing efforts. These include (1) individual factors, such as attitudes, personality traits, and psychological disorders; (2) police-citizen interaction factors, such as interpersonal dynamics and community attitudes; and (3) organizational factors, such as training and supervision, departmental philosophy, and the "cop culture." The article then offers practical strategies for improving officer performance, including (1) selection and screening of officers; (2) training and supervision; (3) fitness-for-duty evaluations; (4) effective supervision and discipline; (5) coaching and counseling strategies; and (6) the most productive use of psychological services. Throughout this discussion, the concept of the police officer as a law enforcement professional is emphasized as essential for guiding public safety policy into the 21st century.

Policing: Responsibilities and Opportunities

CITIZENS WHO grew up in America a generation ago recall being taught that "the policeman is your friend," the one person you could go to if you were lost or in trouble. Most of us still take these expectations for granted because of the skill and dedication of the majority of law enforcement officers who perform their jobs competently and honorably. While there have always been corrupt, abusive, and incompetent cops, these were seen as the exception to the rule by most of the citizens who came in contact with them.

This perception began to change in the last 30 years as law enforcement officers increasingly found themselves on the wrong end of civil disturbances and investigations into violations of civil rights and police procedure. Especially in the last decade, we have seen an increasing number of news stories involving "bad cops" involved in isolated or repeated acts of abuse and corruption at levels ranging from individual infractions to department-wide scandals. This has led law enforcement behavioral scientists to try to understand the individual and systemic factors that go into making good and bad cops. This is not just an academic exercise, as the success of efforts to adopt a truly effective community po-

licing model in a growing number of jurisdictions will stand or fall based on whether citizens view their police forces as approachable protective resources or as hostile armies of occupation (Iannone & Iannone, 2001; Peak, 2003; Peak et al, 2004; Thibault et al, 2004).

Police and other law enforcement agents are unique among professionals in that the law and society gives them the general right, and in many circumstances charges them with the obligation, to use coercive physical force to influence the behavior of citizens. Further, within the broad bounds of standard operating procedure, their decision to use such force is based largely on their own judgment as to what is appropriate in a given situation. No other professional that citizens deal with on a daily basis has that power (Bittner, 1970, 1990; Klockars, 1996). This engenders tremendous responsibility and, with it, the opportunity for abuse, corruption, and substandard performance.

Types of Officer Problems

Admittedly, the term *problem officer* encompasses a wide range of behavior, from tardiness and failure to complete reports on time to brutality, extortion, and murder. While some extreme forms of behavior automatically preclude retaining an officer on the force, and may well incur criminal charges, many kinds of less serious infractions or patterns of substandard performance are amenable to change with the right approach. Accordingly, this section outlines some common forms of officer problems (Barker, 1978; Beigel & Beigel, 1977; Klockars, 1996; McCafferty & McCafferty, 1998; Peak, 2003; Scrivner, 1999).

Excessive force is generally defined as the use of more force than is reasonably necessary, which of course introduces a great deal of subjectivity into exactly what degree of force was "appropriate" vs. "excessive" in a given situation. Still, certain officers seem to earn reputations, among citizens and peers alike, for resorting to strong-arm tactics on a consistent basis, and this may lead to charges of police brutality.

Police corruption typically involves using one's status as a police officer to obtain wrongful gains or benefits, and may involve any of the following.

Mooching: receiving gratuities (such as free meals), sometimes in return for favoritism.

Chiseling: demanding free or discounted admission to sports or other events not connected with police duties.

Favoritism: granting immunity from police action to certain citizens or peers, such as fixing parking or traffic violations.

Prejudice: treating certain groups differently, either better or worse.

"Shopping:" stealing small items from an unsecured place of business on one's beat.

Heisting: stealing expensive items from a crime scene, including stolen cars, and attributing their loss to criminal activity.

Premeditated theft: carrying out a planned burglary.

Extortion: explicitly demanding a cash payment in return for protection against police action.

Bribes: accepting an unsolicited cash payment from those who wish to avoid arrest.

Perjury: lying to protect a fellow officer or oneself, in a court of law or during an Internal Affairs Division investigation.

Carrying unauthorized weapons.

Keeping weapons or drugs that are confiscated from suspects.

Having sex with informants in vice and narcotics investigations.

Selling confidential information to lawyers and insurance companies.

Loafing or attending to personal business while on duty.

Using abusive or deceptive means in interrogation of subjects.

Collecting kickbacks from lawyers for drunk driving arrests or auto accident investigations.

Physical assault and battery.

Anyone who has worked for any length of time with a major police department can no doubt add their own items to this list.

Marginal performance generally refers to "sins of omission," and includes such infractions as tardiness and absences; failure to complete paperwork; misuse of departmental equipment and property; insubordination and problems with chain of command; violation of rules, safety guidelines, and standard operating procedures (SOPs); failure to complete patrols adequately; corrupt or otherwise unprofessional behavior ("conduct unbecoming"); and special unit infractions. Again, any police manager could add items to this list.

In line with the "bad apple" theory, there is evidence that corruption and brutality are frequently linked. McCafferty and McCafferty (1998) cite a 1994 study in the New York City Police Department which found that corruption-prone officers were more than five time more likely than other officers to have had five or more complaints filed against them about the use of unnecessary force. Thus, many kinds of problem behavior tend to cluster in certain "bad cops."

Types of Problem Officers

One approach to understanding problem officers is to view the individual personality and behavioral style of the officer as a primary factor in bad-cop policing. This has led to a number of typologies of police officers (McCafferty et al, 1998; Miller, 2003; Muir, 1977; Robinette, 1987; Scrivner, 1999; Shev & Howard, 1977; White, 1972; Worden, 1996), a number of which will be recognizable to most police managers.

The *tough cop* holds the cynical view that people are motivated mainly by selfish interests, and they believe that the citizenry is generally hostile toward police. They conceive of the role of police officers as "keeping the lid on" or "drawing the line," even if that involves the liberal dispensation of curbstone justice when they feel the situation calls for it.

Clean-beat crime fighters also emphasize the law enforcement function of the police and justify "hard-line" enforcement in terms of its deterrent effect on crime, but are somewhat less cynical in outlook, seeing crime control as just part of their job as good cops. While they are very energetic and proactive on patrol, they lack the hard-boiled street sense of the tough cop.

Cowboys or *hot-dogs* are young, inexperienced, immature, highly impressionable and impulsive rookies, with a taste for action and a low tolerance for frustration. These officers may actually be quite effective in their police work if their gung-ho enthusiasm can be channeled productively, and they need not necessarily evolve into permanent tough cops, if they receive responsible field training and supervision during the formative stages of their police careers.

At the other end of the career spectrum are the veteran *dinosaur* or *burnout* cases, who are suffering from the cumulative buildup of a combination of stressors, which may include past unresolved trauma from critical incidents, frustrated advancement opportunities within the

department, overwork and overinvestment in the police profession, disillusionment with the criminal justice system, and looming retirement with threatened loss of status and work-identity. These officers may fall into a coasting pattern, where they do the minimum possible to get by, or they may become increasingly demoralized and irritable to the point that their anger spills over onto coworkers and citizens alike.

A small number of officers who slip through the selection and screening process (see below) may be characterized as having serious *personality disorders* (Miller, 2003)*,* whose characteristics may include impulsivity, unpredictability, a sense of entitlement, lack of empathy, heightened suspiciousness, emotional instability, and difficulty following orders and rules. These officers may be prone to use excessive force, to take illegal or unfair advantage of their law enforcement status, to be especially at risk for psychosomatic ailments, substance abuse problems, and dysfunctional personal relationships that can impair their work, and to rack up the highest number of citizen complaints and departmental disciplinary citations. Examples include the following.

Borderline personality disorder is characterized by emotional instability, a pattern of erratic and intense love-hate relationships, self-damaging impulsivity, a quest for stimulation, mood swings, and susceptibility to substance abuse and suicidal depression, which results in an unstable work pattern for these officers. Often there will be "great days" or "terrible days," and citizens typically either love these officers or hate them.

Narcissistic personality disorder is a pattern of grandiosity, sense of entitlement, arrogance, need for admiration, and lack of empathy for others' feelings or opinions. Such officers believe that rules are for others cops, and that they are a "law unto themselves" in matters of street justice and departmental policies.

Antisocial personality disorder is a pattern of disregard for, exploitation of, and violation of the rights of others. These are individuals essentially without a conscience, devoted only to their own self-gratification. The more intelligent among them can be quite shrewd in a cunning/conning type of way, and may accumulate considerable street-level fiefdoms of wealth and power, exploit citizens for sex or money, or rise to positions of great authority within the department before their complex webs of deceit begin to unravel (Tyre, 2001).

Avoidant personality disorder is a pattern of social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and hypersensitivity to negative evaluation or criticism. These officers may have initially been attracted to the helping and social service aspects of policing, and are particularly susceptible to burnout and depression when their noble efforts are exploited by citizens and ridiculed by colleagues.

Dependent personality disorder is a pattern of submissive and clinging behavior stemming from an excessive need for care and guidance. Dependent officers look to colleagues or supervisors to provide guidance and direction, and are usually dedicated workers, as long as independent decision-making is kept to a minimum. However, they will be reluctant to take any initiative that puts them at risk of not being liked and approved of.

Histrionic personality disorder is a pattern of excessive emotionality, attention-seeking, need for excitement, flamboyant theatricality in speech and behavior, and the use of exaggeration to maintain largely superficial relationships. These are the "showboats" of the police department who love to be the focus of at-

tention and who will do anything to get positive attention from colleagues and citizens. When these attentional needs fail to be adequately met, histrionic officers may become depressed, sulky, and angry, and are particularly prone to develop psychosomatic symptoms. Worse, if attention can't be gained by doing good, they may resort to more aggressive policing, believing that this is what is required to gain further recognition by their colleagues.

Paranoid personality disorder is a pattern of pervasive distrust and suspiciousness, so that others' actions and motives are almost invariably interpreted as deceptive, persecutory, or malevolent. Because they often have a talent for technical details, they may actually achieve considerable success among the ranks of detectives and investigators where their enthusiasm for ferreting out "dirt" is actually encouraged and rewarded by the law enforcement culture. However, their overly cynical and suspicious attitude may lead to overzealous pursuit and ruinous investigations of honest citizens and fellow officers, resulting in a vicious cycle of recrimination and hostility. Hence the adage, "Just because you're paranoid, it doesn't mean they're *not* out to get you."

Schizoid personality disorder is a pattern of aloof detachment from social interaction, with a restricted range of emotional expression. These are the "oddballs" of the department who keep to themselves, never really causing any trouble, but never forming any kind of solid relationships with their fellow cops. In interactions with citizens, they are generally low-key, but may have a tendency to explode in unfamiliar or threatening situations. Also, they may have a tendency to decompensate and become delusional under prolonged, intense stress, and are more likely to be the source of citizen complaints about "weirdness," rather than abusive behavior or misconduct per se.

A somewhat less consistently disturbed group of officers consists of those with *personal problems,* some of which may be related to the personality patterns noted above, but just as often may reflect a combination of poor choices and bad luck. Such officers may have financial stresses, relationship difficulties, parent-child issues, illness in the family, or other problems that weigh on their ability to do their daily jobs effectively. Sometimes, this sets up a vicious cycle in which the officer turns to alcohol or drugs or makes risky financial or legal decisions that cause even more trouble and accelerate the downward spiral, in some tragic cases leading to officer suicide. This category frequently overlaps with the burned-out officer type. It is especially in these kinds of cases that proper administrative and psychological intervention can be quite rewarding in salvaging an otherwise doomed career.

Problem-solvers are officers who tend to take a broad, existential view of human nature, recognizing that people's behavior is commonly influenced by complex sets of physical, economic, and social circumstances, a perspective that is often at odds with the black-and-white, us-versus-them, law-and-order approach to policing that characterizes many departments. Problem-solver officers conceive of the police role as offering assistance and fostering creative conflict resolution as an alternative to making busts and using force.

If anything, such officers may be prone to underutilizing their legitimate coercive authority where it would be appropriate and necessary. In the era of community policing, however, such officers may become less unusual in many departments.

Less philosophical motives drive the *avoiders,* who, unable or unwilling to cope with the daily demands of policing, prefer simply to do the absolute minimum amount of work necessary to meet their supervisors' expectations. Their basic approach is to lie low and not make waves. Often, however, this shades over into frank dereliction of duty, as officers shirk more and more responsibility, as long as they can get away with it. This type of behavior may occur at any stage of an officer's career, and may be related to avoidant personality as noted above, but if it appears abruptly after a preceding period of adequate performance, supervisors should try to determine if some new stressor is putting a strain on an otherwise good officer's job functioning.

Probably the healthiest balance is achieved by the *professionals,* or *natural cops,* who seem to intuitively know how to handle both work-related and personal pressures. These officers' own healthy personalities form the foundation of their confidence and good judgment on the job, and they are able to productively absorb and assimilate the lessons learned both from formal training and continued experience in the field. Natural cops believe that law enforcement is fundamentally about helping people, but they understand that this sometimes requires the judicious use of legitimate coercive force and that being courteous and professional doesn't mean taking crap. As a result, these officers are neither overly aggressive nor passive, and they don't resent legitimate legal restrictions on their authority, because they are confident of their ability to handle most situations successfully. This is essentially the aspirational model that most departments would like their officers to emulate, but which occurs often enough in real life to warrant the following illustration that

appeared as a human interest story in a daily newspaper (Allen, 2001).

Officer Midian Diaz of the Boynton Beach Police Department "has had a hankering for law enforcement since he was a young boy playing ball in south New Jersey. He admired his cousin – a corrections officer – and friends who were on the police force. And everything about police work filled him with pride and excitement.

"But it took Diaz, 40, a patrolman recently named the Boynton Beach Police Department's 2000 Officer of the Year, a few years to return to his first love." In the meantime, notes the article, he accumulated a number of other life experiences, including joining the Marines and working in construction.

Unlike many recipients who receive the Officer of the Year honor because of a specific heroic deed or event, the article points out, Diaz was selected because of his overall performance. "It's his efforts for the entire year that stood out," Boynton Beach Police Chief Marshall Gage said. "This is a man that goes out and gives one hundred and ten percent every day. He does an exceptional job and not all his work is measured in number of arrests or number of tickets that he gives out."

According to the article, colleagues and supervisors say that Diaz leaves a positive impression on those who meet him. "He's very good when dealing with the public," his supervisor, Sgt. Eric Jenson, wrote in Diaz's last evaluation. "He shows compassion to victims and he has the skill to calm excited people with his verbal communication. Midian is an asset to the department."

There appears to be some influence of Diaz's age and life experience on his mature attitude and behavior in policing. "I've been around the block," Diaz notes. "When I fell into this business, I knew

what it was like with the problems with the kids and domestic [incidents]. I think that helps me with police work, starting late in my career. I can walk into a lot of scenarios that happen and relate to that person or to that incident." He has had no reprimands.

The story also highlights that being a good cop does not necessarily mean being a perfect cop or an unattainable "supercop." One of the recommendations for improvement listed in Diaz's latest evaluation was that superiors "would like to see him diversify and take classes in other areas of police work in preparation for a specialty unit when one comes available." Lt. Charles Kuss wrote that Diaz "has his weaknesses, he continues to work on his spelling and grammar." However, a key trait of success seems to be the ability to respond to constructive criticism not as a personal attack, but as a challenge to become better. Thus, the lieutenant adds that Diaz "takes direction well and continues to improve." Even Diaz's colleagues say "he has been working hard to hone his skills."

Police-Citizen Interactions

Almost by definition, personality traits don't exist in a vacuum, and are most clearly expressed in interactions with other people. Unlike many other professions, policing involves daily confrontations with citizens, a good proportion of which are likely to be unpleasant or dangerous. Cultural norms have come to dictate a general expectation that citizens will respond a certain way when confronted by an authority figure such as a police officer. Conversely, citizens have come to expect a certain mode of behavior from the officers themselves. Thus, one of the situational factors that affect an officer's propensity toward abusive behavior or misconduct is the attitude and behavior of the citizens he or she encounters, especially when these deviate from the "unwritten rules" (Toch, 1996).

Most officers believe that, given the challenging and dangerous job they do, the last thing they deserve is to be treated with disrespect by the citizens they're supposed to be trying to protect. Hence, "contempt of cop" may be seen as among the worst offenses a citizen can commit while interacting with police officers (Lardner & Reppeto, 2000), and may result in overly harsh treatment, especially if the citizen is a suspect in other crimes. The officers' justification for more forceful treatment often hinges on the idea that a citizen's hostile attitude signifies defiance of the larger social institutions the officer represents, and that these miscreants – affectionately known as "assholes" – therefore pose a greater danger to the officers and overall menace to society than more compliant suspects: "an asshole who disrespects a cop is capable of anything" (Toch, 1996).

These are situations ripe for vicious cycles. Conflicts and confrontations often stem from what citizens view as overly brusque street interrogations, capricious misdemeanor arrests, or gratuitous hassling by cops. The citizen's expressed resentment then leads to failure of the "attitude test," prompting further rough language and action by the officer. The citizen's resistance may then escalate to outright aggression, leading to his or her arrest on far more serious charges – assault of a police officer – than might have originally been under question. While many of these situations unintentionally career out of control, some officers are in fact quite adept at provoking such scenes for their own amusement, or, worse, to provide grounds for "cover arrests" on charges related to the confrontation itself. This accomplishes the pur-

poses of legitimizing the officer's use of force to control the situation, automatically converts the victim into a criminal, thereby decreasing the credibility of excessive force complaints, and as an added bonus, contributes to the officer's arrest record and productivity in "cleaning up" his beat (Toch, 1996).

While deliberate officer malfeasance accounts for some instances of abusive curbstone justice, a far more frequent cause is probably lack of communication skills, training, and experience in handling interpersonal confrontations, forcing these officers to fall back on heavy-handed assertions of authority. This tendency is frequently associated with insecurity and a corresponding inability to professionally distance oneself from citizen expressions of resentment – essentially harmless verbal spewing – that don't necessarily rise to the level of an arrestable offense. Such officers habitually react angrily to these confrontations as personal insults and lash out in retaliation, which may further fuel community resentment toward police generally (Toch, 1996).

A related dynamic involves displacement. This particular asshole, here and now, stands symbolically for all the citizen insults, departmental rebukes, and miscarriages of justice the officer has had to grudgingly tolerate throughout his career. Police officers are often cynical about the criminal justice system, and are frequently tempted to dispense street justice themselves. To their credit, either out of conscience or fear of sanction, they usually suppress this urge to "thump the asshole" who is clearly "asking for it." However, if an officer is feeling particularly stressed at the time a particular encounter occurs, that situation may quickly flash over into a violent confrontation, as he takes out his pent-up frustrations on the hapless, if not entirely inno-

cent, suspect (Grant & Grant, 1996; Toch, 1996). Importantly, to the extent that these unfortunate confrontations are due primarily to a lack of training and experience in communication skills, conflict resolution strategies, and stress management, they are potentially correctable.

Law Enforcement Administration and Culture

As noted above, the personal quirks, pathologies, and dysfunctional policing styles of problem officers do not operate in isolation, and understanding the behavior of "bad cops" is incomplete unless we also examine the cultures and philosophies of the organizations in which these officers are trained, socialized, and work on a daily basis. From a practical perspective, such a top-down approach holds great potential to effectively guide police reform, as organizational factors are sometimes more readily altered than are the attitudes and personalities of individual officers and the citizens they confront (Worden, 1996).

A kind of generic "cop culture" exists in most departments, which emphasizes the danger and unpredictability of police work, the collegial loyalty and reliance of officers on each other for backup, a certain degree of discretionary autonomy in handling situations, and the need to assert and maintain one's authority and credibility. The police culture in many departments thus frequently sets up a conflict between giving officers a great deal of latitude in exercising their individual judgment and style of policing, and then seeming to come down hard with sanctions if certain, often unclear, protocols are breached (Armacost, 2004; Blau, 1994; Peak, 2003; Worden, 1996).

Some departments may be tempted to address excessive force and other disci-

plinary and performance problems by setting up rigid, bureaucratic systems of oversight and management which, paradoxically, then seem to worsen the problem. Other departments, usually by default, take the exact opposite route: departmental control is conspicuous by its absence, as supervisors tolerate police officer misbehavior because they themselves lack the will or ability to detect, prevent, or constrain it (Fyfe, 1996; Worden, 1996; Iannone & Iannone, 2001). In either case, police administration mismanagement abets the tendency of some bad apples to sow the seeds of abuse and dereliction, and eventually corrupt the whole departmental barrel.

The other systemic issue involves training, as problems with departmental philosophy and personal conduct often begin at the level of the police academy. Despite required courses and curricular lip-service about law enforcement ethics, legalistics, and human relations, instructors in many training programs regale recruits with lurid, if unrepresentative, war stories that feature the use of marginally justifiable violence against dangerous evildoers. "Hot calls" – harrowing chases, dangerous apprehensions, first-in scenarios – are, after all, what "real" police work is about, the heroic activities that forge the crystallization of a cop's identity as a courageous crimefighter.

During the probationary and rookie phases of training, the greatest influence on recruits and new officers is from their field training officers (FTOs), whose attitudes and behaviors can substantially shape the new recruits' conduct for years to come (Blau, 1994; Toch, 1996). All too often, FTOs inculcate trainees with cynical doubts about the relevance of academy classroom education to the hard-bitten realities of policing "on the street." Their attitude seems to be that

effective police work would be impossible if officers had to follow all the pesky rules and procedures to the letter. The challenge, then, is to integrate training and experience so that "reality" does not necessarily have to conflict with professionalism.

Bad—Cop–to–Good—Cop: Solutions and Strategies

As preceding sections have illustrated, there are a number of contributors to the problem of police misconduct, and consequently, several solutions need to be coordinated in addressing these problems. Accordingly, efforts at correction and enhancement of police performance will require departmental commitment to adequate selection, training, and socialization of officers to create a force of competent and flexible law enforcement problem solvers. Indeed, research shows that police managers prefer to salvage officers whenever possible (Peak, 2003; Robinette, 1987).

Different officers are dysfunctional for different reasons, and police departments therefore need to develop an integrated system of interventions to target different groups of officers at different phases of their careers. Importantly, interventions must address not just officer personality characteristics but organizational practices of the police departments in which the officers work (Grant & Grant, 1996; Scrivner, 1999). Indeed, many recommendations offered in this section can be regarded as police psychology distillations of the general principles of personnel and management psychology that have been applied in a wide range of public and private organizations (Iannone & Iannone, 2001; Lowman, 1993; Sperry, 1996; Grote, 1995; Miller, in press-b; Peak et al, 2004; Stone, 1999; Thibault et al, 2004).

Selection and Screening

The first step in preventing police misconduct logically entails not hiring misconduct-prone officers. If only it were that simple. Scrivner (1999) points out that much of the selection process for police candidates is actually *deselection,* i.e., the weeding out of potentially troublesome candidates based on a variety of practical and psychological criteria. An alternative approach to screening out unsuitable applicants for police work is the *screening in* of those who are suitable and desirable. It seems only reasonable that hiring only the "best and brightest" would provide superior personnel who would be least prone to abuse of force and other indiscretions of police behavior (Grant & Grant, 1996; Johnson, 1983).

Coming from the field of clinical psychology which is diagnosis-oriented and psychopathology-driven, most current screening protocols typically focus on identifying the characteristics of "bad" officers, the better to eliminate them from consideration. In the process, much potentially useful knowledge about what makes a "good" officer is overlooked, as well as insights about how career experiences mitigate or reinforce these characteristics. Moreover, a prehire screening protocol cannot necessarily anticipate emotional and psychological problems that may develop *after* the selection process, during an officer's tenure on the force (Scrivner, 1999).

Screening-out "red flags" include drug or alcohol abuse, behavioral disorders due to brain injury or serious psychiatric disability, a history of serious juvenile delinquency, conflicts with authority, misconduct or poor performance in former jobs, financial problems, or a criminal record. A particularly important feature of the evaluation is the candidate's style of handling anger and aggression, both in the past and currently (McCafferty & McCafferty, 1998). Indeed, these are basic criteria for almost all types of employee screening, but especially for those jobs that concern public safety.

Screening-in protocols should assess not just behavioral styles and character traits, but the potential for both formal training and learning from experience. Especially, for modern professional police forces, there is growing recognition of the value of problem-oriented policing and the need for patrol officers who have good abstract reasoning, mental flexibility, interpersonal creativity, and problem-solving skills (Grant & Grant, 1996; Hancock & McClung, 1984; Johnson, 1983). Other, related positive traits and qualities include psychological maturity and the ability to apply discretion in an ethical and equitable manner. Ideally, officers should be college graduates or be willing to attain degrees as part of their career advancement. Leaders, supervisors, and higher ranking officers should be mature, seasoned individuals with a well-developed sense of integrity and professionalism (McCafferty & McCafferty, 1998; Peak, 2003). The challenge is to find or develop selection measures and protocols that can accurately identify and predict these positive traits.

Yet even the best screening protocol is essentially only a behavioral snapshot of the officer's psychological qualifications at the beginning of his or her career. Ideally, evaluations and reassessments should be a regular component of an officer's progress through his or her law enforcement career. Such reassessments should be balanced with monitoring, training, and supervision safeguards throughout the officer's tenure with the department (Scrivner, 1999).

Education and Training

Certain skills and qualities are largely innate: you either have them or you don't. Many skills, however, can be taught, albeit to varying degrees that depend on the individuals involved. The general training models recommended by police psychologists are based on principles of adult learning that involve a combination of didactic classroom instruction, behavioral participation, simulated patrol scenarios, and role playing. The emphasis is on developing a range of both physical and psychosocial intervention skills that assumes frequent, and often unpleasant, interactions between citizens and police. Such exercises are most productively focused on learning to anticipate problems before they arise and generating productive and flexible problem-solving strategies as an alternative to force (Cooper, 1999; Klockars, 1996; Miller, in press-a; Scrivner, 1999).

Much training, experience, and socialization of new recruits occurs on the street under the guidance and influence of their field training officers (FTOs). In the ideal case, recruits are paired with senior officers who are skilled in resolving problems on their beat. Analyzing and discussing the officer's response to real-life incidents in an individualized and supportive way can powerfully contribute to recruits' interpersonal skill-building and policing effectiveness (Grant & Grant, 1996). Police training also has an attitudinal component: it socializes officers into their respective departments and inculcates departmental philosophies, values, and expectations. These seeming "intangibles" in fact have great impact on officers' behavior on the street (Fyfe, 1996).

Conflict management training enhances officers' communication skills as the primary tools for controlling potentially violent people. Naturally, nonvio-

lent tactics will not always work, and police must be competently trained in how and when to use appropriate physical force when necessary (Geller & Toch, 1996). A model that may be productively applied to police work comes from the field of corporate conflict resolution, and appeals to the martial arts concept that true strength comes from inner confidence, peace, and wisdom, that power is a tool that is best used quietly, and that true respect inheres as much in force restrained as in force expressed. Such a model might be practically reinforced by training in communication skills that appeal to this kind of "verbal judo" approach (Cooper, 1999; Crawley, 1995; Potter-Efron, 1998; Slaiku, 1996).

Tactical conflict management or violence reduction exercises have been developed in police training programs in a number of major cities (Geller & Toch, 1996). These teach officers through role playing how to control a potentially violent encounter and how to de-escalate rather than exacerbate tensions between themselves and citizens. Just as officers will vary in proficiency in other law enforcement skills, not all officers will attain the same level of proficiency in violence reduction strategies. However, given the opportunities to explore their strengths and weaknesses safely and nonpunitively, most officers will hopefully gain a working knowledge of their skill limitations and will learn to overcome some deficiencies and to compensate for those they cannot change (Fyfe, 1989, 1996; Geller & Toch, 1996).

Indeed, the most successful diplomats, combat soldiers, emergency medical personnel, trial lawyers, and others have developed the ability to maintain their professionalism under stressful and confrontational conditions, and this, to varying degrees, is also a skill that can be

taught. This type of professional approach is defined as a cognitively flexible, nonjudgmental attitude that says that most peoples' behavior, no matter how bizarre or provocative, may usually be nonsimplistically explained by factors that go beyond the dichotomies of good and evil, "I'm-right-you're-wrong." For police trainers, this translates into helping officers learn to depersonalize the unavoidable insults and attacks by citizens that come with the job of community policing. This type of training often includes a heavy emphasis on cross-cultural sensitivity and response styles to acquaint officers with the demographic subpopulations of their beats, including different manners and styles citizens have of dealing with authority figures (Fyfe, 1996). As noted above, the "professionals" or "natural cops" seem to do this instinctively. And even if every officer cannot be expected to become an adept street-corner psychologist, cultural anthropologist, diplomat, or philosopher, most officers can at least be trained to view alternatives to force as a means of safe, effective policing.

Coaching and Counseling

Coaching and counseling may be considered a more focused, individualized application of education and training that directly addresses a particular officer's problematic behavior in the context of supervisory session. Coaching and counseling both require constructive confrontation of the problem officer's behavior, but it is important to realize that confrontation need not – indeed, should not – ever be gratuitously hostile, offensive, or demeaning. Professionalism and respect can characterize the interaction of a superior with a subordinate in any supervisory setting, including coaching, counseling, discipline, or even termination. The focus is on correcting the prob-

lem behavior, not bashing the officer. Supervisors should be firm but civil, preserving the dignity of all involved (Grote, 1995; Stone, 1999).

The difference between coaching and counseling lies in their focus and emphasis. *Coaching* deals directly with identifying and correcting problematic behaviors. It is concerned with the operational reasons those behaviors occur and with developing specific task-related strategies for improving performance in those areas. Most of the direction and guidance in coaching comes from the supervisor, and the main task of the supervisee is to understand and carry out the prescribed corrective actions. For example, an officer who fails to complete reports on time is given specific deadlines for such paperwork as well as guidance on how to word reports so that they don't become too overwhelming. An officer who behaves discourteously with citizens is provided with specific scenarios to role-play in order to develop a repertoire of responses for maintaining his authority without offending or abusing the public.

One useful model of law enforcement coaching (Robinette, 1987) divides the process into four stages.

1. *Identify and define the problem*: "There have been five complaints filed against you for excessive force or abusive behavior in the pat three months."

2. *Express the effect of the problem*" "When citizens view an officer's behavior as unnecessarily harsh, it makes it harder for all of us to do our jobs."

3. *Describe the desired action*" "There seem to be some common threads in these complaints. Let's try out some situations and see if we can come up with better responses. But the bottom line is

that your style of interaction with citizens has to change."

4. *Make it attractive*: "We appreciate your efforts to be an enthusiastic, top-notch cop. These new ways of doing you job will help you to be even more effective on patrol."

5. *Document and summarize*: "Okay, I'm noting here that we reviewed this and you agree to make these changes."

   Counseling differs from coaching in two main ways. First, it is less task-focused and more supportive, empathic, non-directive, and non evaluative, and seeks to understand the broader reasons underlying the problematic behavior. This is especially appropriate when the difficulty lies less in a specific action or infraction, and more in the areas of attitudes and style of relating, where there may be a more general factor accounting for a range for problem behaviors. Second, counseling is less top-down directive than coaching, and puts more of the burden of change on the supervisee, encouraging him or her to creatively develop solutions to his or her difficulties. Much of the feedback to the supervisee is in the form of relative statements, so that a kind of Socratic dialog emerges, moving the supervisee increasingly in the direction of constructive problem solving.

   Supervisor: *Do you know why I asked to speak with you today?*

   Officer*: Well, I guess there have been some complaints about me.*

[Discussion continues about the nature of the complaints and their consequences]

Supervisor: *You've been here seven years with a pretty good record. What's been going on lately?*

Officer: *I dunno, maybe the job's getting to me. Ever since the McGillicuddy shooting, it's like everything seems to drag. And the citizens seem more of a pain in the as than ever – like every little thing ticks me off. Oh yeah, things at home haven't been going that great either.*

   [Some further discussion about job and personal problems]

Supervisor: *Well, I'm glad you told me that, and I understand things have been rough the past couple of months, but I'm sure you understand that we need to maintain a certain standard of professionalism. I'm going to refer you to our EAP for some counseling to help you get your bearings. In the meantime, I'd like to take the next few days to think of some ways you can improve how you're doing things out on patrol. Jot them down, in fact, and we'll meet next time to discuss this further. You do your part, and we'll help you get through this, agreed?*

Officer: *Okay, I'll try.*

Supervisor: *Well, I need you to do a little more than try, because the situation does have to change. So get back to me with some specifics next week and we'll take it from there, okay?*

Officer: *Okay, Sarge.*

Discipline and Internal Review

   If accommodative educative, coaching, and counseling measures have been exhausted or ineffective, some sort of departmental internal review and discipline, ranging from an official reprimand, to termination, to the actual filing of criminal charges against the officer, may be indicated.

   Good discipline begins with assessment and monitoring of the officer's

behavior to detect precursors and patterns of excessive force and other problems, so that interventions can be applied as early as possible. To this end, police managers should be attentive to signals of deterioration in officer behavior well before it reaches the point of formal excessive force complaints (Scrivner, 1999).

Another problem in many departments is an overly heavy-handed approach to discipline, once misconduct has been discovered. Discipline should be consistent, impartial, immediate, and definitive. Ideally, the goal should be to stop the misbehavior, while salvaging an otherwise effective officer. To this end, interventions should be graded and targeted. Using nonpunitive interventions, such as coaching, counseling, and retraining, is usually preferable to using punitive measures, at least at the initial stages (of course depending on the seriousness of the offense). But such supportive approaches go only so far with some officers. Those cops who engage in overtly and repeatedly unacceptable conduct must be firmly sanctioned on the grounds that they present a threat both to the community and to the safety of their colleagues (Toch, 1996).

One disciplinary protocol developed specifically for police sergeants in charge of patrol officers (Garner, 1995) specifies five basic principles of corrective action:

1. Have as much background information as possible and know the full story.
2. Have the required administrative support before taking corrective action.
3. Know the officer as well as possible.
4. Frame constructive criticism in a supportive context – remember to raise the good points, not just the bad.
5. Try to obtain agreement, commitment, and buy-in from the officer, so that the final solution feels like his/her decision, too.

Sadly, not every bad cop can be salvaged. Despite all reasonable efforts at training and counseling, officers who are persistently and irredeemably violent, corrupt, or incompetent must be dismissed from the force. In some cases, formal legal charges may have to be brought. If things have progressed to this point, discipline should be consistent, impartial, immediate, and definitive. It is the responsibility of the leaders of law enforcement agencies to find ways of overcoming the obstacles to discipline and dismissal, including the conspiracy of silence, peer pressure, and civil service issues (McCafferty & McCafferty, 1998; Peak, 2003; Perez & Muir, 1996; Thibault et al, 2004). The weeding out of the few truly bad cops is a fundamental prerequisite for the ability of the many good cops to serve their communities with skill and honor.

Fitness for Duty Evaluations

In cases where it is suspected that personal traits, disorders, or stress reactions are causing or contributing to an officer's problem behavior, a formal *psychological fitness for duty* (FFD) evaluation may be ordered to (1) determine if the officer is psychologically capable of remaining in his or her job and exercising the police role; (2) if not, then what measures, if any, are recommended to make him or her more effective and able to function up to the standards of the department; and (3) what kinds of accommodations, if any, must be in place to permit the officer to work in spite of the impairments. The FFD evaluation thus lies somewhere

at the intersection of risk management, mental health intervention, labor law, and departmental discipline (Stone, 1995, 2000).

One useful protocol for the Fitness for Duty Evaluation of police officers (Stone, 1995) will be summarized here. Bear in mind that these stages and components may be modified, depending on the needs of an individual department as well as the specific referral questions involved (e.g., a neuropsychological evaluation in cases of a suspected brain concussion, or a toxicology screen for suspected drug abuse).

Stage 1: Behaviors of concern. In this stage, a police officer has engaged in some behavior that calls into question his emotional stability, judgment, or self-control, and this sends up a signal to supervisory personnel.

Stage 2: Agency assessment. In this phase, someone within the agency becomes formally alerted to the officer's problem and the fact that the officer poses a threat or embarrassment to the department. This may occur through citizen complaints, direct observation of superiors, training reports by the FTO, or – much less commonly – reports by fellow officers.

Stage 3: Evaluation phase. In this stage, an evaluator is enlisted to perform a FFD evaluation. Current guidelines by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) require the evaluator to be a licensed psychologist or board certified psychiatrist with law enforcement experience. The guidelines, however, do not specify how much experience is enough, and there is as yet no generally accepted formal credentialing for police psychologists as a distinct professional specialty. Thus, the level of experience of evaluators is likely to vary considerably and departments should use their best judgment in evaluating their evaluators.

Bear in mind that the results of an FFD evaluation may be brought before a court or a governmental commission and that someone's entire career may hinge on the FFD's conclusions.

Stage 4: Treatment plan phase. In light of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the responses to law enforcement FFD referral questions may often have to go beyond simply an either-or answer about fitness for duty, and may require the evaluator to state the specific measures that must be taken in order for this officer to be fit or to maintain fitness, analogous to the "reasonable accommodations" principle in general disability evaluations (Stone, 2000). In addition, provisions may have to be made for less clear-cut cases in which officers may teeter on the border between fitness and nonfitness or alternate between fit at some times and not at others. This again raises the need for qualified examiners to work closely with departmental officials so that the most fair and accurate evaluation of the officer can be carried out.

Psychotherapy and Other Psychological Services

One of the functions of an FFD evaluation is to make recommendations for education, retraining, counseling, or treatment, and the latter are some of the ways that police psychologists become directly involved with officers and their lives. Unfortunately, within many departments, referral of officers for mental health services when their job performance has begun to deteriorate is viewed as punishment within a disciplinary context, rather than as a proactive human resource intervention that might forestall further problems and help contribute to that officer's better job performance and overall health (Scrivner, 1999).

In this regard, one national survey of police psychologists found that psychologist-assisted training and counseling, along with supervisory monitoring of officer behavior, were regarded as better management mechanisms for excessive force and other police behavioral problems than simply periodic psychological testing of officers, a practice that often prompts opposition from many rank-and-file groups who may resist the idea of "having our heads examined" without due cause (Grant & Grant, 1996).

Psychological services for law enforcement officers is covered extensively elsewhere (Blau, 1994; Miller, 1998, 1999, 2000, in press-a; Russell & Beigel, 1990). Briefly, the goal of departmentally referred psychological treatment is to use the minimum depth and intensity of intervention necessary to restore the officer to his adequate baseline functioning or to modify a pre-existing pattern of problem behavior that interferes with the police role. In some cases, when a certain level of clinical trust and comfort has been established, officers may later opt for further, more extensive individual or family therapy to work on personal issues of special concern to them, once the original departmentally referred issue has been resolved.

In addition to individual approaches, police psychologists who work closely with a given police force may be able to help their department collect valuable human resource information that is relevant to policy. For example, by profiling officers who tend to become abuse-of-force violators, psychologists can help police administrators better understand the complex interaction of personal and systemic factors that contribute to abuse of force problems (Grant & Grant, 1996). Consistent with the overall theme of this paper, such a system should also include "positive profiling" of officers who are likely to perform competently and even outstandingly on the job. The overall principle here is that involving psychologists at the front end of policy and planning for personnel selection, training, and performance monitoring may actually reduce the need at the back end for more intensive and extensive counseling, psychotherapy, and disciplinary action later on.

Administrative and Departmental Solutions

As noted earlier, to fully address the problem of police misconduct, it must be treated as a system-wide problem that includes departmental administrative policies as well as individual elements of the human resource system, such as selection, training, supervision, and counseling. These services would ideally be integrated into a structure that maximizes their impact on the individual officer and on the department overall (Scrivner, 1999).

Consistent with the leadership literature from management psychology, integrity begins at the top (IACP, 1990). In this view, the most important factor for prevention of corruption in a law enforcement agency is a leader who is mature, seasoned, stable, utilizes cognitively flexible thinking, and has personal integrity and a strong personal ethic (Geller & Toch, 1996; McCafferty & McCafferty, 1998; White, 1972). Police leaders who set a strong, positive tone for their agencies and back it up with firm and fair action should be able to expect a department they can be proud of.

Summary and Conclusions

Not every officer can be a "supercop," just as not every officer who is exposed to temptation will become a chronic

goof-off or miscreant. But between these extremes, police managers can powerfully influence the behavior of their marginal personnel in the direction of enhanced competence and performance by adopting the basic "best-practices" model described in this article. Considering the cost of replacing a lost officer, successful salvage efforts make sound fiscal, as well as psychological, sense.

Start with an administration that provides a model of ethical leadership. Establish clear policies with regard to standards and practices, and utilize effective selection and hiring criteria that address these standards. Assure that initial training and socialization of officers is guided by your departmental standards, and employ individualized coaching and counseling modalities to deal with potentially solvable performance problems as they arise. Identify psychological problems as early as possible and refer officers for FFD evaluations and psychological services in the context of support, not punishment. If internal investigation, formal disciplinary action, or termination becomes necessary, carry it out with respect and dignity for all sides and provide ample documentation for all actions taken. Indeed, these are general principles that have been applied to a wide range of successful public agencies and private organizations. Police departments deserve no less.

REFERENCES

Allen, C.R. (2001). Worth his wait: He's Boynton's best. *South Florida Sun Sentinel,* May 23, p. 3B.

Armacost, B.E. (2004). Organizational culture and police misconduct. *George Washington Law Review, 72,* 453-546.

Barker, T. (1978). An empirical study of police deviance other than corruption. *Journal of Police Science and Administration, 6,* 264-272.

Beigel, H. & Beigel, A. (1977). *Beneath the badge: A study of police corruption.* New York: Harper & Row.

Bittner, E. (1970). *The function of the police in modern society.* Washington DC: US Government Printing Office.

Bittner, E. (1990). *Aspects of police work.* Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Blau, T.H. (1994). *Psychological services for law enforcement.* New York: Wiley.

Cooper, C. (1999). *Mediation and arbitration by patrol police officers.* Lanham: University Press of America.

Crawley, J. (1995). *Constructive conflict management: Managing to make a difference.* London: Nicholas Brealy.

Fyfe, J.J. (1996). Training to reduce police-civilian violence. In W.A. Geller & H. Toch (Eds.), *Police violence: Understanding and controlling police abuse of force* (pp. 165-179). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Garner, G.W. (1995b). *Common sense police supervision: A how-to manual for the first-line supervisor* (2nd ed.). Springfield: Charles C Thomas.

Geller, W.A. & Toch, H. (1996). Understanding and controlling police abuse of force. . In W.A. Geller & H. Toch (Eds.), *Police violence: Understanding and controlling police abuse of force* (pp. 292-328). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Grant, J.D. & Grant, J. (1996). Officer selection and the prevention of abuse of force. In W.A. Geller & H. Toch (Eds.), *Police violence: Understanding and controlling police abuse of force* (pp. 150-164). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Grote, D. (1995). *Discipline without punishment: The proven strategy that turns problem employees into superior performers.* New York: Amacom.

Hancock, B.W. & McClung, C. (1984). Abstract-cognitive abilities in police selection and organization. *Journal of Police Science and Administration, 12,* 99-108.

Iannone, N.F. & Iannone, M.P. (2001). *Supervision of police personnel* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall.

International Association of Chiefs of Police (1990). The law enforcement code of ethics. *Police Chief, 57,* 10.

Johnson, K. (1983). Law enforcement selection practices: The United States and Canada. In I.L. Barak-Glantz & E.H. Johnson (Eds.), *Comparative Criminology* (pp. 103-119). Newbury Park: Sage.

Klockars, C.B. (1996). A theory of excessive force and its control. In W.A. Geller & H. Toch (Eds.), *Police violence: Understanding and controlling police abuse of force* (pp. 1-22). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Lardner, J. & Reppeto, T. (2000). *NYPD: A city and its police.* New York: Henry Holt.

Lowman, R.L. (1993). *Counseling and psychotherapy of work dysfunctions.* Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

McCafferty, F.L. & McCafferty, M.A. (1998). Corruption in law enforcement: A paradigm of occupational stress and deviancy. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and Law, 26,* 57-65.

McCafferty, F.L., Souryal, S. & McCafferty, M.A. (1998). The corruption of a law enforcement officer: A paradigm of occupational stress and deviancy. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and Law, 26,* 433-458.

Miller, L. (1998). *Shocks to the system: Psychotherapy of traumatic disability syndromes.* New York: Norton.

Miller, L. (1999). Tough guys: Psychotherapeutic strategies with law enforcement and emergency services personnel. In L. Territo & J.D. Sewell (Eds.), *Stress management in law enforcement* (pp. 317-332). Durham: Carolina Academic Press.

Miller, L. (2000). Law enforcement traumatic stress: Clinical syndromes and intervention strategies. *Trauma Response, 6*(1), 15-20.

Miller, L. (2003). Police personalities: Understanding and managing the problem officer. *The Police Chief,* May, pp. 53-60.

Miller, L. (in press-a). *Practical police psychology: Behavioral science for effective law enforcement.* Springfield: Charles C Thomas.

Miller, L. (in press-b). *Practical psychology at work: Behavioral science for superior management.* Binghamton: Haworth.

Muir, W.K. (1977). *Police: Streetcorner politicians.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Peak, K.J. (2003). *Policing in America: Methods, issues, challenges* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall.

Peak, K.J., Gaines, L.K. & Glensor, R.W. (2004). *Police supervision and management in the era of community policing* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall.

Perez, D.W. & Muir, W.K. (1996). Administrative review of alleged police brutality. In W.A. Geller & H. Toch (Eds.), *Police violence: Understanding and controlling police abuse of force* (pp. 213-233). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Potter-Efron, R.T. (1998). *Work rage: Preventing anger and resolving conflict on the job.* New York: Barnes & Noble.

Robinette, H.M. (1987). *Burnout in blue: Managing the police marginal performer.* New York: Praeger.

Russell, H.E. & Beigel, A. (1990). *Understanding human behavior for effective police work* (3rd ed.). New York: Basic Books.

Scrivner, E.M. (1999). Controlling police use of excessive force: The role of the police psychologist. In L. Territo & J.D. Sewell (Eds.), *Stress management in law enforcement* (pp. 383-391). Durham: Carolina Academic Press.

Shev, E.E. & Howard, J.J. (1977). *Good cops, bad cops.* San Francisco: San Francisco Book Co.

Slaiku, K.A. (1996). *When push comes to shove: A practical guide to mediating disputes.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Slaiku, K.A. (1996).

Sperry, L. (1996). *Corporate therapy and consulting.* New York: Brunner/Mazel.

Stone, A.V. (1995). Law enforcement psychological fitness for duty: Clinical issues. In M.I. Kurke & E.M. Scrivner (Eds.), *Police psychology into the 21st century* (pp. 109-131). Mahwah: Erlbaum.

Stone, A.V. (2000). *Fitness for duty: Principles, methods, and legal issues.* Boca Raton: CRC Press.

Stone, F.M. (1999). *Coaching, counseling, and mentoring: How to choose and use the right technique to boost employee performance.* New York: Amacom.

Thibault, E.A., Lynch, L.M., McBride, R.B. & McBride, B.R. (2004). *Proactive police management.* Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall.

Toch, H. (1996). The violence-prone police officer. In W.A. Geller & H. Toch (Eds.), *Police violence: Understanding and controlling police abuse of force* (pp. 94-112). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Tyre, P. (2001). Betrayed by a badge. *Newsweek,* June 18, pp. 38-41.

White, S.O. (1972). A perspective on police professionalization. *Law and Society Review, 7,* 61-85.

Worden, R.E. (1996). The causes of police brutality: Theory and evidence on police use of force. In W.A. Geller & H. Toch (Eds.), *Police violence: Understanding and controlling police abuse of force* (pp. 23-51). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Author Note: Correspondence may be addressed to Laurence Miller, Ph.D., Plaza Four, Suite 101, 399 W. Camino Gardens Blvd., Boca Raton, Florida 33432. Telephone: (561) 392-8881. E-mail: docmilphd@aol.com