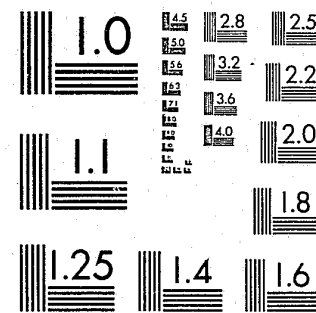


National Criminal Justice Reference Service



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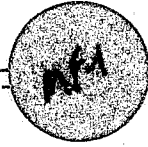
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National Institute of Justice  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C. 20531

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Research



# National Criminal Justice Reference Service

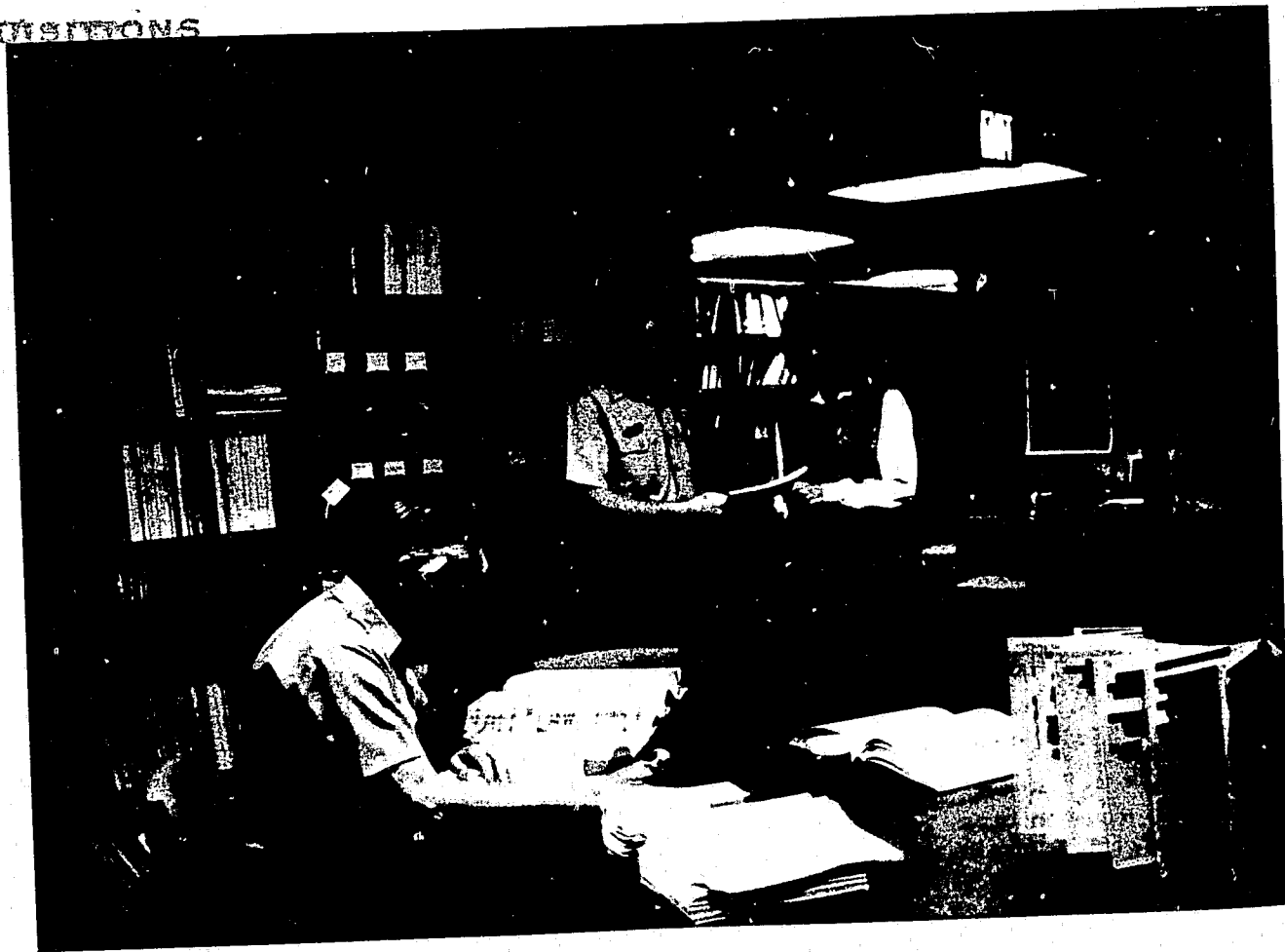
A Resource for Officers and Agents

NCJRS

JUN 86 1986

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Rockville, MD

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**FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin**

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**"If you are a law enforcement manager, one of the essential tools you need is the ability to put your finger on the most current and the most important information available."**



Mr. Stewart

"Given the multitude of different personnel management pressures, how can I select the best possible candidate to hire for my police department"?

"When officers have used deadly force, inevitably departmental policies are questioned. How can I be sure my policies are sufficiently appropriate"?

"Where can I find guidelines for successfully investigating and prosecuting white-collar criminals in my community"?

"From a policy and procedural stand point, how would my department respond to a terrorist incident? How would I deal with the press? To whom would I assign bodyguards"?

For the answers to these questions, the public holds the chief law enforcement executive responsible. But, it's the police manager—the sergeant, lieutenant, captain, and deputy chief—who is responsible for analyzing the problem, assembling the facts,

and organizing the information to make a persuasive, compelling argument for a policy choice or a purchase decision. If you are a law enforcement manager, one of the essential tools you need is the ability to put your finger on the most current and the most important information available. Where can law enforcement officers turn to get this vital information?

The National Institute of Justice, the principal research agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, is dedicated to finding practical answers to questions like these that may affect your day-to-day work and strategic planning.

A toll-free call to the Institute's National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) can help your staff assemble useful background and current research results for policy-related decisions, and can put you in touch with colleagues who can share with you their management successes and guide you away from the problem areas they encountered while trying to initiate specific programs in their communities.

All professionals have a place to go to gather background materials before stating their case. Doctors, lawyers, and educators consult their peers to gather facts and figures. They then have resource materials to cite that give them authority when they speak. Law enforcement officers need their own information center and information specialists they can call upon to help build their case. NCJRS is a depository of information about common challenges in law enforcement and a source that can tell you what works and doesn't work in law enforcement.

When a captain with the Greeley, CO, Police Department was confronted recently with complaints about his department's response time, he wisely wanted the most up-to-date information about the issue before he began developing a policy response. Understandably concerned about the public's expectations, the captain wanted to enhance his department's ability to respond to nonurgent calls without immediately dispatching a patrol vehicle.

**“. . . the National Institute of Justice is dedicated to identifying, testing, and spreading the word about new practical ideas that can help you . . . meet public safety needs.”**

National Institute of Justice research and testing on differential response calls-for-service show how a carefully designed alternative response program can bolster efficiency while maintaining citizen satisfaction. Through NCJRS, the officer was able to obtain the needed background information about Institute-sponsored research in the response area. In addition to the Institute's research, he received information from a data base that includes criminal justice research from across the United States and abroad. The NCJRS staff translates 5 languages and collects research results from 22 countries. Among the information the captain received were such publications as *Efficient Use of Police Resources*, *Differential Police Response Test Design*, and *Improving Patrol Productivity*. In addition to the written materials, NCJRS helped him contact the Garden Grove, CA, Police Department, which already had a model response program.

I can identify with the captain. As a senior command officer with the Oakland, CA, Police Department, I found the command staff was frequently asked to formulate new programs, explain official practices, and justify expenditures. Oakland was a town where police policies and practices were under constant scrutiny. The police were besieged by counter-culture groups. For these purposes, we needed the most current information and the most authoritative sources to support our policies. We usually won support, but only as a direct result of being able to state our case, supported by solid facts and a good strategy about what will work.

As a major Federal sponsor of research on criminal justice, the National Institute of Justice is dedicated to identifying, testing, and spreading the word about new practical ideas that can help you and your colleagues in law enforcement meet public safety needs. The Institute serves as a bridge between researchers and practitioners to ensure that policymakers have the necessary knowledge to support their crucial everyday decisions.

Research can help you weigh the range of options available to improve your operations. It will not provide all the answers, but it can provide essential tools to help you do your job more efficiently. By testing what does and doesn't work, research can provide empirical support for policy decisions and budget requests directed to local officials, supervisory boards, and the public. Being persuasive and making a compelling argument is what counts in today's public arena, where budgets are tight and demands and expectations are high.

Many of you already are taking advantage of the NCJRS. It has been a centralized national information clearinghouse for criminal justice since 1971, and it has proven to be an excellent resource for line officers who, in the move to professionalize, are back in school or who are taking courses for professional self-development. Everyday there are more university-trained police officers and executives. The numbers in the last 15 years have increased dramatically. The demands of the job and its growing complexity and sophistication require additional training and further education. NCJRS information specialists are available to help you by providing the bulk of research you might need for a graduate thesis, a

white paper, graduate course work, or a special research project. A collection that includes outstanding publications like the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* enables NCJRS' staff to keep abreast of the field's changing focus and interest areas.

In addition to being a source of scholarly works, NCJRS provides tangible, practical help to the professional under pressure to increase the effectiveness of existing law enforcement programs.

NCJRS is not just books on a shelf and scores of publication titles. It is a vehicle through which you can talk to colleagues in the field who have overcome law enforcement obstacles similar to the ones you may be experiencing. NCJRS information specialists can give you the names and telephone numbers for executives who can share with you what they encountered and what you might encounter if you initiate a particular policy decision. You can find out not only what a study says but also what the information means in practical terms—what the implications might be for your community. Networking or sharing information among colleagues in the criminal justice field is a good way to save time, effort, and money. By checking first with NCJRS, law enforcement officials can find out whether relevant studies addressing specific concerns have already been done, who did them, and how to research the authors.

NCJRS provides the latest findings of the National Institute of Justice research through its computerized data base that covers a broad range of criminal justice interest areas.

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These areas include law enforcement, crime prevention, corrections, courts, prison and jail crowding, the juvenile justice system, and such specific topics as probing the links between drugs and crime, violence in schools, the forensic use of hypnosis, and staff resource development.

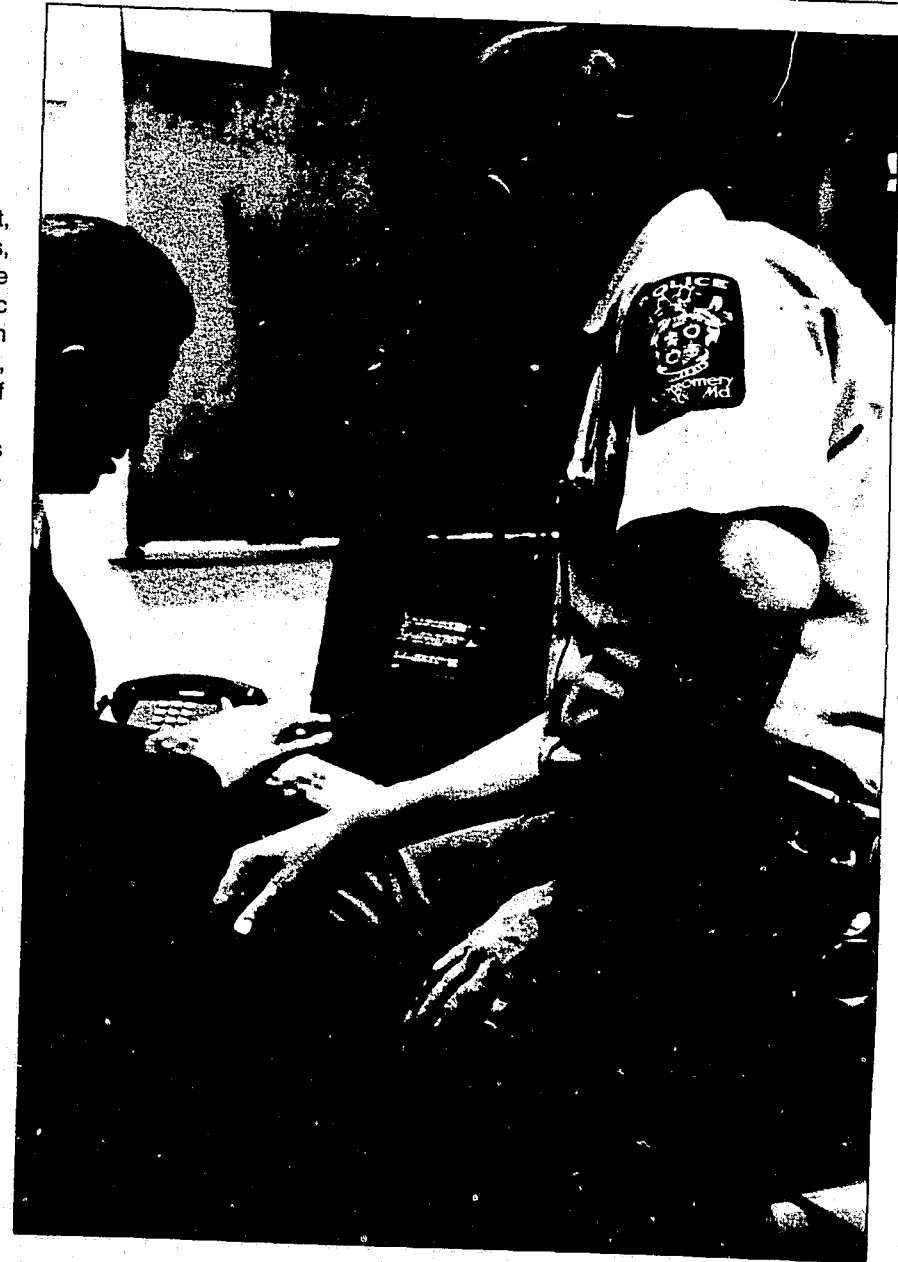
The data base currently contains summaries of more than 80,000 domestic and foreign research reports (translated), books, and articles. A bonus of the NCJRS collection is that it gathers such items as local and regional reports, annual reports from other police departments, training manuals developed by specific communities, and other hard-to-find publications.

Law enforcement officers can access the NCJRS data base in several ways—the traditional way, by calling the toll-free number—800-851-3420—or by using DIALOG, a commercial information network available to libraries, or commercially available to those with personal computers.

If you have trouble accessing the data base, or are unfamiliar with the high-tech option, NCJRS is staffed by criminal justice specialists who have a strong background in the field. When you need help, they are there to provide it. When you call NCJRS, ask for one of the three specialists with expertise in the fields of law enforcement, community crime prevention, and corrections. These specialists are knowledgeable about the literature in a wide range of topics, including training, budgeting, recruitment efforts, work schedules, narcotics abuse,

crime rates, and hostage negotiations, among others. They can take your law enforcement challenge and shape it in such a way that your solutions are strengthened by current data, and hopefully, are more persuasive to your governing body. With the background information as ammunition, you stand a better chance of winning support for your proposal and of getting resources committed to a program you know really works.

An example of how NCJRS works is illustrated by a recent call from a sergeant with the San Francisco Sheriff's Department. The sergeant asked for help in improving his department's jail health standards. He needed information on documenting and defining the role his staff should play and the amount of resources and manpower it



**"NCJRS . . . can be one of the foundations to continue building law enforcement's reputation as a profession . . ."**

would take to bring existing standards into line with other departments. Rather than a routine bibliography listing titles of books and articles on the subject, NCJRS information specialists provided a "custom search" of all data in the NCJRS collection on establishing jail health standards. The search—an electronic hunt through the items in the NCJRS document data base—was tailored to the sergeant's specifications and found information suitable for his department's size and allocated resources. From this search, he was able to select the documents that were most relevant and then build a solid case for improving existing jail health standards.

A request was also received from the police department in Dennis, MA, for information that would aid in the evaluation of the department's psychological assessment program. The department ordered a "topical search," which provided 30 citations from the NCJRS data base and was representative of the available literature in the field.

#### **NIJ Reports**

*NIJ Reports* is a bimonthly journal of important news and announcements on criminal justice issues. Recently redesigned and expanded, *NIJ Reports* includes a news or feature article called "Research in Action," often written by a leading criminal justice expert. The regular column called "Director's Notes" provides information on research findings and unfolding new developments that law enforcement professionals need to know so that they can begin to use new research to its fullest benefit. In the column, I try to describe a problem



confronting police and other practitioners and explain how current National Institute of Justice research can mesh with policy needs.

The journal also contains announcements of new readings and areas of concern in criminal justice. Recent issues highlighted such areas as handling on-the-job stress, upgrading criminal justice technology, and evaluating the future of police emergency response systems. Additionally, *NIJ Reports* lists upcoming criminal justice meetings and conferences and new NCJRS products and services. The journal is free to people who register with the reference service.

#### **Books in Brief**

The heavy work schedule of law enforcement administrators and other senior staff members leaves limited time to read or even scan every criminal justice book they receive. To help

busy law enforcers glean significant information from a book or report without reading the whole volume, NCJRS offers *Books in Brief*, which provides succinct, 4-page summaries of significant publications. Practitioners get the essence of a research report without the methodological details that appear in the full report. An example of a recently published and available brief is *Computers in Criminal Justice Administration and Management*, which identifies the growing use and broad applications of microcomputers in law enforcement. The brief summary gives you headlines and conclusions without a heavy technical discussion. The brief does discuss new areas where law enforcement can be significantly assisted by using computers. If, after reading the brief, you want to review the technical

report in full, you can order the book. Each book summary also provides additional information sources and readings you may wish to pursue.

NCJRS will publish 12 briefs in 1985, 4 each focusing on law enforcement, juvenile justice, and corrections. The books selected are those considered most useful to a particular audience, such as Federal law enforcement agents and local police. Each brief highlights the most relevant issues, findings, and recommendations of the original book.

#### **Topical Searches**

Professionals in the field are often confronted with a specific problem, such as police hiring practices, the use of computers, and issues surrounding the use of deadly force. Materials and resources on the topic can offer much-needed guidance. The NCJRS reference staff will search the data base at your request and provide a comprehensive list of relevant topical reports, articles, brochures, and other literature with brief summaries and information for obtaining the original materials. Prepackaged searches are also available. Among the topical searches that may be of interest to law enforcers are organized crime, computer crime and security, police personnel selection, police and fire consolidation, and psychological screening of police. Customized data base searches are available to respond to a specialized or a local problem.

In addition to its general data base on criminal justice, NCJRS collects specialized information from a variety of Justice Department agencies and maintains the data in one central location. NCJRS houses information in the following areas:

- 1) The Juvenile Clearinghouse offers a full range of products and services for the juvenile justice practitioner. It is supported by the Office of Juvenile and Delinquency Prevention.
- 2) The Dispute Resolution Information Center provides reference services and products aimed at encouraging professionals to use alternative to traditional litigation. It is supported by the Federal Justice Research Program of the Department of Justice.
- 3) The Justice Statistics Clearinghouse provides information on data and reports, as well as statistical research and data collected at the State level. It is supported by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Through NCJRS, the National Institute of Justice is fostering the exchange of information and creating channels of communication among a growing community of law enforcement practitioners. NCJRS staff is ready to help officers, deputies, investigators, and special agents by providing relevant information.

#### **Register with NCJRS**

Among other advantages, professionals registered with the NCJRS automatically receive on a regular basis valuable updates and printed information, such as the subscription to *NIJ Reports*. If you are not currently

registered, this is my invitation to do so. Registration applications and additional information on NCJRS services and products are available by calling the NCJRS toll-free telephone line. As a member of a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency, you'll receive priority treatment. We are deluged by many scholars and students who use the service, but since the National Institute of Justice/NCJRS is designed to support Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies, just identify your department or agency and you'll receive the priority you deserve.

Due to budgetary requirements, it is now necessary to charge a modest fee to cover the cost of some NCJRS services, but many services are free to priority users such as yourself. A nominal fee conserves Government funds, yet ensures the availability of this important information to practitioners in the field. I believe that people will pay a modest cost-recovery fee for good, useful research that is relevant to their pressing policy questions.

In turn, you can contribute to the growing body of knowledge housed at NCJRS by sharing your crime control experiences, management successes, and ideas for future National Institute of Justice research. Call an NCJRS information specialist, or stop by the NCJRS reading room at 1600 Research Boulevard in Rockville, MD. NCJRS is in business to serve the criminal justice community—it can be one of the foundations to continue building law enforcement's reputation as a profession—please use it.

**FBI**

**END**