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*National Institute of Justice*

# **Violence in Cornet City: A Problem-Solving Exercise**

by  
**Patricia Kelly, M. P. P.**  
**Mark H. Moore, Ph. D.**  
**Jeffrey A. Roth, Ph.D.**

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# National Institute of Justice

Jeremy Travis  
Director

Virginia Baldau  
Carolyn Peake  
Program Monitors

## *Advisory Panel*

Sylvester Daughtry, Jr.  
Chief  
Greensboro Police Department  
P.O. Box 3136  
Greensboro, NC 27402

James K. "Chips" Stewart, Principal  
Booz, Allen, and Hamilton  
8283 Greensboro Drive  
McLean, VA 22102

Beverly Coleman-Miller, M.D.  
BCM Group, Inc.  
1090 Vermont Ave., NW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20005

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# Foreword

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Controlling crime remains one of the Nation's top domestic priorities. Urban violence constitutes one of the most tragic and frightening components of that larger problem. There is some urgency, then, in finding a plausibly effective response.

Unfortunately, what the response should be is by no means clear. Certainly long-term violent offenders should continue to be prosecuted and imprisoned for their offenses. But, with large fractions of inner-city populations already imprisoned or under criminal justice restraint and peace not yet at hand, it is no longer clear that criminal justice responses alone will be enough to restore security to America's urban neighborhoods. Certainly society needs to increase the economic opportunities available to its most disadvantaged citizens, bolster the capacity of families to rear their children, and provide the education that can allow children to become resourceful adults. But, with huge sums of money already committed to these programs and no expectation that expanded efforts in these fields could reduce urban violence much in the next several years, it is clear that we cannot rely only on programs that strike at the "root causes" of crime to deal effectively with urban violence.

Increasingly, it seems that the most effective responses to urban violence might lie not in the broad policies sketched above but in the accumulation of a great many smaller interventions that combine law enforcement with public health and social services to deal with components of urban violence that are related to very specific problems such as teenaged gangs, street-level drug markets, domestic disputes, the ready availability of lethal weapons, or ethnic tensions. How these smaller programs should be designed and tested, and how they might be combined within a city to produce an immediate impact on urban violence, might well be a problem that each community will have to work out for itself through some kind of local community mobilization and strategic planning effort.

To help build the capacity of local communities to do such planning, the National Institute of Justice commissioned the development of the case entitled "Violence in Cornet City."

The case presents a concrete image of how violence presents itself in an American city and sketches how political currents begin to run in the city and how bureaucratic organizations respond as the violence becomes more terrifying. Thus, it describes the actual settings in which responses to urban violence must be formulated and implemented. It is based on the actual experience of an American city that has been afflicted with widespread violence, but the case has been abstracted from that particular city's experience to present a more general problem.

The ultimate aim of the case is to stimulate hard-nosed, concrete discussion among citizens, students, and urban policy makers about how the problem of urban violence might best be addressed. By stimulating such conversations, we might be able to break free from the largely ideological discussions of crime and violence that have been the staples of the past and strengthen our capacity to imagine specific, concrete measures that could actually make a difference. We might not only invent some new approaches to violence, but perhaps even more importantly, build our capacity to initiate and deploy measures that are already within our grasp.

I hope that this case proves useful to the country as it searches for an effective response to urban violence. I encourage those who study and discuss the case and reach a conclusion about what Cornet City should do to send those "solutions" to the National Institute of Justice. We will try to keep you informed of the "solutions" proposed. Maybe after several years of accumulating these solutions, we will know better than we now do what an effective response to violence in Cornet City would be, and through that device, what a better response to urban violence throughout America would be. That, at least, is our hope and the reason we published and distributed the case.

Jeremy Travis  
*Director*  
**National Institute of Justice**

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# Introduction

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## Background on Cornet City Case

“Violence in Cornet” describes violence as it appeared and was responded to in a major American city in the late 1980’s. Although the case is based on real events, it has been augmented both by incorporating statistical information from other cities and by introducing some specific fictional aspects that could have happened in almost any city.

The case was developed to stimulate discussion about how America’s cities might best respond to the violence that seems to be overtaking them. Thus, the case combines historical and fictional events to challenge the creativity of those responding to the problem of urban violence.

The case has been used as a group discussion piece at least twice with good results. It was first tried with a small group of experts representing the law enforcement, community policing, and public health approaches to violence prevention. It was later used as the basis for discussions among mayors, Federal officials, academics, and practitioners at the National Research Council/Kennedy School of Government 1993 conference on violence in urban America. In both instances, the case proved challenging and provocative.

## How To Use This Case

The case is intended as a teaching tool. It permits discussants to work through realistic problems and issues to form an integrated multidisciplinary response. These skills will be directly transferable to any group focusing on urban violence in their own community.

To use the case most effectively, it is helpful to adopt a particular point of view and to undertake a particular task using the case materials, such as development of a task force plan. It is also helpful to bear in mind a number of analytic distinctions, discussed below.

### *A Point of View: The Mayoral Perspective*

The case is designed to be analyzed from the perspective of the mayor of Cornet City. Although other perspectives are

useful, it is primarily mayors who face the problem of urban violence most urgently and most immediately. For them, finding some kind of effective response is a top priority—perhaps their most compelling task.

As local chief executives, mayors can mobilize the various resources necessary to combat a multifaceted problem like urban violence. At their command (more or less) are important organizations of the city government, the police, the schools, the parks and recreation departments, and other local service providers. Mayors also may call upon county- and State-level agencies and programs—the courts, the correctional system, social service agencies, and so on.

In addition, mayors may be able to draw upon the resources of the Federal government and social science researchers familiar with the problems of violence. Federal agencies such as the Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Education have all issued reports on the nature and extent of violence and on programs considered effective. Social science researchers have studied different aspects of the violence problem and have issued numerous reports on the problem, its causes, and potentially effective responses.

Using the mayoral perspective permits the discussants to draw on the widest possible political mandate and to draw in resources from the largest possible pool of assistance. Other perspectives—for example, that of the police chief of Cornet—are also useful and can be explored as well.

### *The Task: Devise a Plausible Response*

The task presented by the case study is to draw on the collective wisdom of discussants to outline a plausible and potentially effective response to the problem of urban violence as it appears in the case study. In effect, discussants should think of themselves as members of the task force established by the mayor of Cornet. They may even choose to adopt the roles of individuals highlighted in the case. For example, someone could take on the role of the police chief. The ultimate goal is to produce an outline of a realistic response—in the form of a strategic plan—for dealing with the problem of violence as it appears in Cornet.

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## *Analytic Tools for Developing a Strategic Plan*

Previous uses of the case study have revealed the importance of some general analytic distinctions. These distinctions should be kept in mind during the course of the discussion and during formulation of the strategic plan. It is hoped that a brief discussion of these distinctions will simplify the strategic planning process.

*Perceptual versus substantive problems.* Groups that have previously discussed the Cornet case have found it useful to draw a distinction between two violence problems highlighted in the case. The most obvious problem is the real victimization that is occurring in the community: the injuries and deaths that mark the growth of violence. Groups that have discussed the case have also thought it important to deal with the political and perceived problems as well—the sense that things have gotten out of control, that the city has no effective response to the violence, that people have become paralyzed by fear, and that the neighborhoods in which the violence is occurring have been abandoned and ostracized.

*Short, medium, and long run.* In developing effective responses to the problem, it is also important to distinguish what should be done in the short run (that is, in the next 6 months), what should be done in the medium run (that is, over the next 2–3 years), and what should be done over the long run (that is, the next 5–10 years). It might also be important to think about the relationship between the things done in the short run and those that are supposed to occur over the longer run. Ideally, things done now would build the foundation for longer-run objectives. It may also be important to ask what things could be done now that will aid the long-run objectives even though they will not necessarily produce short-run results.

*Institutional and substantive responses.* Experience has shown that it is useful to distinguish between institutional, or process-oriented, responses and programmatic, or substantive, responses. Institutional, or process, responses refer to establishing or creating new institutional mechanisms or procedures. Creating a task force is one such response. Other examples include shifting law enforcement from rapid response to community policing or forming intergovernmental working groups drawing membership from local, State, and Federal agencies.

Institutional responses are useful for meeting a number of objectives. Obviously they can create a capacity to implement a complex programmatic response to problems involving coordination among agencies or across levels of government. Less obvious is how useful institutional responses can

be in dealing with short-run political issues or in sustaining a spirit of innovation and cooperation among agencies and communities searching for new programmatic responses to the violence problem.

Programmatic, or substantive, responses refer to either program or policy changes that may plausibly have an impact on one or more aspects of the violence problem. Substantive policy or program changes could include improving the capacity to arrest and prosecute dangerous offenders; mobilizing community support to suppress street-level drug dealing; establishing youth recreational activity programs; removing guns from homes experiencing family violence; intensive family interventions providing such wide-ranging services as financial and job counseling, housing assistance, and promoting education for school-age children; and improving the quality and relevance of youth job-training programs. Some of these responses will require special institutional arrangements; others can be implemented using existing mechanisms or procedures.

*Gauging the scope of substantive program or policy changes.* As groups worked through the Cornet case, it became obvious that there are many dimensions along which to measure the size of an intervention. It is important for the group to recognize these differences and the implications that they have for creating an overall strategic plan.

One dimension is program impact: What is the size of the target group? How many elements of the violence problem will be positively affected? How strong an effect can the program be expected to have? Some programs suggested by the group may have a large target group, may affect many aspects of the violence problem, and could substantially reduce the level of urban violence. A large-scale intensive family counseling and assistance program is one example of this type of “masterstroke” program designed to reduce domestic violence.

Some program suggestions will focus on a smaller target audience and seek to intervene in only one part of the larger violence problem. An example of this is parenting classes for a group of single parents living in a particular housing complex. Each of these smaller programs would be expected to have less impact on the overall rate of violence, but the cumulative effect of many such programs could be quite large.

Another dimension to be considered is cost. Program cost can be thought of in two ways. The first is straight monetary cost. How much will a program cost to deliver? The second component is the institutional and political costs associated

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with a substantive program or policy change. Some programs will require little institutional reform and can be implemented pending the availability of funds. Other programs will require extensive institutional reorganization so that they can reach the implementation phase. Finally, some programs will be too costly given the prevailing political climate or will require extensive community mobilization and bureaucratic innovation to ensure success. These considerations all influence how many programs can be mounted and how quickly they can be undertaken.

*Intergovernmental coordination.* Finally, it is important for groups discussing the case to recognize that different programs require different kinds of cooperation across and among different levels of government. There are many programmatic options that can be implemented at the community or municipal level with preexisting resources.

However, efforts undertaken at higher governmental levels can complement or even supersede local effort. For example, local efforts to regulate the availability of alcohol or firearms can be made much more effective if supported by county, State, and Federal regulations. In fact, some programmatic responses are best vested in higher levels of government. Also, some local efforts will require the financial and technical support of State and Federal agencies to initiate and sustain innovative programs.

### *Strategic Planning*

There are no hard-and-fast rules governing the strategic planning process. For the purposes of this case discussion, it is important to ensure participation by representatives from relevant agencies and community groups. This case is designed to provoke discussion among a wide variety of governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

As a starting point, representatives of the following community groups are recommended as participants: mayor's office; police department; city manager's office, if appropri-

ate; parks and recreation department; community corrections department; public housing, both departmental representatives and residents; representatives of social service agencies; community leaders from a wide variety of community groups; and school district representatives. This list is far from exhaustive, and users of the case should feel free to invite additional participants as the local situation warrants.

In practice, strategic planning consists of forming a multidisciplinary integrated action plan. Drawing on the viewpoints and expertise of all case discussants is crucial for the planning process. Groups should emerge from this exercise with a concrete plan translatable into action. This would include but not be limited to "work assignments" for discussants, a schedule, the creation of additional working groups, and an overview of programs proposed by participants. These products are similar to what actual task forces would produce as a necessary first step in analyzing and combating the problem of urban violence in their own communities.

The plan that ultimately emerges from the strategic planning sessions should

- Distinguish the perceptual from the substantive problems and identify solutions that will have an effect on both parts of the problem.
- Include responses to the problem that will have their effect in the short, medium, and long run, and identify the ways in which short-run responses can reinforce the longer-term solutions being proposed.
- Identify the important institutional and programmatic innovations that must be made to make effective responses now and build the capacity for even more effective responses in the future.
- Develop a portfolio of programmatic responses, including broad- as well as limited-impact programs and programs that are innovative and experimental as well as proven successes.



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# Part I

## The Problem

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### The Murder of Anita Woods

There were 12 shots: 6 in rapid succession, a pause, and then 6 more. Lydia Davis reached for the phone and dialed 911. There was a recording.

*You have reached the Cornet City Police Department. All of our operators are currently handling emergency calls. Please stay on the line and your call will be answered. Thank you.*

Davis was not surprised that the line was busy. She had called the police on a number of occasions, and this was not the first time she had heard a recording. She was mad, however. How on earth could the emergency number *ever* be busy? The message was repeated five times before an operator answered. “Hello, how may I help you?”

“Gunshots in the 700 block of Forten Street, Northwest,” Davis said wearily.

“How many gunshots, ma’am?”

“Twelve, I think.”

“We’ll send someone right away.”

She hung up. Davis called her neighbor Martha Heywood. “Did you hear those gunshots?” she asked.

“Yeah. I can see whoever it is lying in a pool of blood right across the street from my house. I’m tellin’ you, Lyd, I don’t know how much more of this I can take.” Heywood lived on Forten Street, the main hangout of the neighborhood’s drug dealers. There were times when Heywood was kept awake all night by the constant traffic: cars driving up with their stereos blaring, dealers shouting to one another, the sound of bottles breaking. She was glad that at least she was retired and didn’t have to get up for work the next day. She would get her sleep before noon, when the next shift of drug dealers began appearing.

“I’m coming around in a minute,” Davis replied. She pulled on a jogging suit over her pajamas and grabbed her coat. As she was locking her door she saw other neighbors walking toward Forten Street, one block north of them. Davis was a 46-year-old office administrator who was relatively new to the neighborhood, having moved there 10 years ago.

This section of Southwood, called Poplar Hills, was populated by middle-income African-American families who had initiated the area’s racial turnover in the 1940’s. Poplar Hills was a mixture of semidetached and row houses with small lawns and porches. The turn-of-the-century residences had recently attracted a handful of young whites to the area, including college students looking for cheap housing away from the state university’s main campus. However, the white population was still too small—and too poor, in relative terms—to cause any real gentrification of the neighborhood. There was still a small-town air in Poplar Hills, a sense that everyone knew everyone else—which, indeed, was the case. It was one of the factors that attracted Lydia Davis to the place. She had never imagined that there would be a drug problem in a neighborhood where small vegetable gardens could be found in many backyards and a tricycle forgotten on the front lawn overnight went undisturbed.

“Here we go again,” she said to herself. “We all come out here after there’s been a shooting. We shouldn’t be living this way. We know who these boys are. We know what they’re doing. We shouldn’t put up with this. We shouldn’t.” Davis joined a crowd of people standing a few yards away from the body.

“Who is it?” she asked her friend Martha.

“That Woods boy’s sister.” Mark Woods was 19 years old and the youngest of four children. He and his sister Anita lived with their grandmother several blocks north of Forten Street. Mark was one of about a dozen neighborhood youths who hung out in front of a string of abandoned businesses on Forten Street, stepping up to cars to make unhurried drug

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sales. He was a lieutenant in the street hierarchy: an intermediary between the local supplier and the boys and young men—and a few females—who made the actual drug transactions. It was clear from the way he carried himself, and the way others treated him, that he was powerful.

“Why on earth would they kill Anita? She wasn’t dealin’ those drugs, was she? I thought she was just usin’ drugs. Are they starting to kill their customers now?”

“Maybe the ones who don’t pay up,” someone in the crowd commented dryly.

“Or maybe they tryin’ to get back at the brother,” said Leonard Francis, who lived on Sixth Street, a few houses down from Davis. “Gettin’ back at him for something he did, through her.” Francis was a retired government employee who was active in local politics. He had recently been elected the representative for Section 4C10 in the Southwood Civic Association.

“I don’t care what the reason is, it don’t make no sense.”

Davis turned to Francis. “Maybe we should form one of those neighborhood patrol groups, like they have out in Northwood. We have enough people, don’t you think?”

Francis shifted uneasily. “Yeah, sure, that would probably be all right.”

Davis was dismayed by his tepid reaction. He was one of the most outspoken people at all the community meetings, talking about how they shouldn’t wait for the police to do things, they should take the matter into their own hands, but he had never tried to form a citizens’ group.

“We too old to be out here standin’ on the corner against these boys. You see how ruthless they are. What makes you think they’re gonna pay attention to us?” This comment was from Hattie Mason, a retired schoolteacher who also lived on Forten Street, two doors down from Heywood.

As Davis stood there listening to her neighbors, she began to feel increasingly frustrated. Why couldn’t they all band together and try to do something? Some of these people were the parents or grandparents of the children who were tearing the neighborhood apart; it wouldn’t be surprising if they were against a patrol group, but what about the others?

The young woman who had been shot was loaded into the ambulance. Her brother Mark, the drug dealer, was pacing angrily, his eyes glassy with tears. “I’m gonna get ‘em,” he kept saying, his teeth clenched. “I swear I’m gonna get ‘em.” His friends stood nearby, hands deep in their pockets.

## A Weekend of Violence and the Government’s Response

The next morning, the death of Anita Woods made the front page of the *Cornet Courier*.

### Six Slain in Weekend Murders Victims Include 3-Year-Old

In the city’s bloodiest weekend this year, six people died under circumstances ranging from child abuse to robbery.

On Friday evening there was an emergency call to an apartment in the Southwood section of the city, where police found a 3-year-old girl on the living room floor. The child had broken bones and multiple skull fractures, and was pronounced dead at the scene. Frank Cartwell, the common-law husband of the child’s mother, was taken into custody. The mother has not yet been located.

In a second domestic matter a woman was shot by her estranged husband as she left her apartment. The previous week Teresa Cordoba had tried to get her husband arrested for threatening to kill her. A restraining order had been issued, according to Superior Court officials.

On Saturday night a convenience store clerk was shot twice in the head after being robbed by two men. Sung K. Suk, father of the slain man and the store’s owner, witnessed the murder. He said that his son had offered no resistance. “He had given them [the] money and he was on his knees with his hands on [his] head. But the guy stood there . . . shot him point-blank. It was really brutal.”

Early Sunday morning an argument in the parking lot of a local bar left one man dead of multiple knife wounds. His assailant, Lawrence J. Peterson, also was wounded during the altercation and is listed in stable condition at the County Hospital. Patrons of the Hitching Post said the fight started when Peterson and the deceased, Michael Harrington, tried to leave the parking lot at the same time and had a minor collision. This was the third violent altercation at the bar so far this month.

A 17-year-old restaurant employee who was fired last week returned to his former place of work and opened fire on employees in the kitchen. The restaurant’s owner was killed and several employ-

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ees were wounded, one seriously. The youth, whose name is being withheld because of his age, fled the scene but was later arrested at his home.

Finally, 22-year-old Anita Woods was gunned down in the 700 block of Forten Street, in an aging section of Southwood known as Poplar Hills. CCPD detectives report that they have no motive at this time.

The article provoked a political firestorm; city officials were deluged with calls from citizens demanding action. Commissioner Willie Farnsworth, chairman of the Public Safety Sub-Committee, said that his office alone received 300 calls within hours of the story's publication. "The people who have been calling my office are just fed up. This violence is getting totally out of control, and they want something done about it," he said. "We have got to get these criminals off our streets.

"I have been calling for a tougher approach to law enforcement for years, and maybe now the mayor will listen. This latest bloodbath makes it clear that the criminals control our city, and we need to take back our streets from them. I am calling once again for reinstatement of the death penalty. We also need to lower the age when you can try as adults these young thugs out here who are literally getting away with murder. We are living in extreme times, and we need extreme measures to bring this situation under control.

"We've also got to have longer sentences to keep these violent criminals in prison, where they belong. Let's give the streets back to the law-abiding people. We've got it backwards right now—it's the good people who are locked up in their homes, and the criminals who are roaming the streets freely. This has got to be rectified. The people of Cornet deserve better, and I hope that the city commission is ready to do what's necessary to stop the insanity in the streets."

In his oblique criticism of the city commission, Farnsworth was targeting Martin McCafferty, chairman of the commission's Human Services Sub-Committee. McCafferty was often pegged as the commission liberal because of his voting record on the "law-and-order" issues—particularly his efforts for stringent gun control. He, too, made a statement to the press.

"It is easy to get emotional when these kinds of tragedies occur, but we need to look at the facts. In four of the six murders we had this weekend, guns were used. One of them, I believe, was a young man who in a fit of rage went home and got his father's gun to kill his boss. The only reason that that man [the owner of the restaurant] is dead, and the only reason

the other people in the restaurant are in the hospital today, is because the young man had access to a gun. That's the only reason. The way to stop the carnage is not just to say we're gonna lock people up after they've already killed someone. The answer is to take away the means to kill. We are not going to eliminate homicides in this city, but at least we'll prevent a lot of them."

The mayor's office also was swamped with telephone calls and even a few telegrams from angry citizens. By the end of the day, Mayor Chris Warren had called a press conference. Flanked by the deputy mayor and the chief of police, Warren read from a prepared statement.

"This weekend's spate of murders in our city has been a wake-up call for all of us. I have heard from every group in the city: the old and the young; working and retired; male and female; black and white. I have heard from the citizens of Northwood and those of Southwood, from the business community and from government workers. The citizens of Cornet agree, and I am in full accord, that *something must be done*. This city—indeed, this nation—is awash in blood. It must stop.

"Today, I am charging 12 people to come up with a plan in 100 days to deal with the problem of violence in Cornet. The members of the Anti-Violence Task Force will be: Police Chief Tony Burnett; two of my colleagues from the commission, Willie Farnsworth, who chairs the Public Safety Sub-Committee, and Susan Wolfe, chair of the Tourism and Economic Development Sub-Committee; the Honorable Connor Bradley, senior judge in the Juvenile Court Division; David Silver, chief prosecutor; Thomas Eckert, Commissioner of Prisons; Stephen Balliet, President of the Chamber of Commerce; Samuel Lee of the Small Business Association; Sheila Robinson, Commissioner of Public Housing; the Reverend Aaron Weems; and Dr. Gail Hodges, professor of urban studies at the state university. Chairing the task force will be Deputy Mayor John Canady.

"This task force will look at the causes for the skyrocketing homicide rate, and it will develop concrete solutions. I am authorizing and requiring that they mobilize every member of this city, from the grassroots level to the government bureaucracy. Every one of us has got to be a part of this effort, because crime and violence are the number-one problems facing this city and this nation. Violence affects everyone, and stopping the violence has got to be everyone's priority."

The duties of the task force were threefold: first, to attend community meetings throughout the city to get firsthand knowledge of the nature of the problems different constitu-

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encies faced and to gather information on effective grassroots initiatives; second, to hold citywide public hearings to obtain testimony from “experts” as well as local citizens; and finally, to review the history of antiviolenace and anticrime initiatives before developing a strategy. The task force could also evaluate efforts in other States, as well as any national programs and policies.

## The View From the Police Department

After the press conference Chief Anthony Burnett got into his car and returned to the office. He felt a little subdued. More than anyone else, he knew that violence was now commonplace in Cornet. Although he wanted to see an end to the problem as much as anyone else, it worried him that such an important public policy issue was taking place in a highly charged, politicized context. There also would be intense pressure to solve the six weekend murders. Burnett used his car phone to call Deputy Chief Jerry Rauss.

“Hello, Jerry, this is the chief. I’m calling about this task force thing. Yeah, it’s going to be [tough]. Listen, I want you to call each of the precincts where those six weekend murders took place and tell them that we’re sending our best homicide detectives to their areas, and I want full cooperation from everybody. Next, I want you to call down to ODA [the Office of Data Analysis] and tell them to bring me everything they’ve got from 1980 to now on homicides: number of people, motives, weapons used. Everything. I want to meet first thing tomorrow morning.”

### *The Office of Data Analysis*

The Office of Data Analysis was located in a large room shared by Jack Newman, the director; Sylvia Patton, a research analyst; a data entry clerk; and a secretary. There were printouts everywhere, and boxes of papers were stacked in every corner. Newman and Patton had stayed late to get the chief’s data. They walked into his office the next morning with a sheaf of documents.

“Well,” Newman began, “including the death of Anita Woods this past weekend, a total of 452 have died in Cornet this year. If this keeps up, we’ll have another record-breaking number of deaths. We’ve only got a population of 600,000, so if this continues, our homicide rate will rival that in urban areas like the District of Columbia, Chicago, and New York City.”

“That’s a distinction we definitely don’t want,” the chief replied. ODA data showed that after several years of decreas-

ing homicide rates, the number of murders in Cornet began to climb precipitously in 1985, from 148 to more than three times that number by the end of 1990. (See exhibit 1.) More than half of the victims were black, mirroring national trends.

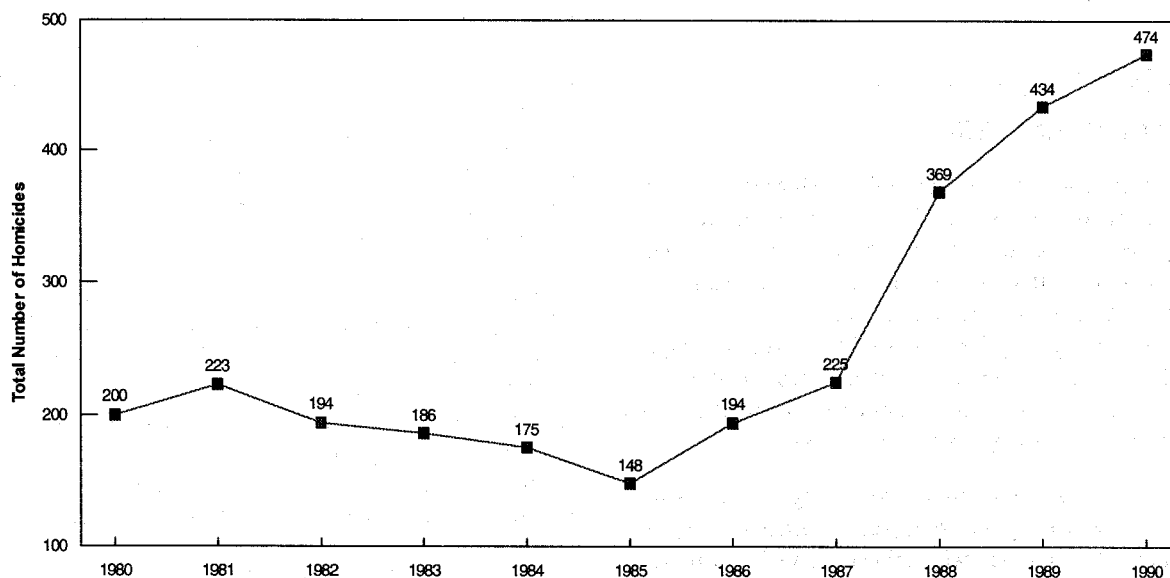
Newman continued. “When you look at the information we’re getting—from lockup, the coroner, the supplementary homicide reports—you see that drugs seem to be the main problem.” First, the number of homicide arrestees testing positive for any drug use rose from 44 percent in 1986 to 64 percent in 1988 and declined after that. (See exhibit 2.) In the general population of arrestees—for violent and property crimes—drug use was even more prevalent: a record 73 percent tested positive for any drug use in 1988, with small decreases observed since then.

A significant number of murder victims also had some type of drug or alcohol in their systems at the time of death. Toxicological data for the period 1985–1988 showed that PCP, cocaine, or alcohol was found in the bodies of almost two-thirds of all murder victims. (See exhibit 3.) Although the overall fraction of victims using any drug had remained roughly constant over the period, a review of victims’ drug-use trends showed substantial differences by type of drug:

- Victims’ use of alcohol, although still among the highest of all psychoactive drugs, had been declining, from a high of 38 percent in 1985 to 23 percent in 1988.
- Heroin use had fallen by half, from 14 percent in 1985 to 7 percent in 1988.
- Marijuana use had almost doubled, from 12 percent in 1985 to 23 percent in 1988.
- The use of PCP had fluctuated during that period but was very high, ranging from 15 percent in 1985, peaking at 30 percent in 1987, and dropping to 22 percent in 1988.
- Cocaine had become the most commonly used drug, its use increasing dramatically from 17 percent in 1985 to 45 percent in 1988.

Next, there were more drug arrests than commissions of either robbery or burglary. (See exhibit 4.) Since 1985 there had been a dramatic increase in the number of drug violations, and in 1986 drug arrests exceeded the number of robberies or burglaries. These data did not necessarily indicate that the number of drug-related crimes was overtaking the numbers for the Part I offenses—only that apprehension rates for robberies and burglaries remained low. Nevertheless, homicides continued to rise even as arrests for drug violations began to fall.

**Exhibit 1:  
Homicides in the City of Cornet  
1980-1990**



**Exhibit 2:  
Percentage of Arrestees Testing Positive for Drug Use  
1986-1990**

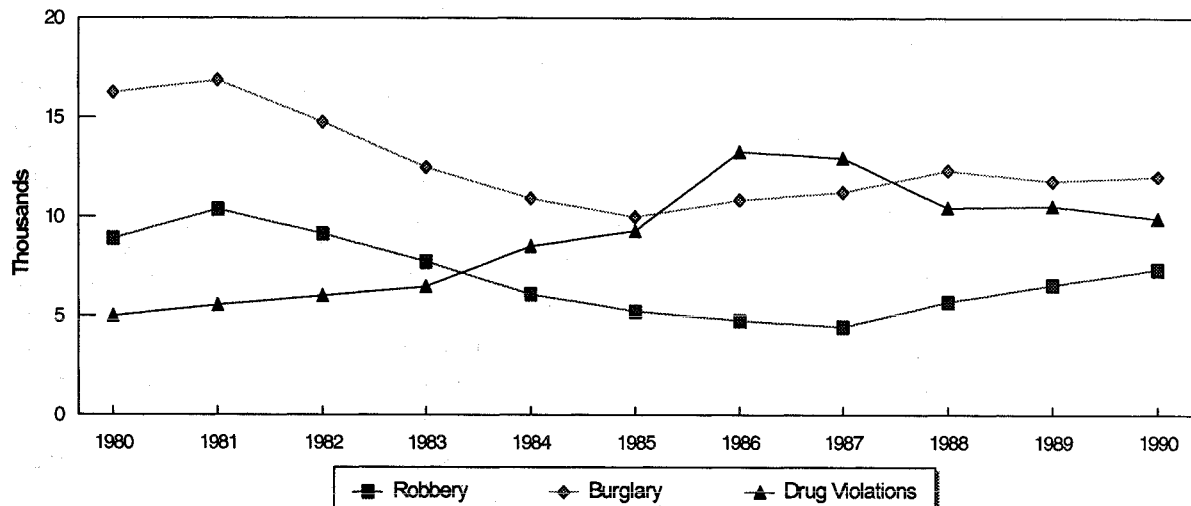
	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Homicide Arrestees Testing Positive for:</b>					
Any Drug Use	44	49	64	35	26
Cocaine Use	25	31	49	32	23
PCP Use	24	25	25	5	3
<b>All Arrestees Testing Positive for:</b>					
Any Drug Use	68	72	73	67	56
Cocaine Use	40	50	64	63	53
PCP Use	39	43	33	17	7

**Exhibit 3:**  
**Drug Use Among Victims**  
1985-1988

<b>Substance</b>	<b>1985</b>		<b>1986</b>		<b>1987</b>		<b>1988</b>	
	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
PCP	23	15	55	27	73	30	26	22
Cocaine	26	17	54	26	70	29	54	45
Heroin	21	14	25	12	8	3	8	7
Marijuana	19	12	60	29	57	24	27	23
Alcohol	59	38	60	29	57	24	27	23
Other	17	11	2	1	12	5	4	3
None	56	35	78	37	93	38	39	32
No. Cases Tested	156		207		242		119	

Source: *Homicide in Cornet City*, December 1988, p. 10.

**Exhibit 4:**  
**Robbery, Burglary, and Drug Violations**  
1980-1990



Finally, Newman presented data on murder weapons. "As you can see, firearms continued to be the weapon of choice. Over the last decade, the percentage of homicides involving gun use rose from 62 percent to 76 percent." (See exhibit 5.) The chief recalled hearing one of the commission members talk about gun control on the previous day and wondered how the ODA information would be put to use.

Now that he had the big picture, Burnett began to consider the individual cases: two domestic situations, one robbery with a possible racial component, a disgruntled employee, and a barroom brawl. Then there was that young woman gunned down in Southwood.

"I want to be informed on a daily basis about the progress of these cases," he told the deputy chief. "The whole city is watching. Use whatever resources are necessary to get the cases solved. Especially that 22-year-old woman, Woods. She's the only one with an unknown motive at this time, is that right?"

"Yes, sir. Detective Soames has been assigned to it."

### *Investigating the Murder of Anita Woods*

Detective Franklin Soames had arrived at the murder scene not long after Anita Woods' body was taken away. In his inspection of the site he had found one bullet lodged in the side of the building where the woman had been standing just before she was killed. Several bullet shells were found in the street.

The only other clues Soames could possibly obtain were from members of the dead woman's family or from people who lived in the neighborhood. He was not at all hopeful that he would get information from any of them. An officer on the

scene had told Soames that the girl's brother had been walking around crying and talking about avenging her death. But the young man had been unwilling to talk to the police and had even dismissed them angrily, spitting out that they were never around when you really needed them. There seemed to be more to his unwillingness to cooperate than just grief, though. Soames discovered that the brother had a record: possession with intent to distribute cocaine. It seemed likely that Mark Woods was a drug dealer and that this was a factor in his sister's murder.

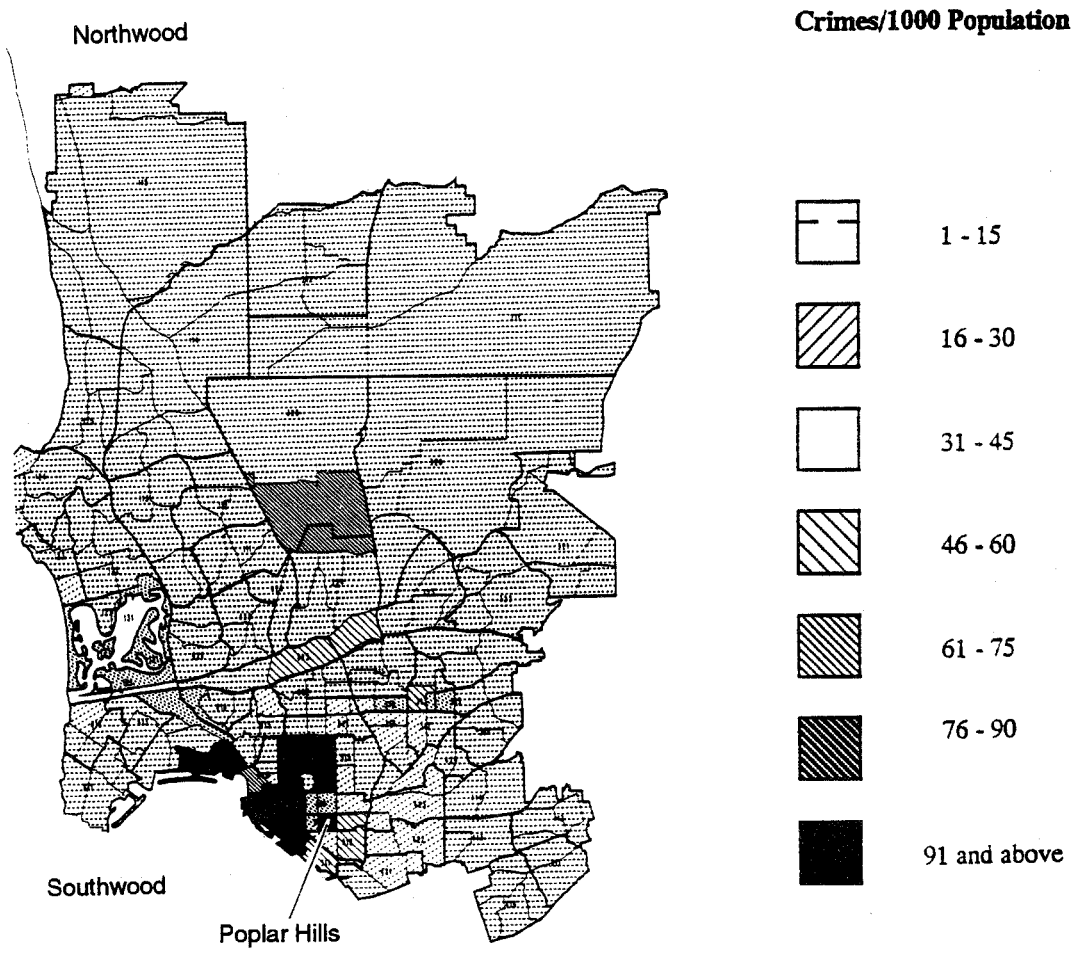
"Very few of the cases I see now are, you know, the typical murders that we were dealing with 10 or even 5 years ago." Soames was speaking to a reporter from the *Courier* who was doing a follow-up story.

"Now there's almost always a drug connection. It's drug dealers beefing with each other over territory, or it's a dealer killing off a customer who won't pay up—the dealer feels he's got to kill the person; otherwise, he's gonna be considered a punk [weakling] on the street, and it's really hard to solve these cases, because nobody wants to come forward. They can't, really, because then they'd be admitting that they're involved in something illegal. The people on both sides are 'bad' individuals, and there's no incentive for anybody to cooperate."

Soames drove back to his office and stuck a pin in the map in back of his desk. (See exhibit 6.) Anita Woods' death had occurred in Southwood, one of the prime drug-dealing sectors of the city. "Look at this," he said. "We've had, what, 450 murders so far? Over half have been here in Southwood." Both geography and demography made the Southwood area a magnet for drug activities, for it was not only the poorest section of the city, it was also on the State border, attracting carloads of out-of-State buyers and sellers.

<b>Exhibit 5:</b>			
<b>Weapons Used in Homicides</b>			
<b>1980, 1985, 1989</b>			
<u>Weapons Used</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1989</u>
Firearms	124	95	331
All Other	76	53	103
Total Homicides	200	148	434

**Exhibit 6:**  
**City of Cornet**  
**Population 590,000**





Soames turned his attention back to the Woods murder and the unlikelihood of getting any evidence to solve it. The family of the victim had no incentive to cooperate with the police, and members of the community faced real disincentives. "I know that somebody in that neighborhood—lots of people—know something or heard something, but I can't get them to tell me, and you know what? I don't blame them, not really. Because if word got out that they said anything, then these people could get killed." Intimidation and murder of witnesses had become so common that when Soames wanted to get information he would never approach the person in public. He knew from experience that drug dealers would not hesitate to kill a "snitch."

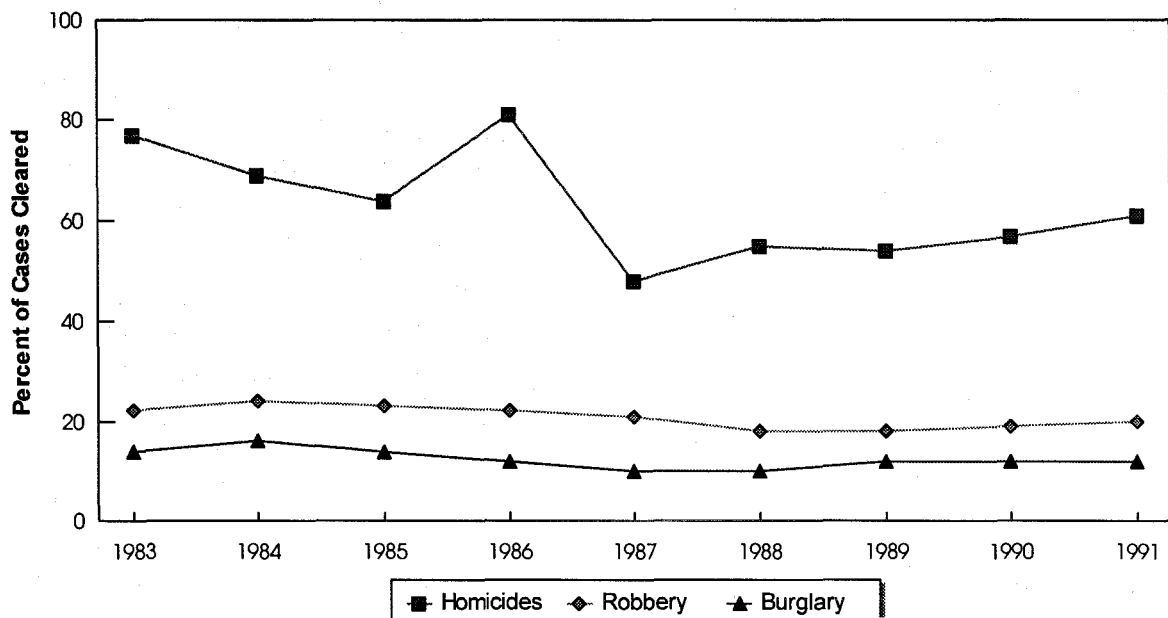
"We're just not dealing with the same kinds of criminals," he lamented. "They will kill people on mere *suspicion* of talking to the cops. I used to tell informants that they didn't have to worry about anything happening to them, but I don't anymore, because some people I swore to protect got popped. You can't imagine what that does to a police officer, someone who is out there to protect people. When you give people your word, lay down your honor like that and then you're not able to come through . . .," he trailed off, shaking his head.

He understood why law-abiding citizens refused to get involved. He understood their fear, because he, too, was afraid.

"I've been on the force for 19 years and doing homicide for 6 years. When I started out in this job I wasn't afraid, not at all. I mean, sometimes I would be outnumbered by the crooks, you know, but I wasn't afraid, because, number one, they didn't use to have guns and number two, I had this . . . you know, *authority*. I don't mean that I was abusive or anything, just that people had some kind of respect for police officers. Both the 'good' people and the 'bad' people. Now, though . . . these guys out here are better armed than I am. Not only that, they're not afraid to kill, even if you're a police officer." The data did indicate that police work was dangerous, with 138 assaults on police officers in 1990, 13 percent of them involving a gun.

Without witnesses or other information, it was going to be very hard to solve the Woods case. As shown in exhibit 7, the police department's closure rate for homicide cases peaked in 1986 at 81 percent, but by 1990 the rate was only 57 percent. Clearance rates for other Part I offenses, although

**Exhibit 7:**  
**Clearance Rates for Part I Offenses and Drug Violations**  
 1983-1991



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lower, had remained virtually constant since 1983, ruling out a general “police overload” explanation. It seemed clear that it was the nature of the murders that was making it difficult to solve them. “In the old days you had lovers’ quarrels or maybe an argument between friends,” Soames explained. “You would usually get the murderer to confess right there on the spot, but now you’ve got nothing to go on. No witnesses, no anguished parents demanding justice, nothing.”

An examination of known circumstances for murders over the last decade supports his statement. (See exhibit 8.) In 1980 police were able to determine the circumstances under which death occurred in 75 percent of their cases, including arguments/altercations (23.5 percent), robbery (19.5 percent), domestic disputes (14 percent), drugs (5.5 percent), burglary (3.5 percent), and police shootings (3.5 percent). By 1989 police were recording the reasons for less than half of their cases: only 39 percent had a known motive or assailant. Even more intriguing, in cases where police could determine neither the reason nor the offender, the majority of victims (76 percent) were black males between the ages of 16 and 39.

Indeed, the rates of homicide among black males was noted with alarm by many groups; these rates were many times higher than those for white males, at every age. (See exhibit 9.) In the last decade, homicide had become the major cause of death among black males, particularly young men between 15 and 19 years of age. (See exhibit 10.) High rates of homicide for other age groups were lower but still significant.

Not only were the victims young, but so were the assailants: the share of murderers under age 18 had tripled in the last five years, from 6 percent in 1986 to 20 percent in 1990. (See exhibit 11.)

With both killers and victims being so young, journalists often tried to portray the killings as a gang problem. Soames remembered trying to explain the situation to a tabloid reporter a month earlier. “Look, kids do everything else dressed alike and traveling in groups, so they commit crimes and do drugs dressed alike and traveling in groups. But that’s got nothing to do with big, formal gangs with initiation rituals, turf staked out, protection rackets, and all the stuff you read about in places like Chicago and Los Angeles. Here in Cornet City, you might have six or eight guys hanging out together for a few months, maybe dealing some drugs or knocking over a liquor store or two. It’s serious stuff, but they don’t hang together for long, and there’s no organized leadership. Maybe we’d have less violence if the kids were

better organized . . . they’d work out their own rules so there would be fewer ‘beefs’ to turn violent. When there *was* a gang hassle that turned violent, you could expect the leaders to work it out like they did after the riots in L.A. Here in Cornet City, no one’s in charge, so there’s no telling what’s going to set off a chain of killings, and it’s awfully hard to turn things around.” Despite this detailed explanation, the day after the interview the headline read: GANG VIOLENCE PLAGUES CORNET CITY, POLICE SAY.

Soames worried about all the publicity and the pressure to solve this murder. Even as he had watched yesterday’s press conference, he’d known that Chief Burnett would be expecting results. He jotted down a few notes and put them in a file marked “WOODS, A.—12/11/90.” He then began to review his other cases, most of them unsolved. “No, we’re just not dealing with the same kinds of cases anymore.”

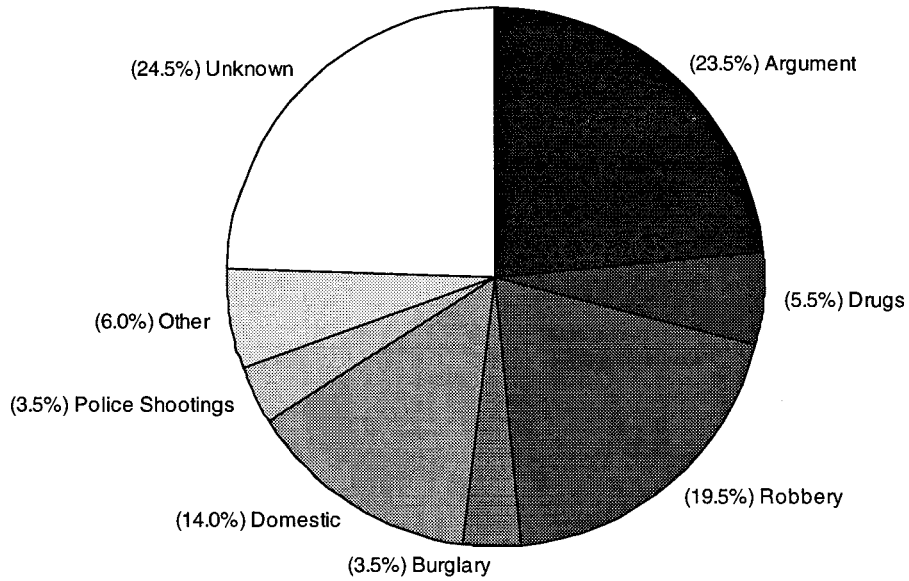
## The View From the Public Health Department

Another person who had watched the mayor’s press conference was Dr. William Freis, commissioner of public health. Freis noted with dismay that the mayor had named representatives of all the usual law enforcement perspectives to the task force: police, courts, prisons. Only two or three people from human services agencies were represented. Freis decided to ask the mayor to be included on the task force.

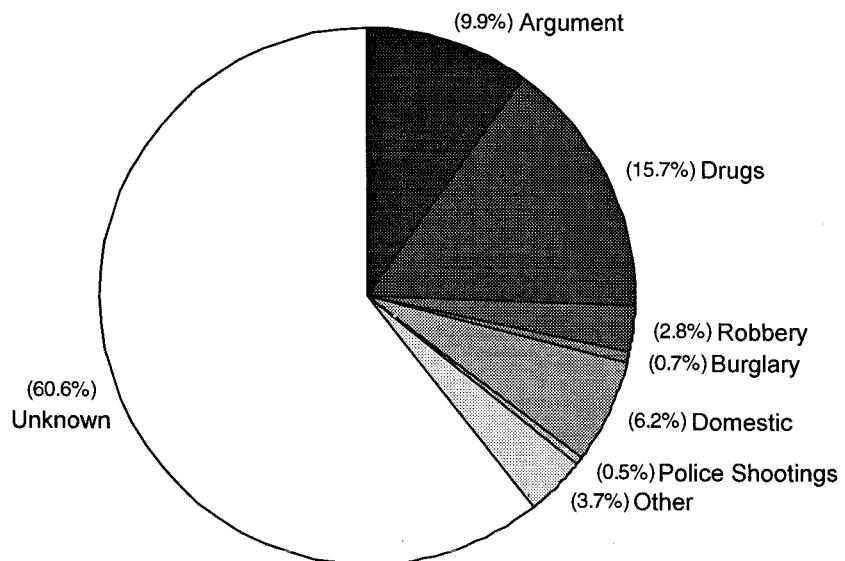
“Mayor Warren,” he began, “there are compelling reasons why I should be part of this initiative. Let me put it to you this way: Last year there were roughly 200 deaths from pneumonia or the flu, and almost 200 deaths from diabetes, but so far this year more people have been victims of homicides than of these other two sources combined. If you consider the flu and diabetes to be serious health problems, why aren’t we looking at homicide as a serious health problem? If the public health community is concerned that 458 people died from tuberculosis, which is preventable, we should be just as concerned that an equal number of our citizens are dying from guns, knives, and beatings. These deaths are also preventable. We need to start looking at the problem of violence differently, as a public health issue and not just a law enforcement issue.”

Freis was part of a growing movement among health professionals to broaden the definition of public health to get the topic of violence into the “mainstream” of public health policy. They argued that the effects of violence have ramifications for the entire Nation. For example, the economic costs of violence include not only expenditures to arrest, try,

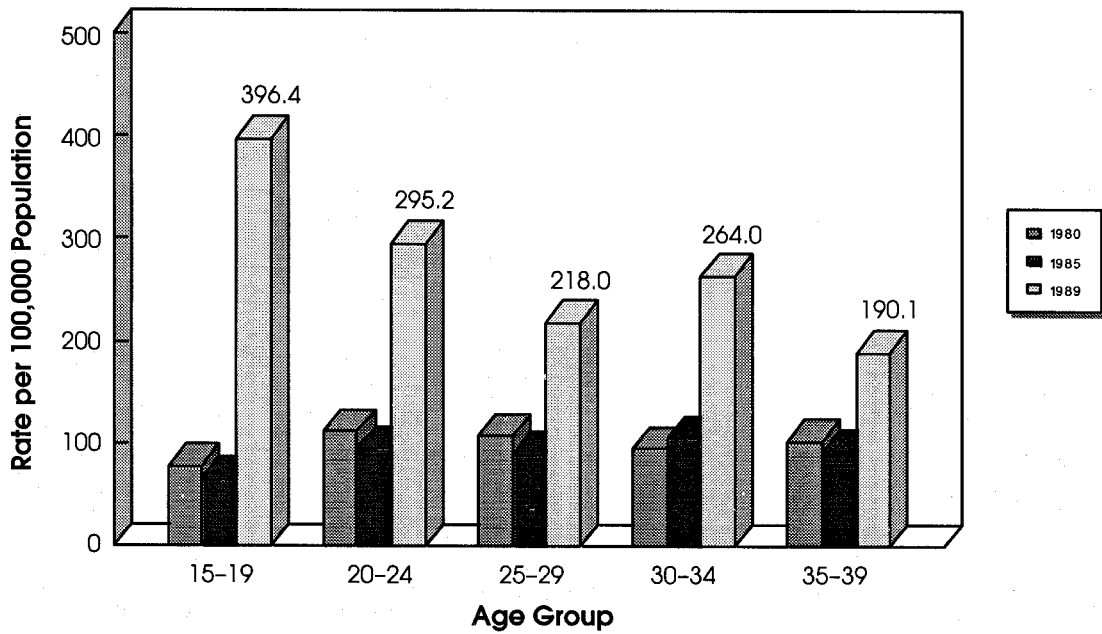
**Exhibit 8:**  
**Homicide Circumstances**  
1980



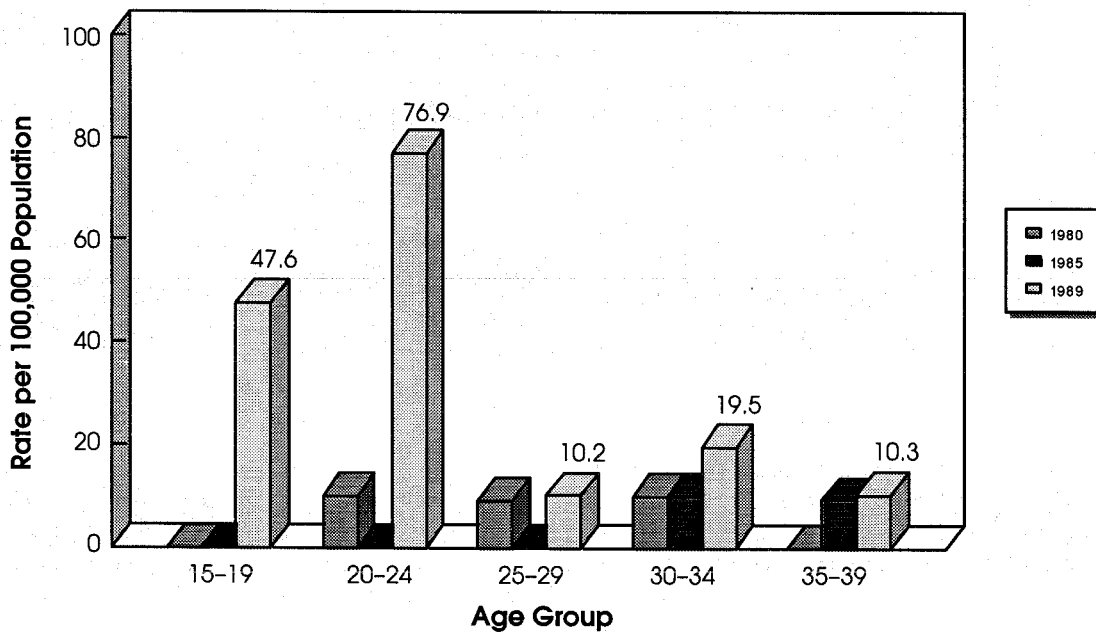
**Homicide Circumstances**  
1989



**Exhibit 9:**  
**Homicide Rates for Black Males**  
 1980, 1985, 1989



**Homicide Rates for White Males**  
 1980, 1985, 1989



**Exhibit 10:**  
**Major Causes of Death in Cornet City**  
**for Adolescents (Aged 15-19)**  
**1980, 1985, 1990**

	<u>Black Males</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Females</u>
<b>1980</b>				
Total Deaths	26	2	10	1
Homicide	18	0	3	0
All Other	8	2	7	1
<b>1985</b>				
Total Deaths	19	2	6	0
Homicide	12	0	2	0
All Other	7	2	4	0
<b>1990</b>				
Total Deaths	84	6	7	1
Homicide	70	5	5	1
All Other	14	1	2	0

**Exhibit 11:**  
**Murder Assailants Under the Age of 18**  
**1986-1990**

<b>1986</b>		<b>1987</b>		<b>1988</b>		<b>1989</b>		<b>1990</b>	
<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
8	6	9	7	26	14	63	19	67	20

and imprison offenders but also the medical and psychiatric care of victims; their lost earnings; and, most important, years of potential life lost. It was estimated that homicides and nonfatal violent injuries cost the Nation \$180 billion in 1990.

In his discussion with the mayor, Freis pointed out that he would like to apply the same epidemiological procedures to address violence as a cause of death as he would to investigate any other disease or condition: "The issues we need to be concerned with are: Whom is this 'disease' of violence

affecting? What are the risk factors? Where is the violence taking place? Are certain groups more affected than others? What are the circumstances surrounding these deaths? What would be the appropriate interventions for each of these circumstances? These are the things we need to be looking at.”

A cursory epidemiological analysis of homicide and violence produced two important observations. First, much of the victimization occurred among black and low-income populations. Freis was concerned that these simple descriptive statistics would be interpreted causally—as confirming the stereotype that African Americans were more violent than whites. He showed, however, that once one controlled for socioeconomic differences between blacks and whites, the racial differences disappeared. This led him to the view that the real explanation for the high rates of violence lay with poverty and inequality instead of race. It was important to know that the worst consequences of violence were accumulating within the African-American community. However, that fact did not constitute evidence that African Americans were inherently more violent than whites: they were neither more nor less violent than whites of a similar socioeconomic status.

Second, although a lot of attention was focused on drug-related murders, in particular the extremely high murder rate among young black males, outside of these special circumstances, most victims were killed by people they knew—very often family members.

“Most family homicides involve spouses and occur in the home,” Freis explained. “Citywide hospital data show that when women are killed by the men in their lives, it’s usually after many, many assaults. Doctors’ offices, clinics, and hospitals are a real flash point. They should be considered sentinel points, because they offer an opportunity for prevention. When we fail to break these cycles of assault, the burden falls back on women.”

An analysis of the relationship of the victim to the offender showed that women were more likely to be killed by a spouse, lover, or other family member, whereas men were more likely to be killed by friends or acquaintances. (See exhibit 12.) Freis continued, “You see, the circumstances of murder are very different, so the strategies would be different. A violence prevention strategy for women, for example, might focus on therapy for their partners, on anger management, or couples therapy.”

Familial abuse wasn’t limited to husbands and wives. The number of Cornet children dying of abuse or neglect had doubled in the last two years: from half a dozen in 1989 to 13 in 1990. The mother was as likely to be the perpetrator as the father. Cornet saw almost 1,800 reported cases of child abuse in that year. At the same time, social service workers could respond only to the most extreme cases: Budget cuts in the Department of Human and Rehabilitative Services had reduced the number of child abuse caseworkers by half. Without the money to hire appropriate staff, the agency had little time for prevention.

**Exhibit 12:**  
**Relationship of Victim to Offender**  
**1993**

<u>Percent of Victims Killed by</u>	<u>Male Victims</u>	<u>Female Victims</u>
Spouse/Lover	6%	30%
Other Family Member	8%	12%
Friend/Acquaintance	45%	25%
Stranger	16%	9%
Unknown	30%	27%

Source: *Understanding and Preventing Violence*, NRC, Table 2.6, p. 80 (1993).

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Freis concluded his pitch, hoping that his frustration wasn't too apparent: "The fact is, the law enforcement system is not adequately addressing the violence issue. It isn't even a question of giving them more resources or whatever, because most violent incidents don't pass through the law enforcement agencies. We have battered women in our hospitals who don't press charges against the men who abuse them, so the police aren't intervening there. We see a lot of children with shaken baby syndrome in our clinics. We've got doctors and teachers and social service people who for whatever reason aren't reporting suspected cases of child abuse, so the police aren't able to protect that population. Mayor Warren, we can't ignore the fact that the health care system sees more preventable violence. There isn't any reason to wait until there's a homicide for the criminal justice system to step in. Then it's too late. You've got to do more than just get additional cops and longer prison terms. That approach isn't going to reach everybody who needs help."

From a practical standpoint it was impossible to ignore violence as a public health issue, because medical professionals were already dealing with the problem. Public medical facilities like the county hospital in Cornet were overwhelmed, for example, with multiple-gunshot-wound cases. These patients, many of whom had no health care, were an additional burden in financial as well as medical terms; hospitals were reeling from the large increase in AIDS patients and a poor population that was often forced to use emergency rooms as a source of primary health care.

Freis had one last request. "I must tell you, Mayor Warren, that I'm surprised that someone representing the schools isn't on the task force. We need to include the schools in this dialog for two basic reasons. First, we have an awful lot of violence taking place in the schools. Second, the schools can be part of the solution: They can teach young people about conflict resolution. I think someone from the school board needs to be represented."

With some misgivings, Mayor Warren appointed Freis to the task force. He was worried that the health commissioner's prescription would require expensive programs that were no longer feasible in the current fiscal climate. Large funding requests by both law enforcement and social service agencies might force a tradeoff between the two approaches or a compromise whereby neither of them would get enough money to do anything effectual.

Warren also agreed to appoint School Board President Monica Reeves to the task force. He hoped this would end the lobbying for inclusion in the task force. Warren could not spend too much time worrying about it, in any case. He had

to make some immediate decisions about which of many community meetings held throughout the city should be attended by task force members and who should testify at the public hearings scheduled for the next three and a half months. One certainty was that Southwood would be a major focus.

## A Community Meeting in Poplar Hills

Lydia Davis had also been making decisions. After being questioned by Detective Soames, she asked for the name of the local district police commander and, after consulting with several neighbors, arranged to meet him at the local church. Because of the publicity surrounding the death of Anita Woods, this was one of the community meetings that task force members had been asked to attend. The prosecutor and Chief Burnett sat quietly in the last pew.

Representing the local precinct was Captain Michael McDougal, a 22-year veteran of the Cornet City Police Department (CCPD) who had found himself attending a lot of community meetings in the last few years. His approach was never to make excuses for the police but to present residents with all of the facts. He began his meeting with Davis and her neighbors by talking about the lack of resources in the police department.

"I know you probably don't want to hear this, but resources are the number-one reason why we can't do as much as we want and what really needs to be done in your neighborhood—or any other for that matter. Last month we only had 7 cruisers out of 19 available, because the others were either in the shop or had been totaled in accidents.

" . . . Then there's the problem with not enough police officers. Every neighborhood is asking for more officers on the beat, more foot patrols. But my number-one priority is to make sure we have the ability to respond quickly to a crime in any part of this district. Sometimes I only have half the force available to me at any one time—officers are either out injured, or they're on maternity leave, whatever. If I only have a handful at rollcall, I can't put two officers on foot in this area, because if we get a call all the way over on Wyckoff [several miles away], there's no way they can get over there as fast as a squad car."

It wasn't just cars that were outdated or insufficient in number. The bulk of the paperwork was still done by hand. There were very few computers, and no money available in the police budget to buy more. Indeed, there was no attempt

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by the top brass at CCPD to develop a strategy to show how and why this new technology would bring efficiency and more time for actual law enforcement. Officers complained that even though they might want to clear a particular street corner of drug dealers, they were reluctant to do so when the arrestee had often paid the fine for “incommoding” and was back on the street before the paperwork had been completed.

Teams of foot patrolmen were sometimes sent out with one walkie-talkie between them. This could be extremely dangerous if they had to pursue a suspect on foot and became separated. Officers complained that Cornet was “in the Stone Age” compared with other cities as far as crime-fighting technology was concerned. In cities on the West Coast, for example, they had portable machines that could take fingerprints on the scene and immediately identify suspects with prior criminal records. Cornet officers said there were times when they could not serve a warrant because they could not prove that the person standing before them was the one they sought; the suspect naturally denied being that person.

Resources were especially lacking for the kind of long-term investigation needed to incapacitate a drug operation. First, there were only a handful of undercover officers available. With so many citizens complaining about street-corner drug trafficking, the police department decided that a high-visibility “buy-bust” was necessary politically, even if it was futile from a law enforcement perspective. At least the police could say that they had made a certain number of raids in a given locality. They could not be accused of doing nothing. Because CCPD lacked the surveillance equipment necessary for a long-term investigation, officers even used their own video cameras to do police work.

Police officers were frustrated and cynical, and so was the public, which felt besieged and frightened not only by the violent criminals but also by corrupt police officers. In 1990 there were an unprecedented number of indictments of police officers, for crimes that included drug distribution, robbery, and murder. The increase in corruption was attributed to a confluence of factors. First, hundreds of officers were hired in the 1980’s without any background check; not surprisingly, many had criminal records. Second, a policy change during that time meant that a prior criminal record was no longer justification for disqualification for police work. Third, both the length of training and its content had been reduced significantly. The combination of youth and poor training was at the root of many of the department’s problems. At the same time that there was an influx of young, inexperienced officers, many of the department’s most experienced people were retiring. There weren’t enough senior officers who could be partnered with new recruits. The net

result was low morale on the force and a public that distrusted the police and believed it to be thoroughly corrupt. The subject of “bad cops” was one of the first raised in the meeting with McDougal.

“We got a cop who patrols right in this neighborhood, and I swear there’s something funny about him,” said Leonard Francis. “Just the other day I saw him over here on his private time—it must have been, because he wasn’t wearing his uniform—but he was talkin’ to those drug boys in broad daylight. You can’t tell me somethin’ isn’t goin’ on with that. You scared to even trust the police, ’cause half of ’em are in on all this mess.” Several people agreed.

“Make no mistake,” McDougal stated, “there are some bad cops out there. If you have some information, please give it to us, and we’ll have our special investigations unit look into it.” Francis thought to himself that he wasn’t going to give any information to anybody and end up dead in an alley.

McDougal continued, “But one thing that I really want to stress in this meeting is that we need the help of the community. The police can’t be everywhere at once, and the only way we can start to solve these problems is if the law-abiding citizens help us. We need your help. If you have information, please let us know about it. Maybe you see certain cars constantly stopping at a particular house. Well, you can write down the tag number, the date, the time, pass that information on to our vice unit. The more information we have, the better the evidence we can get to lock these guys up.”

A man in the back of the room, Dennis Pettibone, stood and pointed at McDougal angrily. He said, “I can’t believe you’re comin’ in here and tellin’ us to snitch on our own people. People in the community should refuse to get involved with cops. If you-all were serious about stoppin’ this drug problem, you could do it. Black people don’t own the planes that bring the drugs into this country. Black people don’t own the gun shops in Virginia where all these weapons are comin’ from. My personal opinion is that this society *wants* black people out here sellin’ drugs and killin’ each other over a piece of rock, and if we don’t kill each other off, then the police are right there to do it for us. You askin’ us to help you lock up more black men, more young black men? No, I don’t think so.”

Another resident entered the fray: “Now wait a minute Denny. I can understand what you’re saying about the police brutality and all, but one thing you’re forgetting is that these black people are out here killing other black people.” The observation was correct: 93 percent of black victims were killed by other black people; the rate for whites killing other whites was 86 percent.



He continued, "I agree with you that if all this drug abuse and murder was happening to whites then they would have solved it yesterday."

"You got that right," said Pettibone. "It's just like with the AIDS thing. As long as it was only killin' off gay people and people in Africa and poor blacks and Puerto Ricans here, nobody cared, but now that you got these celebrities and other famous people dyin', all of a sudden everybody's got all this sympathy for AIDS people. . . . I *do* want all this foolishness in the community to stop, and I'm willin' to get involved. The only thing is I don't want to give any evidence no matter *what* I see, because I'm scared of retaliation."

Getting tangible evidence and witnesses was a major problem in the prosecution of drug trafficking and other crimes. A review of the cases dismissed after an initial decision to

prosecute showed that an exceedingly high proportion were dropped because of evidence or witness problems. (See exhibits 13 and 14.) For example, in 1974 only 1 percent of victimless crimes including drug trafficking were dismissed for evidence problems; and 2 percent, for witness problems. By 1990 26 percent of victimless crimes were being dismissed for evidence-related reasons; and 24 percent, for witness-related reasons. These trends held for robbery and other violent crimes.

McDougal conceded, however, that there was good reason for citizens to be wary of testifying in drug cases. The intimidation and murder of witnesses was now common. "I can understand how the people in this neighborhood would be afraid to come forward with information," he told those at the meeting. "I don't know exactly how to fix the problem, but I know there has got to be some remedy available."

### Exhibit 13:

#### Cases Dismissed Because of Evidence Problems\* 1974, 1990

<u>Type of Crime</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1990</u>
Robbery	2%	19%
Other Violent (Homicide, Rape, Assault)	1%	36%
Victimless (Drugs, Gambling, Sex Offenses)	1%	26%

\* Cases dismissed after initial acceptance by prosecutor.

### Exhibit 14:

#### Cases Dismissed Because of Witness Problems\* 1974, 1990

<u>Type of Crime</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1990</u>
Robbery	20%	43%
Other Violent (Homicide, Rape, Assault)	33%	58%
Victimless (Drugs, Gambling, Sex Offenses)	2%	24%

\* Cases dismissed after initial acceptance by prosecutor.

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A woman in the front row spoke up. "You know, it's not just in these drug cases that people don't think the police do any good or can protect you. The woman who used to live next door to me was beaten for years by her husband. The police would come, but they wouldn't do anything—just tell him to go out and cool off or stupid things like that. She couldn't get a restraining order or anything. She eventually had to move because the man would not stay away. Lord, I remember that man would beat her something terrible, and the police wouldn't do anything about it. I mean, you may not know how to protect people against drug dealers, but you should be able to protect a woman against somebody right in her own home who is trying to hurt her or kill her."

"You're right, ma'am, the laws used to be really inadequate, but now we have special procedures for domestic violence cases. We don't even necessarily have to have the woman herself sign a complaint against him. If the officer sees that the woman is bruised and the house is all torn up, he can make the arrest based on his own judgment."

Although their meeting with Captain McDougal did not satisfy Davis and her neighbors completely, some good did result from it. They got to know one of the officers personally and were willing to provide information on suspicious vehicles and other events in the neighborhood. This led to several raids and the closing of three crack houses. Once residents saw that their reports would be treated confidentially and that the police would respond to them, they were even more willing to work with the police. They began talking seriously about starting a neighborhood patrol group.

Police Chief Burnett and David Silver, the chief prosecutor, felt they had learned a great deal at the meeting and were eager to have other task force members hear some of the arguments that had been made. They asked Davis and some of her neighbors to attend the public hearings once they got under way. Davis and the neighbors were eager to do so.

"It's about time the mayor started paying attention," said Martha Heywood. "It's just too bad they always wait for something bad to happen."

## The Mayor's Charge to the Task Force

Mayor Warren sat at the head of the conference table. This was the task force's first executive session. It was being held just two days after the press conference.

"I want to welcome you all and inform you that there are two additional members. First, we have Dr. William Freis, the

head of all our health services, and the president of the school board, Monica Reeves." Each nodded on being introduced. "I am happy to have them join us in this important task of finding a solution to the problem of violence in this city.

"Let me remind you all once more why you have been appointed to this body.

"This task force has 100 days to tell the law-abiding people in this city what, based on your experience and that of other experts in various fields, Cornet City needs to do. My charge to all of you," the mayor continued, "is to give me real, honest opinions. Lay aside any fear you have of being criticized by me or the public or anyone else. This is not a political problem, so please don't give me political answers. Our first hearing is next week, and I want to make it clear from the start that this task force is serious. Remember that we must act in the public interest.

"Your first duty is to listen to the people. Go to the community meetings, to the churches, to the PTA meetings. Meet with the owners of the small grocery stores and the taxi drivers. And I want you to *listen* to what they have to say. Find out what it's like out there from the average person's perspective. I especially want you to go to the most distressed parts of this city and find out the conditions people are living under. I believe some of you already went out there to Southwood, where the young woman was gunned down."

Police Chief Burnett responded. "Yes, Mayor Warren. I was down there and so was Mr. Silver."

"Good. That's exactly what we need, to hear from the people who are coping with this on a daily basis.

"The other part of your duty as a member of this task force is to hear public testimony from a range of individuals, both professionals and lay people, average citizens, on various aspects of the violence issue. Your first hearing takes place next Monday, at the Municipal Building.

"Finally, I want you to conduct a very careful review of prior initiatives, both here in Cornet and in other States, to combat violence. Find out what has been tried, what has been successful, and why. Tell me whether it can be done here in our city and how. I want specifics on what can be done at a citywide level, at the community level, down to the neighborhood level, and down to the family level. You will have a day-long briefing in preparation for this review.

"I expect your final report to be candid. Are there any questions? No? Then let's get to work. Your first hearing starts next Monday, as I understand it. I'll hear from you in 100 days."

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## Part II

# Developing a Citywide Response

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### The Public Hearing

The first public hearing was called to order four days later in a small room in the Municipal Building. Reporters had been allowed to attend, but not television crews. Deputy Mayor John Canady opened the proceedings.

“All of the people in this room are concerned about crime and want to do something. The mayor and I, and the members of this task force, are equally concerned. We are all here today to try to find out the dimensions of this seemingly intractable problem, its causes, and, we hope, some solutions. This is the first of four public hearings, part of an open process to get every member of every community involved in this. We have been listening to and talking with community activists, religious leaders, representatives from homeless shelters and shelters for battered women, police, everyone.

“We all want to create change, but we need to do it in an informed way. Before we act we must understand. Before we spend taxpayer money, we need to know what’s already been done and what works. Only then can we make wise decisions.

“Each of the people brought here today will provide testimony on how he or she sees the problem of crime and drugs. I want to remind everyone in the room that one of the reasons we limited the number of people who could attend—and the mayor and I got a lot of flak for that—[was] that we wanted this to be a real give-and-take session. We want those of you in the audience to feel free to approach the mike over there with your questions or your comments, and please, we are all on the same side. It may not seem like it, but we are. Let’s try to listen to each other and sort this out together.”

The first person to testify was Officer Constance Yarborough, a 32-year-old black woman who had been on the force for three years. The mayor had made a specific request to hear from lower-level police officers to get a sense of what was happening on the front lines. Yarborough had been working with the residents of Sector 4C10 on improving conditions in the neighborhood.

“I want to thank you all for the opportunity to testify at this hearing. I agree with the mayor that it’s important that we all work together to solve this problem. One thing I can tell you is that the police department cannot solve the problem. We need the members of the community to help us, otherwise these problems are gonna be here forever.

“I’m just gonna tell you what it’s like from the perspective of the beat cop who is out there on a day-to-day basis dealing with crime and other problems in our city. When I walk into a neighborhood and I see guys hangin’ out on the street, let me tell you, I want to get them off the corner. I grew up in a neighborhood just like the one I patrol right now. Most of the people in the neighborhood are nice people. They raised their kids right, and they keep their houses up and everything. So when I see a bunch of guys out there hangin’ on the corner it does make me mad, ’cause I know they’re out there sellin’ drugs, and they’re rowdy, and they’re all packin’ too. Does everybody know what that means?” She looked at the audience. “No? Well, *packin’* means that they’re carryin’ guns. Now, I’m not saying that to frighten anybody, but you just need to know that those boys out there who seem kinda harmless, well, they are the ones out here killing people.

“When I come into a neighborhood, and I see them hangin’ out on the corner, I can’t just tell them to move on. Sometimes they’ll leave on their own, but most of the time they’ll just stay there and wait for me to leave, but if I stay there or try to talk to them, usually they’re gonna get abusive. They’ll say things like, Why don’t you stop harassin’ me, you’re only doin’ it ’cause I’m a black man. They tell me that I wouldn’t be saying anything to people over in the Brockwood section of town. Sometimes they’ll go around the corner and throw things at me from beside a building, try to hit me with a bottle or something. Police work is not easy, it’s not a picnic. It’s dangerous.

“The only law that I can use to get these guys off the streets is what they call the incommoding statute. Under that law they have to be blocking the sidewalk in such a way that

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pedestrians can't get by. In addition, I can only arrest someone for incommoding if there's a citizen complaint. So do you see what I'm saying? Somebody in the neighborhood has to call the dispatcher and say, There's a bunch of guys on Forten Street, and they're blocking the sidewalk so I can't get by. Then I can come around and arrest them, but I can't, as a police officer, charge them with incommoding.

"Now, how many citizens in a neighborhood are willing to register a formal complaint about the guys hangin' out on the streets? None, right? I can understand that, because like I said before, these guys are ruthless, and they have guns. But then that puts me as a police officer in a real box, because I come into the neighborhood and I'm perceived as the bad guy. Even the law-abiding citizens won't speak to me. They don't want to be seen conversing with me because probably they're scared of retaliation. Then when a crime is committed and I come around and try to get information, nobody saw anything. I find it really frustrating sometimes, because you know that the person who won't give you any information about a murder across the street from them, that is the same person who is gonna criticize you and the police department if *their* child gets killed and the police can't find out any information. It's a no-win situation for us.

"Another thing that I really want people to understand is that even if I make an arrest, it's up to the prosecutor's office to decide if they want to try that case, so if I arrest somebody for distribution of crack cocaine, and the person only has a couple of rocks on them, after I go to all this trouble of arresting the guy and filling out the paperwork, the D.A. tells me that the amount of drugs is too small, so they want to charge the person with possession rather than distribution, so they end up plea-bargaining and the person is out on the street again. As a cop, you're not gonna do that too many times, because you're wasting your time. What happens is you at least try to stop the blatant stuff.

"Most of the time I'm not on foot patrol anyway because I have to be in the squad car. One night only three people showed up for rollcall—three people. We had to cover the entire sector, so they put each of us in a squad car. There was nobody available to patrol on foot that night. I hear the people in the neighborhoods often complaining about the lack of foot patrols, but I just want you to understand that we take our orders from the desk sergeant, and if he or she says I gotta be in the patrol car, then I can't tell them, Oh, I promised that neighborhood patrol group in Sector 4C10 that I would walk with them tonight.

"While we're talking about those groups, I just wanna say that I think they're great. I know this is gonna sound weird,

but the truth is I feel safer when I'm in a neighborhood where there's people out patrolling." There was a burst of laughter from the audience.

"I'm not saying I want them to protect me or anything," Officer Yarborough continued, smiling, "but just that I feel better about the neighborhood. I know that the people are at least trying to do something to make the place better, and I know that I can count on them to call the police for help if they see me in trouble. A few weeks ago I had to patrol in a different neighborhood, and I got into an altercation with this guy. Well, I was out patrolling by myself that night—which is not at all unusual—and so I had radioed for help and had to struggle with this guy while I was waitin' for backup. Well, there were people around on the streets in that neighborhood, and not one of them did anything to help me. I mean, I wouldn't expect them to jump in or anything, but they didn't express any kind of concern or anything. I later found out that there were no calls to the station that night saying that a police officer was being attacked.

"Anyway, that's how I ended up with this broken wrist, and I know that in my regular patrol neighborhood this would not have happened. I know that some of the people from there would have called the police or screamed or thrown rocks at the guy or something to try to help me out. This is the kind of relationship that we need between the police and the public. Police officers are just like everybody else. They have kids and families. They like to watch television and have cookouts. I have one child myself, and although I do sometimes feel conflicted about my job, I really like this work, I think it's important. I always wanted to be a police officer, but it wasn't until I was in my late twenties that I decided to follow that dream.

"When the system works, you feel really great about your job, but when it doesn't work, . . . well, this job is very stressful.

"I just want to close by reminding every person in this room that society is only as good as the people who are in it, and if all of us don't try to make things better, one day we're just gonna have chaos—just pure chaos. That has already happened in a lot of neighborhoods, and sometimes even the cops don't care because they think that the people who live there don't care. If you want the system to work for you, you have got to get out there and complain to the captains and the police chief and the mayor. You've got to let them know that you just don't want to live like this anymore. Thank you."

The next person to testify was Judge Carolyn Frazier. Judge Frazier had been on the bench for over 10 years, and had a reputation for being tough but fair.

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“I’m really glad to be taking part in this hearing, which I think will be really illuminating. I hope that as I hear from some of the other people testifying I will gain a better understanding of the kids—and the adults—I see in my courtroom. The fact is, when these kids don’t get what they need, for whatever reasons, from their parents, from their schools, from their communities, and from the police department and probation officers, I am the person left to deal with them, and I see the same faces again and again, since about 70 percent of people arrested are repeat offenders.

“I think that we have been thinking about and writing about these problems for a while now, and I think that researchers and social scientists and citizens in this city and in the country have pretty much figured out what the problems are that have led to the violence that permeates our society. I think things really began to change in 1985/86, when crack started coming into Cornet. Unquestionably, that was the start. You had this significant influx of people from the big cities because of the enormous sums of money that could be made here. You had this infiltration from New York, from Miami, from D.C., and other places, and as a result you had turf wars. That’s when the homicide rate in this city began to skyrocket.

“Another cause for the lethal environment is the availability of high-powered weapons. The NRA can talk all it wants about how guns don’t kill people, people kill people. The fact is that *people with guns* kill people.” There was a burst of applause. “The criminal element in our city is better equipped than the police. They have higher-caliber weapons, and they have more of them. The criminals even have bulletproof vests. There are people in these drug operations whose sole job is to kill people. They are enforcers.

“The people involved in the drug trade today, whether they’re the street-level dealers or the suppliers and their lieutenants or the enforcers, they have this total lack of respect for human life. The drug culture breeds this callousness. Some of the kids involved are really hardened and inured to violence because they grew up with it. It’s learned behavior.

“Another very important factor is that so many of the young black males have no sense of self-esteem, and traditionally, or should I say historically, there has always been a certain level of violence among black males, because so often it is the only way of proving one’s manhood. The homicide rate among black males in general, and the young ones in particular, is phenomenally high. A lot of people only look at the number of kids aged 15 to 19 who are being killed, but I can tell you that this holds for almost all ages. Homicide is the leading cause of death among black males of nearly all ages.

“We live in a society where the quote, real men, unquote, are those who have power. Power is essentially defined as having control over people and having lots of money. Now, there are legitimate ways of acquiring lots of money, but there are prerequisites. Education is one route, because the more education you have the better your chances of earning a good living, but many of these kids are dropping out of school. Black men have attained fame and fortune through sports and the entertainment business but obviously not everybody is going to be a Magic Johnson or a Michael Jackson, and when you stop to consider the controversies that these two famous black men are now embroiled in, they aren’t such clear role models anymore.

“So that leaves only a few legitimate ways to make money—those basic nine-to-five jobs, the kinds of jobs that don’t pay a lot and the ones young people today despise. Of course, the level of opportunity for blacks in Cornet, and throughout this society, has always been less than what was available for other groups. What is new is that the drug trade gives these young men the chance to earn a lot of money and to live the kind of life they see depicted everywhere. They become much more willing to murder people to protect these new economic interests.

“Probably the single most important contributor to the violence that now plagues this city is the deterioration of the family, and especially the unavailability of fathers. I am telling you from personal experience that good fathers have a stabilizing influence. I remember when I was growing up, I had a brother who suddenly started getting into trouble. Our father was working two jobs because he had lost a position at the factory that had closed down, and so he had to take *two* janitorial positions to make ends meet. Well, my brother, who is a few years younger than I, started acting out for some reason: coming home late, being disrespectful to our mother. He was hanging out with a pretty rough crew and, I later found out, was carrying a gun. Our father was coming in really late at night and was getting tired of hearing these stories from me and my mother about what Bobbie had done.

“Well, one day my brother had just gone over the line. I forget exactly what he did, but my father had a heart-to-heart with him, told Bobbie he just wasn’t going to tolerate that kind of behavior, and my brother was gonna have to straighten up and fly right or else. And my brother did.

“The offenders who come before me in court are different. I can tell you that. They have no remorse. There is a seeming indifference to the value of human life. It is chilling, and the younger they are, the more potentially violent they are. When you have a 12-year-old or a 13-year-old who has already

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killed two or three people, there is no way of making that child understand the seriousness of what he or she has done. They haven't developed emotionally or spiritually to the point where they understand what they've done. They have no concept of the future. They don't understand the idea of change or hope. They are, after all, children. They're emotionally younger than their stated years—they're really 6 or 7 emotionally, not 12 or 13, and you know how hard it is to make a 6-year-old understand what *next year* means.

"It's clear to me and to all judges that people are really fed up with crime. Citizens are tired of living in fear. They want the criminals in prison no matter how young they might be. It is tempting for judges to be influenced by this pressure, but I think that most of us, wisely, do not feel it's our role to be crime fighters. Most of us see ourselves as upholders of the law. I certainly see myself that way. I have to look at the facts of each case and the evidence before me. Then I have to use my experience and my judgment to determine what would be fair, what would be a just outcome for the perpetrator and for his or her victim. I've heard people say they think judges are too soft on criminals. There are probably some judges out there who see themselves as social workers and are more lenient, but I don't think most judges are like that or should be like that.

"Obviously, though, there are a lot of weaknesses in our criminal justice system. The main reason that so many criminals are set free is that prosecutors have too many cases and cannot adequately prepare for them. When I started out as a prosecutor, each of us had maybe 50 cases to deal with, on average. Today's prosecutors have twice that many—and those are the *senior* prosecutors, who have the lightest work load. Those who are doing their rotations in the criminal division can have 150 cases to prosecute.

"Even if they have more time to prepare their cases, they have problems getting witnesses. The law-abiding citizen is not going to testify in a drug case, because the possibility of retaliation is real. The only witnesses left are usually people who are themselves involved in illegal activity. They are unsavory people and lack general credibility with a jury.

"Prosecutors sometimes lose cases because evidence is legally inadmissible. The police officer doesn't fully understand search and seizure laws or the rules of evidence, so I have on occasion had to exclude incriminating evidence that would probably [have led] to conviction. Some of you out there are probably thinking: Why can't you just look the other way? You know the person is guilty, or at least you think you do. How can you just let this person back out on the streets?

"I can tell you that it's hard to do. I once had to suppress evidence of a gun. I hated to do it. The case was being handled by a young prosecutor, and he broke the chain of custody in handling a gun seized at the crime scene. Because of that, I couldn't allow it into testimony. It would be totally inappropriate, not to mention dangerous to the very foundation of our judicial system, for me to let my personal feelings or frustrations influence my interpretation of the law.

"I understand how the public can get so frustrated they almost don't care about legalities and principles and procedures. I think that frustration leads us to use the political process to change the judicial process in order to solve social problems. I think that's why the minimum sentences for drug cases were legislated. For a long time judges did not appear to take these drug distribution cases seriously. Since they didn't live in communities where this was going on, judges didn't have a sense of how destructive this activity was to neighborhoods. Judges were giving out these very light sentences, and communities saw these dealers being repeatedly sent back to them with what seemed like a slap on the wrist. Citizens expressed their outrage to the politicians, and that's how we got these very stiff penalties for drug crimes.

"I must confess to you that I am extremely uneasy with the mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses. I have real philosophical problems, because these minimums do not allow you to actually judge the case and its particularities. I have seen some injustices. There was the case of a young woman who got hooked on crack. She lost her job. She eventually lost her kids to Child Protective Services—her life was just completely centered on getting this drug, and she did whatever she had to, to achieve that end.

"Well, she racked up some pretty substantial debts with this dealer. He had beat her up and was threatening to kill her if she didn't come up with some way of paying the money she owed. She worked out this deal with him where she agreed to transport some drugs for him. She was instructed to meet someone at the train station in the District of Columbia, which is a major drug corridor, and the drugs were to be passed to her in an overnight bag.

"She was caught. She had a very significant quantity of drugs on her. Now the woman was being prosecuted in Federal Court, and she was facing a minimum of 10 years. This is her first offense, but that doesn't matter. She is a drug user, but that doesn't matter. It seems to me that what this woman really needs—what she needed all along—is treatment. Instead the courts are treating her the same way as the person who's really high up in the drug hierarchy—the really bad

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person, the dealer or distributor. Actually, the higher-up person gets better treatment, because he has information on all his enemies that he can offer to the prosecutor to get a sentence discount.

“I don’t see how 10 years in prison benefits this woman or society. We’re going to spend tens of thousands of dollars each year to incarcerate her. Her children are probably going to end up in the foster care system, at a cost of tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars. Some of the children will probably end up in the same situation as their mother, and the cycle continues.

“I don’t want you to think that the courts are hopeless, that the system is poisoned fatally, but I do want to sound the alarm that things *will* fall apart, the center *will not* hold if we do not address some of the issues that are undermining our judicial system and our society. Thank you.”

Lydia Davis was clapping and shaking her head at the same time. The more she heard, the more depressed she became. To her right she saw one of her neighbors standing at the microphone.

“What I want to say is not really a question, just a comment, and that is that even though I would want to tell the police about some of the things I see, testifying maybe, I think it is too dangerous out there. There was this one woman a few blocks from here, she was beat up bad by her own son because she had to tell about the drugs that her boy was putting in the basement of her house. Now, I don’t know if the mother was herself involved, but if these boys are going to beat up their own flesh and blood, then I don’t see why they would really hesitate to hurt or even kill somebody else.”

“Yes, I think you’re right,” Frazier responded. “The intimidation and murder of witnesses is really destroying the integrity of the system. The people in the community, people like you, feel there is total anarchy and that the judicial system affords no protection for those few brave people who are willing to testify in a drug case. We need to take a comprehensive look at witness protection programs and other ways to help these people, and we need to have remedies that fall somewhere between telling the witness to dial 911 if he threatens you at one end of the spectrum, and you have to quit your job, change your name, move to Idaho, and never contact your family again at the other end.

“I think another reason people in the community don’t want to get involved is that there is a fundamental distrust of prosecutors. The D.A.’s office needs to do what the police department has done: community outreach. The chief pros-

ecutor needs to do what the police chief has done: go to the churches, the community meetings, the schools. And there needs to be a systemic link to the community—maybe mentor programs—so that prosecutors could get to know kids from the community and vice versa. In the State just west of us the D.A. has a public relations office. And it would of course help if more minorities were hired.”

The next person to testify was the warden of the State prison. Joseph Alston was a burly man with close-cropped hair and a trim mustache. “With all due respect to Judge Frazier,” he began, “I’m the last one to deal with the people who end up in the criminal justice system, and the number of people in that system keeps growing and growing and growing.” There was laughter as people caught the allusion to a well-known commercial.

“In 1985 there were a total of 20,521 people in Cornet City who were either in jail, in prison, on probation, or on parole. That was 4 percent of the entire adult population of this city, and that was the highest rate for any similar jurisdiction in the entire country.

“In 1990, just five years later, Cornet again ranked highest in the country for percentage of the population in jail, in prison, on parole, or on probation: more than 5 percent of the adult population. This is twice the national average. This is 1 out of every 20 adults.” (See exhibit 15.)

“While the number of prisoners has been increasing steadily, the space for housing them has not. There are 11 facilities available, and they are all at or near capacity. Nine of them are under Federal Court order or consent decree to hire more staff and improve conditions or because they are overcrowded.

“It is costing the taxpayer \$14,000 to house each inmate each year. That’s more than \$100 million. People say that we need more prison space, but people also say they don’t want to pay higher taxes.

“Some of you may have the idea that prisons are these real nice places, like country clubs, where inmates sit around playing pool and watching TV. That may be the case for the prisons they send politicians and rich people to, to do their time but not for the typical Cornet offender. Almost 20 percent of them are in a maximum-security environment. About 68 percent are in medium-security facilities, and only about 21 percent are in minimum-security areas.

“What are they doing while they’re incarcerated? There are some services available, but they’re very limited. Some

### Exhibit 15:

## Cornet Population in Correctional Care, Custody, or Control 1985, 1990

Year	Total	Population in				% of Total Adult Population
		Jail	Probation	Prison	Parole	
1985	20,521	*	11,777	6,404	2,340	4.2
1990	25,354	1,629	9,742	8,637	5,346	5.17

\* Included in prison category.

Source: *Correctional Populations in the U.S., 1985; Correctional Population in the U.S., 1990.*  
U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

prisoners get treatment for alcoholism and drug dependency. About 12 percent get psychiatric or psychological counseling. They'll see a therapist maybe once a week, or every two weeks, for an hour. Another 10 percent or so get job training or counseling. I can tell you that the demand for these services is much greater than the supply.

"Most of the people in the prison system are repeat offenders. This may be the first occasion when they have served time, but it's not the first time they've been arrested or convicted of a crime. Whatever it is we are doing or not doing before they get to the point of imprisonment, I can tell you that what happens in prison doesn't seem to be working either. When we release them, they are either substantially unchanged, or they're worse than when they come in.

"One thing we really need to look at is the juvenile detention facilities. These places were built two or three decades ago when a young person got sent there for, say, joyriding or playing hooky from school, and the philosophy back then was you send them away for a couple of weeks, put some sense into them by having them stay at this very regimented, strict environment, and then they would go back home to become law-abiding citizens. Well, those are not the kinds of juveniles we are locking up today.

"These kids are extremely violent. We don't have the physical security or the staff who can handle violent types. These kids don't stay for a few weeks: some of them come in at 13 or 14, they've committed murder, and they'll be there until they're 18 years old. If you think that the adult inmates aren't

getting much in the way of treatment, even less is being done with the juveniles. They have GED classes, some of them are getting counseling once a week maybe, but other than that they're just sitting around every day.

"One of the decisions we need to make as a society is what we expect from incarceration. Do we want to focus on punishment or on rehabilitation, and what do we mean by *rehabilitation*, and, most important, how much are we willing to pay for it? We're already spending \$100 million a year, and maybe we need to do a little cost-benefit analysis to determine exactly what we're getting for our money. Thank you."

The next person to offer testimony was Dr. Marie Banfield, a social worker with the Department of Human and Rehabilitative Services. She began with some sobering statistics. "Last year we had 474 homicides, but we lost more than the 474 people who were killed. We lost almost 10,000 years of potential life." (See exhibit 16.) "We lost 10,000 years of creativity perhaps. This community has lost 10,000 years of productivity, and then you need to consider that the deaths of these people—most of them young black males—is a loss to hundreds and even thousands of others—the mothers, fathers, wives, siblings that they leave behind. Some of these murdered men were fathers, and now their children have got to grow up without them. This means more households headed by single young mothers.

"In the city of Cornet, almost *two-thirds* of all infants are born to single women. In addition, almost 20 percent of the women



**Exhibit 16:**  
**Years of Potential Life Lost**  
1980, 1985, 1989

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>White Male</u>	<u>White Female</u>	<u>Black Male</u>	<u>Black Female</u>
1980	5,118	4,005	1,113	4,675	443	293	150	3,713	963
1985	4,645	3,953	693	4,415	230	203	28	3,750	665
1989	9,230	8,210	1,020	8,735	495	407	88	7,803	933

Source: Age-Adjusted Mortality and Years of Potential Life Lost, by Race and Sex, City of Cornet: 1980-1989.

giving birth today are teenagers under the age of 20.” (See exhibit 17.) “Now, I’m not saying that *single* motherhood in and of itself means failure for a child or societal chaos, nor is *young* motherhood in and of itself a problem if the woman has a social network that gives her emotional and financial support. What makes single motherhood problematic is that single mothers tend to be poorer than mothers who are married. This is logical, since married couples can have two incomes, and even on one income men usually earn more

than women. Young motherhood also is a problem because generally such women have attained a low educational status—a high school diploma at best. From an economic standpoint, the more education you have, the more earning power you have, so when you have children being born into situations where they are already disadvantaged economically and perhaps emotionally, it isn’t surprising that you end up with troubled youths.

**Exhibit 17:**  
**Vital Statistics of Infants**  
1981-1990

	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>
Live Births	9,332	9,378	9,524	9,549	9,840	10,043	10,178	10,514	11,567	11,806
Born to single women	5,487	5,317	5,467	5,577	5,737	5,785	6,086	6,487	7,680	7,686
Percent	58.8%	56.7%	57.4%	58.4%	58.3%	57.6%	59.8%	61.7%	66.4%	65.1%
Born to women < 20 yrs.	1,950	1,847	1,791	1,747	1,752	1,707	1,659	1,840	2,094	2,101
Percent	20.9%	19.7%	18.8%	18.3%	17.8%	17.0%	16.3%	17.5%	18.1%	17.8%
Low birth weight	1,204	1,210	1,400	1,222	1,299	1,225	1,384	1,504	1,862	1,712
Percent	12.9%	12.9%	14.7%	12.8%	13.2%	12.2%	13.6%	14.3%	16.1%	14.5%
Infant Deaths	211	190	173	202	204	211	199	244	267	237
Rate per 100	22.6%	20.3%	18.2%	21.2%	20.7%	21.0%	19.6%	23.2%	23.1%	20.1%

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“The young men and women who end up in the morgue or in jail usually start out in some part of the social service system. They are neglected as children. Some of them have been abused physically and sexually. They grow up knowing violence and force as the only instruments for getting what they need. I remember interviewing one kid, and I asked if he had ever been the victim of violence when he was growing up, and he said no. Well, when I began asking other questions, he told about one time where his mother had beat him severely and brutally with a high heel, leaving marks all over his body. This boy didn’t consider that violence. He didn’t think there was anything wrong with it, because he had accidentally set something on fire and he felt his mother was justified in beating him for it.

“No wonder these kids’ ideas of right and wrong are so completely different from what you or I [grew] up with. Given the world that they live in, their behavior—including murder—makes sense to them. They will kill somebody who owes them \$100 for drugs because, in their world, they will be considered weak if they let a customer get away with owing them money. They feel they have to kill the person or all of their clients are going to start stiffing them, or they may decide to kill somebody instead of just beating the person up, because he may come back later and kill *them*. Over and over you hear these kids say, It was either him or me, and you can see how they would come to that conclusion.

“I’m not saying that all of the people who murder and are murdered are angels but a lot of them could become decent, law-abiding, productive people *if the resources were available to help them*: drug treatment, job training, remedial education, psychological counseling. We as a society must be willing to commit a massive amount of resources if we really want to solve this problem, but we need to be clear about the choices we are making. One, we can try to help these young people by providing services in prisons, in juvenile facilities, and in the communities they come home to. Two, we could just say, Write these teenagers off as a lost generation. Lock them up and throw away the key. We are going to throw all our resources into the young children coming up right now: invest in health care, Head Start, education, training for their parents, etc., before they ever get involved in crimes or drugs. Three, maybe we decide to just let things continue as they are because, quote, the money is not available, unquote, for the kind of massive intervention that I feel is needed.

“Whatever decision we make, we need to understand that there are kids growing up right now who will replace the ones in jail today—actually, more than replace them. I don’t know

about here in Cornet, but if we’re like the rest of the country, we’ll have 20 percent more 16-year-olds by the year 2000 than we have now—and that’s the high-crime age range. Just 16 years from now there will be more African-American and Latino 16-year-olds than ever before, and, let’s face it, they’re not only at the greatest risk of being murdered but also of doing the killing unless something changes. Sooner or later we have to deal with these problems.

“I want to leave you with some information that surprised me when I first came across it. When you look at the socioeconomic profile of victims, you’ll see that it’s almost identical to that of offenders.” She paused and looked at the task force members. “Almost identical—about 61 percent of the assailants had been or were on Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and so were 60 percent of the victims. Among those who murdered, 42 percent were on Medicaid or received health care from charitable sources; the rate for victims was 43 percent. About 13 percent of the murderers had been in the foster care system at some point in their lives, as had 6 percent of the victims.

“The point I’m trying to make here is that poverty is a major contributing factor to the problem of crime and violence. Until we seriously try to eliminate poverty—and I’m not sure we have the political will to do that—we will continue to lose thousands of years of productive life every year. Thank you.”

A member of the audience stood up to make a comment. “I just wanted to say that these children are getting their values from somewhere, and that is the home.” There was scattered applause. “If they grow up with a father who’s a drug dealer or a drug addict, and if everyone in their environment has that same lifestyle, well, how can we expect them to turn out?”

Another woman stood up. “That’s right. Because if they grow up and there’s no father at home and the mother sits home all day and she’s on welfare or having one baby after another, that’s what they learn is normal. These are the only models for adult behavior that they know, and these are negative models.”

Another woman raised her hand to speak. “I just want to comment on what you said about the young mothers and the single mothers. I understand what everybody is sayin’ about a lot of these young girls out here today havin’ babies, and they’re not much more than children themselves, but I am a single parent, almost 40 now, and I am doin’ my best to raise my children in a good home with the things they need. But it is hard raisin’ children in this day and age. There’s a lot of new stuff out there for kids to get into, stuff that you and I never had to deal with as children.

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“I have two boys and one girl, and let me tell you it is *hard* bringing them up in this society. I mean, there is all this . . . just violence out there. They get it in the movies and on the television. These doggone music videos are full of all this violence and sex. I try hard to raise my children right, but I can’t be with them 24 hours a day. I do have two jobs, practically going from one to the other, and I just cannot be home to see what my child is doin’ every minute of the day. I try to set rules, but there are so many temptations and pressures out here on my children to do wrong. It’s really hard to get a young boy to listen to his mother. I’m not, you know, sayin’ it isn’t the parents’ responsibility to raise their children right but just that it is so hard out here. My daughter comes home askin’ me to buy her a Coach® bag. Now, I can’t afford one of those things for *myself*, let alone for my 14-year-old daughter. Yet and still all her friends have these bags, she says. I was fit to be tied one day when she came home with this Coach® bag, tellin’ me that this guy had given it to her as a gift. I told her to give it right back, and I wasn’t havin’ none of that. She was too young to be acceptin’ those kinds of gifts from anybody.

“It’s just really hard to be a parent these days, especially if you out here strugglin’ by yourself.” Others in the audience agreed with her.

The next speaker was Rev. Gerald Carpenter of St. Paul’s A.M.E. Church. He began, “It is a sad thing to lose so many young people—a very sad thing—and we all know that people who are in need, or who think they are in need, are more likely to do whatever they can to *get* what they need.” He paused, looked down at his notes, and then at the task force members. “But I’m still finding it a little difficult to accept the idea that poverty and want can be used as an excuse to kill other people. I know that’s not what Dr. Banfield is saying, but I’m afraid that there are some people out there who are listening to her words and thinking, Yeah, that’s right, it’s not my fault. It’s my parents’ fault. It’s society’s fault. I’m having a very hard time with the notion that because I had a hard life I have the right to make somebody else’s life hard. I’m having a hard time with the idea that because I want your coat, or your car, then I have the right to take it from you—even if I have to *kill* you for it!” There were murmurs of assent from the audience.

“Our previous speaker was a social worker. It is her profession to try to see to the physical needs of children, of families, make sure there is enough food to eat, and that there is shelter. This is excellent and necessary work, and you know something? It didn’t use to be up to the government to do it. We used to be able to depend on our families. We used to be able to depend on our neighbors. We used to live by the words in

the Bible, the part in Revelation that says: The one sitting on the throne will shelter them, they will never be hungry again, nor thirsty, and they will be fully protected from the scorching noontime heat. For the lamb standing in front of the throne will see them and be their shepherd, and lead them to the springs of the water of life, and God will wipe their tears away. We used to *take care* of each other. Now we don’t want to help anybody, or we’re afraid. We have lost the spirituality that makes us feel compassion for each other. Now we live by the dollar: I have to have this and I have to have that.

“One of the things that really struck me was the information that the murderers weren’t very different from their victims. Both groups were relatively poor. Both groups had suffered. But what distinguished the one from the other was the willingness to take someone else’s life. This was not an economic decision, my friends, this was a *moral* decision. Do we want to start excusing people because they grew up in a certain environment and they, quote, can’t help, unquote, the way they act? Do we want to start saying that it’s all right to hurt other people just because you yourself are poor or abused? What we need to tell these people out here murdering other people is, It doesn’t matter *what* kind of home you grew up in, we still expect you to live by the rules of a decent society! Do unto others is what we should be saying to these people. Do unto others. Just because you want to make a lot of money, does that give you the right to sell drugs to a pregnant woman? Is it all right to say to yourself, Well, *she*’s the one making the decision to use drugs, it’s not my problem. What happened to, I am my brother’s keeper?

“Why doesn’t every poor person become a murderer?” Rev. Gerald Carpenter turned to look at the audience. “Why does one poor person go out and get two jobs and another poor person go out and get welfare? Now don’t get me wrong. There’s nothing wrong with welfare. When I was growing up there were times when we had to get food stamps. My mother did days work [domestic work in private homes], and sometimes there was no work and therefore no food, so my mother swallowed her pride and did what she had to do to feed us, and she didn’t think that just because she had a family to feed she could lie and cheat and steal to feed them.

“Let me ask you this: Twenty years ago, how many strong, intelligent black men were working as janitors and shoeshine boys and chauffeurs and cooks and orderlies so they could feed their families and make ends meet? How many came home at night, bone tired, and spent a little time with their sons and their daughters? How many of them got up on Sunday morning, even though they wanted to sleep late, and got *out* of bed, and got their *children* out of bed, and went *down* to the church to learn about how to lead an upright life?

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“What do we have today? Well, you got men out here—they *think* they’re men just because they’ve brought a couple of children into the world (and not even supporting those kids). You got these men who say, I don’t wanna work at McDonald’s.” Rev. Gerald Carpenter smiled. “Did you hear what I said? They don’t *want* to work at McDonald’s for \$5 an hour. No, they wanna start off—at age 18 and *maybe* a high school diploma—they wanna start out wearing a suit and tie and driving a BMW.

“Make no mistake. The rampant drug dealing, the total disrespect for family and community—these are only partly economic issues. These are essentially *moral* issues. I want you to remember that these kids are not out here selling drugs and killing each other because they’re trying to keep a roof over their heads. They’re not trying to buy groceries or pay for a medical operation. They’re doing these things for \$200 tennis shoes. They’re doing it for leather jackets and tickets to fancy nightclubs. This is not a problem of economics. It’s a problem of *values*.

“. . . I hear what this woman was saying, the one who talked about how she is working two jobs and still trying to raise her kids right. We need more mothers and fathers in this community who are like that. We need men and women to give children the right values. Otherwise, where are they gonna get those values from? From television and movies, where you got Joan Collins sleeping with everybody so she can get ahead. You got J. R. Ewing lying and cheating and stealing and double-crossing everybody, so he can get *more* money, *more* power, *more* things. The kids out here are getting their values from the street corners instead of the home, and I am here today to tell you: We need to put *God* out there on the street corner! We need to put *respect* out there on the street corner! We need to put *compassion* out there on the street corner!

“Well, someone has just slipped me a note saying that my time is up. I apologize for taking so much of your time. I know you’ve got to hear from a lot more people, but I am a preacher, and you know how we are once we get to talking.” Many people laughed, including Davis and Heywood. “I just want to close out by saying to all of you, start taking responsibility for what is happening to our young people. Everybody in this room needs to be doing *something* to try to save these kids. It needs to start *in the home*. We need to be asking ourselves: Am I being a responsible parent? Am I setting the right example? If the parents are so concerned about what’s happening with Bob and Mary Sue down the street, who just got a new car and are going on a cruise in February—meanwhile everybody’s in debt up to their eyebrows—well,

what values do you expect the children to have? You have the parents out here buying their six-month-old kids designer clothes. Babies out here whose outfits cost more than mine! We shouldn’t be surprised if the kids grow up thinking they need designer this and designer that or they aren’t anybody. The parents are responsible for these materialistic views. The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.” There was enthusiastic applause and amens from several people.

The next person to be introduced was Cassandra Harding, principal of Martin Luther King High School.

“I want to thank Reverend Carpenter for all the wonderful and important ideas he has asked us to think about. He has said so much that is true. There’s one thing in particular he brought up that I want to reemphasize: Children learn their values at home, and as an educator I know that too many of the children today are not getting the parental support they need to do well in school.

“We have kids coming in who haven’t had any breakfast, or they’ve had a bag of potato chips and a soda. They’re tired because they were up until two o’clock in the morning watching movies on cable television—with *their parents*.” There were some gasps in the audience. “We give the children homework, and when they get home, there isn’t a quiet place for them to do it. The television is going, everybody’s watching *In Living Color*. The parent doesn’t ask the child if homework is finished. They don’t have any rules that the child has to follow about doing homework first and being entertained afterward. Then when the child brings home a poor report card, the parent is running into my office complaining that the teachers are no good and they’re unfair, and the parent is demanding to know, Why did you fail my child?

“Dr. Banfield brought up an extremely important point: young mothers for the most part don’t have the education or the skills to establish a good economic or emotional foundation for their children. Last year, nearly one-third of the black women giving birth in Cornet did not have a high school diploma.” (See exhibit 18.) “The children don’t learn the value of education from the example of the parents, and without education, as Dr. Banfield pointed out, your chances of earning a decent living are greatly reduced.

“One other trend I have noticed—and I tell you it breaks my heart—is the devaluation of intelligence among our youth. I have seen brilliant young blacks *purposely* fail because it wasn’t cool to be smart or do well, and you know, they might be able to deal with that peer pressure for not being cool, for being a nerd, but the peers do something even worse to these

**Exhibit 18:**  
**Age and Education of Mother (Black Residents)**  
**Percentage of Total Age Group**  
**1990**

<u>Yrs. Educ.</u>	<u>Age</u>								<u>Total</u>
	<u>&lt; 15</u>	<u>15-19</u>	<u>20-24</u>	<u>25-29</u>	<u>30-34</u>	<u>35-39</u>	<u>40+</u>	<u>Unknown</u>	
0-8	0.57	0.05	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.04	0.03
9-11	0.30	0.59	0.26	0.21	0.17	0.15	0.11	0.27	0.29
12	0.08	0.32	0.56	0.48	0.45	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.45
13-15	0.03	0.03	0.14	0.20	0.20	0.24	0.20	0.23	0.15
16	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.05	0.10	0.11	0.18	0.07	0.04
17 +	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.06	0.13	0.16	0.06	0.03
Not stated	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01
Total no. of cases	79	1,825	2,613	2,367	1,481	493	99	71	9,048

Source: "Age and Education of Mother by Maternal Race," 1990, Department of Human Services, Washington, DC.

young people. They tell them they aren't *black* if they're smart. I mean, here you are, a teenager. You're already vulnerable and insecure about so much. Then you get everybody around you saying, You think you're white, just because you're doing well in school. I'm telling you, it really astounds and saddens me that in a single generation we've gone from admiring people who are smart and who achieve academically to taking away their very racial identity. Let me tell you a story that speaks to this issue.

"A couple of weeks ago I had this young man in my office for disrupting the class or something, and somehow we got to talking about role models. This young man starts saying that there aren't any role models around today, no black men to look up to. He points out that we only bring up dead people as role models—Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, for example. He said that our race was in a sorry state if the only role models we had were dead ones.

"I asked him if he ever saw any black men at work. He said yes. So I asked him, Don't you think they are role models? Then I asked him about Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and this young man dismissed him out of hand. He said, Yeah, I see him on television, and he sounds just like a white man. He ain't black.

"When I hear things like this I am just astounded. This young man went on to talk about the blacks in corporations who had big jobs, how they had probably sold out, and how they didn't care about the blacks left behind. I tried to point out to him that there was a contradiction in what he was saying. On the one hand, he was saying that there weren't any black male role models around. On the other hand, when I pointed some out to him, he argued that blacks who *did* achieve and had made it were sellouts and didn't deserve his admiration or respect.

"The kids who are in mixed schools really catch hell. When these black kids get into the classes for the gifted and for high achievers, they find fewer and fewer children of color, and it can be very hard for them. They are torn. They have to talk a certain way when they're in school, and they come home and get blasted by their homeboys for being white. And what does it mean to these kids to be a black man? Well, you've got to walk a certain way, and talk a certain way, and wear certain clothes. . . . While this pressure to follow the crowd confronts *all* teenagers no matter what race, for black teens academic excellence and peer acceptance are all wrapped up with *racial* identity and not just individual identity.

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“Another very disturbing trend is that the violence that children confront in their neighborhoods and their communities is starting to show up at the schools. This used to be the one place where they could feel safe, where there was some kind of order. Some of the schools in our city are like prisons. You’ve got armed security guards. You’ve got metal detectors. The drug dealing that occurs on the street corners where they live also goes on inside the schools. We’ve got kids afraid to go to the bathroom because of the drug dealing and intimidation going on in there. Just two weeks ago a teacher was shot by a 14-year-old. What I want to know is, Why doesn’t that child’s parents know that he has a gun? Where is the parental supervision? . . . It just so happens that I had called this young man’s parents *three times* a week before the shooting. I got no response from them.

“Everybody expects the schools to solve these problems. Schools are not just supposed to provide our children with a solid educational foundation. Society wants us to feed them, collect clothes for them, find shelter for those who are homeless, provide preventive medical care, offer counseling, discipline them, entertain them, and now we’re expected to give them civic values. In short, you are asking us to become their parents. You are asking the schools to do what communities used to do, what families used to do.

“Finally, we’re supposed to accomplish all this with classes that are too large, with students in the 11th grade who can’t read, with too few textbooks to go around, with no computers like the schools in the suburbs. You pay us less to do this than you pay the person who picks up your trash. Educating our children is the most important work, after parenthood, that we have to do in this country.

“Like the other people testifying here today, I also believe that we need to make some fundamental decisions about what kind of children we are producing and raising, and we need to make the personal and financial sacrifices as individuals and as a society to make these changes possible. We need to spend more money on education. We need smaller classes. We need to pay teachers what they’re worth, so we can attract the best and the brightest to this profession. We desperately need parents to *get involved*. I can’t tell you how depressing it is to have three parents show up for parent-teacher night, and the ones who show up are usually the parents whose kids are already doing well.

“The bottom line is that we need the commitment of everyone in the community if we’re going to solve the crisis in education, because I can tell you that principals and teachers and administrators cannot do it alone. In the words of the old African proverb, ‘It takes a whole village to raise a child.’ Thank you.”

Davis and Heywood hardly noticed that they had been there for almost an hour. They had found each speaker provocative and challenging. Other members of the audience were raising their hands to ask questions.

A young woman spoke first. “I wanted to ask Principal Harding why don’t they just take these unruly kids out of the schools and put them in a place just for them.” Several people clapped or expressed agreement. “I mean, they are messing things up for the kids who *do* want to learn.”

“But suppose it was your child causing the problems,” someone shouted.

“I would still say send them to a special school. I have a nephew who I know belongs in a special school. His mother cannot handle him at all. He is constantly being suspended, and I know my sister is tired of going down there and signing him back in. He is the type of child who probably needs to be in a stricter environment, with a smaller number of kids in the class so the teacher has more control.”

Harding responded, “We are exploring those very options, but one of the problems we’re facing is finding a site and getting the funding for staff and equipment. We’re having a hard enough time finding money for the traditional schools.”

A man in his late thirties stood at the microphone with his arms folded across his chest. “I wanted to respond to what the social worker was saying earlier. I don’t want to sound like I’m a hard-hearted person or cold or anything, and I do feel for some of these kids you-all are talking about, but all I keep thinking about is, Where is the responsibility? There are more opportunities out here today and more programs than ever before. When I was growing up we didn’t have *any* of this stuff—midnight basketball and job training and all that. I mean, I listen to these kids, and it seems to me that a lot of ’em just don’t *want* to work. They want that easy money, and they’re not poor either. Their mothers would *give* them whatever it is they want. Just like the Reverend said. But they just . . .” His voice trailed off. “I don’t know. I really don’t know.”

Rev. Gerald Carpenter raised his hand to speak. “Like I was saying, we have lost our moral bearings. We are quick to blame everyone but ourselves. I will be the first one to admit that racism is very real. It is prevalent in this society, but there is no white person out there telling this young person to sell drugs to a pregnant woman.”

Judge Frazier entered the discussion. “Well, I think you’re right, Reverend Carpenter, when you point out that there is this tendency to look outward to place the blame for everything. At the same time, though, today’s society is very

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different from the one you and I grew up in. We don't have the same neighborhoods anymore, where people looked out for each other and didn't hesitate to correct someone else's child."

Dr. Banfield responded, "I can definitely understand this gentleman's frustration, but I do want to point out that these kids really do need massive intervention, starting with some intensive, long-term psychotherapy or counseling. We've got to go back with these kids and uncover the really harmful and devastating events of their childhoods. I'm talking about four, five, six years of this kind of intensive therapy, several times a week. I think it's unrealistic to think that you can spend one hour a week with these kids for a year and expect to make any substantial progress."

Someone in the audience yelled out, "What about recreation? The kids don't have anything to do."

Judge Frazier responded. "Recreational activities are just crucial. I mean, you have children out there in the suburbs acting out and having beer parties in the garage when the parents aren't home. They're bored. Why should we expect poor children to be any different? We do need to offer some recreation alternatives for our children."

"And we need to start early," Banfield added. "If a child's on the wrong path by fourth grade, it's going to be hard to pull him back." Several people said incredulously, "The *fourth grade*?"

"That's right, the fourth grade," Banfield repeated. "You can save some after that, and we have to keep trying. But if we wait past third or fourth grade, we're going to lose a lot of them."

The moderator announced that there was time for one or two more questions. Davis was at the microphone.

"My name is Lydia Davis, and I live in the 1300 block of Sixth Street over in Southwood. Today I have listened to the police officer say that, you know, it's hard to arrest these boys out here in the street terrorizing us, and then the judge said that it's so hard for the prosecutors to convict the drug dealers, and then the man from the prisons said that he doesn't have any place to put them even if they were convicted. What I want to know is what all this means. Are you-all saying that we have to live with this problem? 'Cause that's what I'm hearing."

There were murmurs from the audience; the task force members looked at each other. Finally, the deputy mayor responded.

"Mrs. Davis, I believe I understand some part of the frustration you're expressing right now, but I want to assure you that Mayor Warren and I, and every member of this task force, are working to make sure that you, and everyone else in Cornet, . . . *don't* have to live with this problem anymore. We are not proposing a quick fix. It isn't going to happen in a few months, but we will have a plan, a strategy, for the mayor to implement in a few months. No, you are *not* going to have to live with this problem. No one should have to live with this problem."

## Drafting the Plan

Testimony from the public hearing had been sobering, and throughout the next day's executive session strands of the various arguments were pulled out for examination and discussion. There was among the task force members a remarkable effort to avoid the simplistic and the ideological; after all, they reminded themselves, real people would be affected by their decisions.

"We also need to look at past and current anticrime programs here in Cornet," the deputy mayor told them. This information was contained in the *Background Report on Anti-Violence Initiatives in Cornet*, a 30-page document that revealed that many of the efforts were less than a year old and focused on law enforcement. (See exhibit 19.) It would be difficult to evaluate their impact, since they were so new.

Finally, the task force received a summary of major studies and commissions on violence in U.S. cities, from 1917 to 1982 (listed in exhibit 20). The two most recent reports they focused on were *Combating Violent Crime: 24 Recommendations To Strengthen Criminal Justice*, a 1992 report from Attorney General William P. Barr; and *Youth Investment and Community Reconstruction: Street Lessons on Drugs and Crime for the Nineties*, published in 1990 by the Eisenhower Foundation. The conclusions in these documents represented the extremes in the crime debate, with Barr emphasizing incarceration and its desired progeny, deterrence, and Eisenhower arguing for the effectiveness of broad-based prevention. (See exhibit 21.)

"Well," said the deputy mayor, "what are your initial thoughts? You've got yesterday's testimony from the experts and from the average citizens. You've been briefed on Cornet's antiviolence programs, and you've got some national reports before you. Most important, each of you has personal knowledge and experience to bring to bear on this issue. To borrow a phrase: What is to be done?"

## Exhibit 19:

### Summary: Background Report on Anti-Violence Initiatives in Cornet

#### POLICE INITIATIVES

- *Domestic Violence Teams (DVTs)*. Established in 1986. Police allowed to make an arrest without a complaint by the battered individual, based on their judgment of the situation. Police help the woman to contact the county's Office on Women's Domestic Violence Program, and are also given discretion to transport the battered woman and her children to the local women's shelter.
- *"Operation Sunset."* Intensive investigation of drug trafficking and related murders that started in 1984 and ended in virtual failure in 1988. An internal investigation found that police corruption fatally compromised the effort.
- *Community-Oriented Policing Strategy (COPS)*. Established in early 1990 on a limited basis in low- and middle-income neighborhoods with significant increases in crime and violence. The program involved foot patrols by officers who were specifically and, where possible, exclusively assigned to a particular area. Officers authorized to use some of their time to interface with other government agencies (Public Works, Sanitation, Regulatory Affairs, etc.) to address problems such as poor lighting, abandoned vehicles, dumping and housing code violations.

#### LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

- *1975 Weapons Control Act*. One of the country's most restrictive laws, it barred the purchase of any new handguns. Additionally, this law limited possession of handguns to police officers, security guards, and those who owned these weapons before the law was enacted.
- *Youthful Offenders Act*. Announced in 1990 in a highly publicized \$20 million "Youth Crusade." The Act lowered the age at which youths could be charged as adults in felony murders from 16 to 14.
- *Youth Crusade*. A 1990 effort to focus more resources on prevention and intervention through a diversion program; penal and institutional aftercare; and intergovernmental liaison.
- *Spousal Abuse Law*. A 1991 law (commonly referred to as the "battered woman syndrome law") which allowed defense attorneys to introduce evidence of past physical abuse by women who had murdered their husbands. The law also permitted the use of expert testimony on "battered woman syndrome" as an argument that the woman was acting in self-defense.

#### SOCIAL SERVICE INITIATIVES

- *"Lead Paint Project."* An education and lobbying campaign started in 1980 to remove lead-based paint from public housing units.
- *Visiting Nurse Program*. A highly successful effort to reduce the incidence and prevalence of child abuse and neglect by having visiting nurses address issues of nutrition, prenatal care, parenting, and stress management. The program had been cut recently, severely limiting the ability of staff to do effective case management.
- *Child Protective Helmet Campaign*. An initiative that had only recently been introduced by the Public Health Commissioner. Its objective was to reduce head injuries among young people.
- *Prenatal Education Classes*. These classes were offered beginning in 1988 in local health clinics and the County Hospital. Budget cuts had eliminated the program.



## Exhibit 20:

### Summary of Major Studies and Commissions on Violence in U.S. Cities

<u>Year/Place</u>	<u>Name of Commission</u>	<u>Appointed By</u>	<u>Chairman</u>	<u>Name of Final Report</u>
1917 - East St. Louis	Special Committee Authorized by Congress	House of Representatives	Ben Johnson	Report
1919 - Chicago	Chicago Commission on Race Relations	Gov. Frank Lowden	Edgar A. Bancroft	The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot
1935 - New York	The Mayor's Commission on Conditions in Harlem	Mayor Fiorello La Guardia	Charles Robertson	The Negro in Harlem: A Report on Social and Economic Conditions Responsible for the Outbreak of the March 19, 1935 Riot
1943 - Detroit	Governor's Committee to Investigate Riot	Gov. Harry Kelly	Herbert J. Rushton	Final Report
1965 - Los Angeles	Governor's Commission on Civil Disorders	Gov. Edmund Brown, Sr.	John A. McConea	Violence in the City: An End or Beginning?
1968 - Washington	National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders	President Lyndon B. Johnson	Otto Kerner	The Kerner Report
1968 - New Jersey	Governor's Select Commission on Civil Disorders	Gov. Richard J. Hughes	Robert D. Lilley	Report for Action
1968 - Chicago	Chicago Riot Study Committee	Mayor Richard J. Daley	Richard B. Austin	Final Report
1969 - Washington	National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence	President Lyndon B. Johnson	Milton S. Eisenhower	To Establish Justice, To Insure Domestic Tranquility
1970 - Washington	National Commission on Campus Unrest	President Richard M. Nixon	William W. Scranton	The Scranton Report
1982 - Miami	U.S. Civil Rights Commission	President Ronald Reagan	Clarence Pendleton	Confronting Racial Isolation in Miami

## Exhibit 21:

### Summary of 1992 Barr Report and 1990 Eisenhower Report

#### Combating Violent Crime (Barr Report)

- Protect the community from dangerous defendants through pretrial detention.
- More effective deterrence, to include "truth-in-sentencing"; mandatory minimum penalties for gun offenders, armed career criminals, and habitual violent offenders; the death penalty; and asset forfeiture.
- More effective deterrence of youthful offenders, to include treating juvenile offenders as adults and using juvenile offense records in adult sentencing.
- Efficient trial, appeal, and collateral attack procedures.
- Detection and prevention of crime by investing in quality law enforcement personnel; computerizing criminal data; and enacting statutory changes in immunity and surveillance laws.
- Greater protection and respect for witnesses, to include victim restitution and compensation, and protection from intimidation and harassment.

#### Youth Investment and Community Reconstruction (Eisenhower Report)

- Comprehensive attack on the social and economic factors associated with crime and violence through efforts ranging from education to primary health care to housing.
- Replication of early education programs such as Head Start, in order to reduce subsequent criminality and drug use.
- Cost-effectiveness of investment in social services over criminal justice services.
- Adequate funding and technical/managerial support of grassroots anticrime and antiviolence programs.
- Replication of and emphasis on small-scale efforts.