POLICE AT WORK:
Patrolling and Investigating

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As a result of reading this chapter, the student will be able to:

1. Describe the ideal traits typically sought among people who are hired into policing
2. Explain the kinds of topics that are taught in the recruit academy and overall methods for preparing recruits for a career in policing
3. Delineate the methods and purposes of the FTO concept
4. Describe the several basic tasks and distinctive styles of policing
5. Explain what is meant by a police working personality, including how it is developed and operates
6. Clarify how the work of policing can be perilous in nature
7. Discuss the nature of the police traffic function
8. Define police discretion, how and why it is allowed to function, and some of its advantages and disadvantages
9. Explain the current era of policing, the community era, and the prevailing philosophy and strategies of community policing and problem solving
10. Review the qualities, myths, and methods that involve investigative personnel
You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, “I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.” . . . You must do the thing you think you cannot do.

—Eleanor Roosevelt

Murder though it hath no tongue will speak.

—Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act II, Scene 2

INTRODUCTION

How do I become a police officer? A detective? A criminal profiler? How do I qualify to work in forensics? Do police have to arrest everyone they see breaking the law?

These are all legitimate, oft-heard questions as posed by university students. Unfortunately, owing in large measure to Hollywood’s portrayals of police work and investigations, there are many misperceptions about the field. First, the odds of one becoming a criminal profiler are virtually nil—as are the odds of some federal agent academy trainee being brought out to help investigate a serial killer case (as was the plot in a major movie starring Jodie Foster). Second, one who wishes to work in a forensics lab must have a background in chemistry, biology, or a related natural science field (e.g., biochemistry or microbiology). Finally, in order to become a detective, one must normally begin as a regular officer; then, with years of training, experience, and often testing or at least an oral examination, one might be deemed worthy of being an investigator. This chapter hopes to remedy those misperceptions at least in part by looking at some of the primary roles and functions of the individuals who work in police organizations; included are

ASSESS YOUR AWARENESS:

Test your current knowledge of police patrol and investigations by first reading and responding to the following seven true-false items; check your answers after reading this chapter’s materials.

1. Of several high-risk occupations—including commercial fishing, logging, and piloting airplanes—policing ranks highest in terms of danger.
2. The terms forensic science and criminalistics are often used interchangeably, but they have quite different meanings.
3. As typically shown in movie and television portrayals, detective work is primarily action-packed and involves a successful search for offenders.
4. The four basic tasks of policing as involves the public include patrolling, tracking, arresting, and appearing in court.
5. What is termed the “CSI effect” has actually helped jurors to become more knowledgeable and thus widely improved the quality of justice in the United States.
6. DNA is the most sophisticated and reliable type of physical evidence.
7. Police officers, being governed by laws and procedure manuals, actually have very little discretion.

Answers can be found on page 401.
the point of their being recruited and trained, and eventually going to work either as officers on patrol or as criminal investigators.

First is a review of the types of persons who are sought for and hired into policing, as well as their initial training at the academy; included is a consideration of how one’s occupational personality is formed—the subculture of the “cop’s world.” The roles and tasks of the police are discussed, as is their discretionary use of authority in enforcing the law. Finally, those who investigate crimes, the detectives, are examined; included is a review of the nature of their work, some myths and attributes, and how advances in DNA have assisted in achieving their goals. A summary, key terms and concepts, review questions, and several scenarios and activities that provide opportunities for you to “learn by doing” will conclude the chapter.

FROM CITIZEN TO PATROL OFFICER

The idea of a police subculture was first proposed by William Westley in his 1950 study of the Gary, Indiana, Police Department, where he found, among many other things, a high degree of secrecy and violence.¹ The police develop traditions, skills, and attitudes that are unique to their occupation because of their duties and responsibilities. Next we consider how citizens are brought into, and socialized within, the police world.

Recruiting the Best

Recruiting an adequate pool of applicants is an extremely important facet of the police hiring process. August Vollmer, the renowned Berkeley, California, police innovator and administrator, said that law enforcement candidates should have the wisdom of Solomon, the courage of David, the patience of Job and leadership of Moses, the kindness of the Good Samaritan, the diplomacy of Lincoln, the tolerance of the Carpenter of Nazareth, and, finally, an intimate knowledge of every branch of the natural, biological and social sciences.²

Police officers are solitary workers, spending most of their time on the job unsupervised. At all times they must be able to make sound decisions and adjust quickly to changing situations during periods that are unpredictable and unstable, chaotic, or high-stress—all the while acting ethically and in keeping with the U.S. Constitution, their state statutes, and their agency’s policy and procedures manual. For these reasons, police agencies must attempt to attract the best individuals possible.

Figure 6.1 shows the general kinds of screening and testing methods that are used with new recruits in the United States. Obviously the goal is to bring the most qualified and capable people into the field (as well as more women and minorities, generally, discussed in Chapter 7). Then an example of an agency’s hiring process is provided in the accompanying “Focus On” case study, setting forth the components of the hiring process as used by the Kansas City, Missouri, Police Department.

Recruit Training

Police recruits are taught a wide variety of subjects in academy training (see Figure 6.2). They are taught to nurture a “sixth sense”: suspicion. A suspicious nature is as important to the street officer as a fine touch is to

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Following are the types of examinations and activities involved in the hiring process for the Kansas City, Missouri, Police Department (KCPD) (as well as many other police agencies). The entire process, which includes a substance abuse questionnaire (not shown), may require several months to complete.

- **Written Examination:** All applicants begin with and must take the Police Officer Selection Test (POST). A review for this exam is generally given within one month prior to the written examination, and a sample test is available upon request.

- **Physical Abilities Test:** This is an obstacle course designed to simulate challenges that could be encountered during an officer's tour of duty. Applicants must demonstrate their ability to maneuver through the course with minimal errors.

- **Preemployment Polygraph Examination:** The polygraph examination is administered by a qualified polygraph examiner and covers criminal activity, drug usage, integrity, truthfulness, and employment history.

- **Background Investigation:** The background investigation will cover pertinent facts regarding the applicant’s character, his or her work history, and any criminal or traffic records.

- **Ride-Along:** To expose applicants to the actual duties performed by KCPD officers, during the background investigation, the applicant will be required to ride with an officer on a weekend for a full tour of duty during the evening or night shift.

- **Oral Board:** This interview consists of questions designed to allow the KCPD to assess an applicant’s overall abilities as they relate to the field of law enforcement.

- **Psychological Examination:** This interview is conducted by a certified psychologist, after a job offer has been made.

- **Physical Examination:** Applicants undergo a complete medical and eye examination performed by a licensed physician, after a job offer has been made.

a surgeon. The officer should be able to visually recognize when something is wrong or out of the ordinary. As a Chicago Police Department bulletin stated,

Actions, dress, or location of a person often classify him as suspicious in the mind of a police officer. Men loitering near schools, public toilets, playgrounds and swimming pools may be sex perverts. Men loitering near any business at closing time may be robbery suspects. Men or youths walking along looking into cars may be car thieves or looking for something to steal.

Figure 6.2 displays the predominant topics included in training new officers and the median length of training for each. A considerably high percentage of police agencies use physical agility tests, perform psychological evaluations, and provide educational incentive pay to officers, and municipal police officers receive about 55 additional hours of initial (i.e., academy and field) training.

Field Training Officer

Once the recruits leave the academy, they are not merely thrown to the streets to fend for themselves in terms of upholding the law and maintaining order. Another very important part of this acquisition process is being assigned to a veteran officer for initial field instruction and observation. This veteran is sometimes called a field training officer (FTO). This training program provides recruits with an opportunity to make the transition from the academy to the streets under the protective arm of a veteran officer. Recruits are on probationary status, normally ranging from six months to one year; they may be immediately terminated if their overall performance is unsatisfactory during that period.

Most FTO programs consist of three identifiable phases:

1. An introductory phase (the recruit learns agency policies and local laws)
2. Training and evaluation phases (the recruit is introduced to more complicated tasks that patrol officers confront)
3. A final phase (the FTO acts strictly as an observer and evaluator while the recruit performs all the functions of a patrol officer)

The length of time rookies are assigned to FTOs will vary. A formal FTO program might require close supervision for a range of 1–12 weeks.

Most police officers also receive in-service training throughout their careers, because their states require a minimum number of hours of such training. News items, court decisions, and other relevant information can also be covered at roll call before the beginning of each shift. Short courses ranging from a few hours to several weeks are available for in-service officers through several such means as videos and nationally televised training programs.
PART II • The Police

FIGURE 6.2
Topics Included in Basic Training of State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPICS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF ACADEMIES WITH TRAINING</th>
<th>MEDIAN NUMBER OF HOURS OF INSTRUCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report writing</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>20 hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrol</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigations</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic first aid/CPR</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency vehicle operations</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers/information systems</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weapons/self-defense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-defense</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>51 hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearms skills</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonlethal weapons</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal law</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>36 hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitutional law</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of law enforcement</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-improvement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics and integrity</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>8 hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and fitness</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress prevention/management</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic foreign language</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community policing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural diversity/human relations</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>11 hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic strategies</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediation/conflict management</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special topics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>14 hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juveniles</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic preparedness</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hate crimes/bias crimes</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Field training officer (FTO): one who is to oversee and evaluate the new police officer’s performance as he or she transitions from the training academy to patrolling the streets.

Working personality (see Police subculture).

HAVING THE “RIGHT STUFF”: A WORKING PERSONALITY

Since the publication of Westley’s aforementioned examination of police subculture in 1930, the notion of a police personality has become a popular area of study. In 1966, Jerome Skolnick described what he termed the working personality of the police. He determined that the police role contained two important variables: danger and authority. Danger is a constant feature of
Police work. Police officers, constantly facing potential violence, are warned at the academy to be cautious. They are told many war stories of officers shot and killed at domestic disturbances or traffic stops. Consequently, they develop “perceptual shorthand,” Skolnick said, that they use to identify certain kinds of people as “symbolic assailants”—individuals whom the officer has come to recognize as potentially violent based on their gestures, language, and attire.

John Broderick7 presented another view of the working personality of the police. He believed that there are actually four types of police personalities: enforcers, idealists, realists, and optimists.

- **Enforcers** are officers who believe that the job of the police consists primarily of keeping their beats clean, making good arrests, and sometimes helping people. These officers have sympathy for the homeless, the elderly, the working poor, and others whom they see as basically good people.

- **Idealists** are officers who put high value on individual rights and due process. They also believe that it is their duty to keep the peace, protect citizens from criminals, and generally preserve the social order. As a group with a high percentage of college graduates, their commitment to the job is the lowest of the four groups, and they are less likely to recommend the job to a son or daughter.

- **Realists** place relatively little emphasis on either social order or individual rights. They seem less frustrated, having found a way to come to terms with a difficult job. For them, the reality of the job consists of manila envelopes and properly completed forms. Realists see many problems in policing, such as special privileges given to politicians. They work well in the ordered, predictable environment of a police records room.

- **The optimists** also place a relatively high value on individual rights. Like idealists, they see their job as people oriented instead of crime oriented, providing opportunities to help people; they find it rewarding to spend the majority of their time in service activities. Optimists are committed to the job and would choose policing as a career all over again. They enjoy the mental challenge of problem solving.

**Traits That Make a “Good” Officer**

It is not too difficult to identify bad police officers through their unethical or criminal behavior. But what are the traits of good officers?

Dennis Nowicki8 acknowledged that while certain characteristics form the foundation of a police officer—honesty, ethics, and moral character—no scientific formula can be used to create a highly effective officer. However, he compiled 12 qualities that he believes are imperative for entry-level police officers:

- **Enthusiasm**: Believing in what one is doing and going about even routine duties with a certain vigor that is almost contagious

- **Good communication skills**: Having highly developed speaking and listening skills and the ability to interact equally well with a wealthy person or someone lower on the socioeconomic ladder

A sense of humor, the ability to communicate, and job enthusiasm even for routine duties are some of the crucial traits required for police officers to be successful.
PART II • The Police

- Good judgment: Having wisdom and the ability to make good analytic decisions based on an understanding of the problem
- Sense of humor: Being able to laugh and smile, to help oneself cope with regular exposure to human pain and suffering
- Creativity: Using creative techniques to place oneself in the mind of the criminal and accomplish legal arrests
- Self-motivation: Making things happen, proactively solving difficult cases, and creating one’s own luck
- Knowing the job and the system: Understanding the role of a police officer, the intricacies of the justice system, and what the administration requires; using both formal and informal channels to be effective
- Ego: Believing one is a good officer; having self-confidence that enables one to solve difficult crimes
- Courage: Being able to meet physical and psychological challenges; thinking clearly during times of high stress; admitting when one is wrong; standing up for what is right
- Understanding discretion: Enforcing the spirit of the law, not the letter of the law; not being hard-nosed, hardheaded, or hard-hearted; giving people a break; showing empathy
- Tenacity: Staying focused; seeing challenges, not obstacles; viewing failure not as a setback but as an experience
- A thirst for knowledge: Being aware of new laws and court decisions; always learning (from the classroom but also through informal discussions with other officers)

Defining the Role

What are the police supposed to do? Often this question is given such oversimplified answers as “They enforce the law” or “They ‘serve and protect.’” But policing is much more complex, and most Americans probably do not have an accurate idea of what the police really do. In reality, the police are called on to perform an almost countless number of tasks.

One of the greatest obstacles to understanding the American police is the crime-fighter image. Because of film and media portrayals, many people believe that the role of the police is confined to the apprehension of criminals. However, only about 20 percent of the police officer’s typical day is devoted to fighting crime per se. And, as Jerome Skolnick and David Bayley point out, the crimes that terrify Americans the most—robbery, rape, burglary, and homicide—are rarely encountered by police on patrol. In their words:

Only “Dirty Harry” has his lunch disturbed by a bank robbery in progress. Patrol officers individually make few important arrests. The “good collar” is a rare event. Cops spend most of their time passively patrolling and providing emergency services.

Also, many individuals enter police work expecting it to be exciting and rewarding, as depicted on television and in the movies. Later they discover that much of their time is spent with boring, mundane, and trivial tasks—and that paperwork is seldom stimulating.
Four Basic Tasks

Patrol officers may be said to perform four basic tasks of policing:

1. *Enforce the laws*—although this is a primary function of the police, as we saw above, they actually devote a very small portion of their time to “chasing bad guys.”

2. *Perform welfare tasks*—throughout history, the police have probably done much more of this type of work than the public (or the police themselves) realize; following are some of them:
   - “Check the welfare of” kinds of calls, where someone has not been seen or heard from for some time and may be either deceased, ill, missing, or in distress
   - “Be on the lookout” (BOLO) calls, where someone has wandered away from a nursing or an assisted living home, is a juvenile runaway, and so forth
   - Delivering death messages
   - Delivering blood to hospitals (particularly in more rural areas where blood banks are not available)
   - Assisting firefighters and animal control units
   - Reporting burned-out street lights or damaged traffic signs
   - Performing all manner of errands simply because they are available—locking and unlocking municipal parking lots, collecting receipts from municipal entities such as golf courses, delivering agendas to city/county commissioners, and so forth

3. *Prevent crime*—this function of police involves engaging in random patrol and providing the public with crime prevention information.

4. *Protect the innocent*—by investigating crimes, police are systematically removing innocent people from consideration as crime suspects.

Three Distinctive Styles

James Q. Wilson also attempted to clarify what it is that the police are supposed to do; Wilson maintained that there are three distinctive policing styles:

1. The watchman style involves the officer as a “neighbor.” Here, officers act as if order maintenance (rather than law enforcement) is their primary function. The emphasis is on using the law as a means of maintaining order rather than regulating conduct through arrests. Police ignore many common minor violations, such as traffic and juvenile offenses. These violations and so-called victimless crimes, such as gambling and prostitution, are tolerated; they will often be handled informally. Thus the individual officer has wide latitude concerning whether to enforce the letter or the spirit of the law; the emphasis is on using the law to give people what they “deserve.”

Tasks of policing (four basic): enforce the law, prevent crime, protect the innocent, and perform welfare tasks.
2. The **legalistic** style casts the officer as a “soldier.” This style takes a much harsher view of law violations. Police officers issue large numbers of traffic citations, detain a high volume of juvenile offenders, and act vigorously against illicit activities. Large numbers of other kinds of arrests occur as well. Chief administrators want high arrest and ticketing rates not only because violators should be punished but also because it reduces the opportunity for their officers to engage in corrupt behavior. This style of policing assumes that the purpose of the law is to punish.

3. The **service** style views the officer as a “teacher.” This style falls in between the watchman and legalistic styles. The police take seriously all requests for either law enforcement or order maintenance (unlike in the watchman-style department) but are less likely to respond by making an arrest or otherwise imposing formal sanctions. Police officers see their primary responsibility as protecting public order against the minor and occasional threats posed by unruly teenagers and “outsiders” (tramps, derelicts, out-of-town visitors). The citizenry expects its service-style officers to display the same qualities as its department store salespeople: They should be courteous, neat, and deferential. The police will frequently use informal sanctions instead of making arrests.

**Perils of Patrol**

Although several occupations—commercial fishing, logging, piloting airplanes, farming, and ranching in particular—have workers dying at much higher rates than policing, police officers’ lives are still rife with

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**SAUDI ARABIA: LITTLE TO DO ON PATROL**

The police in Saudi Arabia assist with enforcing the very cruel (by Western standards) Islamic law, which is governed by the Koran and can include amputations of limbs, which are conducted in many cities and with some frequency on the Justice Square in Riyadh. Believing that public beheadings and amputations deter other prospective offenders, people in the vicinity of the square are encouraged by the police to witness these events. When a thief’s right hand is cut off in public, a string is tied to the middle finger and the hand is hung from a hook high on a streetlight pole on Justice Square for all to see. Because there is a near total absence on Saudi Arabian streets of gangs, drive-by shootings, purse snatching, and contraband, the police patrol the streets in Chevrolets, BMWs, and Volvos, looking for minor infractions of the law.

Owing to the aforementioned harsh criminal code, there is little for the Saudi police to do in terms of crime prevention or investigation. The religious police—the *Mutawin*—patrol and stroll in their white cotton robes and sandals and look, as one writer observed, like “desert nomads who have stumbled unexpectedly into the 20th century.” They look for people who are improperly dressed or women who have a loose strand of hair falling across their face or who need to adjust their *tarhas* (head coverings). Around-the-clock patrols ensure that shops are closed in time for daily prayers and that only married couples are sitting in family sections of restaurants. The patrols often follow persons suspected of being involved in what is deemed immoral behavior, such as drug use, homosexuality, gambling, and begging. Teams of religious police will also destroy home satellite dishes, which bring uncensored Western television broadcasts into Saudi homes.
occupational hazards. Each year, about 70 police officers die through felonious means; the average age of the slain officers is about 38 years, they had worked in law enforcement for about 12 years, and about two-thirds were assigned to patrol duties. Another 50 or so officers die through accidental means.\(^1\) Officers seldom know for certain whether a citizen whom they are about to confront is armed, high on drugs or alcohol, or perhaps even planning to die at the hands of the police using a technique known as “suicide by cop.” This danger is heightened during the graveyard (night) shift, when patrol officers encounter burglars looking to invade homes and businesses, people who are intoxicated from a night of partying, and so on, all under cover of darkness.

### A STUDY OF PATROL EFFECTIVENESS

The best known study of patrol efficiency, the **Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment**, was conducted in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1973. Researchers—wanting to know if random patrol had any significant effect on crime, police response rates to crime, or citizen fear of crime—divided the city into 15 beats, which were then categorized into 5 groups of 3 matched beats each. Each group consisted of neighborhoods that were similar in terms of population, crime characteristics, and calls for police services. In one beat area, there was no preventive patrol (police only responded to calls for service); another beat area had increased patrol activity (2 or 3 times the usual amount of patrolling); in the third beat there was the usual level of patrol service. Citizens were interviewed and crime rates were measured during the year the experiment was conducted.

The study found that the deterrent effect of policing was not reduced by the elimination of routine patrolling; nor were citizens’ fear of crime, their attitudes toward the police, or the ability of the police to respond to calls reduced. The Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment (depicted in Figure 6.3) indicated that the traditional assumption of “Give me more cars and more money, and we’ll get there faster and fight crime” was probably not a very viable argument.\(^1\)

### THE TRAFFIC FUNCTION

No one enjoys being on the receiving end of a traffic citation, but traffic hazards (especially drunk or texting drivers) pose a major problem, and thus traffic control is part of the police role. Indeed, traffic stops account for about half (52 percent) of the contact Americans have with the police.\(^19\) Citizens are often unhappy about having to pay a traffic fine or possibly go to court, and may

![By its nature, policing carries a high potential for danger; this funeral procession escorts an officer who was killed during routine traffic stop.](image-url)
PATROL OFFICER

Name: Tony Moore  
Current position: Drug Interdiction Task Force Detective  
City, state: Reno, Nevada  
College attended/academic major: University of Nevada, Reno/BA, criminal justice  
Most significant career achievement: Selected by peers for the distinguished rank of Master Police Officer.

How long have you been a practitioner in the criminal justice system?
17 years (6 years as patrol officer, 10 years as gang officer and detective, 1 year as drug interdiction detective)

My primary duties and responsibilities as a patrol officer include:
Generally, providing safety for the public. As a citizen, I expect the same from my police. Also, the patrol officer is the first responder to every emergency, ranging from something very minor (such as a stalled vehicle) to rescuing children and adults from violent attacks, in-progress felonies, or burning buildings and vehicles.

With every response or arrest comes responsibility for making the right decisions. The patrol officer must know applicable laws and procedures so the correct actions are taken and decisions made. Bad decisions or inappropriate actions can lead to civil liability, departmental discipline, or the officer or another person being injured or killed.

Proactive policing is another aspect of the patrol officer’s role. The officer must address problems and crime trends in his or her area, including traffic enforcement, drug activity, warrant arrests, gang activity, or investigations that extend beyond merely taking a crime report.

In addition, problem solving is the patrol officer’s responsibility. Arrests are not the only solutions to neighborhood problems, so officers must understand crime theories and study crime trends, environmental factors leading to crime, and so on—while also using community resources such as residents, businesses, schools, hospitals, the news media, and treatment programs.

Although about one-third of my career has been as a patrol officer, that was my most influential assignment. The patrol function is where officers learn a style of policing; accumulate the basic skills to be a safe, productive, and effective officer; and develop the skills for accomplishing the above tasks as well as for more specialized assignments. Even interviewing skills are learned while working the street.

The qualities/characteristics that are most helpful for a patrol officer include:
Integrity, good decision making skills, the desire to work, and the physical ability to perform. Integrity is absolutely essential, as it guides the officer to make good decisions, especially under difficult circumstances.

Good decision-making skills are necessary for making dozens or hundreds of critical decisions daily. These decisions affect people, and involve criminal procedures and laws, safety concerns, civil liability, and departmental guidelines. Not every situation and decision the patrol officer is faced with is covered by clearly defined standards or laws, so the ability to effectively use discretion is an essential element of good decision making.

Anyone can learn a skill or information, but the desire and drive to work is far more valuable. A very knowledgeable officer who chooses not to fully apply his or her skills is far less effective and productive and useful than a less skilled officer who works hard.

Remaining physically fit will also prepare one for a long career in law enforcement. This is essential because, inevitably, the officer will be involved in fights with suspects, foot pursuits, climbing over fences, lifting arrestees, and performing searches.

In general, a typical day for a patrol officer would include:
A shift briefing at the outset, where the previous day’s or shift’s significant events are discussed, and might include short training segments, discussions of crime trends and persons of interest, and departmental business. Once the patrol officer is in service, he or she will first respond to any high-priority calls for service (e.g., a traffic accident with injuries, an escalating domestic disturbance, a burglary in progress, a bank robbery, a fight, a shooting, a missing child, or a suicidal subject), and then may assist the officers still on calls from the previous shift. Then the officer will respond to lower-priority calls, such as “cold” burglary or larceny reports, traffic problems, graffiti reports, tenant/landlord civil disputes, or shoplifting cases. From there, a wide variety of occurrences is possible (i.e., there is no “typical” day): The day may begin in a
calm and structured manner, and then become very chaotic. For example, while completing a crime report, the officer might be sent across town to assist other officers in a fight, then immediately go to another area for a violent domestic dispute, and then go assist the fire department—all in the span of an hour or so.

As indicated above, the patrol officer must also designate time for proactive policing and problem solving. Patrol officers are also expected to be extremely familiar with their assigned areas and the people within them.

Developing communication skills is also important, as most reported crimes or significant actions taken by the patrol officer will be documented through official reporting. Paperwork is often a very unpopular, time-consuming task, and reports are plentiful, but they are important, are expected to be accurate and detailed, and must typically be completed before the end of the shift.

My advice to someone either wishing to study, or now studying, criminal justice to become a practitioner in this career field would be:

To be certain that you want to be a police officer and are willing to begin working in patrol. While very rewarding, the patrol officer’s role is inherently dangerous, is at times quite stressful and difficult, and involves great successes and terrible tragedies. If you cannot function in this environment, then you may want to consider a different career.

Also, you should become familiar with every aspect of policing and patrol assignments. My education was instrumental in preparing me for employment with my department. In addition to providing me with an overall education and view into the criminal justice system, I took opportunities for internships at different agencies that afforded firsthand experience, and also helped me to identify the department that was most desirable to me. This is a good means of preparing for patrol work and policing prior to entering the academy. The educational resources, literature, and training opportunities that you can use prior to being hired are endless.

Finally, identify those patrol officers and law enforcement practitioners who are successful, and apply the traits and skills that make them successful. Surround yourself with others like you who want to have a successful career. Be a positive example for your peers, and know that your actions and attitudes are contagious. And never compromise your integrity.

verbally express their displeasure: “You should be out catching bank robbers,” “I’m a taxpayer, and I pay your salary,” or “I know the police chief!” Because this traffic encounter may be the citizen’s one and only contact with a police officer, the officer’s display of a professional and courteous demeanor may well have long-term significance for community policing, and strict traffic enforcement policies can also negatively impact police-community relations.20

By trying to enforce traffic laws and investigating traffic collisions, the police endeavor to reduce traffic deaths and injuries and generally make vehicular travel safer; on its face, this is a noble undertaking. In this era of accountability and litigation—and the vast amounts of damage done to people and property each year as a result of traffic accidents—it is essential that officers competently investigate traffic collisions and cite the guilty party, not only from a law enforcement standpoint but also in the event that the matter is taken to civil court.

One of the traffic functions for which the police receive public support is in their efforts to identify, apprehend, and convict the hit-and-run (or “phantom”) driver. No one thinks highly of these offenders—who...
Traffic function: the aggregate of motor vehicles, pedestrians, streets, and highways, for which police must investigate and apply laws to provide safe travels for citizens in their jurisdiction.

Discretion: authority to make decisions in enforcing the law based on one’s observations and judgment (“spirit of the law”) rather than the letter of the law.

The Police

are often intoxicated—who collide with another innocent party’s vehicle or strike a pedestrian and then leave the scene. In fact, this matter quickly becomes more of a criminal investigation than a mere collision investigation for the police. In most states, the killing of a human being by someone driving under the influence (DUI) is a felony. Physical evidence and witness statements must be collected in the same fashion as in a conventional criminal investigation; paint samples and automobile parts left at the scene are sent to crime laboratories for examination. The problem for the police is that unless the driver of the vehicle is identified—by physical evidence, an eyewitness, or a confession—the case can be lost.

As will be seen in Chapter 7, the police traffic function also carries tremendous potential for liability, particularly in the area of high-speed pursuits; examples are provided in that chapter.

POLICE DISCRETION

The power to use discretion in performing one’s role is at the very core of policing. However, as will be seen below, this power can be controversial—and used for both good and bad.

The Myth of Full Enforcement

The municipal police chief or county sheriff is asked during a civic club luncheon speech which laws are and are not enforced by his or her agency. The official response will inevitably be that all of the laws are enforced equally, all of the time. Yet the chief and sheriff know that full enforcement of the laws is a myth—that there are neither the resources nor the desire to enforce them all, nor are all laws enforced impartially. There are legal concerns as well. For example, releasing some offenders (to get information about other crimes, because of a good excuse, etc.) cannot be the official policy of the agency (and letting an offender go is a form of discretion as well); however, the chief or sheriff cannot broadcast that fact to the public. Indeed, it has been stated that “the single most astonishing fact of police behavior is the extent to which police do not enforce the law when they have every legal right to do so.”

Attempts to Define Discretion

The way police make arrest decisions is largely unknown (see possible determining factors, below). What is known, however, is that when police observe something of a suspicious or an illegal nature, two important decisions must be made: (1) whether to intervene in the situation and (2) how to intervene. The kinds, number, and possible combinations of interventions are virtually limitless. What kinds of decisions are available for an officer who makes a routine traffic stop? David Bayley and Egon Bittner observed long ago that officers have as many as 10 actions to select from at the initial stop (for example, order the driver out of the car), 7 strategies appropriate during the stop (such as a roadside sobriety test), and 11 exit strategies (for instance, releasing the driver with a warning), representing a total of 770 different combinations of actions that might be taken.

Criminal law has two sides—the formality and the reality. The formality is found in the statute books and opinions of appellate courts. The reality is found in the practices of enforcement officers. In some circumstances, the choice of action to be taken is relatively easy, such as arresting a bank robbery suspect. In other situations, such as quelling a dispute between neighbors or determining how much party noise is too much, the choice is more difficult.

Our system tends to treat people as individuals. One person who commits a robbery is not the same as another person who commits a robbery. Our system also takes into account why and how a person committed a crime (his or
Determinants of Discretionary Actions

The power of discretionary policing can be awe-inspiring. Kenneth Culp Davis, an authority on police discretion, writes, “The police are among the most important policy makers of our entire society. And they make far more discretionary determinations in individual cases than does any other class of administrators; I know of no close second.”

What determines whether the officer will take a stern approach (enforcing the letter of the law with an arrest) or will be lenient (issuing a verbal warning or some other outcome short of arrest)? Several variables enter into the officer’s decision:

1. The law is indeed a factor. For example, many state statutes and local ordinances now mandate that the police arrest for certain suspected offenses, such as driving under the influence or domestic violence.

2. The officer’s attitude can also be a factor. First, some officers are more willing to empathize with offenders who feel they deserve a break than others. Also, as Klockars and Mastrofski observed, although violators frequently offer what they feel are very good reasons for the officer to overlook their offense, “every police officer knows that, if doing so will allow them to escape punishment, most people are prepared to lie through their teeth.” Furthermore, police, being human, can bring to work either a happy or an unhappy disposition. Personal viewpoints can also play a role; for example, perhaps the officer is fed up with juvenile crimes that have been occurring of late and thus will not give any leniency to youths he or she confronts who are involved in even minor crimes.

3. Another major consideration in the officer’s choice among options is the citizen’s attitude. If the offender is rude and condescending, denies having done anything wrong, or uses some of the standard clichés that are almost guaranteed to rankle the officer—such as “You don’t know who I am” (someone who is obviously very important in the community), “I’ll have your job,” “I know the chief of police,” or “I’m a taxpayer, and I pay your salary”—the probable outcome is obvious. On the other hand, the person who is honest with the officer, avoids attempts at intimidation and sarcasm, and does not try to “beat the rap” may fare better.

Pros and Cons of Discretion

Having discretionary authority carries several advantages for the police officer: First, because the law cannot (and should not) cover every sort of situation the officer encounters, discretion allows the officer to have the flexibility to treat different situations in accordance with humanitarian and practical goals. For example, assume an officer pulls over a speeding motorist, only to learn that the car is en route to the hospital with a woman who is about to deliver a baby. While the agitated driver is endangering everyone in the vehicle as well as other motorists on the roadway, discretion allows the officer to be compassionate and empathetic, giving the car a safe escort to the hospital rather than issuing a citation for speeding. In short, discretionary use of authority allows the police to employ a philosophy of “justice tempered with mercy.”

One disadvantage of discretionary authority is that those officers who are the least trained and experienced have the greatest amount of discretion to exercise. In other words, as the rank of the officer increases, the amount of discretion that he or she can employ normally decreases. The patrol officer or deputy, being loosely supervised on the streets, makes many discretionary
decisions about whether or not to arrest, search, frisk, and so forth. Conversely, the chief of police or sheriff will be highly constrained by department policies and procedures, union agreements, affirmative-action laws, and/or governing board guidelines and policies. Another disadvantage is that allowing police to exercise such discretion belies their need to appear impartial—treatment people differently for committing essentially the same offense. Critics of discretion also argue that such wide latitude in decision making may serve as a breeding ground for police corruption; for example, an officer may be offered a bribe to overlook an offense.

See the two case studies in the accompanying “You Be the Judge” box and respond to the questions posed for each of them.

COMMUNITY POLICING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Chapter 5 discussed the three eras of policing, which led to today’s “community era.” Following is a brief description of policing in terms of how it moved from the political and reform eras—both of which experienced problems in terms of recognizing and working with the community. The seeds of community policing and problem solving were sown in London in 1829, when the architect of London’s police force, Sir Robert Peel, offered that “the police are the public and... the public are the police,” and that by establishing patrol beats, officers could get to know their citizens and thus be better able to gather information about neighborhood crime and disorder. As was seen in Chapter 5, however, in the United States that close police-public association over time driving a deep wedge between the police and minorities, many of whom claimed to be victims of this practice. Indeed, a New Jersey state police executive was fired for statements that were perceived as racially insensitive concerning racial profiling.) Assume there have been a number of complaints against police for racial profiling in your city, and a number of minority groups are very vocal about wanting the situation stopped. At the same time, there has also been a serious problem of violent crimes being committed in shopping malls against jewelry salespeople delivering gems. Based on descriptions provided by victims and informant information, it appears the robbers are Colombians—not Latinos, African Americans, or other immigrants—and it seems a group of about a dozen Colombians is committing these crimes. Assume two police officers see four men who fit this physical description sitting in a car in front of a jewelry boutique and who appear to be closely watching people with briefcases.

POLICE DISCRETION

A. Assume a police officer pulls over a vehicle for swerving across the center line. The driver is a 17-year-old college student who is an elementary education major who admits she’s been drinking at a party. The breathalyzer test reveals a .07 blood alcohol concentration. In this state, .07 can result in a charge of either “driving after having consumed alcohol” or a more serious “driving while ability is impaired.” There are two other girls in the car: One has a badly swollen jaw after having fallen at the party; the driver is attempting to get her to the Urgent Care facility. Another girl, the older sister of the driver, is visibly pregnant.

1. What discretionary issues are presented? What discretionary options are presented? In the final analysis, how do you believe the officer should deal with the driver?

B. A flashpoint for many citizens is racial profiling—also known as biased policing—in which police appear to be pulling over drivers simply on the basis of their race. (Racial profiling began to loom as a major issue in policing in the early 2000s, driving a deep wedge between the police and minorities, many of whom claimed to be victims of this practice. Indeed, a New Jersey state police executive was fired for statements that were perceived as racially insensitive concerning racial profiling.) Assume there have been a number of complaints against police for racial profiling in your city, and a number of minority groups are very vocal about wanting the situation stopped. At the same time, there has also been a serious problem of violent crimes being committed in shopping malls against jewelry salespeople delivering gems. Based on descriptions provided by victims and informant information, it appears the robbers are Colombians—not Latinos, African Americans, or other immigrants—and it seems a group of about a dozen Colombians is committing these crimes. Assume two police officers see four men who fit this physical description sitting in a car in front of a jewelry boutique and who appear to be closely watching people with briefcases.

2. How should the officers address this situation?
often led to powerful political influences and corruption (in terms of who was hired, who was promoted, and who could bring elected officials the most votes), which in turn led to the onset of the reform era in the 1930s (which attempted the removal of police from the community and political influence, the creation of civil service systems, and so forth). The community era of policing recognized that the public has a vested interest in addressing—as well as vital information concerning—neighborhood crime and disorder, and thus a return to Peel's principles were needed and the two entities should work hand in glove to resolve problems.

Problem-oriented policing, which began to develop in the mid-1980s, was grounded in principles different from, but complementary to, those of community-oriented policing. Problem-oriented policing is a strategy that puts the community policing philosophy into practice. It advocates that police examine the underlying causes of recurring incidents of crime and disorder. The problem-solving process helps officers to identify problems, analyze them completely, develop response strategies, and assess the results. Police must be equipped to define more clearly and to understand more fully the problems they are expected to handle. They must recognize the relationships between and among incidents—for example, incidents involving the same behavior, the same address, or the same people. The police must therefore develop a commitment to analyzing problems—gathering information from police files, the minds of experienced officers, other agencies of government, and private sources as well. It can also require conducting house-to-house surveys and talking with victims, complainants, and offenders. It includes an uninhibited search for the most effective response to each problem, looking beyond just the criminal justice system to a wide range of alternatives; in sum, police must try to design a customized response that holds the greatest potential for dealing effectively with a specific problem in a specific place under specific conditions.

Thousands of police agencies have thus broken away from their reactive, incident-driven methods that characterized the reform era—where police would race from call to call, take an offense report, and leave the scene without seeking any resolution to problems or achieving any long-term benefits. This change in philosophy and strategies goes far beyond merely creating a “crime prevention specialist” position, a “community relations unit,” a foot or bicycle patrol, or a neighborhood mini-station. Today, community-oriented policing and problem solving involves radical changes in police organizational culture and structures, management styles, and external relationships. It requires a cultural transformation within the entire police agency, involving changes in recruiting, training, awards systems, evaluation, and promotions. New technologies have also been designed to help effect this transition, while personnel training, evaluation, and reward systems have been altered to fit this philosophy. At its core, this approach fosters more long-term, thoughtful crime control and prevention strategies.

Finally, what every criminal justice employee knows is that there are three
elements that must exist in order for a crime to occur: an offender, a victim, and a location, as shown in Figure 6.4, the problem analysis triangle. The triangle helps officers visualize the problem and understand the relationship between these three elements. Additionally, it helps officers to analyze problems, it suggests where more information is needed, and it assists with crime control and prevention. Simply put, if there is a victim and he or she is in a place where crimes occur but there is no offender, no crime occurs. If there is an offender and he or she is in a place where crimes occur but there is nothing or no one to be victimized, then no crime will occur. If an offender and a victim are not in the same place, there will be no crime. Part of the analysis phase involves finding out as much as possible about the victims, offenders, and locations where problems exist in order to understand what is prompting the problem and what can be done about it.

In the following scenario, compare how the police would have handled the problem using traditional methods versus the contemporary community-oriented policing and problem-solving approach. In the latter, the police use what is termed the SARA problem-solving process (see Figure 6.5), which is composed of the following four steps: scanning (officers first identify a problem and look for a pattern or persistent repeat incidents), analysis (here, officers thoroughly examine the nature and causes of the problem in order to identify possible responses), response (the officer develops creative solutions that will address the problem), and assessment (later, officers look at the problem and neighborhood to see if their responses were effective, examining such indicators as numbers of reported crimes, calls for service to the area, and citizen fear of crime).

In a relatively quiet neighborhood, police have recently had to respond to a series of disturbances. All of the disturbances—loud music, fighting, screeching tires, people displaying lewd behavior on and near the premises—appear to be related to a recently opened live-music dance club. In a month’s time, police officers have been sent to the club to restore order on more than 50 occasions. Under the traditional policing model, typically the swing (evening) shift officers would respond to the club and restore order for a short period of time; later, graveyard (night) shift officers often would have to return to the club to again restore calm. Usually when officers arrive, however, the offenders are already gone, so a report is taken, and the officer leaves. This problem—with police basically showing up, taking a disturbance or noise complaint report, and leaving—persists for months on end.

Under the community policing and problem-solving approach, however, following are examples of activities that might occur toward getting the problem resolved. First, information is gathered concerning possible zoning and health department violations. Officers arrange a meeting with the club manager/operator and representatives from the city’s business licensing division, during which the consequences for continued problems are explained. This also results in the manager’s removal of an unsavory employee and his “following” of drug users and other undesirable characters at the club. The hours of the club’s live music are limited, and the manager and employees are trained in relevant sections of the municipal code covering disturbing the peace, minors in liquor establishments, trespassing laws, disorderly behaviors, and so on. The officers also arrange a meeting with the club’s landlord, who agrees to install more lights in the parking lots and a “sound wall” around the business to buffer the area residents. A later assessment reveals that a reduction in call for service in the area was realized, and area residents, although not entirely happy with the continuing existence of the business, acknowledged satisfaction from their complaints; no further newspaper stories appeared regarding the noise and disorder in the neighborhood.
THE WORK OF FORENSICS AND DETECTIVES

The challenges involved with investigating crimes may well be characterized by a quote from Ludwig Wittgenstein: “How hard I find it to see what is right in front of my eyes!” Certainly the art of sleuthing has long fascinated the American public. Certainly the expanding uses of DNA in the news and such television series as *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* have done much to capture the public’s fascination with criminal investigation and forensic science in the 21st century. This interest in “sleuthing” is not a recent phenomenon, however; for decades, Americans have feasted on the exploits of dozens of fictional masterminds, like Sherlock Holmes, Agatha Christie’s Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple, Clint Eastwood’s portrayal of Detective “Dirty Harry” Callahan, and Peter Falk’s Columbo, to name a few.

In reality, investigative work is largely misunderstood, often boring, and generally overrated; it results in arrests only a fraction of the time; and it relies strongly on the assistance of witnesses and even some luck.

**Forensic Science and Criminalistics: Defining the Terms**

The terms *forensic science* and *criminalistics* are often used interchangeably. **Forensic science** is the broader term; it is that part of science used to answer legal questions. It is the examination, evaluation, and explanation of physical evidence in law. Forensic science encompasses pathology, toxicology, physical anthropology, odontology (development of dental structure and dental diseases), psychiatry, questioned documents, ballistics, tool work comparison, and serology (the reactions and properties of serums), among other fields.

**Criminalistics** is one branch of forensic science; it deals with the study of physical evidence related to crime. From such a study, a crime may be reconstructed. Criminalistics is interdisciplinary, drawing on mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, anthropology, and many other scientific fields.

Basically, the analysis of physical evidence is concerned with identifying traces of evidence, reconstructing criminal acts, and establishing a common origin of samples of evidence. The types of information that physical evidence can provide are as follows:

- **Information on the corpus delicti** (or “body of the crime”) is physical evidence showing that a crime was committed, such as tool marks, a broken door or window, a ransacked home, and missing valuables in a burglary or a victim’s blood, a weapon, and torn clothing in an assault.

- **Information on the modus operandi** (or method of operation) is physical evidence showing means used by the criminal to gain entry, tools that were used, types of items taken, and other signs—items left at the scene, an accelerant used at an arson scene, the way crimes are committed, and so forth.

- **Linking a suspect with a victim** is one of the most important linkages, particularly with violent crimes. It includes hair,
blood, clothing fibers, and cosmetics that may be transferred from victim to perpetrator. Items found in a suspect’s possession, such as bullets or a bloody knife, can also be linked to a victim.

• **Linking a person to a crime scene** is also a common and significant linkage. It includes fingerprints, glove prints, blood, semen, hairs, fibers, soil, bullets, cartridge cases, tool marks, footprints or shoeprints, tire tracks, and objects that belonged to the criminal. Stolen property is the most obvious example.

• In terms of **disproving or supporting a witness’s testimony**, evidence can indicate whether or not a person’s version of events is true. An example is a driver whose car matches the description of a hit-and-run vehicle. If blood is found on the underside of the car and the driver claims that he hit a dog, tests on the blood can determine whether the blood is from an animal or from a human.

• One of the best forms of evidence for **identification of a suspect** is DNA evidence, which proves “individualization.” Without a doubt, that person was at the crime scene.

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**Locard’s exchange principle:**
the notion that when one commits a crime, he leaves a part of himself at the crime scene wherever he steps, whatever he touches, and so on; the crime scene analyst or investigator’s job is to locate that evidence and use it in the investigation.

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**Investigative Stages and Activities**

The police, more specifically investigators and criminalists, operate on the age-old theory that there is no such thing as a perfect crime; criminals either leave a bit of themselves or take something away from the crime scene. This is termed **Locard’s exchange principle**, which asserts that when any person comes into contact with an object or another person, a cross-transfer of evidence—in the form of fingerprints, hairs, fibers, and all manner of residue or other materials—will occur.\(^ {31}\) An example is when a victim is strangled to death (by an assailant who is not wearing gloves), the suspect may well have the victim’s skin cells under his nails, the victim’s hair on his clothing, and other such residual material on his person. In the apprehension process, when a crime is reported or discovered, police officers respond, conduct a search for the offender, and check out suspects. If the search is successful, evidence for charging the suspect is assembled, and the suspect is apprehended.\(^ {32}\) Cases not solved in the initial phase of the apprehension process are assigned either to an investigative specialist or, in smaller police agencies, to an experienced uniformed officer who functions as a part-time investigator. Following are the basic investigative stages:\(^ {33}\):

• **The preliminary investigation:** Duties include establishing whether a crime has been committed; securing from any witnesses a description of the perpetrator and his or her vehicle; locating and interviewing the victim and all witnesses; protecting the crime scene (and searching for and collecting all items of possible physical evidence); determining how the crime
was committed and what the resulting injuries were, as well as the nature of property taken; recording in field notes and sketches all data about the crime; and arranging for photographs of the crime scene.

- **The continuing investigation:** This stage includes follow-up interviews; developing a theory of the crime; analyzing the significance of information and evidence; continuing the search for witnesses; beginning to contact crime lab technicians and assessing their analyses of the evidence; conducting surveillances, interrogations, and polygraph tests, as appropriate; and preparing the case for the prosecutor.

- **Reconstructing the crime:** The investigator seeks a rational theory of the crime. Most often, inductive reasoning is used: The collected information and evidence are carefully analyzed to develop a theory. One of the major traits of criminals is vanity; their belief in their own cleverness, not chance, is the key factor in their leaving a vital clue. Investigators look for mistakes.

- **Focusing the investigation:** When this stage is reached, all investigative efforts are directed toward proving that one suspect (perhaps with accomplices) is guilty of the crime. This decision is based on the investigator’s analysis of the relationship between the crime, the investigation, and the habits and attitudes of the suspect.

### Myths and Attributes of Detectives

**Detectives/investigators** are members of police agencies who investigate crimes by obtaining evidence and information relating to illegal activities; furthermore, by extension—and what is often overlooked in their role—they ultimately present in court the findings of their investigation. To be effective, detectives must be trained in such general areas as the laws of arrest, search, and seizure; investigative principles and practices; judicial proceedings; and oral and written communications. More specialized training will often be required if individuals are specializing in such areas as sex crimes, family crimes, homicide investigation, and gang and drug enforcement.

Several myths surround police detectives, who are often portrayed in movies as rugged, confident (sometimes overbearing), independent, streetwise individualists who bask in glory, are rewarded with big arrests, and are adorned by beautiful women. In reality, detective work is seldom glamorous or exciting. Investigators, like their bureaucratic cousins, often wade in paperwork and

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**you be the... DETECTIVE**

**SUICIDE OR MURDER?**

As the coach opened the door to the locker room, the only light that shone was from the players’ large shower area. Upon flipping the light switch, he saw the body of his once “ace” pitcher, Hines, lying on the floor in the shower. In his pale left hand he held a gun. There was a bullet wound in his left temple. Under his tanned right hand was a note saying “My pitching days are gone, my debts and humiliation more than I can bear. Sorry.” His nearby locker contained a half-empty bottle of beer, his uniform, an uneaten stadium hot dog, a picture of his two children, and his Acme-brand ball glove with “RH” stamped in the webbing. Wet footprints were observed walking in and out of the shower. Upon surveying the scene, the responding detective said “I do not believe this was a suicide.”

1. What fact(s) led to this conclusion?
Police detectives must be skilled interviewers; this detective is interviewing college students after a gunman opened fire at a college in California.

Television programs focusing on criminal investigations and forensic techniques may be creating unrealistic courtroom expectations among jurors that cannot be achieved in real life. This phenomenon has been labeled the “CSI effect.” Some court officers believe this “effect” is truly present: Prosecutors indicate that jurors want to see all evidence subjected to substantial forensic examination, whether warranted in a specific case or not, while some defense attorneys believe that jurors deem all scientific evidence to be flawless and thus establish guilt. The *voir dire* jury selection process may also be altered to ensure that those jurors who are unduly influenced by shows like *CSI* are screened from jury service. Such modifications to the usual process could result in longer trials and increased use of expert witnesses to aid the jury in understanding the presence or absence of physical evidence. A survey of Kentucky circuit court judges found that the impact has been strong—but not in areas where one might expect. First, three-fourths of the judges indicated that jurors have come to expect more forensic evidence; furthermore, 82 percent of the judges believed that “shows like *CSI* have distorted the public’s perception of time needed to obtain forensic results.” In that same connection, a slight majority (53.4 percent) believed that the popularity of shows like *CSI* has made it harder to convict defendants. The responding judges also perceived that these television programs create unrealistic representations concerning the state of the forensic art in their jurisdiction, as well as the speed of forensic testing.

In one Illinois case, jurors acquitted the defendant of a rape charge—even when presented with DNA evidence and strong testimony from the victim and an emergency room nurse—because no test was performed to see if “debris” found in the victim matched soil from the park where the crime occurred.
To be successful, the investigator must possess four personal attributes to enhance the detection of crime: an unusual capability for observation and recall; extensive knowledge of the law, rules of evidence, scientific aids, and laboratory services; power of imagination; and a working knowledge of social psychology. Successful detectives (and even patrol officers) also appear to empathize with the suspect; if a detective can appear to understand why a criminal did what he did, a rapport is often established that results in the suspect’s telling the officer his or her life history—including how and why he or she committed the crime in question. Perhaps first and foremost, however, detectives need logical skills, the ability to exercise deductive reasoning, to assist in their investigative work.

**Using DNA Analysis**

Today DNA is the most sophisticated and reliable type of physical evidence (see Figure 6.6); police are now able to submit to laboratories work that until recently was not even possible to examine: “touch” evidence, utilizing DNA analysis to see whether a defendant even touched a

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**FIGURE 6.6**

“What is DNA?”

1. DNA is the chemical substance that makes up our chromosomes and controls all inheritable information (e.g., eye, hair, and skin color).
2. DNA is different for every individual except identical twins.
3. DNA is found in all cellular materials (white blood cells, tissue cells, bone cells, hair root cells, and spermatozoa).
4. Half of an individual’s DNA/chromosomes comes from the father and the other half from the mother.
5. DNA is a double-stranded macromolecule.
6. The DNA strands are chemically made of four different building blocks:
7. In specific regions on a DNA strand, each person has a unique sequence of building blocks or genetic code.
8. It is a person’s unique genetic code that allows forensic scientists to identify an individual to the exclusion of others.
Part II • The Police

The Police

DNA: deoxyribonucleic acid, or the acids found in all cells; used in forensics to match evidence (hair, semen) left at a crime scene with a particular perpetrator.

Policing styles: James Q. Wilson argued that there are three styles of policing: watchman, legalistic, and service.

weapon; DNA evidence from steering wheels; finding drugs on the floor of a room and analyzing them to determine which hand threw them down on the floor.41

A testimonial of DNA’s promise in investigations is offered by a former supervising criminalist of the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department:

The power of what we can look for and analyze now is incredible. It’s like magic. Every day we discover evidence where we never thought it would be. You almost can’t do anything without leaving some DNA around. DNA takes longer than fingerprints to analyze, but you get a really big bang for your buck.42

Furthermore, DNA has allowed investigative personnel to exonerate people who were convicted in the past for crimes they did not commit. Indeed, in April 2007 it was reported that the 200th person—a former Army cook who spent nearly 25 years in prison for a rape he did not commit—was exonerated by DNA evidence (the 100th exoneration since January 2002).43

Forensic Scientist (Criminalist)

Name: Renee Romero
Current position: Director, Forensic Science Division, Washoe County Sheriff’s Office
City, state: Reno, Nevada
College attended/academic major: Michigan State University/BA, chemistry, forensic science; University of Nevada, Reno/MS, cell and molecular biology

How long have you been a practitioner in this criminal justice position? Since 1989—24 years
My primary duties and responsibilities as a practitioner in this position are:
Being responsible for the management of the Forensic Science Division at the Sheriff’s Office. This entails managing budgets, planning for future forensic technology changes, and ensuring we are meeting our accreditation standards. Prior to becoming the director in 2008, I was a practicing forensic scientist (criminalist). While I have limited controlled substances experience, the majority of my experience is in the DNA field. The primary duty of a forensic scientist is to examine evidence from criminal cases. This evidence can range from drugs, firearms, toxicology, and DNA to shoe prints, tire tracks impressions, and latent fingerprints. A forensic scientist usually specializes in one specific discipline. After examining the evidence the forensic scientist must issue the findings to the investigating agency and then work with the district attorney’s office to prepare for expert testimony when the cases go to trial.

The qualities/characteristics that are most helpful for one in this career are: Attention to detail, organization, and excellent communication skills.
In general, a typical day for a practitioner in this career would include:
Spending time in the laboratory examining evidence, reviewing findings, and writing reports. The day may be interrupted with changing priorities based on the investigative needs of new cases as they arise.
My advice to someone either wishing to study, or now studying, criminal justice to become a practitioner in this career field would be:
To obtain a scientific degree. If you believe you are interested in toxicology or controlled substances, then work toward a chemistry degree. If you think you are interested in the DNA field, then work toward a molecular biology degree—and you must also earn college credits in genetics, molecular biology, and biochemistry. The field of forensic science is getting more competitive, so obtaining a master’s degree would be beneficial as well.
• The idea of a police subculture was first proposed in 1950 by William Westley, who found a high degree of secrecy and violence.
• Recruit academy training covers a wide variety of subjects; neophyte officers learn how to use a variety of lethal and less lethal weapons, and how to deal with criminal suspects, offenders, victims, and witnesses; hands-on training and simulated situations are also employed.
• After leaving the academy, new officers are assigned to a veteran officer—a “field training officer”—for initial field instruction and observation; this phase of training helps recruits to make the transition from the academy to the streets under the protective arm of a veteran officer, while on probationary status.
• Jerome Skolnick said officers develop a working personality, and that the police role contains two important variables: danger and authority. Consequently, they develop a “perceptual shorthand” to identify certain kinds of people as “symbolic assailants”—those who pose a physical threat to them.
• John Broderick presented another view of the working personality of the police, believing that there are actually four types of police personalities: enforcers, idealists, realists, and optimists. Dennis Nowicki stated that honesty, ethics, and moral character make a highly effective officer, and offered 12 additional qualities for entry-level police officers.
• Police have four basic tasks: enforcing the laws, performing welfare tasks, preventing crimes, and protecting the innocent.
• James Q. Wilson maintained that there are three distinctive policing styles: the watchman style, the legalistic style, and the service style.
• Although several occupations have workers die at much higher rates than policing, this occupation still has many occupational hazards.
• The traffic function is an important part of policing; as officers enforce traffic laws and investigate traffic collisions, they attempt to reduce traffic deaths and injuries.
• Full enforcement of the laws by police is a myth; they typically have considerable discretion in whether or not to arrest someone. Determining factors include the law (e.g., some ordinances mandate arrest for certain offenses, such as domestic violence), the officer’s attitude (concerning the law that is violated, as well as toward the offender), and the citizen’s attitude toward the officer.
• Today, under the community policing philosophy, officers are trained to examine the underlying causes of problems in the neighborhoods on their beats and to involve citizens in the long-term resolution of neighborhood problems.
• The fields of forensic science and criminalistics are the most rapidly developing areas in policing—and probably in all of criminal justice.
• Several myths surround police detectives, who often perform mundane duties and are often unsuccessful in their search for the offender.
• DNA is the most sophisticated and reliable type of physical evidence, and has resulted in hundreds of arrestees being exonerated.

**Key Terms & Concepts**

- Academy training
- Community policing and problem solving
- Criminalistics
- Detective/investigator
- Discretion
- DNA
- Field training officer (FTO)
- Forensic science
- Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment
- Locard's exchange principle
- Policing styles
- “Sixth sense”
- Tasks of policing (four basic)
- Traffic function
- Welfare tasks
- Working personality
1. What ideal traits are sought among those persons wishing to enter policing?
2. How are police recruits socialized into the police subculture while in academy training, and what are some topics that are studied by trainees while attending the academy?
3. What are the methods and purposes of the FTO concept?
4. What is meant by the working personality, how was the concept developed, and how does it function?
5. What traits or qualities are said to make a “good” officer?
6. What are the primary tasks and styles of policing?
7. How would you describe the activities that are involved in the police traffic function?
8. What examples can you provide of police use of discretion? What are some pros and cons of police use of discretionary authority?
9. What are the qualities, myths, and methods that tend to revolve around investigative personnel?

You are a patrol sergeant lecturing to your agency’s Citizens’ Police Academy about the patrol function. Someone asks: “Sergeant, your officers obviously can’t enforce all of the laws all of the time. Which laws are always enforced, and which ones are not?” How do you respond to her (without saying something absurd like “We enforce all of the laws, all of the time,” which of course would be untrue)? How would you fully explain police discretion to the group?

The “Crime & Investigation Network,” based in the United Kingdom, advertises on its website that it “investigates the darker corners of human life” and “offers viewers stories of real life crime” that “open the door to real crime labs, police archives and courtrooms, allowing viewers to join detectives as they examine evidence and piece together clues.” You can access and participate in solving a number of different crimes at http://www.crimeandinvestigation.co.uk/games/solve-the-murder.html.

For a practical view of traffic problems and solutions, go to http://www.popcenter.org/problems/street_racing/ and/or go to http://www.popcenter.org/problems/drunk_driving/. These are guides published by the federal Center for Problem-Oriented Policing. Read and describe the kinds of problems that are caused by illegal street racing and/or drunk driving. As importantly, consider what efforts are described in the guides that police are using to successfully address these problems.
Visit www.sagepub.com/introcrim to access the student study site.

- The wave of feminism during the 1970s consequently gave women equal opportunity brought female involvement in a wide variety of crimes - sometimes termed feminist theory - as well as new studies and questions of that involvement: do the traditionally male-centered theories of crime that apply to men apply to women as well? And what explains the long-standing fact that women commit far fewer crimes than men?

- In their own words, criminals explain and rationalize their acts in a variety of ways, including financial gain, the need to maintain street status and a partying lifestyle, revenge, and for “thrill-seeking” purposes.

- Crimes in the U.S. are measured and reported in three primary ways: the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports, the National Incident-Based Reporting System, and the National Crime Victim Survey. Each had its unique approaches as well as advantages and disadvantages.