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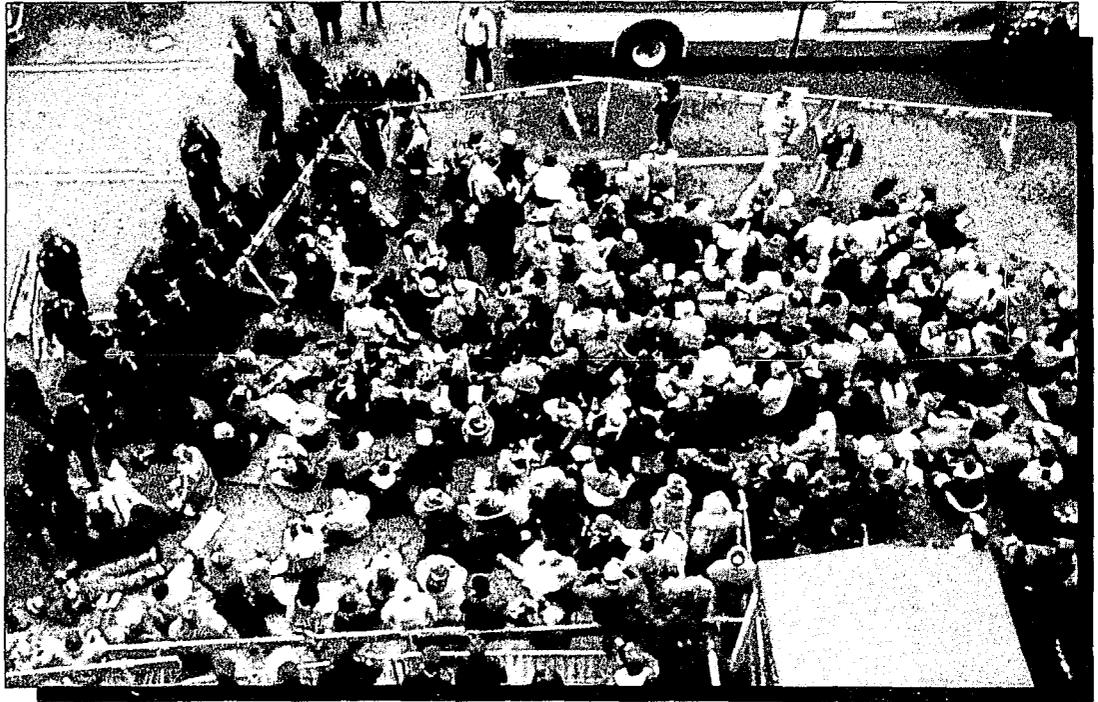
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Policing Demonstrations

By
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The proper handling of demonstrations is a major concern of law enforcement, especially since the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and the right of the people to assemble peacefully. Protecting the rights of everyone involved and maintaining order have become the responsibilities of the police, who pledge to uphold the Constitution when taking the oath of office. However, many variables complicate the problems associated with policing demonstrations.

Oftentimes, officers are placed in the role of mediator or referee between two opposing forces. Individual beliefs and opinions may shade the issue at hand, regardless of the desire to remain objective. Also, the makeup of the demonstrators, such as age, religion, sex, and eth-

nicity, may dictate the manner of policing. Other factors to consider are the actions and conduct of a given group, their training and tactics, the number of demonstrators as compared to the number of officers, the extent of police training and experience, and the physical conditions of the demonstration site, to name a few.

The key to handling a demonstration successfully is trained and experienced law enforcement personnel. Recent protests have only fostered the belief that to properly control modern-day mass demonstrations, policing tactics and equipment must be constantly updated. In order to carry out this mission, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) has implemented training programs and specific methods and techniques designed to prepare personnel to handle civil disorders.

TRAINING

The NYPD addresses disorder control in four specific areas of recruit training—law, police science, social science, and physical education. The law courses explain the constitutional guarantees afforded demonstrators, as well as the legal guidelines that must be followed. This includes the laws of arrest, disorderly conduct, obstructing governmental administration, and resisting arrest, along with other related statutes.

The police science course covers the department's policies and procedures with regard to demonstrations, while the social science instruction acquaints officers with the psychological aspects of crowd control and group behavior. Physical education instructors teach recruits crowd control formations and the need for self-discipline, both physical and mental, when policing a demonstration.

Refresher courses are also provided to departmental personnel. Further, management training programs are conducted to provide sergeants and lieutenants with necessary supervisory skills. Uniformed members of the rank of captain and above sharpen their skills in an executive development program.

In addition, a training course for disorder control and demonstration policing is required for all uniformed personnel. This course is designed to cover tactics and platoon formations which are adaptable to meet special needs based on actions taken by activist groups. Included in the curriculum are expedited arrest procedures, which encompass the use of

stretchers and other removal methods, transportation, and processing of prisoners.

TODAY'S DEMONSTRATORS

Strategies

The sophistication of demonstrators today becomes more evident with each staged event. Organizers record the actions of the police and then train their people in ways they believe will effectively hinder the policing of the next demonstration. The tactics employed counter the procedures and equipment used by the police. For example, demonstrators form human chains by holding hands or interlocking their arms and legs, they do not carry identification in order to delay the arrest process, and they passively resist by going limp when asked to move, thus forcing the police to physically carry them from the scene.

Another common practice is for demonstrators to chain themselves to stationary objects. In the past, ordinary bolt and chain cutters made these tactics ineffective.

However, in recent rallies across the Nation, anti-abortion protesters have fortified the lock-and-chain method by bringing a 200-pound reinforced concrete slab called the "block" to the demonstration site. Its design is similar to the "stocks," which were used to secure a person's head and limbs as a form of punishment in colonial America times. After placing the "block" at strategic locations (entrances and exits), two people would place either their heads and necks or one of their limbs in a cutout and then lock themselves in. This type of barricade required police not only to unlock the individuals but also to remove the heavy cement slab from the site. To exacerbate this condition, the demonstrators used U-shaped kryptonite locks made of high-strength armor and carbon steel, which made conventional bolt cutters ineffective and the removal of the locks slow and tedious.

"Operation Rescue"

"Operation Rescue" is a national coalition of "pro-life"



Chief Johnston



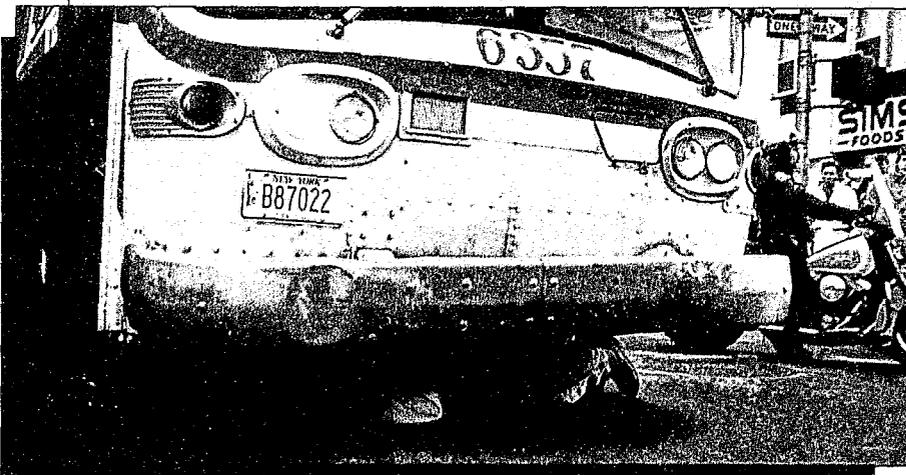
Captain Loesch



Stretchers are used when demonstrators passively resist police by going limp.



Demonstrators interlock hands and arms to form a "human chain" when prevented from crawling under french barriers.



Demonstrators hamper removal of those arrested by lying under Transit Authority buses with their heads positioned in the area of the wheels.

(anti-abortion) groups organized to "rescue" unborn victims of abortion. A "rescue" is accomplished by obstructing the operation of targeted clinics for as long as possible through nonviolent civil disobedience, e.g., sit ins and passive resistance to arrest.

On January 13, 1989, an "Operation Rescue" group with approximately 1,200 protestors staged a "sit down" in front of a planned parenthood center in Manhattan. Because of the rapid response of arrest teams, the clinic opened within 2 hours, and 277 persons were arrested.

NYPD's ability to minimize the effect of this demonstration was the result of training, planning, and effective use of available equipment. After the demonstration was under control, all commanders returned to headquarters to critique the policing of this demonstration and to plan for the others expected on the following day. This was not an easy task, since New York City has more than 50 abortion clinics, and police did not know which ones were targeted.

However, during this planning stage, certain strategic issues became evident. First, mobile units were essential in order to expedite police response. Second, the demonstrators had to be prevented from crawling under barriers, arrest buses, and police vehicles. Once strategies had been devised and the proper crowd control equipment readied, only the demonstration sites needed to be identified.

On January 14, 1989, six different abortion clinics throughout the city became demonstration sites. Eight mobile units were available; each was self-contained and included uniformed police and

supervisors, police legal advisers, community affairs and public information representatives, and fully equipped technical support, communication, and emergency services personnel. Additionally, each mobile unit was assigned trucks carrying barriers, tow trucks to remove "blocks," and buses to transport prisoners. Stretchers were available to assist in removing demonstrators, and plastic handcuffs were used for mass arrests.

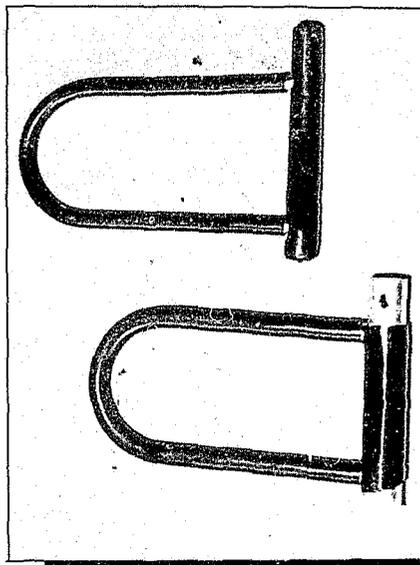
The police at each demonstration site were equipped with a court order enjoining the demonstrators from participating in unlawful conduct, and this injunction was read aloud before the arrests took place. An arrest processing center was set up at a separate location to handle the large number of expected arrests.

The planned tactics were a success. By day's end, 652 demonstrators had been arrested. Most were removed on stretchers to avoid injury to officers and demonstrators.

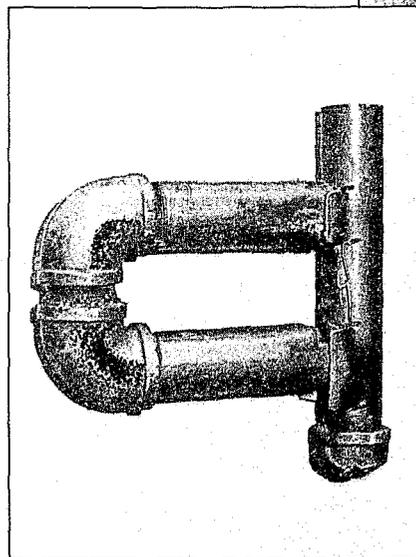
Crowd Control Devices

Instead of traditional wooden "horse" barriers, "french barriers" (metal) were used. These barriers were joined together in such a fashion that protestors could not crawl through the openings at the bottom. The use of tandem french barriers divided the crowd into two pen-like areas and expedited clearing the entrances.

Even though the french barriers worked, a new problem was encountered when protestors grabbed hold of the metal rungs, thus hindering police efforts. To overcome this problem, the department has since developed the "crowd interposer," which is a 4' x 8' sheet of 3/4" plywood



Demonstrators attach U-shaped locks to each other's ankles and sit in a "wagon wheel" configuration.



Demonstrators use both U-shaped locks encased in steel pipes and unencased locks to attach the ankles of two demonstrators with the neck of a third.



with hand holds cut out on one side. With this device, an arrest team can remove a person directly in front of the entrance and fill the vacant spot with an officer holding one end of a crowd interposer. The arrest team then proceeds to move through the crowd. Once done, french barriers manned by police officers are positioned to take the place of crowd interposers.

Problems Encountered

One setback involved the use of U-shaped locks. At three different locations, a group of at least seven protestors formed a human chain in the shape of a wagon wheel. Using chains with U-shaped locks, the demonstrators were joined at the ankles and necks, with at least one person chained to a permanent fixture at the demonstration site.

An air-powered cut-off tool was used to remove the locks, but only after numerous problems were overcome. For example, the average air bottle used to operate the cutting tool lasted approximately 5-7 minutes, but it took some 15 minutes to remove each lock. Blades needed to be changed continuously because they wore down. Some locks were filled with crazy glue; others were encased in 2-inch diameter steel or galvanized pipe, which was filled with a tar-like substance and small stones. The heat of the blade softened the tar, clogging the blades.

The locks used by the demonstrators were .625 inches in diameter with a cross-bar diameter of 1.25 inches. Each weighed 4 to 5 pounds, depending on length, and were made of a tough grade of steel fully hardened to 120,000 PSI (pounds per square inch). The locks were tubular key locks hardened to resist picks and drilling. However, after testing and research, a successful removal procedure was developed. (See sidebar.)

CONCLUSION

The proper handling of demonstrations is not a simple matter. Therefore, police departments must remain current with the tactics used by demonstrators.

As today's demonstrators become more sophisticated and disciplined in the furtherance of their causes, the police must rely on training and state-of-the-art equipment to neutralize demonstrator strategies. Continually evaluating and upgrading training, planning, and disorder control tactics will ensure a department has the necessary knowledge to effectively police a demonstration.

Procedure To Remove U-Shaped Locks

- 1) Cut a small square or window-shaped opening in the steel/galvanized pipe
- 2) Remove any tar and stones from the window area
- 3) Use an 4½" electric cutter/grinder powered by a portable generator. When equipped with a ¼" carborundum blade, this tool can cut through an unobstructed lock in less than 20 seconds

NOTE: Using water to cool the metal will prolong the cutting process

Safety Measures:

- Wear safety goggles and gloves
- Place a piece of steel or a pliable thin sheet of metal between the pipe or lock and the person's limb or neck
- Use a gel blanket or similar wet material to protect the demonstrator from heat or sparks generated by the cutting tool

