

CATCHING CAREER CRIMINALS: -
A STUDY OF THE REPEAT OFFENDER PROJECT
TECHNICAL REPORT

by
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Report to the
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The Honorable James K. Stewart, Director
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President

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Abstract

CATCHING CAREER CRIMINALS:
A STUDY OF THE REPEAT OFFENDER PROJECT

by
Susan E. Martin
Police Foundation

This study examined the effectiveness of the Repeat Offender Project (ROP), a specialized police unit created in May 1982 by the Metropolitan Police Department of Washington, D.C. The study documented how well the approximately 60 officer ROP unit operated, what it cost, and how well it achieved its goal of "selecting, apprehending and contributing to" the conviction of persons believed to be committing five or more Part I offenses per week. A field experiment was conducted to determine whether ROP increased the likelihood of arrest of persons targeted as "repeat offenders" in comparison with their likelihood of being caught in ROP's absence. The study also compared ROP officers' arrests, their dispositions, and their arrestees' criminal histories with those of a random sample of officers in various assignments.

The controlled experiment showed that ROP substantially increased the likelihood of arrest for the persons it targeted. ROP arrestees had longer and more serious histories of prior arrests than a comparison sample of arrestees of officers in other police units. The ROP arrestees were also more likely to be prosecuted and convicted on felony charges and more likely to be incarcerated. One cost of ROP's activities, however, was that ROP officers made only half as many arrests while in ROP than they had made before ROP was created. But this cost appears to have been offset by the greater seriousness of the current and prior offenses of ROP arrestees. The study concludes that other very large police departments seriously consider creating proactive repeat offender units.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CATCHING CAREER CRIMINALS:
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Two facts stand out in modern crime control policy debates. One is that a small proportion of criminals commits a disproportionate number of crimes. The other is that most prisons are increasingly overcrowded. Both facts have led to growing interest in selectively focusing criminal justice system resources on the most active and dangerous chronic offenders.

In the past, police have rarely adopted a selective approach to apprehending street criminals. The Metropolitan Police Department of Washington, D.C., adopted that approach in May 1982 in establishing an 88-officer (later reduced to 60) Repeat Offender Project (ROP pronounced "rope").

The creation of ROP offered a unique opportunity for research on the problems and effectiveness of operating a proactive police unit to carry out a selective apprehension strategy. The Police Foundation obtained the department's agreement to cooperate in a multifaceted experimental study of ROP as an innovative prototype.

The Police Foundation study addresses several questions:

1. How does ROP operate and what strategies do its officers use in selecting and apprehending the persons it targets?
2. Do ROP's tactics increase the likelihood of arrest for targeted repeat offenders?
3. Are the offenders that ROP arrests more active and serious than offenders arrested under routine police operations?
4. Are the ROP arrestees more likely to be prosecuted, convicted, and incarcerated?
5. How does ROP affect the arrest productivity of the officers in that unit?

POLICING CAREER CRIMINALS

Since the publication of research indicating that a small proportion of the criminals commits a disproportionate amount of crime (Wolfgang et al., 1972; Petersilia et al., 1978; Chaiken and Chaiken, 1982; and Greenwood, 1982), a variety of criminal justice efforts have begun to selectively identify and incapacitate those persons who are "career criminals." To date most of those efforts have been undertaken by prosecutors and parole boards. But the police, as the gatekeepers of the criminal justice system, may also fruitfully adopt policies focused on repeat offenders.

Traditionally the police have been mobilized to enforce the law reactively, in response to a citizen complaint (Reiss, 1971; Black, 1973). Proactive--that is, police-initiated--policing efforts have been limited to investigations of vice and other offenses in which there are no complainants or victims (Moore, 1983; Wilson, 1978; Williams et al., 1979). In recent years, however, Abscam, "stings," and efforts to control police and political corruption have demonstrated more frequent proactive enforcement by police. And the success of these activities has stimulated suggestions that proactive tactics be more widely applied to efforts to reduce street crime.

Somewhat different tasks and tactics are required for reactive and proactive policing. In reacting to citizens' complaints, the officer's primary objective is to detect the occurrence of a crime and to identify and apprehend the perpetrator at the scene of the crime or through subsequent investigation. In proactive policing the officer must observe or instigate a crime.

Programs focused on career criminals may employ reactive or proactive tactics in various combinations. To date existing programs have included such reactive tactics as prioritized service of warrants against identified "career criminals" (Gay et al., 1984), notification of the prosecutor when an identified career criminal is arrested, and more active supplementation of cases against such persons (Gay, 1983; Felony Augmentation Program, 1981). Proactive tactics have included use of decoys, surveillance, and phony fencing operations (See Pate et al., 1976; Wycoff et al., 1980; Felony Augmentation Program, 1981; Bowers and McCullough, 1982; Gay, 1983).

Although there is broad interest in career criminal initiatives among police administrators, few departments have adopted career criminal programs. A recent survey located only 33 existing programs in the entire country (Gay, 1983). Little is known about how such career criminal programs actually operate or how effective they are. Thus, when the Metropolitan Police Department

created the Repeat Offender Project there were many unanswered questions about how it would and should operate and few precedents to guide it.

ROP'S DESIGN AND INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION

ROP was proposed by Captain (now Inspector) Edward Spurlock in response to Police Chief Maurice Turner's request for innovative proposals to reduce crime. His plan called for establishment of a "perpetrator-oriented", proactive unit focused on active recidivists. Its objective was the identification and apprehension of two types of active offenders known as "targets." "Warrant targets" were persons already wanted on one or more warrants who could be arrested on sight. "ROP-initiated targets" included persons believed to be criminally active but not currently wanted. This category was termed "surveillance targets" by ROP officers since they anticipated that surveillance would be the principal tactic used to catch them. However, the term "ROP-initiated" is more accurate because surveillance has become just one of a variety of tactics used to catch both types of targets.

Spurlock's plan defined ROP's criterion for selecting both types of targets as "the belief that the person is committing five or more Part I offenses per week." It called for half of the officers' time and effort to be devoted to working on warrant targets and half on ROP-initiated targets. Both types of targets were to turn over quickly (72 hours or less) to focus ROP's resources on the most active criminals, since only the very active were likely to be observed committing a crime within a three-day period.

Spurlock and his three lieutenants selected a team of officers who varied in age, race, gender, appearance, and previous police experience. The ROP officers were organized into seven-member squads, each of which included a female and a detective. The squad, led by a sergeant, became the basic work group to which targets were assigned and credit for arrests given. Officers were given ample discretion over routine activities, but the sergeant was responsible for selecting the squad's targets and working on the street with the

officers. Three experienced investigators were made "the target committee," responsible for developing new targets and reviewing candidates generated by the squads.

The unit's resources included 20 old cars (that blended inconspicuously into ghetto neighborhoods), other surveillance and investigative equipment, and a computer terminal linked to the department's information system. Other information came from the department's daily major violators list, the criminal histories of recent arrestees, daily crime reports from each district, and specially prepared weekly printouts listing all persons wanted on three or more felony warrants--all of which helped ROP to select targets.

To reduce interunit rivalry that could inhibit the flow of information necessary for ROP to function effectively, ROP adopted an internal arrest log. This credited ROP officers for all arrests for which they were responsible even if the arrest was formally booked to another officer.

Difficulties encountered in the first several months led to several modifications of ROP's targeting practices, squad operations, and apprehension tactics. When surveillance of R.I. targets proved to be frustrating and unproductive, the squads increased the proportion of warrant targets to about 75 percent of those selected. They also gradually broadened the officers' repertoire of investigative and undercover infiltration strategies and skills. And the 72-hour turnover rule was relaxed when it proved difficult to implement.

As ROP officers built up their informal information networks, target development practices also changed. Initially the target committee selected and developed all targets, mostly on the basis of official record information. However, such information was regarded as unreliable and far less desirable than "street" information.

Gradually, with strong encouragement from ROP managers, the unit acquired a reputation for responding to requests for assistance based on "hot" street

information. The officers developed cooperative networks and information sources in other departmental units, neighboring police agencies, and on the street (i.e., informants). As a result, an increasing proportion of targets was generated by the squads on the basis of this information. Squads also began working jointly with other agencies on a number of targets. These changes allowed ROP to stretch its resources and become a center of information about criminal activities in the metropolitan area. They also resulted in targeting persons who did not meet ROP's selection criteria, diverting limited resources away from a focus on persons actively committing Part I offenses.

ROP IN ACTION

Common considerations affecting target selection are the target's catchability, moral worth, longer term yield, and the squad's working style. Catchability depends primarily on the quality, recency, type, and amount of information about the target's location and activities. Moral worth is related to the seriousness and amount of the target's prior criminal activities, his or her apparent contempt for the law and police, and alleged current activity. Yield is measured in terms of its contribution to ROP's information network, public visibility, and likely additional arrests.

The primary task in apprehending warrant targets is to locate them. If the squad has a current address, all that is required is to wait there and arrest the target. If the officers do not have a good address, they usually review police and other records or contact persons likely to know the target's whereabouts. To arrest persons who are not wanted, ROP officers must develop evidence about a specific crime in which they participated. This may involve a variety of vice and investigative activities such as buy-and-busts, cultivating informants and investigating their "tips," surveillance of targets, and linking property found in the possession of a target that is believed to be stolen back to its rightful owner.

Analysis of ROP apprehension activities and targeting outcomes indicated that there was no consistent formula for or primary tactic associated with arrests. Most of ROP's arrests were made quickly (80 percent within one week of targeting) and did not involve extensive investigative efforts.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design to assess ROP's effectiveness included several components to address the various questions. An experiment was conducted to determine whether persons selected as "repeat offenders" by ROP were more likely to be arrested because of ROP's efforts than they would be in its absence. The experimental design permitted ROP officers to create a constantly changing pool of targets, to pair any two of the same target type (warrant targets or ROP-initiated targets) and, by a coin toss, to assign one target randomly to the experimental condition and the other to control. Experimental targets were investigated by a ROP squad of officers for a seven-day period; control targets were off limits to ROP officers but vulnerable to arrest by any other police officer. The experiment lasted 26 weeks, during which time work on 212 pairs of randomly assigned targets was completed.

As is common in field experiments, there was some evidence that some ROP officers manipulated the coin toss (which research staff did not always control) to assure immediate assignment of the targets they desired. Others avoided submitting a target to the toss, getting it treated as an authorized exception (which constituted 32 percent of all ROP arrests) even though it did not always fit the rules for an exception. In addition, there were difficulties in locating non-ROP arrests which suggests the possibility that some were missed.

To test the potential impact of manipulation and missed non-ROP arrests, we recalculated the experimental findings after adjusting for an estimate of these effects (assuming that 20 percent of the coin tosses had not been random and that 10 control arrests had been overlooked). This adjustment did not alter the significance of the experimental outcome. Additional tests comparing the

experimental and exceptional targets indicated that where they differed, the former appeared to be more criminally active. Finally, because the findings of the comparative and observational components of the study supported the experimental results, our confidence in the validity of the latter increased.

The second research approach was a comparison group design used to examine: 1) the effects of ROP on its officers' overall arrest productivity; 2) the nature of their arrests; 3) the dispositions of those arrests by the courts; and 4) the criminal histories of the arrestees. On each of these variables, the 40 ROP officers, who had operational assignments in patrol, tactical/crime prevention, vice and detective units, prior to assignment to ROP were compared with a sample of 155 officers with assignments to those units, and with 14 officers with warrant squad duties. Data were collected for two time periods: April 1 to September 30, 1981, prior to the 1982 establishment of ROP, and April 1 to September 30, 1983.

Information regarding all arrests made by the ROP and comparison officers was collected from station house arrest logs. Arrest histories of a sample of these arrestees were obtained from the Metropolitan Police Department. Information on the case dispositions of the arrest sample was obtained from the criminal division of the Superior Court.

Using regression analysis the study compared changes in ROP and comparison officers' arrest productivity, after statistically controlling for differences in officers' 1981 arrest rates, district, and assignment. Regression also was used to determine whether ROP officers' cases in 1983 were more likely than they had been in 1981 (and than the 1983 cases of comparison arrestees) to result in prosecution, conviction, incarceration, and longer sentences--after controlling for arrest type, officer's assignment arrestees' age, and prior arrest record. compared the prior arrest histories of the ROP and comparison officers' arrestees to determine whether ROP officers arrested targets with longer and more serious prior arrest records than the arrestees of comparison officers.

Extensive participant observation of ROP officers at work was conducted to provide information about ROP decision making, investigative techniques, and apprehension strategies. A variety of data items was collected from the case jackets of all persons targeted by ROP during the study period. This included the 289 persons involved in the experiment, the 100 targets that were authorized exceptions, and 85 persons whom ROP officers serendipitously arrested while working on another assigned target.

FINDINGS

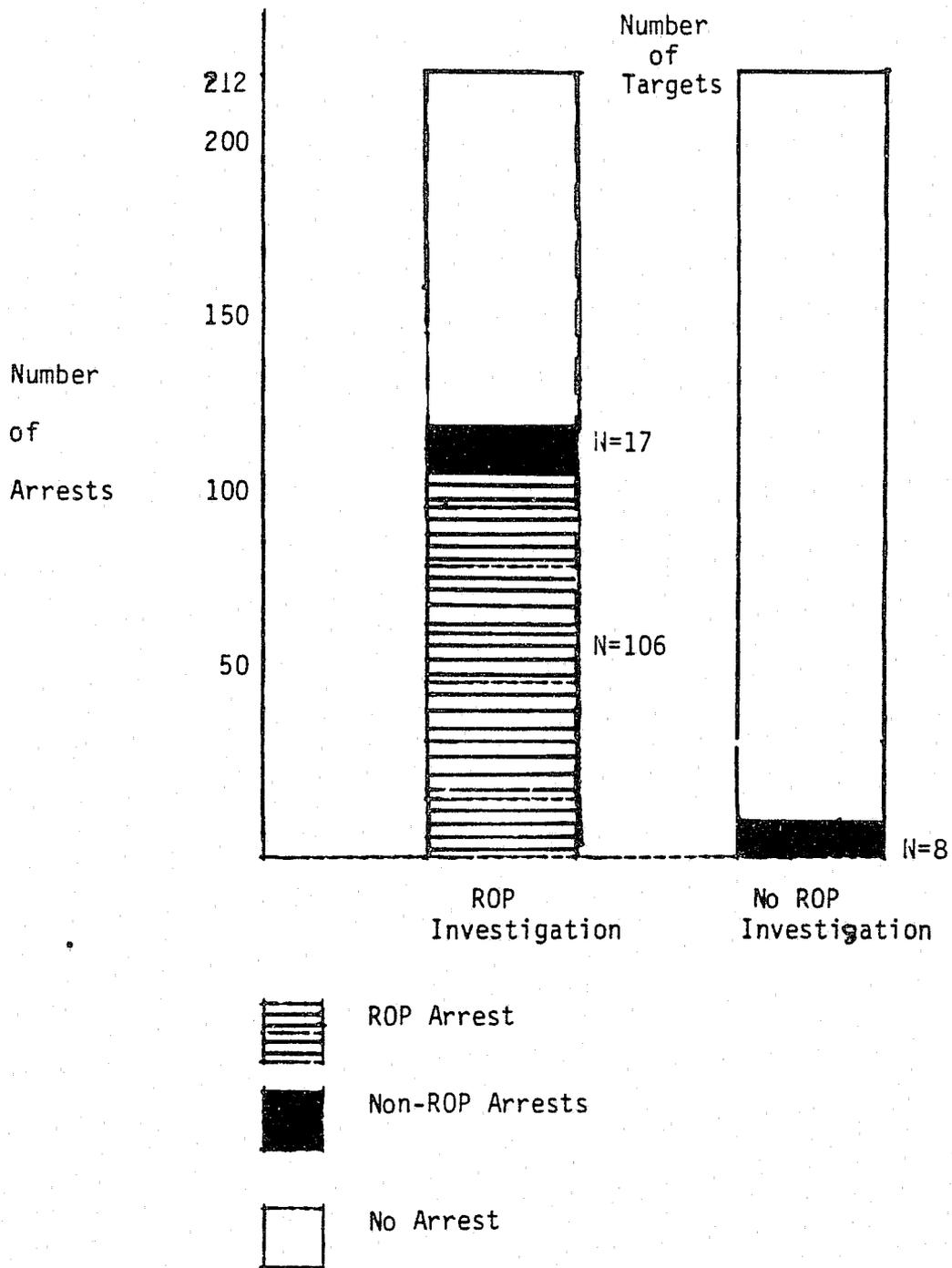
Experiment. The experiment clearly showed that ROP increased the likelihood of arrest of targeted repeat offenders. As indicated in Figure 1, of the 212 experimentals, ROP arrested 106 (50 percent). In contrast, only 17 experimentals (8 percent) and eight controls (4 percent) were arrested by officers in other units. This difference was statistically significant. Strong differences in arrest rates were found for both warrant and ROP-initiated targets. Fifty-five percent of warrant targets eligible for non-ROP arrests were arrested by ROP, a sharp contrast to the nine percent of warrant targets eligible for ROP arrests that were arrested by non-ROP officers. For ROP-initiated targets, the comparable figures were 47 percent and six percent. The magnitude of this finding suggests that despite several problems in implementing and sustaining the experimental design, ROP made a difference by increasing the likelihood of arrest for both warrant and ROP-initiated targets.

Prior Arrest Records of Arrestees. The comparative study examined the criminal histories ROP and comparison officers' arrestees after making adjustments for district and assignment. In the 1981 the differences between number of prior arrests of each group's arrestees were minor. However, in 1983, ROP arrestees had significantly more total prior arrests than comparison officers' arrestees. As shown in Figure 2, ROP 1983 arrestees had an adjusted mean of 8.4 prior arrests and comparison officers' arrestees only 4.2. ROP arrestees in 1983 also had significantly more arrests than comparison officers' arrestees for Part I

Figure 1

Arrests of Suspects Targeted by ROP and Randomly Assigned to ROP

Investigation or Not



and robbery offenses. Thus ROP has altered the criminal history characteristics of the persons its officers arrest. Its officers' arrestees' prior arrest records have become longer and more serious at the same time that comparison officers' arrestees' records have become less serious.

These differences are even sharper when ROP arrestees are broken down by the target type. Persons deliberately targeted by ROP (i.e., both experimentals and authorized exceptions) had 7.5 prior arrests at the time they were initially targeted; persons serendipitously arrested had only 3.7 prior arrests. There was no difference between the prior records of warrant targets and ROP-initiated targets.

Case Dispositions. We examined the dispositions of ROP and comparison arrests to determine whether ROP arrestees were more likely to be prosecuted, convicted, and incarcerated. In 1983, there were substantial differences between the case outcomes of ROP and comparison officers' arrest, after adjusting for offense type, offender age, and prior arrest.

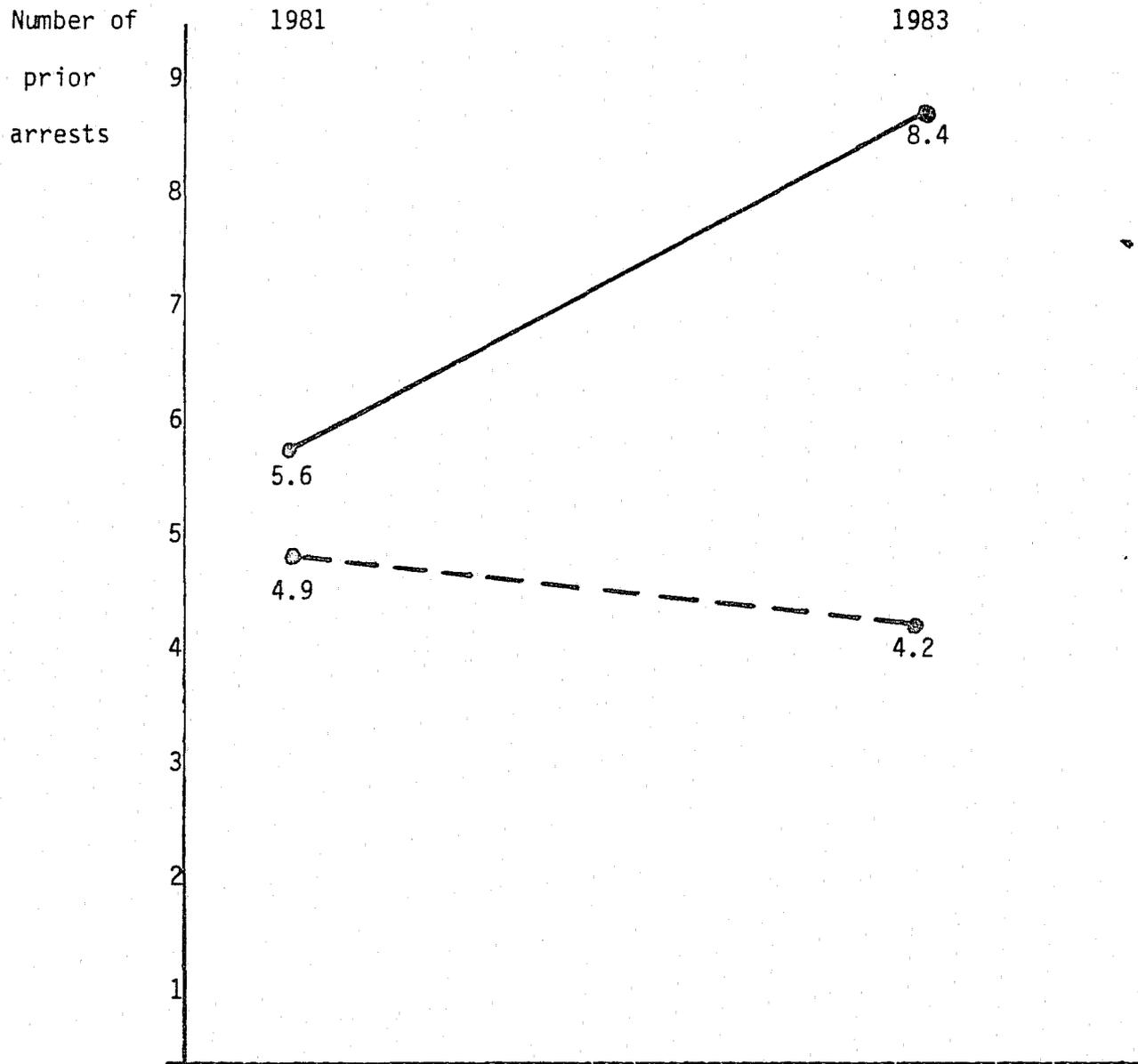
Although there was little overall change from 1981 to 1983 in the proportion of cases accepted for prosecution, as shown in Figure 3, ROP officers greatly increased the proportion of new cases accepted for prosecution as felonies. At the same time the proportion of comparison officers' cases prosecuted as felonies fell for officers in all assignments but casual clothes tactical units. As a result, 49 percent of ROP's new cases were accepted for prosecution as felonies but comparison cases charged as felonies in 1983 ranged from seven to 42 percent.

Total convictions increased from 49 percent of case outcomes in 1981 to 63 percent in 1983 for both ROP and comparison officer groups. And for both groups the proportion of misdemeanor convictions also increased. ROP officers also increased the proportion of felony convictions from 19 to 24 percent of all prosecuted cases, whereas the proportion of felony convictions in comparison officers' case outcomes decreased for officers in patrol, vice, and detective

Figure 2

Mean Number of Prior Adult Arrests of Arrestees

(adjusted for officers' district and assignment and arrestee's age)

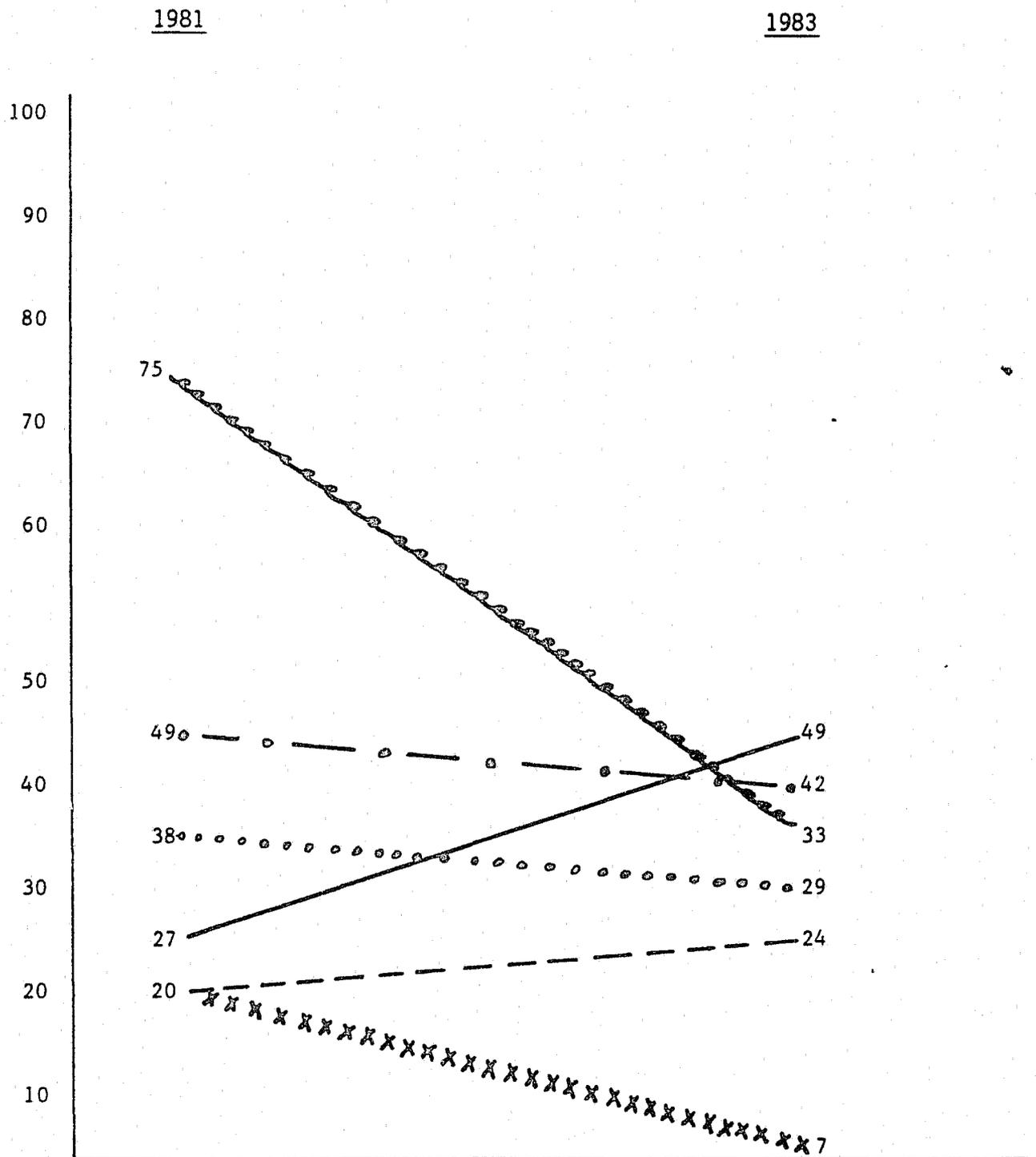


— ROP officers' Arrestees (1981 N=274; 1983 N=253)

---- Non-ROP Comparison Officers' Arrestees (1981 N=270; 1983 N=285)

Figure 3

Percentage of Eligible New Cases Prosecuted as Felonies



ROP Officers' Arrestees	(1981 N=185; 1983 N=134)
Patrol Officers' Arrestees	(1981 N=34; 1983 N=28)
Tactical Officers' Arrestees	(1981 N=89; 1983 N=89)
Vice Officers' Arrestees	(1981 N=5; 1983 N=14)
Detectives' Arrestees	(1981 N=21; 1983 N=12)
SOD Officers' Arrestees	(1981 N=16; 1983 N=12)

assignments and increased for those assigned to tactical units and SOD's warrant squad, leaving the overall proportion unchanged.

As shown in Figure 5, incarceration rates for ROP in 1983 remained at the 1981 level as did the rates for comparison officers in all assignments but SOD warrant squad which fell in 1983.

Those ROP arrestees that were sentenced to serve time in 1983 appear to be getting longer sentences than the comparison officer convictees, after statistically controlling for offense type, age, and criminal history. ROP's apparent effect on sentence length is probably a consequence of the more serious conviction offenses of its arrestees within each of the broad categories of offenses used in this study.

Effects on Officer Arrest Productivity. The comparative study also examined changes in arrest rates of ROP and comparison officers after controlling for differences in their district and assignment and their 1981 arrest productivity. It found that ROP had a depressive effect on the total number of arrests made by its officers. As indicated in figure 5, ROP officers in 1983 made an adjusted mean of 6.6 arrests and comparison officers an adjusted mean of 12.4 arrests. This difference between the groups in 1983 was statistically significant. Most striking is the fact that the ROP officers' 1981 mean of 14.5 arrests was reduced by more than half in 1983.

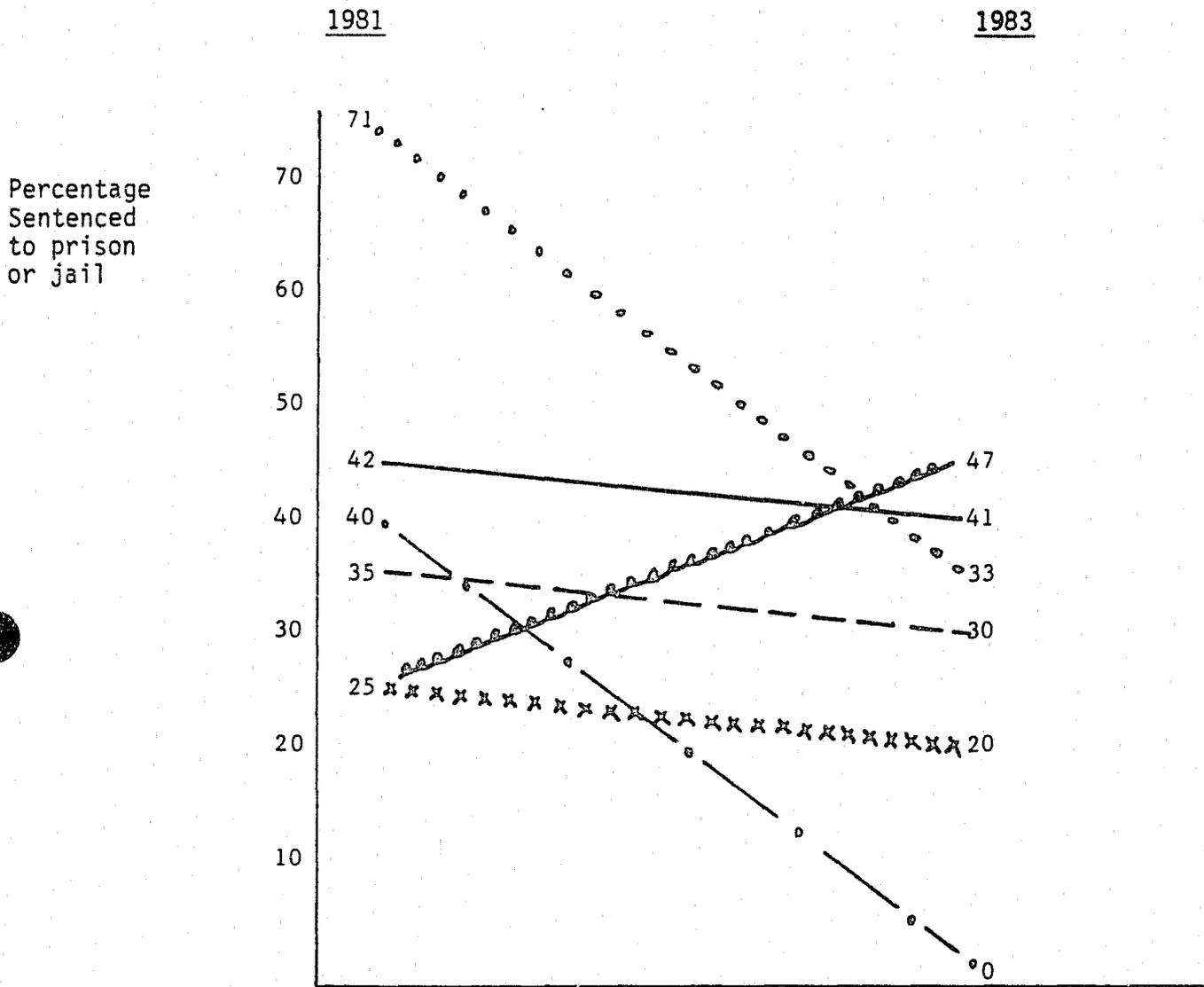
When the two groups were compared in terms of changes in Part I arrests, however, the significance of differences between them disappeared. And when measured in terms of changes in "serious" arrests (Part I's plus arrests for distribution and possession with the intent to distribute drugs, weapons charges, and arrests on a felony bench warrant), ROP officers showed a significant increase in serious arrests relative to comparison officers.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

By virtually all measures used to assess ROP, that unit appears to have succeeded in its goals of selecting, arresting, and contributing to the

Figure 4

Proportion of Convicted Arrestees Sentenced to Some Incarceration

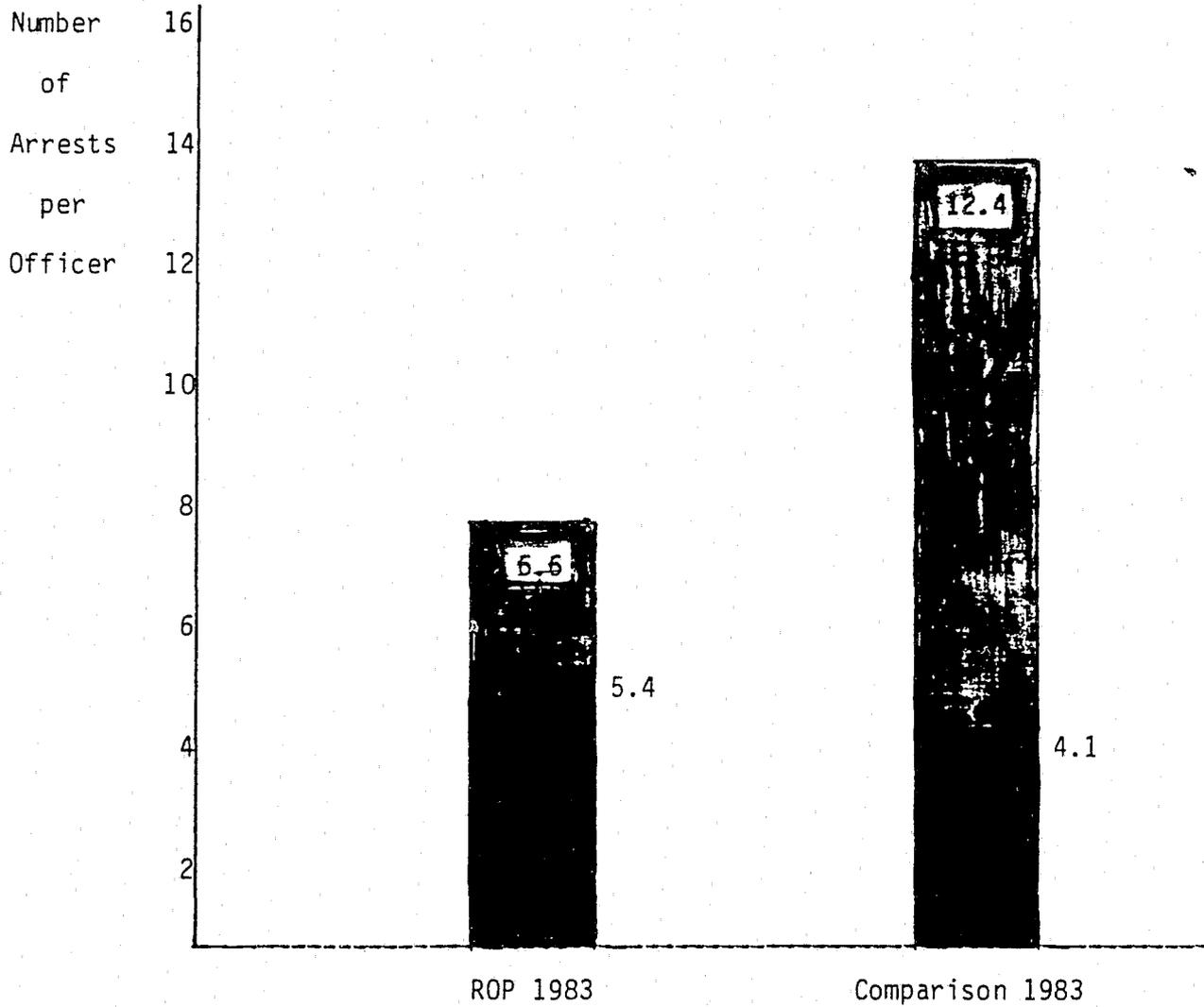


- ROP Officers' Arrestees (1981 N=83; 1983 N=70)
- Patrol Officers' Arrestees (1981 N=14; 1983 N=12)
- Tactical Officers' Arrestees (1981 N=37; 1983 N=47)
- xxxxxx Vice Officers' Arrestees (1981 N=4; 1983 N=5)
- o-o-o-o-o Detectives' Arrestees (1981 N=10; 1983 N=6)
- ~~~~~ SOD Officers' Arrestees (1981 N=12; 1983 N=19)

Figure 5

Mean Number of Arrests by ROP and Comparison Officers in 1983

(adjusted for district, assignment, and 1981 individual arrest rate)



 Total Arrests
 Serious Arrests

incarceration of repeat offenders. It increased the likelihood of arrests of targets, the seriousness of the criminal histories of its arrestees, the probability of prosecution for a felony, the chance of a felony conviction, and the length of the term of those sentenced to incarceration. However, it is premature to conclude that a proactive repeat offender unit will necessarily be effective in other departments and should be adopted by them. Several factors suggest a cautious interpretation of our findings and recognition of the potential dangers in adoption of the ROP model of perpetrator-oriented proactive policing by other departments.

Costs. Creation and operation of ROP has involved some costs that should not be overlooked. First, there were approximately \$60,000 in direct expenses to equip the unit. Second, ROP has decreased its officers' overall arrest productivity. The arrests forgone, however, have tended to be minor offenses while ROP officers have increased the rate at which they made serious arrests. Thus the tradeoff appears to be a reduction in order maintenance activities in exchange for an increase in crime fighting activities.

The Criminal Activity of Targets. Although ROP arrestees had longer criminal records than the comparison arrestees, one cannot be certain that they are the most active 20 percent of all offenders or are committing five or more Part I offenses per week. Other studies have found that prisoners with longer criminal records are more likely than those with short record to be among the highly active group. But while prediction instruments have been successful in selecting low-rate offenders using a variety of information items, they have been unreliable in selecting the high-rate criminals. It is likely that the street information on which ROP officers heavily rely enhances their ability to select the most criminally active targets. However, it was impossible for the present study to determine what proportion of the ROP targets actually met that unit's targeting criterion of five or more Part I's per week.

Generalizability of the Finding. One must be cautious about generalizing from the findings of a single case study. What worked for ROP may be related to the unique characteristics of Washington, D.C., its department, or the personnel and leadership of ROP. In the absence of other units or groups with which to compare the ROP experience, it is difficult to determine which aspects of its organization and tactics are idiosyncratic, which may be effectively replicated in a different setting, and which might better be altered.

Recommendations. The results of the study strongly indicate that other large urban police departments should consider creating specialized units focused on repeat offenders. Obviously, such proactive police units must be designed to address specific local crime problems and fit the resources available to the department. A 60-person unit is costly and probably far larger than is desirable for all but a handful of major cities. Careful attention must also be given to the balance between proactive and reactive tactics, and to the types of crimes or criminals on which the unit will focus.

It is essential to assure that adequate administrative controls are planned for target selection. Productivity pressures for quick arrests can encourage evasion of targeting criteria and selection procedures. Use of informants, while increasing the knowledge of criminal activity in the community, is fraught with the danger that the informant rather than the organization will shape targeting priorities. ROP constantly struggled with these problems. In fact, one of the largely unanticipated benefits of the experiment was that it led to increased administrative oversight of target selection. Several of the administrative changes necessitated by the Police Foundation experiment were retained after it was completed.

Additional dangers are inherent in the use of undercover tactics. A proactive plainclothes unit that employs a wide variety of unorthodox tactics allows its officers enormous discretion. Without careful supervision, there

will be much opportunity to harass, entrap, and otherwise violate citizens' rights. Fortunately, ROP's leadership managed to prevent these problems by emphasizing the need for careful attention to legality.

Although this report leaves many questions unanswered, it provides encouragement for police to develop a selective apprehension strategy. If street information does provide the best means of identifying and apprehending highly active offenders, then the Washington program and others like it might have a major impact on serious crime.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Recent research findings that a small proportion of criminals commits a disproportionate amount of crime (Wolfgang et al., 1972; Petersilia et al., 1978; Peterson et al., 1980, Williams, 1979; Chaiken and Chaiken, 1982; and Greenwood, 1982) and increasing pressures on limited resources have led to initiatives by criminal justice agencies to prospectively identify and selectively incapacitate that small group of "career criminals." Most of these initiatives to date have focused on improving the effectiveness of prosecutorial and parole decision making. The police, as the gatekeepers to the criminal justice system and agents closest to "the street," also have a potentially large role in implementing a policy that selectively focuses on career criminals. However, to be effective they must be able to identify such offenders accurately, increase the frequency with which they are arrested, and build better cases against them.

The growing interest of police departments in adopting proactive strategies to "targets," investigate, and apprehend individual selected as career criminals has led to many questions. How should such a proactive unit operate? What criteria should be used in selecting targets? What tactics are most effective in apprehending active recidivists? What are the dangers, risks, and costs of a largely covert policing strategy of crime control. And how effective are various proactive approaches? The creation of the Repeat Offender Project, (ROP---pronounced rope) in May, 1982 by the Metropolitan Police Department of Washington, D.C., made it possible to seek preliminary answers to these questions.

A study of ROP appeared to be timely in view of its unique size and mandate, the opportunity it presented for an intensive examination of a

prototypic police career criminal program, and the interest of policy makers in such programs and strategies. Shortly after ROP's creation the department agreed to participate in an experimental study of its operation and effectiveness conducted by the Police Foundation with funding from the National Institute of Justice and the Ford Foundation. The actual research design was developed by the Foundation staff in conjunction with ROP's commander and higher ranking departmental officials.

A. Research Goals and Strategies

The goals of the Police Foundation study were: 1) to describe in detail targeting process and apprehension strategies used in a proactive police unit designed to apprehend high-rate street criminals; 2) to assess the effectiveness of ROP in selecting and increasing the probability of arrest, prosecution, and conviction of highly active repeat offenders; 3) and to examine the benefits and cost of ROP in terms of changes in officer arrest activities and arrestee characteristics and the unanticipated consequences of operating such an "elite" unit.

To address these questions several research components were adopted. Participant observation was employed to illuminate the day-to-day operations of ROP and the rationales underlying officers' decision making. A field experiment was conducted to address the question of the extent to which ROP increased the likelihood of the apprehension of those persons it designated as "repeat offenders" and targeted for further investigation. And a comparative quasi-experimental design was used to compare changes in the number and nature of arrests made by ROP officers before and after assignment to ROP and with changes observed in the arrests of a sample of officers in several other assignments and police units during the same time periods. The

comparative analysis suggests some of the costs and the benefits of operating a specialized unit such as ROP.

This multi-facted design strategy follows the suggestions of Boruch (1977) to combine a series of different studies and of Denzin (1978) to combine methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. Such triangulation of data produced from different designs and methods, strengthens the validity of one's findings by addressing a question from several different but overlapping perspectives. The experimental data set permits comparisons between ROP and non-Rop units but involves only persons who were targeted by ROP during the study whether or not they were arrested. This design has substantial internal validity. The quasi-experimental comparative design adds external validity. Although it includes only persons that were arrested, it nonetheless provides a broader frame of reference from which to compare ROP officers' arrests, their dispositions, and arrestees' criminal histories. And the observational data contributes importantly to explaining why and how the observed ROP effects came about.

B. Proactive Policing, Criminal Careers, and Career Criminal Programs

There are a variety of policing strategies for apprehending "career criminals" as well as other offenders. Traditionally the police have been reactively mobilized in response to a citizen complaint (Reiss, 1971; Black, 1973), at which time additional resources may be used to investigate a criminal incident and seek out an offender. Such reactive mobilization of the law is designed to protect individual rights by limiting the scope and intensity of government surveillance of citizen. Until recently proactive or police-initiated social control efforts have been limited to investigating vice and other "invisible offenses" in which there are no complainants or witnesses (Wilson, 1978; Williams et al., 1979; Moore, 1983). ABSCAM, stings, and efforts

to control police and political corruption (Moore, 1983; Sherman, 1978; Bowers and McCullough, 1982, and Marx, 1983) in recent years, however, have contributed to a growing proportion of proactive law enforcement activities by police. Their "success" has stimulated suggestions that such proactive tactics be applied to efforts to reduce street crime and deal with "career criminals" (e.g., Feinberg cited in Blackmore and Welsh, 1983). Both strategies for police mobilization supplement a variety of crime prevention efforts such as high visibility preventive patrol and less visible undercover activities based on analysis of crime patterns.

Police crime control strategies differ not only with respect to the source mobilizing the police action but, as indicated by Table 1-1, in terms of the primary police task or activity, the relation of the officer to the crime and the criminal, the timing of police efforts, and visibility of police activities. In reactive policing the officer's job is principally to detect the perpetrator of a crime and to apprehend him or her after a crime is known to have occurred (Wilson, 1978). Using such an approach police focus on an offender only in conjunction with a reported crime; their activity, characteristic of routine patrol and detective work, is overt; the officer visibly responds to an assigned run or case. Most career criminal programs to date have involved reactive mobilization, including pre-arrest prioritized service of warrants and post-arrest notification of the prosecutor when a career criminal has been arrested, and more active supplementation of the cases of identified career criminals.

In proactive policing the officer provides the opportunity for a consensual crime to occur and detects it through deceptive means that often include use of surveillance, informants, and undercover agents, buy/bust tactics, and intensive

investigation. Such work involves observing, creating or instigating crime (Wilson, 1978; Williams et al., 1979); its tactics tend to be covertly carried out in small, elite units. Proactive strategies previously used in career criminal programs have included surveillance, decoy, and phony fencing operations.

Preventive policing may involve a variety of tactics to forestall the occurrence of a crime. Officers may use covert or overt intelligence gathering which may be focused on individuals, crime types, or areas where neither a crime nor suspect has been named. Examples of preventive strategies used in career criminal programs include use of crime analysis to guide preventive patrol activities and the distribution of "mugbooks" of career criminals to patrol officers. Thus police concerned with "career criminals" have available a variety of tactics that fall into each type of crime control strategy and existing programs have used differing strategies.

Although these diverse of policing strategies has long been available, a programmatic focus on career criminals is relatively new in policing. More than 100 career criminal programs were developed in the 1970s in prosecutors' offices. Many of these involved a police component. Yet a recent nationwide survey of law enforcement agencies located only a total of 33 programs about half of which involve primarily proactive, pre-arrest activities (Gay 1983). Many of these involved a police component. Yet a recent nationwide survey of law enforcement agencies located only a total of 33 programs about half of which involve primarily proactive, pre-arrest activities (Gay 1983).

The police role in most post-arrest prosecutorial career criminal programs has been reactive and case specific. The police have identified "career criminals", collected criminal history information, provided investigative assistance to the prosecutor, and acted as liaison officers to the court to

Table 1-1

Type and Nature of Police Activities by Operational Strategy

Characteristics	Type of Strategy		
	Preventive	Proactive	Reactive
Source of activity	Police initiated	Police initiated	Citizen initiated
Type of task/activity	Preventive patrol/intelligence/crime analysis	Instigation	Detection and apprehension
Timing	Prior to known crime	Prior to crime	After crime reported; either pre-or post-arrest
Visibility	Overt preventive patrol and crime analysis Covert intelligence	Covert	Overt
Examples of uses and activities in career criminal programs	Preparation and distribution of mugbooks	Suspect surveillance; phony fencing operations; decoys	Case augmentation after the arrest of persons selected as career criminals; crime solvers: prioritized warrant service

facilitate case processing. Evaluations of such programs suggest that they increase the likelihood of conviction and incarceration. The national evaluation of LEAA's Career Criminal Program did not attempt to assess the extent of police activities but suggested that they were of limited importance (Chelimsky and Dahlmann 1982:99). However, Manhattan's Felony Augmentation Program (FAP), involving primarily post-arrest case building, appears to have succeeded.

The Felony Augmentation Program involved three elements. It established a Career Criminal Monitoring Unit that identified career criminals currently in the community who were between 16 and 36 years old and who had at least two prior arrests for robbery or one arrest for robbery and another for another violent felony offense in Manhattan within the previous 36 months. With these criteria, a list of 1,100 "targets" was developed. During the nine-month study period, as soon as any of the targets on the list was arrested (in 96 percent of the instances by a patrol officer), a detective from the newly-created Career Criminal Investigation Unit was assigned to do immediate case enhancement to improve the quantity and quality of available evidence in the case. An evaluation FAP conducted by the New York City Police Foundation found that of the 1,100 targets, 594 were arrested on a variety of charges and 235 of these arrests were accepted for augmentation.¹ A felony indictment was issued in 59 percent of the augmented FAP cases in contrast to 20 percent city-wide felony indictment rate. FAP also resulted in conviction of 89 percent of the indicted cases in comparison with a city-wide conviction rate of 79.6 percent and an incarceration rate of 94 percent, which compared favorably with the 69.5 percent city-wide rate. (Felony Augmentation Program, 1981) However, the city-wide figures do not control for the influence of prior criminal history on sentence. The third part of the program, a Career Criminal Apprehension Unit designed to

apprehend targets using surveillance, was substantially less successful. It arrested only 21 targets, ten of whom were included in the group as augmented cases (Felony Augmentation Program, 1981).

A small but growing number of police departments have explored proactive career criminal initiatives independent of prosecutorial programs. LEAA's Integrated Criminal Apprehension Program (ICAP) contained a career criminal component, usually as a small part of the total programmatic effort. ICAP activities included the development of a list of career criminals and dissemination of "mugbooks" with information about them to groups of officers. In one ICAP site, (Stockton, California) the police developed a 6-to-10 officer strike force which engaged in one or two "missions" per month. The missions involved use of decoy operations, saturation of high crime areas, surveillance of known offenders, and prioritized service of warrants. They also provided tactical support for "sting" operations. Between 1979 and 1981, 64 percent of the 42 missions directed at particular suspects were successful in leading to arrests (Gay et al., 1984).

Reviews of research on preventive patrol (Schell et al., 1976) and specialized patrol (Webb et al., 1976) were inconclusive with respect to the effectiveness of a wide variety of proactive tactics. A Police Foundation evaluation of the relative effectiveness of perpetrator-oriented patrol (POP) and location-oriented patrol (LOP) in comparison with each other and regular preventive patrol found that both POP and LOP strategies were superior to routine patrol in producing arrests for target crimes (robbery and burglary) per officer-hours expended, apprehending suspects "in the act," and gaining convictions for these crimes. Evaluators generally found LOP to be superior in producing burglary and robbery arrests and requiring fewer officer hours per

target arrest; ROP produced more arrests for target crimes stemming from officer-initiated activities and undercover operations (Pate et al., 1976).

A recent evaluation of "sting" operations run by local police agencies found that these anti-fencing operations were successful in arresting suspects actively engaged in property crime and additionally provided intelligence on suspects and crimes that may serve as the basis for future investigative activities (Bowers and McCullough, 1982; but for a critical assessment of "sting" activities see Marx and Reichman, 1984).

In sum, a variety of both proactive and reactive policing tactics are available for use in efforts focused on career criminals. However, most have been used singly or in small scale programs, many of which have not been evaluated. The use of proactive tactics outside of vice work appears to have been recent, limited, not well studied, and, when evaluated, to have produced mixed or equivocal outcome. Case enhancement activities by police have been incorporated into many prosecutorial career criminal programs for more than a decade. But these have been largely reactive and case-specific, rather than suspect-specific, and their contributions to case outcomes rarely assessed. Furthermore, as Gay, et al. (1984) noted, such career criminal program activities do not affect the critical routine police processing of investigative cases. No police department to date has mounted a large scale program aimed at street criminals that is perpetrator-oriented rather than focused on cases, specific target crimes, or geographic areas. Washington, D.C.'s Repeat Offender Project thus represents an innovative effort in terms of its size, scope, and effort to combine reactive and proactive elements using instigative (vice), investigative, surveillance, and intelligence tactics to apprehend career criminals. In examining ROP our goal has been to assess not only the outcomes

of ROP's activities but to understand the processes and policies by which the unit achieves them.

C. Organization of This Report

Chapter Two describes ROP's origin, conceptual design, initial operation, and early adaptations. Chapter Three presents the research designs of both the field experiment and quasi-experimental comparative study, the methodologies used to collect and analyze each data set, and the limitations of each.

Our findings are presented in chapters Four through Eight. Chapter Four describes ROP in action. It explores the target selection process, illustrates ROP's apprehension strategies with case histories of several targets, and analyzes ROP's patterns of work on different types of targets. In Chapter Five the outcomes of the experiment are presented. Chapter Six examines what happened to the cases of the arrestees in court. Chapter Seven describes the criminal histories of different types of ROP targets and compares the criminal histories of ROP arrestees with the criminal records of the arrestees of a sample of officers in other assignments and with persons arrested by ROP officers prior to the creation of ROP. Chapter Eight explores the impact of ROP on officer arrest productivity. It compares the number and seriousness of the arrests made by officers assigned to ROP with arrests by comparison officers, thereby indicating some of the costs and advantages of operating ROP. Our conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter Nine.

CHAPTER 2

THE RESEARCH SETTING:

ROP'S PROGRAM MODEL AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter provides a background for discussion of the research methods and findings by describing the conceptual design and goals of ROP and the ways they were implemented and adopted.

A. The ROP Model: Origin and Goals

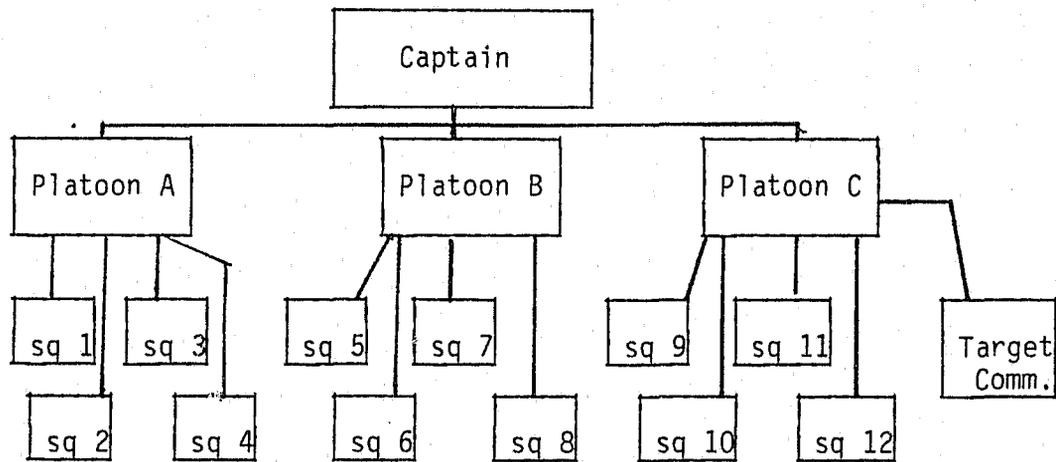
The Repeat Offender Project was officially initiated on March 26, 1982 to "identify, arrest, and successfully prosecute" recidivists currently active and operating within Washington, D.C., using a mix of investigative, intelligence, surveillance, and vice techniques. (Metropolitan Police Department Special Order #82-6, March 26, 1982). Its operational objectives were specified as: 1) identifying recidivists by communicating and coordinating with a member of existing units in the department; 2) coordinating the arrest of targeted recidivists wanted on outstanding warrants; 3) coordinating investigation and surveillance of recidivists not currently wanted; 4) coordinating tactical and investigative efforts regarding recidivists wanted on warrants from outside jurisdictions (fugitives); and 5) coordinating efforts for efficient prosecution and incarceration of targeted recidivists (Special Order #82-6, March 26, 1982).

The initial impetus for creating ROP came from the Mayor and Chief of Police who sought a visible new way to aggressively address the city's crime problem. The Chief asked four captains to submit innovative proposals to reduce crime using 100 officers who were to be transferred from administrative to street assignments. Captain Edward Spurlock's¹ proposal for a perpetrator-oriented, proactive unit focused on repeat offenders was adopted.

Documentation of ROP's conceptual development and its transformation into an operational unit is very limited. Captain Spurlock's initial (undated) memo to the Chief stated that ROP was based on the premise that most crimes are committed by a relatively small group of recidivists and that fewer resources are required to concentrate on individual suspects than saturate affected areas to prevent offenses. Two types of recidivists would be sought: those wanted on warrants and persons not currently wanted but suspected of committing 5 or more Part I offenses per week who would be the subjects of ROP surveillance. Disruption of suspects' criminal activities was to be achieved through both deterrence and incapacitation. Deterrence (a secondary goal) was to come about when ROP officers "contacted" persons whom they were unsuccessful in arresting after a period of surveillance. Both short-term incapacitation resulting from pretrial detention and longer prison terms were sought. In sum ROP was created to reduce crime by proactively focusing police resources on the apprehension of active recidivists committing Part I offenses.

B. Organization and Personnel

Initially ROP was established as a six-month pilot project. The 88-officer unit was administratively placed in the 3,900 officer Metropolitan Police Department's Field Operations Bureau and, within it, in the Special Operations Division (rather than the Criminal Investigation Division). ROP's officers were organized as follows:



Each squad, led by a sergeant, included an investigator and six officers, one of whom was female.

In the weeks prior to commencing operations potential sources of targeting information were explored, procedures for selecting targeted recidivists (known simply as "targets") were established, a pool of about 100 targets was created, and a target committee, consisting of three detectives, was selected and given responsibility for record keeping as well as subsequent target selection.

ROP's design addressed many of the shortcomings that had hampered previous perpetrator-oriented programs. In assessments of programs in Kansas City (Pate et al. 1976) Manhattan (Felony Augmentation Program, 1981), Birmingham (Wycoff et al. 1980), and at a variety of ICAP sites (Gay, et al., 1984) a number of operational problems had been noted. Surveillance operations had been initiated without adequate information about suspects who often could not be located. Surveillance operations lasted so long that targets became "tail conscious." Blending into the ghetto environment had been difficult because almost all the officers were young, white males who were required to remain cleanshaven. The

cars they drove quickly had been identified as police cruisers. In addition, interunit rivalry had reduced information sharing, target selection procedures had relied too much on criminal record information, and coordination with prosecutors, to assure special attention for unit cases, had been inadequate.

To address these problems, ROP's commanding officers selected its 88 officers from among 400 applicants with an eye toward heterogeneity in terms of age, race, sex, appearance, and prior police experience. Captain Spurlock and one lieutenant had relatively free choice from among the applicants, although, as in the selection of personnel for any "elite" assignment, there was jockeying and internal politicking. Only one detective out of a large number of investigators selected from the Criminal Investigation Division was permitted to accept assignment to ROP. The officers came from all seven police districts. Forty-three of the 73 officers and five of the 12 sergeants were drawn from patrol assignments.² The selection criteria were not formally specified.

ROP acquired the equipment it sought. The department purchased 20 used cars that were not former cruisers and that blended inconspicuously into ghetto neighborhoods. The unit also acquired shotguns; surveillance equipment such as body recorders, video recorders, binoculars, and vehicle tracers; confidential funds; insignia, hats, and armbands to identify the plainclothes ROP officers as the police on raids; and a computer terminal linked to the department's main computer that made instantly available a large amount of data about potential and actual targets. "Bait property" was subsequently acquired through "donations" from the D.C. Board of Trade.

ROP's commander established an internal system for crediting arrests to officers and squads to reduce interunit rivalry and facilitate information-sharing. Both arrests made by ROP officers and those to which ROP efforts directly contributed even though they were officially credited to

another officer were recorded in ROP's internal arrest log. Biweekly reports to the Chief included accounts of all arrests in the ROP log and ROP's commanding officers assessed ROP officers' productivity on the basis of the internal log rather than officially-recorded arrests put on the departmental arrest book. This system enabled ROP officers, with the encouragement of their supervisors, to "give" arrests for the official statistics to uniform officers who assisted at arrest scenes in order to build good will and cooperative relations while still getting "credit" for them internally.

Information from a variety of sources regularly was made available to facilitate ROP target selection. For example, a computer program listing all persons wanted on 3 or more warrants was written and a printout of this data prepared weekly for the ROP office. Other documentary information sources routinely obtained and reviewed by the target committee included the department's daily Major Violators list, the list of individuals selected for special prosecutorial efforts by the U.S. Attorney's Career Criminal Unit, Youth Division's juvenile recidivist list, daily crime reports from each district, the department's daily lockup list, the arrest records (rap sheets) of all individuals arrested for a felony in the previous 24 hours, lists of releasees from the Department of Corrections, and weekly pawn sheets submitted to the department by certain shops.

Prior to commencing operations, ROP officers were given two weeks of training in investigative and surveillance techniques. Actual operations began on May 3, 1982.

C. Establishing Policies and Modifying Operating Procedures

A variety of difficulties in implementing the original ROP design were encountered in the initial months in the field. These led to modifications of targeting practices, squad operations, and administrative policies.

1. Targets and Targeting

Initially ROP officers distinguished only two types of targets. "Warrant targets" were persons wanted on one or more warrants who could be arrested on sight; "surveillance targets" were active recidivists not currently wanted for a particular crime. Because the term "surveillance target" is somewhat of a misnomer, ROP's terminology has been replaced by the term "ROP-initiated target" (R.I. target) in this report. Initially it had been anticipated that surveillance would be the principal tactic used to apprehend targets that were not wanted. They would be observed and immediately apprehended in the commission of a crime. However, surveillance is a tactic that can be and is used with both types of targets. Moreover, a variety of other tactics increasingly have been employed to catch R.I. targets. The distinguishing feature of this category of targets is that ROP officers initiated the investigative activity.

After several weeks of operation a third category of targets, "type 3's" was added when it was found that ROP officers were making a number of serendipitous arrests. Type 3 arrests usually occurred when the officers in the course of work on an assigned target, observed criminal activity or found a wanted person.³

Rather than focusing on any particular crime or establishing selection criteria based on prior arrests, ROP seeks "persons believed to be committing 5 or more Part I offenses per week" (Special Order 82-6, March 26, 1982). The target committee members reviewed the information available to them, further investigated those persons that appeared to be criminally active and/or dangerous, and prepared a jacket (or file) on those persons for assignment to a squad.⁴ When a squad needed a new target, the squad sergeant selected one

from the pool of those developed by the target committee and a committee member gave it a target number and logged out in the ROP assignment log.

Captain Spurlock's initial design for ROP called for half of the officers' time to be spent working on warrant targets and half on ROP-initiated targets. It also anticipated rapid target turnover. All targets were to be disposed of within 72 hours or the platoon lieutenant had to approve an extension. This rapid turnover policy was intended to focus ROP's resources on the most active criminals. It was based on the assumption that if a very active target was selected for surveillance, the officers were likely to observe him or her committing a crime within the 72 hours; if an inactive target was selected, they were less likely to observe the commission of a crime within that period, but the amount of time they wasted also would be limited⁵. Both the 50 percent of time and effort and 72-hour turnover aspects of the ROP design were modified when problems were encountered in the field.

The 72-hour rule was gradually relaxed when it proved difficult to implement. Locating targets often took several days. Investigations tended to be sporadic as squads worked on several targets at once. Lieutenants, with squads working a variety of hours, found it difficult to closely monitor squad activities. The target committee could not generate enough targets on which its members had completed background investigations. And squads, once involved in an investigation that looked promising, were reluctant to relinquish a target. Although fairly rapid turnover of targets remained a goal, the squads often kept target jackets for several weeks, working on them intermittently.

2. Surveillance

Surveillance also proved to be more difficult and less effective than had been anticipated and its failure led to adaptations. ROP's design relied on

surveillance as the primary police tactic used to apprehend ROP-initiated targets. But even using several cars and officers, targets under surveillance were lost. Round the clock observation consumed many hours but yielded few arrests. External pressure mounted to demonstrate success by making arrests. Officer frustration with the tedium of hours of surveillance and the infrequency of arrests also increased. All these factors contributed to a shift toward work on an increasing proportion of warrant targets. Indeed, despite the "50 percent of time and effort" standard, one target committee member estimated that after six months of operation about 80 percent of officers' time was devoted to warrant targets. And, at the end of its first six months of operation, only 14 percent of ROP's 398 arrestees had been ROP-initiated targets, 52 percent had been warrant targets, and 33 percent serendipitously-arrested type 3s (Internal Memorandum from Captain Spurlock to the Chief of Police, November 22, 1982).

The failure of surveillance as a tactic and the low number of R.I. target arrests posed a dilemma. How could ROP meet productivity expectations in order to survive and maintain the unit's goals? The solution consisted of: 1) formally maintaining the "50 percent of time and effort" standard while informally allowing an emphasis on productivity despite criticism that ROP was "nothing but a giant warrant squad;" 2) abandoning surveillance as a primary apprehension technique (although, as Chapter 7 indicates, it continued to be used in certain situations); 3) allowing the number of ROP-initiated targets to decrease; 4) adopting a successful longer-term strategy of broadening ROP officers' repertoire of investigative and undercover/instigative techniques which are used in working on R.I. targets.⁶

3. Developing Information Sources and Cooperative Relations

Information about criminals and their activities is essential for an undercover police unit and was seen as a key ingredient in successfully

targeting active offenders. Initially most ROP targets were selected on the basis of criminal history and other documentary data that regularly flowed into the target committee. But "street" information--both from informants and other police officers--was actively sought by ROP and, as the flow of such information increased, targeting practices were modified.

ROP's commander sought to develop both formal and informal communications sources and cooperative networks. However, a formalized requirement that the commanders of the seven patrol districts submit names of likely targets and the assignment of each ROP sergeant to act as a liaison with a district or specialized unit within the department failed to produce many viable targets. Several district commanders were resentful about losing officers to ROP, suspicious of the high visibility of the ROP unit, and critical of an arrangement that benefitted ROP but threatened their detectives' informants and their control of crime in their area. Commanders of specialized units also regarded ROP with hostility as a competitor for informants, resources, and credit for arrests. They went along, however, when the Chief made clear his strong support for ROP.

As is frequently the case (Williams et al., 1979), close informal relationships were carefully cultivated and yielded greater dividends. ROP officers were encouraged to maintain ties with associates in the units they left and build new communication ties with officers in other police units. These informal ties in D.C. and neighboring departments led to suggestions of many targets to squad members who increasingly took initiative in developing their own targets rather than selecting those generated by the target committee.

ROP's solicitation of requests for assistance from other units and efforts to make clear their responsiveness to the few requests and suggestions that came in gradually paid off in close ties to several other Metropolitan Police

Department units and agencies outside of the department. For example, when several prisoners escaped from a neighboring county jail, one ROP squad was assigned to work with the sheriff's department. ROP's success in locating five of the nine escapees led to a close and continuing relationship with this department.

By the time this study was initiated, FBI agents came to the office frequently; occasional joint operations had been carried out with most of the other neighboring departments; and ROP was receiving a variety of requests from the Chief's office, other departmental units, and neighboring police agencies. In addition, officers from the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agency, Metro Transit Police, and Prince George's County police departments had been assigned by their agencies to work in the ROP office part time. And, most squads had developed several informants including arrestees who had been "turned" and others who were paid.

These cooperative ties with other units and expanding network of informants enabled ROP to stretch its resources and became a center of information about criminal activities in the entire metropolitan area. At the same time, in its effort to be responsive to others' requests, the criteria for target selection were sometimes waived, diverting ROP's limited resources away from efforts focused on persons believed to be actively committing Part I offenses. And reliance on informants meant that they rather than the officer often determined who would be the focus of ROP investigation (see Williams et al., [1979] for a discussion of informant-centered targeting).

4. Administrative Control and the Unified Squad Concept

Intra-organizational sharing of records and information, particularly in vice squads, usually is quite limited (Williams et al., 1979). Cases are

assigned to and/or developed by individuals, there are strong pressures to keep their work secret, and few rewards for sharing. This, in turn, limits the ability of command personnel to exercise control over officers' activities and investigations. ROP was designed to make the squad, rather than the individual, the functional operational unit. Target selection was made the sergeant's responsibility (although Captain Spurlock and the lieutenants also got information from their sources and gave it to sergeants) and the target belonged to the whole squad. Although officers sometimes initiate investigations independently, targets are shared within a squad and arrests credited to it. The squad sergeant participates in all street activities, is present at the service of all warrants, and thus is able to closely monitor officers' activities.

D. ROP After the Initial Six Months

At the end of the initial six-month pilot period, ROP's existence was continued by the Chief for another six months (and subsequently extended several more times). Its personnel was reduced from 88 to 60 officers, several squads were reorganized, and its administrative procedures were tightened. The reduction in size appears to have resulted from a combination of factors. Some officers who were urged to remain at ROP opted to return to old units. Others failed to show initiative or self-direction, and were not asked to continue. In addition, a shortage of ROP cars, other equipment, good targets, and office space suggested the desirability of a smaller, more tightly run unit.

Platoons A and B were each reduced from four to three squads. The target committee and two "special" squads designed to emphasize use of undercover tactics were put under the supervision of C platoon's lieutenant who had used these tactics in DC "sting" operations. Thus a lieutenant rather than a

sergeant was made responsible for target development and other administrative activities.

The target committee was gradually expanded, reaching six members by January 1983 although squads were assuming an increasing role in developing their own targets. Several of the committee members became involved in special investigative tasks such as overseeing long-term investigations.

Administrative procedures also were regularized. A sergeant was assigned full-time responsibility for maintenance of cars and equipment, procedures for vehicle and equipment inspection were established, and all officers were required to complete daily activity reports. Nevertheless, supervision and administrative procedures remained relatively fluid and informal.

Since November 1982 there have been fewer changes. The network of contacts has grown, particularly through the cultivation of informants; the variety of undercover tactics initially used by the "special" squads have been adopted by all squads and the term "special" eliminated; and several large-scale investigations have been carried out. Furthermore, in January 1983, when a new property offense statute went into effect, making it easier to make a case for trafficking in stolen property, ROP expanded its definition of its target population to include "persons believed to be trafficking in stolen property" and targeted a number of "fences."

E. Conclusion

ROP was initiated to provide a visible and aggressive effort to reduce crime by adopting a suspect-oriented strategy focused on the small proportion of activist recidivists. Captain Spurlock's design for a Repeat Offender Project called for the selection and apprehension of highly active criminals of two types: persons already wanted on a warrant and those not wanted but believed to be committing five or more Part I offenses per week. Selection of

targeted recidivists, or simply targets, was to be based on information from both official records and informal sources particularly other units within the Metropolitan Police Department. Apprehension was to involve a mix of investigative, intelligence, vice and surveillance techniques.

In creating ROP, many of the problems encountered by other proactive units were avoided. ROP's 88 officers were heterogeneous, the unit acquired adequate equipment, arranged for routine access to ample official information about criminal activities and offenders, established an internal recordkeeping system to encourage cooperation with other units, and adopted a flexible system of administrative control and intraunit cooperation by making the squad the basic working unit. Nevertheless, problems arose in operationalizing Captain Spurlock's program model.

To address both the internal and environmental pressures that threatened its survival, ROP adapted several aspects of the original design. Its target development and selection processes changed as ROP built a network of information sources and cooperative relations with other units. The expectation that 50 percent of officer's time and energy would be devoted to work on ROP-initiated targets gave way to investment of far more officer time in warrant targets that were more likely to result in arrest. Surveillance ceased to be the primary technique for apprehending R.I. targets as officers expanded their repertoire of investigative activities and undercover tactics. Nevertheless, administrative policies remained informal and unwritten. It is to the methods used to assess ROP's effectiveness in selecting, apprehending, and achieving the conviction of active recidivists that we now turn.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 2

1. Edward Spurlock was promoted to Inspector in August, 1984. He will be referred to as Captain in this report since it was the rank he held during the study.
2. For information about the background and prior arrest activity level of ROP officers, see Chapter 7.
3. Several brief descriptions of type 3 arrests made the week of June 19, 1983 illustrate their serendipitous character and the diverse circumstances under which they occurred.

#1- While two ROP officers were assisting a citizen with a disabled auto, they were approached by a subject who asked if they would like to buy some cologne and produced 8 boxes of cologne with store price tags. The officers identified themselves as police, asked the person to produce a sales receipt, and when he admitted to stealing the cologne, they arrested him for theft. A subsequent check indicated that he was also wanted on a Theft II warrant.

#2-While officers were conducting a surveillance on an assigned target they observed two subjects in a car with a Florida license plate loosely wired on. A computer check revealed that the tags were stolen. As the ROP officers approached the car they observed the rear seat was filled with clothing with department store price tags still attached. An additional computer check indicated that the car was also stolen. The two men were then arrested for auto theft. The clothing, valued at \$2,000, was seized when the defendants could not account for it. One of the two was additionally charged as a fugitive from

justice from Prince George's County for failure to appear in another auto theft case.

#-3As two officers were serving an arrest warrant at the residence of a target wanted for homicide, they observed a person trying to hide himself in the crawl space of the attic. This individual was arrested when ROP officers learned he was wanted on an outstanding Theft II warrant.

4. The jacket is supposed to contain the target's criminal record, several copies of his or her photo, and a computer printout with information available on the department computer. This includes data on current and prior addresses, employers, and drug problems; PROMIS data including pending cases, arresting officer and liberty status; and D.C. Department of Corrections information on prior convictions and incarcerations. As squads work on targets they are expected to add an activity log and other information to the jacket. When the jacket is returned it is kept in the target committee inactive file.

5. Chaiken and Chaiken (1982:44) found that the median annualized crime commission rate of a sample of incarcerated offenders in three states for robbery, burglary, aggravated assault, theft, forgery and fraud offenses was 14.77 crimes. The annualized crime rate of the most active 10 percent for the same group of crimes was 605 offenses. Using these figures, the "average" offender commits a serious crime only every 25 days at liberty; an offender in the most active 10 percent commits an average of two crimes a day.

6. The impact of this effort is indicated by the fact that during the six months of the study, 24 percent of the 282 persons arrested by ROP officers were R.I. targets, an increase of 58 percent.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH DESIGNS AND METHODOLOGIES

This chapter describes the research designs employed in conducting the field experiment and quasi-experimental comparative study of officers' arrests and their arrestees' criminal histories.

A. Field Experiment

1. Research Questions

The primary question addressed by the field experiment is whether ROP was effective in increasing the likelihood of arrest, conviction, and incarceration of those persons it targeted as "repeat offenders." To determine ROP's effect on the likelihood of arrest the experiment compared the rate at which targets randomly assigned to ROP squads were arrested by that unit with the rate at which they presumably would have been arrested in the absence of ROP. It also compared the case dispositions of the ROP and non-ROP arrestees. In addition, the experimental data permitted examination of the criminal histories of different types of ROP targets and analysis of the relationships among various ROP apprehension strategies, target types, squads and their work styles, and targeting outcomes (i.e., arrest or not).

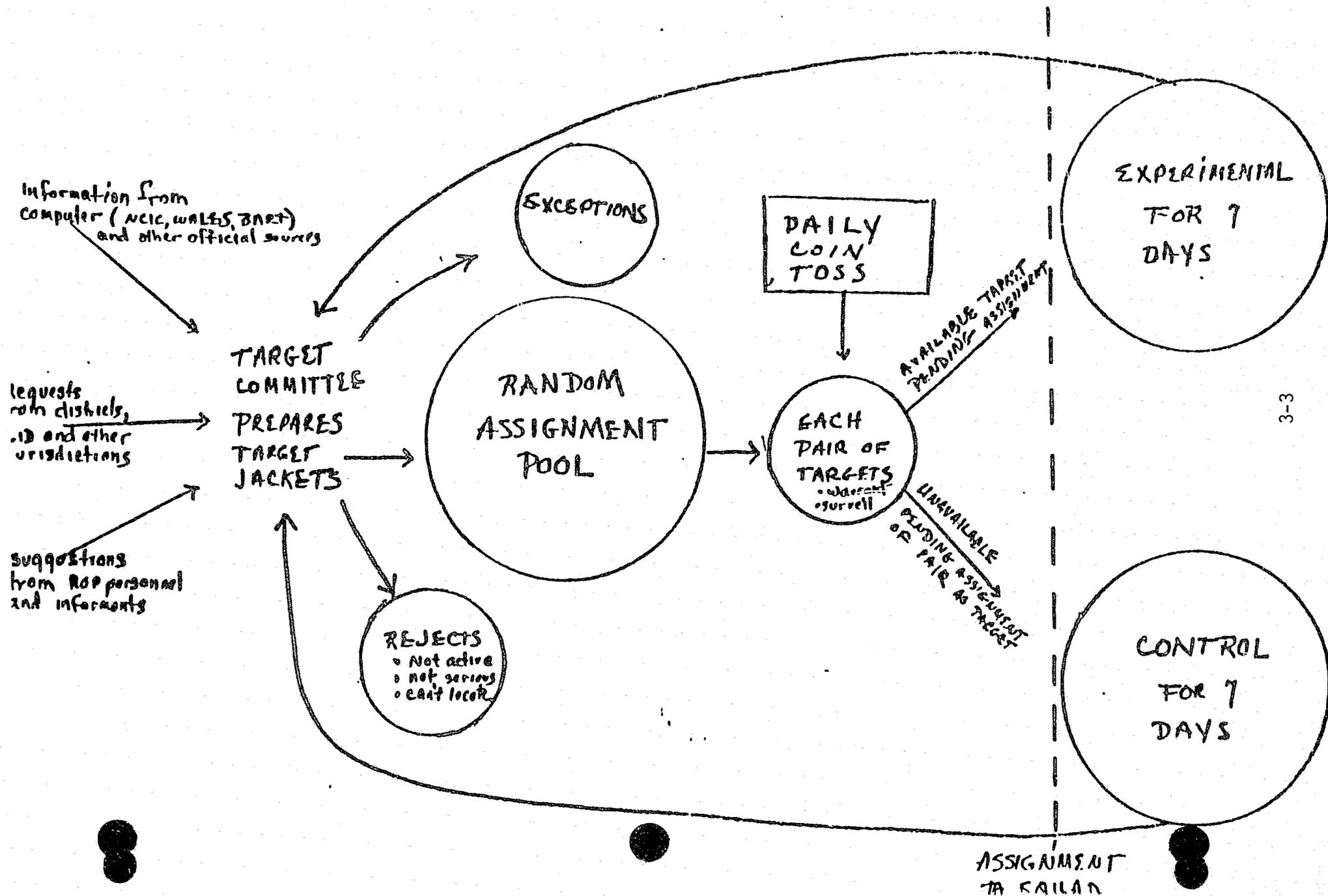
2. Experimental Design and Related Issues

Experiments with random assignment to treatments have well-known advantages (Cook and Campbell, 1979). In this study we compared the rate at which randomly assigned experimentals (i.e., repeat offenders assigned to ROP squads) were arrested by ROP with the rate at which both controls (i.e., offenders off limits to ROP officers) and experimentals were arrested by police units other than ROP. The difference between these arrest rates indicates the effect of ROP, assuming that non-ROP arrests represents a base rate at which such persons would be arrested in the absence of ROP.

The experimental design might have involved random selection from a flexible pool or the development of a fixed pool of "repeat offenders" to be randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. The fixed pool had the advantage of being less easily manipulated. A large number of targets would have been developed prior to the study, all of them would have been randomly assigned only once, and at the end of the study the percentage of E's arrested by ROP compared with that of C's arrested by others. It also had a severe disadvantage: it failed to conform with the realities of the research environment. ROP constantly got suggestions of possible targets from other officers and informants and its officers continually developed leads about new criminal targets. ROP officials feared losing outside sources of information if ROP was perceived as unresponsive to incoming suggestions and asserted that a fixed pool would rapidly become obsolete. They also anticipated enormous internal resistance to a policy that severely undercut officers' discretion to pursue new leads and follow-up on those placed in control. Departmental commanders were concerned with the legal repercussions of and public opposition to a policy that delayed the arrest of dangerous controls by ROP officers because police officers are legally obligated to make an arrest if they knew the whereabouts of a wanted person. For these reasons the flexible pool design was adapted.

The experimental design that was implemented permitted random selection of targets from a constantly changing pool of individuals who were allowed to enter the target pool as they became known to ROP (see figure 3-1). Once accepted into the pool by a member of ROP's target committee, any two targets could be paired. On the basis of a coin toss, one was randomly assigned to the experimental condition as a ROP squad's target (E) and the other became a control (C), unavailable to ROP for the length of the targeting period. (In

FIGURE 3-1 ROP EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN



this report, the term "randomly assigned" or "randomized target" refers to the targets included in the experimental portion of the study, whether in a control or experimental status; "experimental" refers only to those randomized targets assigned to a ROP squad). The pairing and assignment of targets to the E or C condition occurred at the time a squad sought a new target. The only limiting condition on pairing targets was that both had to be either warrant targets or ROP initiated targets.

Six related design issues had to be addressed prior to initiating the experiment.

a.) Length of Targeting Period

The target period, or time a target remained in the E or C status, was set at seven days. This was the maximum period that ROP officials would agree to prohibit ROP officers from working on control targets and the minimum time that the researchers viewed as needed to track control targets' liberty status. If during the week-long exposure period both the E and C were arrested, each was "counted" regardless of the day on which it occurred. At the end of the initial targeting week, the experimental target was either returned to the target committee as an arrest or a "recycle"¹ or it was extended for another full week. In the latter case, the control target also remained in control for another full week.²

b.) Unit of Analysis

The design made the targeting (i.e., the assignment of a target for a period of one week or more to either E or C status) rather than the individual target the primary unit of analysis. This was done in order to permit random assignment of individual targets several times within the experimental portion of the study. Multiple targetings threatened the independence of the E and C populations³ and introduced the possibility of contamination of the

findings.⁴ However, it was necessary to permit a target, initially assigned to control status, to reenter the pool for possible retargeting. As Table 3-1a shows, of the 289 targets or persons who were randomly assigned to E or C status during the study, 71 percent were randomly assigned only once; 18 percent (85 persons) were targeted twice and nearly 12 percent (47 persons) were targeted three or more times. Thus these 289 persons were involved in a total of 424 randomized targetings (see Table 3-1b).⁵ To determine if the limits on the independence of the E and C groups arising from the multiple randomized assignments affected the experiment's outcome, additional data analyses were carried out in which the target was the unit of analysis and each person was classified as an E or C on the basis of his or her status in the first targeting.

c.) Target Selection Criteria

The second issue related to ROP's criteria, the criteria for entry into the target pool. Efforts to establish a formalized set of selection standards or to create a system for prioritizing targets accepted in the pool proved unsuccessful. Consequently, this study describes ROP's targeting practices (in Chapter Four) and the criminal history and other characteristics of the targets (in Chapter Five) but cannot state how many targets met a particular standard.

d.) Authorized Exceptions from the Experiment

After extensive discussion it was agreed that in three types of situations a target could be exempted from the experiment. Authorized exceptions included: "hot tips" involving specific information about the whereabouts of a wanted person or someone currently in possession of specified contraband; targets for whose premises a search warrant had been obtained and had to be executed within a limited time period; and "special requests" from the Chief, the head of a D.C.

Table 3-1a
Targets by Frequency in the Experiment

Number of random assignments	Number of Targeted Persons	Percent of all Targeted persons
1	204	71
2	52	18
3	26	9
4	3	1
5	2	1
6	1	.3
7	1	.3
TOTAL	289	101%

Table 3-1b
Targeting by Frequency in the Experiment

Randomly Assigned Targetings	Total Number of Targetings	Percent of Total Targetings
First	289	68
Second	85	20
Third	33	8
Fourth	7	2
Fifth	4	1
Sixth	2	.5
Seventh	1	.3
TOTAL	424	100%

departmental unit or another department's chief that were directed to ROP's commanding officer and required immediate action.

e.) The Measurement of Non-ROP Arrests

The initial experimental design planned comparisons of ROP's rates of arrest and convictions of experimentals with arrests and conviction rates of controls. However, a pretest suggested that the number of non-ROP arrests was very low. And because only ROP officers were aware of who was an active target, experimentals were as likely as controls to be arrested by officers in other units. To account for all non-ROP arrests and increase the number available for data analysis, it was decided that non-ROP arrests of both experimentals and controls were to be included in the comparison of non-ROP arrests with ROP arrests of E's. Even with this adjustment, the low number of non-ROP arrests limited the analyses comparing ROP and non-ROP case dispositions.

f.) Duration of the Experiment

It was agreed that the experiment would terminate when work on 250 pairs of randomly assigned targets was completed. This was expected to take about six months.⁶ The experiment began March 27, 1983, and ended 26 weeks later on September 28, 1983, although only 212 legitimate random assignments had been completed.⁷

3. Threats to the Experiment's Validity

Several problems threatened the validity of the study findings. First, it proved difficult to assure that for all random assignment targets a) had been legitimately paired, b) were at liberty in Washington, D.C., c) fit ROP's criteria, and, d) if they were warrant targets, were listed as "wanted" in the Washington Area Law Enforcement System computer network. Thirty-nine random assignments subsequently were invalidated and excluded from the experimental

data set. Nineteen of the invalidations occurred because one of the targets was incarcerated during the targeting period.⁸ Six other invalidations occurred because it was discovered that one of a pair of targets was no longer wanted at the time of the coin toss. Other invalidations occurred because the control's identity was unknown,⁹ the target was randomly assigned twice during the same targeting week, ROP officers worked on the control, a warrant and a ROP-initiated target were paired, and a target became the focus on an ongoing investigation that did not fit the framework of the experiment.

None of the invalidated targetings were included in any of the data presented in this report. To discourage ROP squads from working on targets in control and encourage careful pre-randomization verification of targets' liberty status, no data were collected on invalidated targetings. Thus ROP got no credit for either arrest when one squad first arrested the E then the C within a single targeting period. Similarly, both ROP and non-ROP arrests were eliminated when it was subsequently discovered that one of the targets in a pair had not been at liberty during the targeting period.

Locating non-ROP arrests proved to be difficult. Arrest information in Washington, D.C. is not computerized and does not include juvenile arrestees in public records. No consistent data were available on arrests made outside Washington. We reviewed the department's daily lockup list and checked on the status of warrants and pending cases. The target committee provided information on the arrests of juvenile targets and on search warrants obtained at the addresses of unidentified persons connected with fencing operations. And since for nearly half of the non-ROP arrests of experimentals, information regarding the arrest was provided by the squad working on the target. It is likely that all serious arrests in D.C. were located. However, it is likely that we missed

some non-ROP arrests of controls, particularly those occurring outside of D.C. Such omissions, if they were numerous, could seriously bias the findings, making ROP look comparatively more successful than it was. However, the number of non-ROP arrests that we missed is probably small. Even for recidivists arrests are infrequent and an arrest within a one-or-two week time window is a very unlikely event. Furthermore, the fact that there were more than twice as many non-ROP arrests of E's (17) than C's (8) while suggesting that there were some omissions, suggests how numerous they might have been. Since the number of non-ROP arrests of C's should be the same or slightly greater than non-ROP arrests of C's, the number of arrests we failed to locate probably is not more than 10.

The experiment was based on the premise that the non-ROP arrest rate represented what would have occurred in the absence of ROP. This premise was only true if other metropolitan police units that suggested targets to ROP continued their efforts to apprehend these individuals so that ROP supplemented their activities rather than producing a substitution effect. Interviews with several district and unit commanders indicated little substitution and our data indicate that only about 25 percent of the randomized targets were suggested by officers in other D.C. police units. However, ROP activities may have substituted for some activities of the Youth Division's serious juvenile offender officers and the fugitive squad. After early July when a Youth Division officer transferred to ROP there was close cooperation between the units, several joint "turnups," and likely cessation of efforts by Youth Division on other targets they recommended. On several occasions, officers from one ROP squad reviewed fugitive squad's files for targets.

Nevertheless, the magnitude of the substitution of ROP for these units is limited: a total of 20 targets, accounting for 31 targetings, was "recommended" by these two units, including five juveniles targeted prior to July.

The large number of fugitive arrests made by ROP resulted largely from requests made directly to the unit by police in one neighboring county. However, this led to another validity problem: randomly assigned warrant targets only ROP officers knew were wanted. In no more than 10 instances, the other jurisdiction had not listed the warrant in the area-wide computer network, but the officer holding it informed a ROP officer that it was outstanding.

The experiment imposed administrative controls on ROP officers by forcing them to present targets to the target committee for formal assignment and potential deferral or rejection. It made their work more visible to supervisors and vulnerable to challenge. The squad sergeants dealt with this threat to their autonomy in several ways. All squads complied with the experiment to a substantial degree; they varied considerably, however, in the extent to which they sought to circumvent the rules and the mechanisms they chose.

Limiting the authorization of exceptions (and their occurrence when a squad deliberately arrested someone who had not been assigned) was a problem throughout the experimental period. Administrative support of the rules governing exceptions were sporadic. In all, during the six-month study period, in addition to working on 212 experimentals, ROP squads worked on 100 authorized exceptions, 91 of whom were arrested, and made 85 serendipitous type 3 arrests.

Manipulation of the experiment was able to occur because authority to conduct the coin toss was gradually shifted from the Police Foundation research director to several target committee members (about 6 weeks into the experiment). The transfer of authority was regarded as necessary for several reasons. First, it helped meet squads' unpredictable need for targets by

allowing them to toss for new targets when the director was unavailable. Second, permitting some target committee members to conduct the coin toss eased the administrative burden the experiment put on them and probably increased squad compliance by coopting committee members to act as "rule enforcer" vis a vis the rest of the unit. Third, it facilitated collection of the structured observation data by easing the role conflict built into the research director's responsibilities.¹⁰

The clearest indicator of manipulation of the coin toss was its after the fact admission by several ROP officers. In addition, two squads were observed in such attempts by the project director and there were circumstantial indicators that it occurred.¹¹ How often did this happen? One ROP officer suggested that no more than 10 percent of the tosses were manipulated. If 10 percent was acknowledged, up to 20 percent is more likely to be accurate. Individually these threats to the validity of the data are small. Cumulatively, however, they suggest some caution in accepting the experimental outcome at face value.

B. Additional Internal ROP Data

Because we sought to describe and analyze the characteristics of the full range of ROP targets, ROP's arrest-related activities, and the outcomes of all ROP arrests, data were collected at the ROP office from the jackets of all persons targeted by ROP (including the 85 serendipitously- arrested "type 3") between March 28 and September 27, 1983. Six data collection instruments were used. The first recorded background characteristics of the targets including socio-demographic and criminal history information. The second form recorded assignment information for each targeting. For experimentals and authorized exceptions a third form indicated ROP apprehension activities including the overall level of effort, persons contacted, and tactics used in apprehension

efforts. A fourth, less detailed form, gathered information about apprehension activities resulting in non-ROP and type 3 ROP arrests. The fifth form included arrest data such as pre-trial release status, arrest charges, and property recovered from arrestees. The final form recorded case disposition for adult arrestees subsequently prosecuted on new charges in D.C. Superior or District Courts.

In addition, participant observation in the ROP office was begun by the project director in September, 1982 with an initial focus on the targeting process. Systematic observation of 40 tours of duty with 26 officers was conducted from late April (after the experimental procedures had been established) through September, 1983. Intensive observation over a period of a month was conducted with three of the squads, three other squads each were observed daily for one week and two squads were not observed. Initial plans for working two days with each individual officer within a squad following a randomly selected officer sampling design quickly broke down. The chosen officer often was in court, using a day of comp time, or unexpectedly shifted working hours. In addition, the nature of the different types of work officers did affected the viability of observation. Consequently the observer functioned as a nominal "temporary member of the squad," sought to observe the whole group, and permitted the observation schedule to be shaped by the officers' availability and daily work activities. Nevertheless, most squad members were observed at least once.

The detailed coding scheme devised for recording all contacts and activities soon was replaced by a simpler data collection instrument that recorded time spend on various types of targets (experimental, exceptions, and type 3's, and those still being developed) and activities. The categories of activities included surveillance, office work, out-of-office record checks,

court-related activities, interviewing informants, arrest and follow-up, administrative tasks, and cruising high crime areas. This instrument was supplemented by copious note taking that focused on target selection, apprehension strategies and tactics, the use of informants, interrogation and information gathering techniques, and inter-unit relations.

The presence of a white female observer in a plainclothes unit that concentrated efforts on black street criminals in the ghetto was sometimes awkward and conspicuous. Because in many instances it would have appeared "unnatural" or aroused suspicions to have a white woman with black undercover officers, a disproportionate number of tours were with white officers. Nevertheless, squads were instructed to permit observer participation in all activities and a wide variety of squad conferences, investigative activities, station house interviews with arrestees, meetings with informants, surveillance efforts, raids, arrests, and meetings with prosecutors and courthouse personnel were observed.

In sum, a field experiment comparing the rate at which randomly assigned experimentals were arrested by ROP with the rate that experimentals and controls were arrested by non-ROP units was conducted from March 31 to September 30, 1983. In addition to data collected on the experiment and its randomly assigned targets, quantitative data were gathered from ROP jackets on exceptions and type 3 targets not in the experimental study. And participant observation was conducted to illuminate how ROP officers select targets and seek to apprehend them.

C. Quasi-experimental Comparative Design

1. Research Questions

The quasi-experimental or comparative component addressed the following questions: in comparison with officers in other units and assignments, did ROP

officers arrest more offenders? Arrest a higher proportion of offenders for Part I offenses? Make arrests that were more likely to result in conviction and incarceration? Arrest individuals with more extensive criminal histories after controlling for age? And can the observed differences in arrest-related activities of the ROP and comparison officers be attributed to organizational effects of assignment to ROP rather than selection effects related to the characteristics of the individuals assigned to ROP? That is, does assignment to ROP change the types of arrests its officers make and the arrest histories of their arrestees?

2. Research Design and Methodology

A quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group design was used to permit three related comparative analyses: comparisons of the number and seriousness of the arrests made by ROP and a comparison sample of NR officers; of the outcomes of these arrests; and of their arrestees' criminal histories at two time periods.¹¹ Time 1 (T1) extended from April 1 through September 30, 1981, prior to the creation of ROP; time 2 (T2) went from April 1 through September 30, 1983. Looking first at officers' arrest productivity in terms of total arrests, arrests for "serious" offenses, and Part I arrests, we obtained the equivalent of a change score between 1981 and 1983 by regressing the 1983 arrest rate on the 1981 rate using a dummy variable for ROP arrest activities. The analysis was then rerun with the addition of district and assignment variables in order to eliminate statistically the effects of differences arrest opportunities among officers in the two sample groups. Next we compared the median and adjusted mean number of prior arrests for various offenses of a sample of the arrestee of the ROP and comparison officers in both time periods. Finally, we used a regression analysis to examine the effect of ROP on the case dispositions and sentences of a sample of the arrests after statistically

controlling for offense type, offender age, and prior arrests, and officers' assignment.

a) Sampling

1) Officer Sample

The officer sample included a ROP group and nonequivalent comparison group. The entire ROP group (N=66) consisted of all officers ever assigned to that unit who had been in street assignments (i.e., with the opportunity to make arrests) in T1. Initially it included 26 ROP dropouts who left the unit prior to April 1, 1983 and 40 study period officers (ROP) who were in the unit during T2 and who had street assignments in T1. This latter included four persons who left the unit prior to September 30, 1983, and eight persons who joined after April 1, 1983. ROP members with the rank of sergeant or above and persons assigned to clerical duties were excluded. The ROP dropouts and their arrests were included in the study primarily to determine if those officers that remained in ROP during the study were subject to a creaming effect and significantly different from those that left the unit. When no difference was found between the two groups of ROP officers and their arrest activities at T1, the dropouts and their arrestees were excluded from subsequent analyses.¹³

The comparison sample included several groups of officers all of whom were in the same assignment in T1 and T2: 1) a random sample of 53 patrol officers 2) a random sample of 35 district detectives and 7 vice investigators; 3) all 60 casual clothes tactical officers (tact) in that assignment at both time periods; and (4) the 14 officers in the Special Operations Division's warrant squad in both time periods.

Because ROP officers perform a unique combination of the activities involved in a variety of other assignments, we sought to permit comparison with

officers in as many related assignments as feasible while controlling statistically for the differential arrest opportunities related to district and assignment. The comparison sample is large (169 officers) to allow for separate comparisons of ROP with officers in different assignments with additional controls for district. To assure adequate representation from all districts, the sample called for 60 officers in each assignment category.

The random sample of patrol, detectives, and vice officers was selected in several steps. From a list of all sworn officers assigned to the Patrol Division's 7 districts as of June 30, 1983, a random sample of 500 names was drawn. All officers sworn in after 11, 1979,¹⁴ and those who had changed district, division, or rank after April 1, 1981, were eliminated. For those remaining in the sample, the administrative officer in each of the city's seven police districts was consulted to determine whether the officer's specific assignment at T1 and T2 was the same and also offered the opportunity to arrest adult offenders. All officers who had changed assignments and those assigned to community services, crime scene search, K-9, administration, scooter tact, and station clerk duties were eliminated. The first remaining 60 uniform patrol officers¹⁵ and all remaining tact, detective, and vice officers were selected. Because tact officers most closely resemble ROP in terms of rank, amount of discretion, a focus on serious crime, and the use of surveillance tactics, when fewer than 20 were drawn in the random sample, it was decided to include all tact officers that met the other criteria.

2) Arrestee Population

Each person arrested by a ROP or comparison officer in either T1 or T2 and all dropout officers' arrests in T1 were initially included in the arrestee population. Information on each adult arrestee was collected from official arrest logs kept at each district station house. The logs record the arresting

officer for each charge brought against an individual. An arrestee was included in the sample if the officer in the sample was credited for any charge. In recording the most serious arrest charge, coders followed the hierarchy used in the Uniform Crime Reports for Part I offenses. They recorded any Part I offense as more serious than any other charge. When an arrestee had several Part II charges, they were ranked for seriousness in the following order: any offense against a person; any weapons offense; any drug offense (ordered as distribution, possession with intent to distribute, and simple possession); other property offense; municipal code violations, (e.g., vending without a license and disorderly conduct), and traffic offense.¹⁶ An original charge was given priority over arrest on a bench warrant unless the latter was for a felony and the former for a municipal code violation.

The population of arrestees for the study initially included 579 persons arrested by ROP study-period officers, 341 by ROP dropouts, and 1,908 by the comparison officers in T1, and 264 ROP arrestees and 2,078 comparison arrestees in T2.

3) Arrestee Sample

From the population of 4,829 arrestees we sought samples of about 300 1981 ROP, 1981 comparison, and 1983 comparison arrestees to compare with the 264 1983 ROP arrestees with respect to case disposition and prior criminal histories. On the assumption that 10 to 15 percent of the records we sought would be unavailable, computer-generated random samples resulted in selection of 317 ROP, 299, and 318 arrests respectively for further comparison with all 264 persons arrested by ROP officers in 1983.

b) Data Collection

Data were obtained from the Metropolitan Police Department on the date of birth, length of police service, sex, and race of each officer in the study. For each adult arrest made by the officers in the sample the following information was collected from the district arrest logs: arrestee's name, date of birth, race, social security number, date of arrest, total number of charges, the number of charges credited to the officer in the study, the most serious arrest charge, and most serious charge credited to the officer in the study. Juvenile arrests were not included in the comparative study because their arrests and their dispositions are not a matter of public record. While this exclusion resulted in understatement of officers' total arrest productivity, there is no reason to believe it affected the internal validity of the findings by differentially affecting the comparison groups. Ten percent of the coding forms were reviewed and verified at the station house.

From the computer-generated samples of arrests, the arrestee's name, arrest date, most serious charge, arresting officer, and immediate outcome (elect to forfeit collateral at police station, released from station on citation, or booked in central cellblock) were copied onto coding forms. For all persons who did not elect to forfeit, the public records of the D.C. Superior Court were manually searched for prosecutor's intake decision, charge, conviction offense, and sentence. Court record data were found for 91 percent of the 1981 ROP arrestees, 92 percent of the comparison arrestees, and 94 percent of both the 1983 arrestee groups.

The computer-generated sample list of arrestees with each arrestee's date of birth, social security number, and study code number, (indicating 1981 or 1983 arrest, ROP or comparison officer, and officer's assignment) was sent to the Metropolitan Police for a record search. Employees of the Department's I.D.

and Records Division photocopied the arrest histories and sent them to the police department's liaison to the Police Foundation study to assure that the correct record had been drawn. The liaison then removed all identifiers and placed the study code number on each record. In the approximately 75 instances where all identifiers did not match, a "two out three items" match rule was adopted. Arrest records were obtained for 91 percent of the arrestee sample (1,082 of the 1,190 records requested). Each was then coded by Police Foundation coders for total number of arrests, number of Part Is, each Part I offense, and Part 1 offenses in the 5 years prior to the study arrest period (September 30, 1981 or 1983).

In summary, this study was designed to answer three questions. First, how does ROP select and apprehend targets? This was addressed by participant observation supplemented by quantitative data from ROP jackets. Second, does ROP increase the likelihood of the apprehension of targeted offenders? This was addressed by a field experiment. Third, what is the effect of assignment to ROP on officers' arrest activities? This was examined through a comparative design that compared ROP and a randomly selected group of officers from other assignments with respect to the number and seriousness of their arrests, the outcomes of a sample of those arrests, and the arrest histories of their arrestees. The answers to these questions are presented in the following five chapters.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 3

1. When squads returned targets they usually recommended subsequent recycling or retirement from the pool. Targets tended to be retired because they were incarcerated, or, less frequently, because there was strong evidence that they had left the area.

2. If the control was known to have been arrested and the ROP squad wanted an extension, the design permitted assignment of a new control target. In practice, record-keeping problems were such that the need to provide a substitute control never arose. The "mates" of the non-ROP arrests that were only discovered several weeks after they had occurred were treated as "returned" (i.e., not arrested) regardless of whether a ROP arrest had occurred in a week subsequent to the non-ROP arrest.

3. The difference of means test used to measure the significance of the experimental outcomes is based on the assumption that the Es and Cs are independent. In the experimental study each randomized coin toss was independent but some persons were alternately Es and Cs violating a strict definition of independence as entirely different populations.

4. A second or subsequent targeting's outcome may be contaminated by the occurrence of a prior targeting in several ways. Prior targeting as a C may have permitted information to percolate or ripen or, conversely, it may have resulted in deterioration of the value of time bound information. Prior targeting and arrest as an E may have led to the development of information by ROP officers that made a subsequent arrest easier to make. Instances of each of these contaminating effects were observed in the field.

5. Further examination of multiple targets indicates that of the 204 persons targeted only once, 143 were experimentals and 61 controls. Of those targeted twice, 22 were controls both times, 5 experimentals both times, 6 experimentals then controls, and 19 controls first then experimentals. Of the 26 persons targeted three times one was only an experimental, 12 only controls, and 13 had combinations. Focusing on targetings, 161 first targetings were E's and only 128 were C's. Overall, only 96 persons were only C's, 149 were only E's, and 44 were alternately E's and C's in a variety of sequences.

6. Basing completion of the experiment on the number of pairs assigned rather than a specified time period had the advantage of providing an incentive to squads to comply with the experiment to accelerate its end rather than to seek an exemption which extended the duration of the experimental conditions.

7. A declining number of flips in September, imminent squad reorganization and personnel changes in ROP, and a clear difference in the ROP and non-ROP arrest rates suggested the diminishing returns of continuing the experiment.

8. In some instances the target's status was not checked; in others a target was arrested a day or two before targeting but that fact only subsequently became known. In several instances when a target that had been in control became an experimental, the squad found that he or she was (or had been) incarcerated outside of Washington, D.C. This new information resulted in the invalidation of the targets' previous flips.

9. In three instances a suspected fencing operation occurring at a particular street corner was selected as a target. Since the names of the participants

were not known, and there was no business name or address for a warrant, it was impossible to verify if any participant in the operation had been arrested. These coin tosses were invalidated.

10. Administration of the experiment required maximizing control over ROP decision making; observation required minimizing intrusion on the natural setting that was being described and analyzed. Suspected manipulation and patterned evasion put the researcher into the role of being informer for the ROP commander who would then challenge target committee decisions and discipline squads. This threatened voluntary compliance with the experiment (by creating an adversarial situation) and officers' cooperation with the observation. Consequently, administrative control was relaxed to facilitate examination of ROP activities including mechanisms of noncompliance.

11. At a party celebrating the end of the experiment, one officer proudly said that his squad had only once arranged for a "double headed" coin to be used for the toss, hinting that others had done so more often. Others directly acknowledged that manipulation occurred. In one instance I overheard one sergeant telling an officer to lock up an individual who was in control. When confronted, however, he insisted that he had only said to "investigate" the target as part of a carry over from a previous case. Another sergeant twice had his squad arrest a control target. He simply put the arrest and its outcome ahead of the rules of the experiment without apology. Finally one target (that had been arrested prior to the experiment) was "randomly" assigned, became an experimental, and was arrested four times during the study. In addition to low odds of "winning" all four coin tosses, the fourth toss, which occurred while I was observing the squad, appeared mysteriously on the assignment book only after

the target's fourth arrest. Both the sergeant and administrative lieutenant denied any irregularity but this toss was eliminated from the study. For indications in the data that manipulation occurred, see Chapter 5.

12. Throughout this report the terms "comparison officers" and "comparison arrests" refer to the officers in the comparative data set and their arrests. The term "non-ROP arrests" refers to the arrests in the experimental data set not made by ROP officers.

13. T-tests comparing differences of means between the 40 ROP experimentals and the 26 ROP dropouts found no differences between them with respect to age ($t=.447$, n.s.), length of service ($t=.138$ n.s.), race ($t=.079$, n.s.) and sex ($t=.757$, n.s.). Nor did the groups differ substantially in their 1981 arrest rates. The ROP experimentals mean total arrests was 14.48; the dropouts' mean was 13.1. Informal interviews with ROP personnel confirmed that ROP dropouts were a cross section of the the unit's officers who left for a variety of reasons rather than those who failed to meet the unit's norms.

14. All ROP officers were sworn in prior to this date. Rookies were deleted from the non-ROP sampling frame to eliminate the effect of a lack of police experience as an explanation for any observed differences in arrest behavior.

15. After collecting data on arrests made by these officers it became evident that seven of them had either changed assignment or had been on extended sick leave. When these observations were confirmed by the administrative officers, these officers were eliminated from the sample but not replaced.

16. This ranking system led to certain anomalies. For example, petty larceny was coded as more serious than simple assault and possession of a blackjack was treated as more serious than drug dealing or a major mail fraud. Because the arrest charges indicated in the District arrest logs were often incomplete, this simple coding scheme based on this available information was adopted. Whatever its shortcomings, this scheme should be unbiased with respect to the two samples.

CHAPTER 4

ROP IN ACTION:

TARGET SELECTION AND APPREHENSION ACTIVITIES

This chapter examines ROP in action. First, it briefly describes the work unit, the squad. Next, it analyzes the target selection process. Then, through illustrative cases and quantitative findings, it details the apprehension process to illuminate how ROP achieves the outcomes that subsequently will be reported.

A. ROP Squads

Although the squad is usually the primary supervisory and organizational unit in police organizations, it is rare for squad members to work as an operational unit as they do in ROP. In that unit, officers may have their "own" informants and develop targets individually, but targets are assigned and arrests credited to the squad as a whole. Squads routinely have informal meetings at the beginning of each tour (still termed "roll call"), members work jointly on many targets, and the sergeant works closely with the officers on the street.

The basic problem that all squads face and solve in various ways is to select targets that are sufficiently "bad" (i.e., criminally active) and, at the same time, to arrest "enough" of them since the most professional and skilled criminals tend to be the most elusive. How they juggle pressures related to both the quantity and quality of their arrest output, in the face of the uncertainties about the criminal activity and catchability of their target input, depends on officers' experience and the information at their disposal. Information sources are essential for success. Good information, in turn, rests on the ability to enter reciprocal relations where they "give" something to the

source in return for the information about the activity and whereabouts of active criminals.

Some squads focus on developing criminal informants who are paid or given the hope of leniency from the court in exchange for information. Cultivating such sources requires undercover agents and detectives skilled in interrogating and negotiating with criminals. Others focus on informal reciprocal arrangements with other law enforcement personnel for whom they do favors (e.g., arrest a person the other particularly wanted). And within ROP, officers' informal personal ties with target committee members and their skills in apprehending certain types of targets affect whether a committee member saves particularly good or "appropriate" targets for them.

Within each squad the division of labor includes both formal and informal roles. Formally, sergeants direct target selection, suggest the choice of apprehension strategies, and allocates individual tasks. The detective, in consultation with the sergeant, directs complex cases, prepares warrant applications and other legal documents, controls most informants, and interviews arrestees. Officers informally either act as undercover agents or are generalists, carrying out a variety of investigative and surveillance activities. All of the 7 or 8 ROP officers frequently used in an undercover capacity are black. However, one white sergeant has acted as an organized crime "Don" on several occasions. During the study, several squads had no undercover officers (squads 2, 3 and 5) but could "borrow" them for particular operations; others lacked a detective for several months (squad 3 and 5) or were short of generalist officers (squad 7).

Both individual skills and squad style (see pp.4-11) affect the squads' target selection and arrest productivity. As tables 4-1a and 4-1b indicate, during the experiment there was wide variation in the number of experimental

Table 4-1a

Experimental Target Assignments by Squad

Squad	Number of Assigned Warrant	Target By Type		Warrant Targets as Percent of Total Assigned	Percent of Assigned Targets Arrested
		R.I.	Total		
1	21	10	31	68	68
2	26	16	42	62	71
3	20	4	24	83	25
4	35	6	41	85	41
5	21	5	26	81	31
6	9	6	15	60	53
7	4	6	10	40	20
8/9*	18	5	23	78	61
TOTAL	154	58	212		

* Squad 9 was eliminated two weeks after initiation of the experiment. Squad 8 was created in early July, 1983.

Table 4-1b

Type of Target Arrested by Squad

Type of Target Arrested*	Squad							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8/9**
Warrant	26 (46)	30 (58)	28 (52)	47 (85)	32 (57)	16 (28)	6 (28)	20 (61)
R.I.	21 (37)	17 (33)	8 (15)	7 (13)	13 (23)	18 (32)	15 (45)	8 (24)
Type 3	10 (18)	5 (10)	18 (33)	1 (2)	11 (20)	23 (40)	12 (36)	5 (15)
TOTAL	57 (101)	52 (101)	54 (100)	55 (100)	56 (100)	57 (100)	33 (101)	33 (100)

* Percentage in parenthesis

** Squad nine was eliminated two weeks after the study began and made three arrests. Squad eight was created in early July and functional for 13 weeks of the 26-week study period.

targets selected (ranging from 10 to 42) the proportion of warrant targets selected (ranging from 40 to 85 percent), and the proportion arrested. Four of the squads arrested more than half of the assigned experimental targets and two others arrested only a quarter or less. As the "borrowing" of officers and use of a sergeant undercover illustrate, an essential characteristic of the ROP operation is flexibility and informality in its day-to-day activities and mode of supervision.

B. Targeting

1. Selection Criteria and Their Function

ROP's primary targeting criterion, the belief that someone is committing five or more Part Is per week, indicates that ROP is seeking to arrest the most active 10 to 20 percent of all offenders¹. However, this definition serves largely symbolic purposes and functions only as a general guide to decision making since the actual activity of offenders is unknown and the definition avoids specifying the bases for the "belief," fails to provide a way of assessing the relative length and seriousness potential targets' criminal records, and makes no distinctions among Part I offenses. Target selection is largely an ad hoc decision based on several informal understandings (and misunderstandings)² about the nature of crime and criminals, ROP's goals, and productivity pressures both within and external to ROP.

Efforts to introduce a point system for ranking potential targets in conjunction with the experiment were rejected because, as one target committee member asserted,

you have to look at everything, use common sense, and decide on an individual basis...There can be no set (targeting) criteria.

And Captain Spurlock insisted,

prioritization is operational. If there were 10 jackets we could not put them in order... and to do so would be a waste of energy since there is no way to know for sure if we are right.

Such flexible targeting criteria serve the implicit goals of ROP's officers, target committee members, and officials. They allow officers the latitude to work on those about whom they have information and thus are more likely to apprehend. They reduce the work of the target committee. They permit the Captain to respond to requests by make targeting decisions with an eye toward their consequences for ROP and its relations with other units and agencies without appearing to bend the rules.

Ironically, following completion of the experiment, Captain Spurlock adopted the following point system for prioritizing targets: 10 points for verified source information; five for criminal history (criteria unspecified); four for narcotics addiction; three for each pending case; two if the target is on probation or parole; and one if he or she is unemployed. Eight points are necessary for an individual to qualify for targeting. The system was implemented because an increasing number of targets failed to meet even the general targeting criteria once squads no longer had to present a target for at least the pro forma review by the target committee prior to the coin toss. Despite this effort to maintain targeting standards, administrative control over targeting remains loose and implementation of the priority system is inconsistent. The system is instructive, however, about the primary considerations in targeting and the continuing tension between what Williams et al. (1979) termed the "militaristic" and the "agent/informant" modes of targeting.

2. Factors in Target Selection

The target committee selects persons and develops targets from the universe of potential offenders. Squads may select an existing target from the committee's pool or develop its own target for committee approval.

One factor reviewed in most targeting decisions is criminal history. A person's prior record is regarded as a useful but often incomplete and inaccurate guide to decision making. Its importance is much greater in the absence of other information about a target and it may be useful in justifying targeting decisions made largely on other bases.

Squads' targeting patterns vary and these differences are related to several considerations. Officers have different conceptions about crime seriousness and the way to reduce crime. Some put greater emphasis on interrupting organized criminal networks that often involve large scale property crime; others focus more on the threat of violence posed by person offenders and see ROP's mandate more in terms of the threats to citizens' physical safety. Officers vary, too, with respect to their willingness and ability to develop informants the confidence they place in the information they provide, and their particular knowledge and skills. Nevertheless, across squads and types of targets the common key factors for consideration in the selection process are: catchability; moral worth, including seriousness of criminal activity; anticipated outcome beyond an immediate arrest for ROP and the squad in terms of new information, the unit's visibility, and future resources; and squad style.

a. Catchability

Of the several elements that contribute to a target's catchability, the most important is the availability of "good" information. The value of the information rests on (1) its recency or "hotness", (2) the decision maker's confidence in that source, (3) his or her familiarity with the target or the

target's neighborhood or associates, and (4) the availability of potentially useful additional information sources.

In weighing information, "source" or "street" information (i.e. data from a police officer or an informant) about an individual's alleged recent criminal activities is preferred above all else even if the informant is "unproven." One official asserted:

If a burglary detective tells me that he knows an individual is busy, I'd pick that person (as a target) over someone with 30 arrests on his record; the feeling of the detective is worth ten times what those records show.

Source information is valued for several reasons. Police recognize that because high-rate offenders commit many crimes for which they are not caught, their arrest record fails to fully reflect their criminality. Detectives have extensive knowledge about about crimes and criminal activities that never appear on arrest records. For example, if an offender is arrested for one offense and confesses to 10 others, these crimes are "cleared" (see Skolnick, 1967 for a discussion of clearance rates) but never appear on the criminal history in Washington D.C. In addition, detectives often have information about who committed a particular crime but may not have sufficient evidence to make an arrest.

"Snitch" or street informant information is also highly valued because the police believe that only criminals in the criminal environment really know what is going on. And reliance on such information saves a great deal of time. A good preliminary investigation takes at least a day of work; snitch information provides a shortcut. The officer can simply arrest a wanted person once it is known where the person is or will be at a particular time, buy contraband for a

buy-bust arrest, or sell "bait" property to make a case for receiving or trafficking in stolen property.

A potential target's catchability is greatly influenced by the personal knowledge of a target committee member or other ROP officer. Target committee members often draw on their prior experience in vice and investigative units, targeting persons they have previously arrested. One member, for example, noticed the name of a thief that he had locked up on several occasions on the lock up list. Since this individual had been very active previously, (confessing to more than 30 other offenses) and had an identifiable modus operandi, when the officer learned that he was back on the street, he not only targeted this individual but reviewed his personal files for additional targets. Because target committee members and other ROP officers have different individual knowledge, however, the latter often grumble about "cold" (i.e. unfamiliar) targets in the pool about which committee members are quite enthusiastic.

In reviewing target jackets prepared by the target committee some squad sergeants simply seek a familiar person. Some select only targets with an address in a district in which they or other squad members have previously worked. This enables squad members to get information from former colleagues, conduct surveillance in familiar neighborhoods, and turn to their old informants for leads. Sergeants also look for useful information, particularly on the target's likely whereabouts. Desirable data items include a recent arrest (because the arrest report may include a current address and the names of criminal associates and relatives); an outstanding parole or probation warrant (since a parole or probation officer is likely to provide the police with information); and information about drug use.

Evidence of narcotics use increases an offender's likelihood of selection for several reasons. It fits ROP officers' conceptions of a good target because

the officers perceive there to be a direct connection between drugs and crime. Addicts must support their habits by dealing, stealing, or both. Although ROP's focus is on Part I offenders, a dealer (rather than a thief) is "in the culture" and a good potential informant through which to catch other targets. Furthermore, addiction increases catchability. Addicts must buy their drugs regularly, so require a regular substantial income, usually from crime. They are likely to be found at one of the drug-dealing locations in the city and are known to other addicts who can be induced to provide information about them. Furthermore, serving search warrants for drugs, particularly at "shooting galleries," enables the officers to search for other contraband including guns and to locate additional persons wanted on warrants.

The newness of a jacket also influences target selection. Officers much prefer those that have not yet been worked. Although the jackets of previously targeted individuals often contain useful information to follow up, officers assume that newly developed jackets have "hot" information that is more valuable than the leads previously developed by another squad.

b. Moral Worth

Moral worth, a term not used by police officers, conveys their sense that the individual deserves to be targeted and apprehended. Its principal components are the amount and seriousness of the crime believed to be committed by the individual. Several aspects of an individual's criminal record indicate a potential target's moral worth. A recent arrest or newly issued warrant indicates current criminal activity as well as adding to catchability. A long criminal record indicates the potential target's commitment to crime as a way of life as well as providing data about the modus operandi. The presence of many bench warrants or many prior arrests on bench warrants indicates "contempt of the justice system" and an effort to avoid deserved punishment suggesting added

moral culpability. Outstanding fugitive warrants or arrests as a fugitive suggest a wide geographic range of criminal activity. A long arrest record with few convictions indicates an ability to "beat the system". And, for warrant targets, those wanted for serious person offenses are viewed as an immediate threat to the community. Each of these indicators of a target's moral worth suggests the desirability of intensified efforts to assure arrest and incarceration for such individuals through ROP's efforts. Individuals with a record of offenses committed with a gun, firearms offenses, and arrests for assault on a police officer are given special consideration.

At the extreme are targets such as George (see p.4-19) who had a serious criminal record, a drug habit, was wanted for a serious offense, had defied the court by literally walking out, had been requested for targeting by the U.S. Attorney, and faced additional charges for child abuse. This combination made him a unanimous choice for targeting by a squad and intensive, unrelenting apprehension efforts when targeted. Most other selections are based on more particularistic and less clearly identified considerations.

Although it is known that teenage offenders commit crimes at a higher rate than adults, the target committee and all but one squad tend to select as targets individuals over 25 years old in preference to juveniles and young adults. Older offenders show a clearer commitment to crime, have observable modus operandi, and are more likely to be incarcerated if apprehended and convicted. In addition, the difficulties encountered in getting the juvenile records of potential targets under 18 (cumbersome but surmountable) and of those who recently have reached 18 (virtually impossible) hinders targeting youthful offenders. The justification for selecting suspected fences who tend to be older businessmen who are not violent rests largely on moral desert. Fencing supports and facilitates street crime by providing a market for the stolen

property. Fences' ability to avoid punishment while profiting from and sustaining crime arouse the officers' indignation.³

c. Yield: Increasing Information and Resources

The Repeat Offender Project operates in a metropolitan area in which the flow of offenders across jurisdictional lines to commit crimes is greater than the flow of information about such activities among the numerous federal, state and local police and criminal justice agencies. To select the most active criminals for targeting requires information; their apprehension requires a variety of resources. A new unit that takes personnel and equipment from the districts and threatens their turf is not likely to be welcomed or provided information unless it gives something in exchange.

To eliminate friction with other units over credit for arrests ROP's commander adopted an internal recordkeeping system. ROP personnel were encouraged to solicit and respond to a variety of requests from officials and officers even when they did not meet ROP's targeting criteria. This has succeeded in building an extensive informal information network and yielded high visibility arrests, sometimes at the cost of the integrity of the unit's targeting procedures and criteria. Aware of the risk of compromising its focus on career criminals, ROP's commander acknowledges, "we live in the real world," (i.e. a highly politicized organizational environment). He added, "I need that person's (the requester's) cooperation on the larger scheme of things...so I have to help (others) ...even when I don't want to." Refusing requests, particularly from high ranking officials, would undermine the carefully-cultivated network of information and resources viewed as necessary for survival.

In response to a request from the FBI, two individuals wanted as major heroin distributors were targeted. Squad members questioned the merit of

targeting these individuals, primarily because they viewed "big," widely-sought individuals as uncatchable given ROP's limited resources (i.e. reward funds for informants). Their assessment proved correct but targeting these individuals was viewed as an investment of officer time promising a longer-term benefit. Conversely, a ROP squad got information and assistance from the Bureau of Licensing and Inspection on one case. When that agency subsequently requested ROP assistance in another case, ROP lent it, despite the fact that illegal real estate activities are not Part I offenses. Other requests (e.g., Adam, on p.4-16) involve officer-to-officer exchanges in which the requesting officer provides information that facilitates an arrest and ROP responds with a quick lockup that benefits both units.

d. Squads and Their Styles: Hunters, Trappers, and Fishermen

Targeting patterns vary according to each squad's working style and preferences for meeting informal pressures to work both types of targets and arrest two targets per week. Although there are no individual or squad arrest quotas, ROP reports biweekly to the Chief on its arrests. All squads are expected to carry their share of the load and, by and large, do so (see table 4-1b). When arrest statistics were low, one lieutenant not-so-subtly told his sergeants, "put some meat on the table," and someone wrote on the ROP blackboard "have you made an arrest today?" All squads respond to pressure to make arrests by selecting a few "easy" quick-arrest targets while devoting most time and energy to the more difficult and interesting ones. However, they differ in what is viewed as "easy." Most "easy" targets are wanted on warrants; a few (such as John, see p.4-22) are secondary figures in larger ROP cases for whom an arrest warrant has already been obtained and can be served at the squad's convenience. In addition, some squads cruise high crime areas seeking type 3 arrests.

Squads can be characterized as primarily hunters, trappers, and fishermen. Hunter squads specialize in locating people, principally targets wanted on one or more warrants for violent crimes. Trapper squads focus on ROP-initiated targets, particularly long-term investigations. Fisherman squads seek quick turnover of both warrant and R.I. targets and seek out a large number of type 3 arrests. The differences in the types of targets selected and apprehended by each ROP squad, which suggests the squad style, are indicated in Tables 4-1a and 4-1b.

Squad 4 best illustrates the hunter squad. Thirty-five of the 41 experimental targets selected by this squad (85 percent) were wanted on warrants, all experimental arrests and 85 percent of all the squad's arrests were warrant targets. Squad 8 also is a hunter with warrant targets clearly predominant both in targets selected and arrested. In contrast, squads 1 and 2 are trappers that selected substantially more R.I. targets (32 percent of the experimentals of each) and arrested a large proportion of them (37 and 33 percent of all their arrests were R.I. targets). Squad 6 is the clearest fisherman. It was assigned few experimentals (15) and had a higher number of authorized exceptions (26) than most other squads and made more type 3 arrests than any other. As a result, it was tied with squad 1 in making the most total arrests (57).

Their style affected the way the squads met pressures to select and arrest "appropriate" targets. Some of the wanted persons on whom hunters focused were very elusive. To maintain its statistics, however, the hunter squad also targeted persons who were more easily apprehended. To find criminally active but catchable targets hunters looked for new warrants issued for individuals they have previously arrested and retarget them. They selected persons wanted in D.C. who seem likely to be incarcerated in neighboring jurisdictions and

filed detainers on them ⁴. They also solicited suggestions from the units seeking wanted persons: Youth Division for juvenile absconders; robbery and fugitive squads for wanted adults; and detectives in neighboring jurisdictions seeking wanted persons who reside in D.C. and can be arrested as fugitives from justice. Fugitives are desirable targets for several reasons. Often they are unaware that they are being sought in D.C., giving the ROP squad the advantage of surprise. Because the detectives seeking these persons often provide ample information, the ROP squad only has to go to a particular address and make an arrest. There is no paperwork to complete for an arrested fugitive. And these arrests build up cooperative networks by doing "favors" for neighboring detectives who can subsequently be called on to informally provide information a ROP officer needs.

Trapper squads' strategy for meeting productivity expectations involved investing substantial time and energy initially in one "key" target with the hope that it would pay off in the closures of many cases, recovery of substantial amounts of property, the disruption of organized (rather than individual) criminal activity, and information about the target's associates who subsequently could be targeted and arrested. While the investigation was going on, squad members selected "easy" unrelated warrant targets for quick arrests to keep up arrest statistics and followed up on information regarding secondary figures developed in previous investigations. Their warrant targets often were persons wanted by the officers from the other units with which the squad was working or were persons previously arrested by ROP. Trapper squads require the leadership of an experienced investigator, since long-term investigations demand planning, careful target selection, and such resources as informants, technical skills, and legal expertise. In addition, the sergeant must be willing to have

ROP administrators more actively involved in the squad's activities than occurs with more routine targets.

Fisherman squads achieved quick target turnover and high arrest rates without being specialists in locating people through a combination of activities. They arrested R.I. targets through buy-bust activities, involving guns, drugs, or ostensibly stolen property. They followed up informants' "hot tips" to make quick arrests of wanted persons or those holding contraband. And their frequent street cruising yielded many type three arrests.

Not all squads were consistent in style. For example, squad 3 was primarily the fisherman type but lacked both a detective and officers with undercover skills. Therefore, its officers selected primarily warrant targets and compensated for the low arrest rate of assigned targets with type 3 arrests. Squad 7, conversely, tended toward a trapper style, but worked fewer targets and had fewer arrests because its two undercover officers were frequently "borrowed" by other squads and its several prolonged investigations yielded fewer spinoff arrests.

3. Impact of ROP's Targeting Procedures

Captain Spurlock's policy of giving squads broad discretion in selecting targets and apprehension tactics and introducing informal administrative control was designed to maintain officer motivation. It allows ROP's "hungry lions" ample "grazing room" and, at the same time give the command staff freedom to respond to external targeting requests and pressures for arrests. However,

it also has unwanted side effects. It has left the proactive mobilization of the law against street criminals to a substantial degree in the hands of other units making requests of ROP, the informants who work with and for ROP officers, and ROP officers whose perspective on making many arrests may conflict with administrative concern with more systematic use of unit resources. Furthermore, by casting the net widely ROP increases the danger of informally labeling as "repeat offender" many individuals who in fact are not highly active. And, it threatens ROP's effectiveness with the prosecutor by presenting many cases that appear to be trivial. This undermines the ROP's effort to get U.S. Attorney to give its arrestees special consideration.

C. Apprehension Activities

1. Target Apprehension Process: Five Illustrative Cases

Targeting is best understood as a continuous process of selection, investigation, location, apprehension, and additional investigation of individuals, marked by administrative formalities at assignment (when a target gets a target number and is logged out) and arrest (when the event is recorded in ROP's log and the jacket returned). Conceptually, (and more characteristic of ROP in its first few months of operation than during the study period), the process involves the following sequence: a preliminary investigation to review the potential target's criminal history, computer printout data, and other available information; creation of a jacket ready for assignment to a squad

for those appropriate for targeting; selection by a squad; additional background checks to verify and, if necessary, supplement the information in the jacket with data from prior arrest reports, incident reports, and information from neighboring jurisdictions; active apprehension efforts; arrest; post-arrest followup.

For targets developed by squads, the background investigation may be truncated or conducted prior to formal assignment. Apprehension activities for a warrant target either involve a "turnup" (i.e. attempts to serve an arrest warrant) or contacts with persons associated with the target to further determine his or her whereabouts. Apprehension tactics vary more widely for R.I. targets, depending on the amount of information available and type of suspected criminal activity.

Post-arrest activities include investigation of property seized as suspected proceeds of crime and interrogation of arrestees about their criminal activities and those of their associates. This may lead to the preparation of new arrest warrants, retargeting of the arrestee, and development of new targets.

How the process works is made clearest by several cases that illustrate various types of targets, selection rationales, apprehension strategies, and outcomes. The first three cases are warrant targets; the latter two are R.I. targets.

Case 1: Adam

A 3rd district detective requested assistance in serving a warrant for theft II on Adam through one squad member who had formerly worked in that district. He provided the officer with what he believed to be Adam's address.

Adam had just turned 18. He had had several juvenile arrests but none as an adult. The administrative lieutenant subsequently criticized the sergeant for targeting Adam (without approval) since neither his record nor informal

information suggested that he was very active. As a likely quick arrest, however, the squad had yielded to the temptation to "lower standards."

At 7:30 a.m., the squad did a turnup at the address but discovered it was the target's sister's apartment. She said she didn't know where Adam lived, gave the address of another sister who might know, and stated that the target hung out at a particular video arcade in the neighborhood. At 8 a.m. the officers went to the sister's but there was nobody home. One of the officers in the squad said he knew a security guard who worked at the arcade as well as at a local supermarket. He and his partner went to find the guard to show him the target's photo and ask that he call the ROP office if Adam came in. Two other officers went to the range to test fire their guns and then worked on a potential target Captain Spurlock had asked them to check out.

At 2:15 p.m., while completing daily activity reports, the security guard called to say that Adam was at the market and was wearing a maroon shirt, gray shorts, and hightop sneakers. The officers got the keys to 3 cars (which had been turned in) and set out for the market. However, the target left shortly before their arrival. Figuring he was still in the area, the officers cruised the streets and alleys until they spotted Adam and arrested him. He was transported to the 3d district where the partner of the detective with the warrant and the arresting ROP officers completed processing him without conducting a systematic interview.

Case 2: James

The next target, James, illustrates target recycling, a limited apprehension effort due to lack of squad involvement in a target selected from the target committee pool, and the reasons for returning a target. Pressured by his lieutenant to take more experimental targets, the squad sergeant selected several warrant targets from the target committee's pool. However, only James

and one other were still wanted and/or at liberty. The coin toss determined that James would be the target. James was 32 years old, had seven prior arrests (two for robbery, three for burglary and one for larceny), and five convictions, two of which resulted in person sentences of more than one year. He was currently wanted on three warrants (for robbery, theft, and failure to appear).

Squad members reviewed material already in the jacket from another squad's previous effort to apprehend James. There were no good leads. The sergeant sent two squad members to check whether the target was residing at any of the old addresses listed in the jacket. Another officer and I went to the Department of Motor Vehicles to find out if the target or his common law wife, Carol, had registered a car under a newer address and to the main post office to request information regarding the target's possible forwarding address.

The clerk at the main post office sent us to a branch office where we learned that there was no record of a forwarding address. A newer address was obtained for Carol at motor vehicles.

When we returned to the ROP office, we found that the other squad members who had had no success in checking the old addresses, were ready to return the jacket. However, the officer who had gotten information about Carol's address, got Carol's phone number from information, called it, and asked for James. A woman said he would be in later and suggested reaching him at two other numbers. Thinking the target was soon to arrive, the squad went for a turnup. Two officers went to Carol's apartment; two others went to a nearby phone booth to try to reach James. After getting a busy signal for 45 minutes, the officers knocked on Carol's door. There was initial confusion because Carol thought the officers wanted her brother James rather than her estranged husband James who was known as "Butch." After some questioning, she insisted that she did not

know Butch's whereabouts but wanted to find him because she was trying to collect child support payments. She promised to contact the target's sister to learn where he was. The officers returned to the ROP office.

Later in the week the officer in charge of continuing work on the target recontacted Carol who had no new information. He was unsuccessful in reaching Carol's brother James. He called the target's father in Baltimore saying that he needed to get an important message to James. He was told that the father had had no contact with his son for two years. He also contacted the fugitive squad of the Baltimore police since James had previously been arrested there. He does not appear to have contacted the officers with warrants for James or the welfare department.

The officer then returned the jacket "having checked out the target's ties and contacts in D.C. with negative results." The jacket was returned because the squad was involved in work on another target, it appeared that James was not in Washington, and squad members were not inclined to put further effort into a target about whom they had limited information, no informants, and little psychic investment.

Case 3: George

At the opposite extreme is a warrant target that involved more than six weeks of full time and vigorous efforts over a three month period. The target, George, had walked out of the courtroom as the jury returned with a guilty verdict in an armed robbery case. In addition, he was under investigation for charges related to child abuse. The U.S. Attorney's Office asked for ROP's help. George was a 36 year old drug addict. His nine prior arrests included two aggravated assaults, four robberies, one narcotics offense, and two other Part II charges. He had five convictions including three for robbery, and an unknown incarceration record.

Initial squad activities included reviewing all old arrest reports seeking names and addresses of associates, kin, and police officers who might have additional information; getting automobile registration and license plate information for the target and relatives; and doing turnups at more than a dozen locations including the homes of his relatives and George's former residences.

More than 50 persons were interviewed in the investigation, including George's former girlfriend; current common law wife, Cindy; former landlords; property managers of transient apartment houses in D.C. and Prince George's county; George's relatives; Cindy's family and friends; criminal associates with whom George had previously been arrested; and former employers.

Extensive surveillance was conducted on the residence and cars of kin, associates, and friends of George and Cindy. Squad members also constantly checked the whereabouts of cars owned and operated by relatives and kin of the target in the search for additional locations and potential informants. They spent many hours cruising several drug corridors looking for the target.

One squad member investigated a series of reports of shoplifting incidents, showed store clerks photo spreads including George and Cindy, and, on the basis of clerks' identification of Cindy, obtained two warrants for her arrest.

The squad sergeant arranged through the D.C. Board of Trade to have fliers with George's photo printed and distributed to department stores and large grocery chain stores throughout the metropolitan area. This nearly resulted in George's apprehension. He and an associate were arrested for shoplifting but George assaulted the security officer and escaped.

When squad members learned from an informant who worked at the institution in which Cindy's child was being kept that Cindy was expected to visit the child, the institution was surveilled for the day. Cindy's mother visited but

Cindy failed to appear. When Cindy was located in jail in a neighboring county, the ROP officers interviewed her but could not gain her cooperation.

A break came when Cindy's mother agreed to cooperate and promised to call ROP on a special phone line when Cindy called her house. Complying with a court order obtained by ROP officers, the phone company traced the call and provide ROP with the location of the phone. However, the trace took so long that the target had left when the officers arrived.

After six weeks of effort, ROP commanders insisted that the squad suspend work on George. Nevertheless, squad members continued to check George's old haunts and keep in touch with potential informants. The target was reassigned when a promising new lead developed after a month. The second phase of work lasted two weeks. It involved extensive surveillance of several new associates in Prince Georges County and D.C. But the denouement began when Cindy's mother again permitted a phone trace that yielded the number from which she was calling.

The trace indicated that the call came from a telephone that was listed to the address of a store that had been razed the previous year. Phone company records indicated that the phone had been disconnected; instead, it been moved. But ROP now had the target's phone number. To learn the address a variety of phone ploys were used. None worked until by a stroke of good luck, one call was answered by someone stating that he was a repairman working on the line. A ROP officer called back shortly, insisting that he was a phone company supervisor and demanded to know the address at which his subordinate was working. A subsequent line check confirmed the address and a raid resulted in the arrest of both George and Cindy.

The cases of Adam, James, and George suggest that initial efforts in seeking to apprehend wanted persons involve verifying the target's address by phone or in person then serving the warrant. If these efforts fail, a variety of covert and overt tactics may be employed. Those illustrated by the cases included contacting a variety of persons believed to know the target; seeking information through the phone company, post office, and other agencies or organizations; seeking assistance from a variety of law enforcement personnel and agencies; expanding the investigation to obtain arrest or search warrants for associates who then can be pressured to become informants; cruising areas known to be the target's hangouts or the residence of his or her kin or associates; attempting to cultivate informants and surveilling the cars, homes, and persons of target's associates and kin. Two R.I. target cases illustrate how they differ in case development and apprehension tactics from warrant targets.

Case 4: John

John was 30 years old and had only one prior arrest and conviction, for auto theft. He would not ordinarily have been selected as a ROP target had he not been one of nearly a dozen targets that resulted as a spinoff from a major investigation of Teddy in the fall of 1982. An informant had provided information about Teddy and many of the persons that worked for him (committing commercial burglaries that Teddy masterminded, fencing the property, and dealing drugs). When ROP officers developed other informants and information, they obtained and served a search warrant on Teddy's house. They arrested him and four associates. John had been present (but was not arrested) and agreed to be interviewed by the squad detective. He confessed to participating in one burglary in Prince George's County and agreed to provide information about other

crimes in which Teddy and his associates were involved. He subsequently failed to do so. However, on the basis of the information John had previously provided to ROP (which the officers verified through confessions of others confederates who were "turned"), an arrest warrant was obtained by officers in P.G. County charging John with burglary. Since the warrant was obtained on the basis of information developed by the ROP squad, John became a R.I. target. Several months later, since the warrant was still outstanding, the ROP squad actively targeted John, who was believed to work in D.C.

At 8:30 a.m., two squad members went to the house in which John was supposed to be staying. Nobody was there. Two other officers attempted to arrest John at work. First they phoned the Veterans Administration (V.A.), John's presumed employer. When the V.A. had no record of John working at headquarters, the officers went to two different V.A. offices. Neither supervisor contacted recognized John's photo.

Returning to the ROP office, the officers reexamined the jacket and decided to try to locate John through his sisters, whose names and phone numbers were on the old arrest report. Neither sister was home but one officer left a message that "Mr. Williams from Good Jobs Inc." had a job opening for John but needed to reach him quickly. Half an hour later, John's sister called "Mr. Williams" and gave him John's work number (at a different V.A. installation). The officers promptly went there and arrested John. Since he had been a peripheral member of Teddy's group (he was the brother of Teddy's girlfriend and a new "recruit") and had failed as an informant in the past, John's interrogation was brief and not particularly productive. He was handed over to an officer from fugitive squad for extradition to Prince George's County.

Case 5: Alex

Alex's arrest typifies ROP's operation in apprehending persons believed to be trafficking in stolen property. The name of the target had been provided by an informant. A preliminary check with officers in the First District indicated common knowledge that the target was running a fencing operation.

Alex, at 37, had 17 prior arrests for such offenses as assault while armed, robbery, burglary, larceny, possession of a prohibited weapon (gun), narcotics violations, and cruelty to children. He had five convictions and was on parole for the gun charge.

On Tuesday one squad member went to Alex's store and sold him 10 "hot" Ralph Lauren sport shirts. On Wednesday the same officer, wearing a body recorder⁵, went back to sell him a cordless telephone and VCR and to purchase a gun. During this second transaction (necessary to establish a trafficking case), were stationed in ROP's surveillance van behind the store since the target was believed to be taking "hot" merchandise to an upstairs apartment or his car through the store's back door.

The undercover officer sold the phone to the target who asked for five more and arranged to trade the VCR for a gun which the target said he could get in two hours. Since no gun had been obtained, however, it was necessary to obtain a search warrant for the store and apartment and an arrest warrant to execute that day to assure recovery of ROP's "bait" property in case no gun was produced.

Three officers remained surveilling the store from the van; the sergeant and undercover agent went to the court to get the warrants. Returning several hours later armed with the warrants, they radioed to get two uniformed units from the First District to help the ROP officers serve the warrants. It was

agreed that the undercover officer would make the transaction and scratch his head after leaving the store to signal if he had gotten the gun. Instead, because the gun had not yet arrived, the officer sold the target the VCR for \$100. While discussing whether to wait until the gun arrived to serve the warrant, a man with a large briefcase entered the store. Thinking it contained the gun, the officers decided to "hit." The target was arrested but the man with the briefcase was released when no gun was found.

The search of the upstairs apartment and store resulted in seizure of several gold pendants still bearing price tags, one video recorder, a dozen pairs of designer jeans with labels, a piece of equipment later found to be stolen from the Department of Recreation, 220 packs of cigarettes with Virginia and Maryland tax stamps, and \$1,250 hidden in a suit pocket. The cordless phone and VCR were recovered; the shirts were not. The arrested target protested entrapment; interrogation was brief and formal.

The arrest of Alex illustrates several aspects of ROP's strategy in making cases for trafficking in stolen property. The squad moved swiftly making two consecutive sales, getting and executing a search warrant, and arresting the target. The operation was brief because there was little indication that the target was involved in a large operation requiring intensive investigation or promising arrests of additional repeat offenders. No informant whose identity had to be protected had been involved. And the squad acted quickly to "protect" and recover ROP's limited supply of "bait property."

In sum, these five cases illustrate the different problems posed by warrant and R.I. targets and the diverse strategies and tactics used to apprehend them. The key problem in working on warrant targets is locating the individual. This requires either going to a known address or finding it. The principal task in working on an R.I. target is developing sufficient evidence to make an arrest.

Since the types of ROP initiated cases vary widely, so do the apprehension tactics used.

2. Time Use

Describing how ROP officers spend their time is difficult because there is no "typical day," the contributions of each individual to squad efforts are not well documented, and time use and apprehension strategies varies by squad and type of target. To provide a fuller picture of how officers spent their time, time use data were systematically recorded as part of the observation during 40 tours of duty (see Chapter 3, page 11 for details).

Somewhat over half of the officers' time was spent working on an assigned target, 35 percent of which were experimentals and 20 percent that were exceptions. Of the remaining time, 6 percent was spent making type 3 arrests and completing post-arrest paperwork, 17 percent on target development activities, and 23 percent on various activities not directly related to a specific target.

Target development activities observed in the field included checking records; interviewing an informant for potential targeting "leads"; putting on a body recorder, instructing an informant and listening to his conversation with a prospective target to determine if he was interested in a proposed "gun deal"; reviewing teletype; meeting with a detective from one district to discuss a pattern of illegal activities on which a major ROP investigation was subsequently developed; and showing a photo spread of known shoplifters to a store clerk who had recently had two shoplifters escape. Non-target related work included a day of in-service training, court-related activities (e.g. picking up a witness and conferring with an assistant U.S. attorney prior to presentation of a previous case to the grand jury), automobile maintenance, recordkeeping and preparation of a daily report of activities, squad meetings, and waiting in the ROP office to execute a search warrant or go on a raid.

A substantial amount of time spent on target-related activities involved travel from the ROP office to various locations (e.g., Departmental headquarters to get old arrest reports, to a neighboring jurisdiction to talk to a detective, to the reported residence of a target to execute a search warrant) and post-arrest activities. Although not typical, following the arrest of a R.I. target on charges related to trafficking in stolen property, the officers in the arresting squad spent most of their time for the next three days completing property forms and attempting to trace items that were seized as suspected proceeds of crime to their rightful owners in order to develop new cases.

3. Characterizing Apprehension Activity

To supplement the observation data, quantitative data taken from the daily activity reports and other items contained in the jackets of all previously-selected targets worked by ROP squads during the study period were collected.⁶ Items collected included the number and types of persons contacted by ROP officers in their investigative efforts and the tactics used to apprehend the target.

The statistical picture these data provide of the frequency of certain activities and of contacts has several limitations.⁷ Nevertheless, the quantitative data provide approximations of the relative frequency of diverse activities and types of contacts, and the amount of time and effort devoted to different types of targets.

a. Time to Outcome and Level of Effort

Most targets were arrested quickly. As table 4-2 indicates, two-thirds of the arrested exceptions and nearly half of the arrested experimental targets were apprehended within 24 hours of targeting⁸ and 80 percent of all ROP

Table 4-2

Days to Outcome by Assignment Category and Outcome

Percent time to outcome	Experimental Returned* (N=106)	Experimental Arrested (N=106)	Exception Arrested** (N=91)
1 day or less	5	48	67
2 to 7 days	25	32	14
8 to 14 days	30	11	3
15 to 28 days	26	4	8
29 or more days	14	5	8
	100%	100%	100%

Chi² = 11.3

p < .0001

df=8

* Includes experimentals assigned to ROP but arrested by non-ROP unit.

** There were 9 exceptions returned. Because this group is so small, they were excluded from statistical analysis.

arrests occurred within one week. Targets not arrested within a week, however, tended to be extended for additional work by ROP squads. Forty percent of the returned experimentals but only 9 percent of the arrested experimentals remained out more than two weeks.

There was wide variation not only in time to outcome but the amount of officer effort that was focused on a target. Overall, for 49 percent of the targets, the level of officers' activity was limited to less than one full day of work by all or part of a ROP squad; for only 7 percent of the targets was an entire squad involved for 4 or more full days of work (or some of its officers involved for a comparable amount of time). As shown in Table 4-3, the activity level also varied substantially by outcome and target type. Warrant targets involved less ROP officer time and effort than ROP-initiated targets regardless of outcome. Arrested exceptions required either little or extensive efforts; arrested experimentals tended to require moderate efforts; those returned took more officer time and energy than both types of arrested targets.

When returned targets were kept beyond the first week, ROP officers made more different types of contacts than they did for those returned after only one week and attempted a wider array of activities. Nevertheless, the total officer activity level tended to remain limited. Most returned targets involved less than 4 full days of the time of the entire squad; once the immediately available leads and information sources were checked and failed to result in an arrest, work on most targets became limited and sporadic as illustrated by work on James. The few targets to which more than 32 hours of all squad members' time was devoted also were frequently arrested. When a ROP squad decided to invest a substantial personnel time and effort in a target, it chose carefully, tended to select an R.I. target, and followed through to an arrest.

Table 4-3

Squad Time Expenditure by Target Type, Assignment Category,
and Outcome

Squad Time Expenditure	Exception Arrested			Experimental Arrested			Experimental Returned		
	Warr. (N=41)	R.I. (N=50)	Total (N=91)	Warr. (N=27)	R.I. (N=79)	Total (N=106)	Warr. (N=30)	R.I. (=75)	Total (N=106)
Less than 8 hours	46	78	64	33	61	54	20	36	30
8-32 hours	37	16	25	48	27	40	77	60	65
More than 32 hours	17	6	11	19	3	7	3	4	4
	100%	100%	100%	100%	101%	101%	100%	100%	99%

b. Contacts and Apprehension Tactics

As illustrated by the five cases, ROP officers rely on a variety of persons to provide them with information about the whereabouts and criminal activities of targets and use a wide variety of apprehension tactics. Whom they contact for information and the tactics they use depends on their knowledge of the target from previous experience with him or her, information in the jacket or obtained from reviewing police reports, the type of information sought, and the type of target. The officer's goal in working on a warrant target is to locate that individual who can immediately be arrested. To arrest a ROP initiated target the officer not only has to locate the person but develop sufficient information to link him or her with a criminal act. This may be done in four principal ways: 1) observing the occurrence of a crime (if there is advance information about it); 2) obtaining physical evidence linking the target and a crime including finding the target in possession of stolen property or contraband; 3) getting a confession from the target that he or she committed a crime; and 4) developing sufficient informant and/or witness information about the target's participation in a particular crime to obtain an arrest warrant.

The number and types of persons contacted differed between warrant and R.I. targets and between those arrested and those that were returned but did not differ between arrest experimentals and exceptions of the same type (see table 4-4). Across target categories, the most frequent contact was with at least one other police officer. For warrant targets, because officers often had the target's address, no contacts were necessary. When the target's address was unknown or proved to be incorrect, officers sought information from those persons most likely to be in contact with the target: parents, a spouse, other kin, landlord, neighbors and employers. For substantially more warrant than

Table 4-4

Types of Contacts by Assignment Category and Outcome

Percent targets w/ 1 or more contacts	Exception Arrested		Experimental Arrested		Experimental Returned	
	Warr. (N=50)	R.I. (N=41)	Warr. (N=79)	R.I. (N=27)	Warr. (N=75)	R.I. (N=31)
Father	--	--	6	--	7	--
Mother	10	2	19	7	18	3
Other kin	8	2	11	7	25	6
Neighbor	6	2	6	--	16	6
Known criminal Associate	10	44	3	30	20	13
Spouse	4	--	9	7	15	6
Ex-spouse	2	--	1	--	13	--
Family of spouse or ex	2	--	--	--	9	--
Employer	6	--	6	4	12	6
Landlord	6	12	6	--	15	6
Informant	24	34	14	44	16	29
Probation officer	2	2	5	--	11	16
Police off.	42	61	34	56	64	48
Other	18	32	13	22	36	19

R.I. targets officers contacted those persons although such contacts were relatively infrequent. For R.I. targets, in addition to police, contacts with criminal associates and informants who knew of planned or past crimes were more than twice as frequent as they were for warrant targets and contacts with other types of persons were quite infrequent. Regardless of target type, ROP officers contacted more categories of persons for returned than arrested targets. If one approach or contact succeeded, others were not necessary; if it failed, alternative approaches were used. The one exception to this finding was that for a higher proportion of arrested than returned targets (25 and 20 percent respectively) an informant was contacted at least once. While this difference was not statistically significant, it supports other data suggesting that informants played an important role in ROP arrests.

Similar differences were found in the apprehension tactics used with different types of targets. To arrest many warrant targets all that was required was verification of a known address and a turnup. When these efforts failed, however, various covert and overt tactics were employed. These included contacting persons acquainted with the target, surveiling persons acquainted with the target in the hope that they would lead to the target, expanding the investigation to criminal associates to pressure them into becoming informants, cruising areas frequented by the target, and seeking to locate the target through the records of a variety of agencies such as the post office and phone company. For 25 percent of the warrant targets but only 12 percent of the R.I. targets, officers cruised the areas frequented by the target and for 8 percent of the warrant targets and 3 percent of the R.I. targets, phone company records or cooperation was obtained.

Strategies used with R.I. targets differed somewhat from those associated with warrant targets. For example, all 15 instances in which ROP officers

bought or sold bait property occurred with R.I. targets. ROP officers obtained search warrants in efforts to apprehend more than a quarter of the R.I. targets (27 of 99). This tactic was significantly associated with the arrest of the R.I. target. In 26 of the 27 instances in which ROP officers got a search warrant, the target was immediately or subsequently arrested.⁹

Probable cause to arrest a R.I. target was also frequently developed by using an undercover ROP officer or informant to buy drugs (seven targets, six of whom were arrested), buy guns (three of five cases ended in an arrest), or buy or sell "stolen" property (in nine of 14 instances this resulted in an arrest). R.I. targets also were more likely than warrant targets to have been developed from an expansion of an ongoing investigation and to lead to additional R.I. targets and the closure of additional criminal cases. ROP initiated targets "belonged" to ROP officers who routinely questioned them following arrest whereas warrant targets were turned over to the officer who had obtained the warrant. Thirty percent of the R.I. targets led to expanded investigations (in contrast to 7 percent of the warrant targets) and 25 of the arrested R.I. targets permitted ROP officers to close additional cases (in comparison with only 8 warrant targets).

Surveillance was frequently used with both types of targets. ROP officers surveilled the premises of 33 percent of all warrant targets and 46 percent of R.I. targets. They also surveilled the associates (and/or the premises) of 15 percent of the warrant targets and 21 percent of R.I. targets. The amount of surveillance varied from a few minutes to many days. Of the 109 targets for whom time estimates on the amount of surveillance were available, table 4-5 indicates that about two thirds were surveilled less than four hours, that arrested targets were surveilled less time than returned ones, and warrant targets less than ROP initiated targets.

Table 4-5

Amount of Time Spent on Surveillance*

Percent Surveilled	Exception Arrested		Experimental Arrested		Experimental Returned	
	Warrant (N=14)	R.I. (N=23)	Warrant (N=23)	R.I. (N=10)	Warrant (N=23)	R.I. (N=15)
less than 2 hours	42	43	48	30	26	21
2 to 4 hours	21	35	22	20	30	13
4 to 16 hours	30	9	26	20	30	19
more than 16	8	13	4	30	13	46
	101%	101%	100%	100%	99%	99%

* There were 20 targets that appear to have been subject to some surveillance but estimation of the amount of time was impossible from the information in the jacket. These have been omitted from the analysis. It is likely that the amount of surveillance devoted to targets surveilled less than 16 hours is generally overestimated but that the relative differences between target types is accurate. Since the number of targets getting more than 16 hours of surveillance is few and these cases became known to the research staff, these figures are quite accurate.

D. Conclusion

An understanding of how ROP operates cannot be derived from the Special Order creating the unit or any of the official documents produced by it. As in many organizational settings in which there are broadly stated goals and workers have substantial discretion, decision making in ROP has been situational and guided by flexible, unwritten rules based on shared understandings. As a new unit seeking to devise an innovative blend of proactive and reactive tactics with virtually no successful models to guide it, even those few written documents and guidelines that had been prepared were set aside as specific policies developed through a process of trial and error. After eighteen months of operation, many aspects of ROP's operation became routinized. But administrative control over targeting decisions and apprehension strategies has remained informal, unwritten, and largely in the hands of the sergeants---except in a handful of extensive, long term investigations of the activities of surveillance targets.

ROP's definition of its target pool sets a symbolically high standard. But it allows wide officer discretion in selecting "repeat offenders" on the belief that they are committing 5 or more Part I offenses per week or trafficking in stolen property. Target committee reliance on official record data has been gradually supplanted by a flow of information from the network of street informants and other police that have been developed. Tips and leads may come directly to a squad officer, be called in to the target committee, or be channeled through the ROP command staff. Targeting thus has become a continuous process of investigation punctuated by formalities at certain points. Squads make situationally-guided decisions to pursue leads on the basis of consideration of the potential target's catchability, moral desert,

and payoff. At the same time, these strategies are affected by squad style and officers' individual skills.

Apprehension efforts, too, vary widely. Initial frustration with target surveillance led to the selection of an increasing proportion of "arrestable" warrant targets to achieve a "respectable" number of arrests. It also led to a longer-term broadening of its officers repertoire of undercover techniques and more extensive use of such tactics by several squads. This has resulted in an increase in the proportion of R.I. target arrests and in several "big" R.I. target investigations that led to the recovery of large amounts of stolen property, penetration of organized property crime networks, and substantial visibility for ROP's innovative tactics. Currently ROP employs a flexible blend of proactive, reactive, and preventive policing strategies that include instigation, intelligence gathering, investigation, and surveillance tactics.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 4

1. Five Part I's per week means ROP is seeking targets committing 250 such crimes annually. According to RAND findings (Chaiken and Chaiken, 1982: Table 15-A), this means persons between the 79.9th percentile (which represents those committing 200 or more crimes annually) and the 84.5th percentile (for persons committing more than 300 crimes annually) including fraud and forgery which are not Part I's. These figures overestimate the activity of offenders (See Vischer 1984) who themselves are prisoners and unrepresentative of the entire criminal population.

2. One officer clearly misunderstood the unit's targeting criteria. He insisted that he was required to select as targets only persons with 5 or more previous Part I arrests. Others simply did not know the "5 or more Part I's per week" criterion.

3. The number of fences targeted by ROP, however, only increased substantially after January, 1983, when a new law greatly increased the catchability of these offenders and the department formally added "persons believed to be trafficking in stolen property" to ROP's targeting criteria.

4. A detainer is a writ notifying the warden of a prison or jail to continue to hold a prisoner in custody because he or she is wanted by another jurisdiction. If the target is wanted in D.C. and located elsewhere, the ROP officer files a detainer with the D.C. Superior Court. This assures that the target will be transferred to D.C. to face the new charges rather than being released. This is counted as a ROP arrest. If the target is wanted elsewhere and is located by ROP in D.C. jail, the information is passed to the officer holding the arrest warrant and that officer files a detainer. These were not counted as ROP arrests by the study.

5. ROP officers generally tape record such transactions to strengthen their case with evidence that indicates the target's awareness that the property was stolen, his or her intent to sell the property, and the absence of entrapment of the target.

6. Serendipitously arrested targets were excluded from the analysis. Previously selected targets include both experimentals and exceptions exempted from random assignment.

7. For those arrested, there was no indication whether the activity or contact contributed to the arrest. The data did not indicate the temporal sequence or underlying logic of a contact or action. They were based on reports whose completeness and style varied widely among squads and officers. Reports tended to omit various pre-targeting investigative action, unsuccessful contacts and tactics unless they were quite time consuming (e.g., calls to area jails), and certain successful ones (e.g. agreement of an arrestee to become an informant). They rarely specified the amount of time and energy devoted to various efforts. Like many other police reports (Chatterton 1983) officers sought to control information and construct an account that justified their actions.

8. The five experimentals returned in one day were all non-ROP arrests.

9. This is probably a substantial underestimate of the number of search warrants obtained and an overestimate of ROP's success in making arrests as a result. In 40 tours of duty, I observed the execution of 2 search warrants that were unsuccessful. Only one involved a formally assigned target; the other

involved the search of a room in a transient hotel on the basis of an informant's "hot tip." When the ROP officers arrived to execute the warrant the occupant was gone and never was further investigated. It is likely that there were a number of similar "hot tip" situations in which a warrant was served at a location, the object of the search was not found, and no record of targeting was entered on the assignment or arrest logs. Although squads were required to fill out an additional form for the study in such instances, they often did not.

CHAPTER 5

ROP VERSUS MPD: EXPERIMENTAL FINDINGS

The experiment, detailed in Chapter 3, was designed to determine how much more likely a targeted repeat offender was to be arrested, prosecuted, convicted, and incarcerated given the existence of ROP than in its absence. This chapter examines the experimental findings.

A. Experimental Outcomes

The principal outcome of the experiment is presented in Table 5-1. Of the 212 experimental targets assigned to ROP squads, 106 (50 percent) were arrested by ROP; only eight of the 212 controls (4 percent of the C's) as well as 17 of the experimentals (8 percent of all E's) were arrested by other units. This difference is statistically significant ($z=10.53$; $p < .0001$) and indicates that a targeted repeat offender is more likely to be arrested by ROP than he or she is to be arrested in its absence. In calculating this difference of proportions statistic, a very conservative measure was used. Both E's and C's were vulnerable to non-ROP arrests. However, a number of the E's were quickly arrested by ROP and, therefore, were not really available for non-ROP arrests. To compensate for their removal from the group of active targets, the 106 ROP arrests were subtracted from the 424 total targetings vulnerable to non-ROP arrest in calculating the test statistic (see Footnote 1 in Table 5-1 for details).

The marked difference between the ROP and non-ROP arrest rates holds for both warrant and ROP-initiated targets. Seventy-two percent of all randomized targets were warrant targets and 28 percent were R.I. targets. But as shown in Table 5-2, ROP was as likely to apprehend a R.I. target (47 percent) as a warrant target (51 percent); likewise the proportions of warrant targets

Table 5-1

Experimental Outcome by Assignment Category*

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of Targetings	Percent of Experimental Outcomes	Number of Targetings	Percent of Control Outcomes
ROP arrest	106**	50	0	0***
Non-ROP arrest	17	8	8	4
No arrest	89	42	204	96
TOTAL	212	100	212	100

Z = 10.53
P < .0001

* The difference of proportions test normally would be calculated on the basis of the proportion arrested divided by the total number eligible for arrest. For ROP, this is 106 arrests divided by 212 targetings. For non-ROP arrests, this is 25 arrests divided by 424 targetings, since Es and Cs were equally vulnerable to non-ROP arrests. However, because many ROP arrests were made quickly, thereby effectively removing the target from the street, a more conservative measure was adopted. The 106 ROP arrests were subtracted from the 424 targetings so that the non-ROP proportion became 25/318 in calculating the proportion arrested and the variance. This measure accounts for all non-ROP arrests while adjusting for the effect of ROP arrests on the non-ROP arrests vulnerability of experimentals.

** ROP arrests include 93 targets arrested in Washington, D.C. by ROP officers; four targets who had never been controls and who were located by ROP officers in jails in jurisdictions other than Washington, D.C. and against whom ROP officers filed detainers; and 9 individuals arrested in neighboring jurisdictions as a result of the investigative activities of ROP officers. In the latter instances, ROP officers also participated in the apprehension but could not formally make the arrest. When an additional difference of proportions test was calculated, removing these 13 out of jurisdiction arrests, a value of Z = 9.32 was obtained which was still significant at .0001.

*** Two targets were arrested by ROP while in control status, in violation of the experimental design. These randomized targetings were voided and their outcomes were not credited to ROP.

Table 5-2

Experimental Outcome by Assignment Category
and Target Type

Outcome	Experimental				Control			
	Warrant		ROP-initiated		Warrant		ROP-initiated	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
ROP arrest	79	51	27	47	0	-	0	-
Non-ROP arrest	15	10	2	3	5	3	3	5
No arrest	60	39	29	50	149	97	55	95
TOTAL	154	100%	58	100%	154	100%	58	100%
Success Ratio*	51%		47%		9%		6%	

* The success ratio was calculated by dividing the number of targets by the number of arrests by ROP for experimentals and by dividing the total number of warrant or ROP-initiated targets minus ROP arrests of that type by the number of non-ROP arrests. [For example, $15 + 5$ warrant non-ROP arrests / 308 targets - 79 ROP warrant arrests = $20/229 = 9\%$.]

(9 percent) arrested by non-ROP units differed little from the proportion of R.I. arrests (6 percent).

Comparisons of experimental and control targets suggest the likelihood of some manipulation of the targeting process. If the coin tosses had been totally randomized, there should have been no difference between the groups with respect to criminal history, recency of arrest, or targeting source. But controls had significantly more arrests per year of exposure and a higher proportion had been arrested for violent Part I offenses than experimentals. Conversely, more experimentals than controls had been arrested in the six months prior to initial ROP targeting. Furthermore, as shown in Tables 5-3 and 5-4, a greater proportion of E's than C's originated from a source outside of ROP and from a squad, rather than the target committee, within it. Part of the significant difference between the sources of experimental and control targets is attributable to the fact that more controls than experimentals had second and subsequent targetings. (See footnote in Table 5-4) These differences inflated the proportion of internally-generated targets in Table 5-3 and target committee recycles in Table 5-4. Nevertheless, when the data were rerun including only the first targeting, significant differences in the sources of E's and C's remained. These findings, as well as the observation data, suggest that the manipulation by ROP squads was related more to the recency than the extensiveness of the targets' prior arrest history and to the availability of source information beyond the official record.

The primary concern of squads was to "win" in the coin toss those targets that they had developed, usually on the basis of "source information" from an informant or other police officer that supplemented official record information. When such information was available, the absence of a lengthy criminal record was waived; if source information was unavailable, targeting was based

Table 5-3

Initial External Source of Targeting
Information by Assignment Category

Percent Originated by Source	Experimental (N=212)	Control (N=212)
Informant	9	4
D.C. officer or official assigned to patrol district	8	5
D.C. officer or official in other assignment*	19	10
Police in neighboring jurisdiction	21	17
No external source	44	64
TOTAL	101	100

Chi² = 18.6 P < .001 DF = 4

* Includes criminal investigation division, special operations division, youth division, and any other unit not part of one of the seven patrol districts.

Table 5-4

Internal Source of Targeting Information
by Assignment Category

Percent Originating from Internal Source	Experimental (N=212)	Control (N=212)
ROP squad	65	44
Target committee original	19	20
Target committee recycle*	15	35
Captain Spurlock	1	1
TOTAL	99	100

Chi² = 24.6 P < .0001 DF = 3

* The first time a target developed by the target committee during the study was randomly assigned, it was categorized as an original; all subsequent targetings were classified as target committee recycle. Those targets generated prior to initiation of the experiment and retargeted at the initiative of the target committee were categorized as target committee or recycle. Previously-developed targets that were recycled at the initiative of a squad and those that were developed during the experimental study, randomly assigned initially to control, and again randomly assigned at the request of a squad were classified as squad-generated.

exclusively on official record data to which a more stringent standard of judgment was applied.

Because both departures from randomness and possible omissions of non-ROP arrests occurred, a difference of means test that adjusted for both of these effects was calculated. In this adjusted test, 20 percent of the randomized coin tosses, all of which resulted in a ROP arrest, were eliminated (to get rid of the effects of manipulation). In addition, assuming that 10 non-ROP arrests were missed, the total of non-ROP arrests was increased to 35. Even with these adjustments, however, the observed test statistic ($z=6.25$) remained statistically significant ($p \leq .001$). Thus, we conclude that in spite of shortcomings in the administration of the experiment and possible omissions in collecting the data, differences in ROP and non-ROP arrest rates were so substantial that it is very unlikely that these problems affected the experimental outcome in more than a marginal way. ROP greatly increased the likelihood of arrest for persons it targeted as repeat offenders.

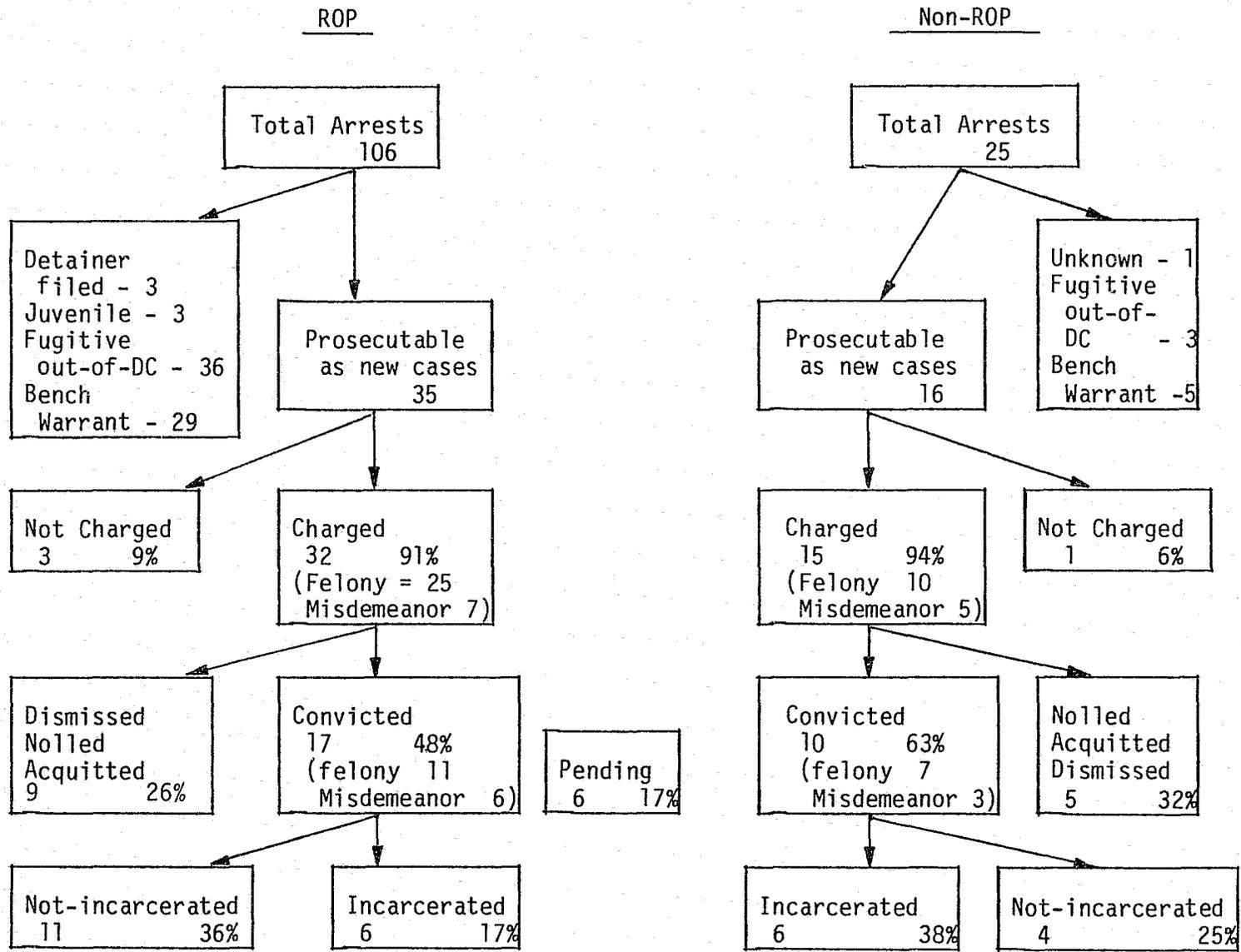
B. Arrests and Disposition of Randomly Assigned Targets

The experiment was concerned not only with the effect of ROP on the likelihood of arrest but the seriousness of the arrests and the strength of the cases presented for prosecution since each is related to the likelihood of incarceration. Both the ROP and non-ROP arrests of randomized targets involved serious offense charges for which arrestees were likely to be prosecuted. Unfortunately, the number of cases for which conviction and sentencing data were available was so small that analysis was impossible. Figure 5-1 summarizes the flow of cases from arrest through sentencing. It indicates that only 35 out of 106 ROP arrests (33 percent) and 16 of the 25 non-ROP arrests (64 percent) could be prosecuted as new criminal cases in the District of Columbia. The 71 ROP arrests that were "lost" to the study, include three persons against whom

Figure

Case Processing of Arrested Randomly-Assigned Targets by Arrest Unit

5-6



detainers were filed but no further action has occurred, three juveniles, 36 fugitives and/or persons arrested in joint operations outside D.C., and 29 persons arrested on bench warrants. The nine non-ROP arrests that were not followed include three persons arrested out of D.C., five on bench warrants (including two juveniles), and one in which the charge was unknown. Thus fugitives were 12 times as likely to be arrested due to ROP's presence than in its absence and persons wanted on bench warrants more than five times as likely to be arrested due to ROP.

The large and unevenly distributed number of cases for which neither arrest charge nor dispositional data were available, however, lead to sample selection bias problems in analyses of the remaining cases. (For a discussion of sample selection bias see Heckman 1979; Berk and Ray, 1982; and Blumstein, et al. 1983). This bias, as well as the small number of cases, require that the dispositional analyses be regarded as suggestive.

Table 5-5 shows the offense for which randomly assigned targets were arrested on a new charge in D.C. by assignment category and target type. Overall, 25 of 41 ROP (61 percent) and 11 of 16 non-ROP arrests (69 percent) were for Part I's. Thus, randomized targets were arrested by both groups for serious offenses. There was also a difference in the seriousness of arrest charge by target type regardless of arresting group. Eleven of the 13 ROP arrests and all of the non-ROP arrests for violent Part I's were warrant targets. In contrast, 14 of the 19 R.I. targets arrested by ROP squads were arrested for property crimes.

One of ROP's goals was to incapacitate repeat offenders by increasing the frequency of their pretrial detention. Table 5-6 shows that of the 70 persons arrested by ROP for crimes in D.C., 29 persons (41 percent) remained in jail, while 13 of the 21 non-ROP arrestees (62 percent) were not released. Thus a

Table 5-5

D.C. Arrest Offense Type by Assignment
Category and Target Type

Offense Type	ROP Arrest			Non-ROP Arrest		
	Warrant*	R.I.	Total	Warrant	R.I.	Total
Violent Part I	11	2	13	8	-	8
Property Part I	6	6	12	2	1	3
Other property**	4	8	12	-	-	-
Weapon	-	1	1	1	-	1
Drug	1	2	3	2	2	4
TOTAL	22	19	41	13	3	16

* Includes 3 "arrests" in which a detainer was filed.

** Includes embezzlement, forgery, uttering, fraud, receiving stolen property, and traffic in stolen property.

Table 5-6

Pretrial Release Status of D.C. Arrestees by Assignment
Category and Offense Type

Offense Type	Release Status					
	Jail*		Release		Not Papered	
	ROP	Non-ROP	ROP	Non-ROP	ROP	Non-ROP
Violent Part I	4	6	8	2	1	-
Property Part I	3	-	7	2	1	1
Other property	2	-	10	-	1	-
Gun/drug	1	2	3	3	-	-
Felony bench warrant	13	1	5	-	-	-
Misdemeanor bench warrant	6	4	5	-	-	-
TOTAL	29	13	38	7	3	1

* Includes two persons placed on 5-day holds.

substantial proportion of arrested randomized targets were immediately incapacitated (although some of these probably subsequently made bond and were released). The offenders most likely to remain in jail were persons arrested on bench warrants. This suggests that targeting persons wanted on bench warrants for serious charges was an effective strategy for achieving an immediate incapacitation payoff.

A very high proportion of the arrested randomized targets were prosecuted for felonies, as indicated in Table 5-7. Ninety-one percent of the ROP arrestees' cases were accepted for prosecution and 71 percent were charged as felonies. Similarly, only 6 percent of the non-ROP arrests were rejected at initial presentation and 63 percent were charged as felonies. While the low rejection rate might have been predicted given the high proportion of arrests on warrants, it should be noted that ROP-initiated cases were as likely to be prosecuted as felonies as warrant cases when ROP made the arrest. Only one out of the four ROP-initiated targets arrested by other units was charged as a felony.

As of December 30, 1984, 17 of ROP's arrests and 10 of the non-ROP arrests had resulted in convictions and six of the cases of each had been sentenced to some incarceration (with 6 ROP cases still pending). Such small numbers make it impossible to draw conclusions about the quality of these cases or ROP's long term incapacitation effects.

C. Discussion

ROP significantly increased the likelihood of arrest of those persons it targeted. Furthermore, when they were arrested, randomized targets were apprehended for serious offenses, were often detained pretrial, had their cases accepted for prosecution, and were prosecuted for felonies regardless of whether

Table 5-7

Initial Prosecutorial Action on Adults Arrested in D.C.
by Experimental Category and Target Type

Prosecutorial Action	ROP						Non-ROP					
	Warrant		R.I.		Total		Warrant		R.I.		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Charged as felony	13	72	12	71	25	71	9	75	1	25	10	63
Charged as misdemeanor	3	17	4	24	7	20	2	17	3	75	5	31
Not charged	2	11	1	6	3	9	1	8	-	-	1	6
TOTAL	18	100%	17	101%	35	100%	12	100%	4	100%	16	100%

they were arrested by ROP or another unit. Nevertheless, the difference between the types of arrests made by ROP and non-ROP suggests that ROP is not simply doing more of what other units are already doing. Rather, ROP appears to have developed several areas of activity on which its officers focus, creating niches for its own special investigative and apprehension efforts.

Among its warrant targets, ROP concentrated on fugitives, juvenile absconders, and others wanted on bench warrants. Such a strategy has had several benefits. It reduced competition and increased cooperation with other units which frequently called on ROP. At the same time, it had an immediate impact. Nineteen of the 29 experimentals (66 percent) arrested on bench warrants (including nine escapees and two parole violators) but only 10 of the 38 (26 percent) persons arrested on original D.C. charges were immediately incapacitated. And although data are not available on the pretrial detention and conviction rates of fugitives and out-of-D.C. arrests, surely some of these were incarcerated. Indeed, some ROP officers prefer targeting persons believed to be active in D.C. who are wanted in other jurisdictions to targeting persons wanted for the same crimes in D.C. They believe that the former are more likely to be detained pretrial and incarcerated if they are convicted by neighboring jurisdictions than by the D.C. courts. Thus, warrant targets pay greater "dividends" in arrests on serious charges and immediate incapacitation than R.I. targets, while requiring less officer time and effort (see Chapter 4). They help fulfill the unit's need to produce "statistics," permitting greater investment of personnel and other resources in original investigations.

ROP-initiated investigations have tended to focus on the targets' organized theft and fencing activities. Consequently most arrests of R.I. target arrests have been for property offenses. Although these arrests are less likely to result in pretrial detention or in prison sentences than violent offenses, ROP

squads have focused on targets' property rather than violent crimes for several reasons. Theft is organized; thieves need fences and fences need buyers for their merchandise. This organization makes it easier for ROP's undercover agents to infiltrate by posing as thieves seeking to sell stolen property, to observe thieves meeting fences at fixed locations, and to trace recovered property that has some mark of identification. This strategy enables them to penetrate criminal networks and build large-scale investigations and cases involving multiple targets. A similar strategy is unlikely to be as effective in yielding robbery and homicide arrests since these require different types of evidence.

The low number of non-ROP arrests of R.I. targets suggests that without ROP's efforts such persons are not likely to be apprehended. Nonetheless, focusing efforts on property crime poses a dilemma. Although preliminary data suggest that ROP-initiated arrests are more likely than warrant arrests to lead to convictions (eight of 15 concluded warrant cases and nine of 13 R.I. cases resulted in convictions) they are less likely to lead to incarceration. Furthermore, they pose far greater dangers of entrapment than warrant targets and raise questions about ROP's targeting priorities. Fences and professional shoplifters tend to be quite criminally active but usually are not armed and pose far less danger to other citizens in the community than robbers and rapists.

The experiment has found that ROP "works" to greatly increase the likelihood of arrest of active offenders, whether or not they were wanted on a warrant at targeting. In the next three chapters, we turn to questions about the characteristics of ROP targets and arrestees, the outcomes of the arrests made by ROP and comparison officers, and the effects of ROP's apprehension process on arrest productivity.

CHAPTER 6

HOW BAD ARE ROP TARGETS?

This chapter compares the criminal histories of ROP arrestees with ROP officers' arrestees prior to assignment to ROP and with the persons arrested by the comparison officers. Then it examines all ROP targets, whether or not they were arrested, and compares the criminal histories of targets by experimental assignment category and target type.

A. ROP and Comparison Sample Arrestees

The comparison sample of arrestees provided several measures of the extent and nature of the criminal histories of persons arrested by the ROP and comparison officers in 1981 and 1983 study periods. Table 6-1 shows the unadjusted mean, the mean adjusted for age, and the median number of arrests for various offenses of the sample of arrestees of each officer group in both time periods. The adjustment for age was included because 1983-ROP officers' arrestees were slightly older (mean = 30.9) than those of the other three groups (mean = 28.5, 28.2 and 28.4 respectively) giving the former more time to accumulate a criminal history than the latter.

The table indicates: 1) the differences between the criminal histories of the ROP and comparison arrestees in 1981 were minimal. Arrestees in both groups had the same mean total number of arrests and where there were differences, the comparison arrestees tended to have slightly more extensive records; 2) in 1983, ROP arrestees had substantially more prior total arrests, Part I arrests, and arrests for each Part I offense except for aggravated assault and Part I arrests in the prior five years than comparison arrestee; 3) the persons the ROP officers arrested in 1983 had longer criminal histories than those they arrested in 1981; and 4) the increase in ROP arrestees' criminal histories occurred at

Table 6-1

Prior Criminal Histories of Arrestees
by Arresting Office Group

	All Cases (N=1,082)	ROP-81 (N=274)	Comparison-81 (N=270)	ROP-83 (N=253)	Comparison-83 (N=285)
TOTAL ARRESTS					
Unadj. mean	5.7	5.7	5.7	7.0	4.7
Adj. mean	5.6	5.9	5.9	6.4	4.9
Median	3.6	3.1	3.9	4.9	3.0
TOTAL PART I's					
Unadj. mean	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.7	1.7
Adj. mean	2.2	2.1	2.4	2.5	1.7
Median	1.4	.97	1.4	1.5	.83
ROBBERY					
Unadj. mean	.50	.46	.53	.65	.38
Adj. mean	.50	.43	.50	.65	.34
Median	.20	.17	.19	.26	.17
AGG. ASSAULT					
Unadj. mean	.32	.33	.37	.34	.24
Adj. mean	.32	.34	.39	.29	.26
Median	.13	.13	.18	.10	.10
BURGLARY					
Unadj. mean	.38	.32	.41	.38	.28
Adj. mean	.35	.33	.41	.37	.28
Median	.14	.12	.19	.15	.10
LARCENY & AUTO THEFT					
Unadj. mean	.93	.92	.93	1.17	.73
Adj. mean	.93	.93	.96	1.09	.76
Median	.35	.26	.37	.49	.31
PART I ARRESTS IN PAST 5 YEARS					
Unadj. mean	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.3	.92
Adj. mean	1.1	1.0	1.3	1.3	.91
Median	.65	.49	.84	.84	.48

the same time that the number of prior arrests of non-ROP officers' arrestees declined.

To test for the statistical significance of these differences, analyses of variance (ANOVA) tests and simultaneous tests of significance of pairs of means (Scheffé's procedure) were used. As Table 6-2 indicates, for total, Part I's, robbery arrests, and Part I arrests in the five years prior to the end of the study period (for 1981 arrestees, September 30, 1981; for 1983 arrestees, September 30, 1983) there were statistically significant differences in the prior criminal records of arrestees in the four groups. Furthermore, examination of the sources of the difference indicated that the arrest histories of the 1983 ROP and comparison officers' arrestees were significantly different with respect to total, Part I, and robbery arrests.

Table 6-3 shows the proportion of the arrestees of each group that were above the 90th percentile for each offense type. Because each group is not exactly equal in size, the distribution of the group in the full sample (representing the baseline probability of being in the most frequently-arrested 10th) is presented in the first row. Due to the infrequency of robbery, aggravated assault, and burglary arrests the proportion that had any arrest rather than the proportion above the 90th percentile is shown. There was little difference between the proportions of 1981 ROP and comparison arrestees in the most frequently arrested 10 percent (23.3 percent versus 26.2 percent, respectively). However, large differences between the groups appear in 1983. ROP officers arrested 40 percent and comparison officers only 13.5 percent of the persons with most total arrests. Similar differences between 1983 ROP and comparison officers' arrestees were observed for Part I arrests, larceny and auto theft arrests, and Part I arrests in the previous five years.

Table 6-2

One Way ANOVA & Simultaneous Test of Significance of
Pairs of Means (Scheffé's Procedure)

Offense	One Way ANOVA*	Probability	Significance of Different Pairs**
All Arrests	4.82	.002	ROP-83 * Comparison-83
Part I Arrests	4.52	.004	ROP-83 * Comparison-83
Robbery	3.10	.02	ROP-83 * Comparison-83
Aggravated Assault	1.02	.38	NONE
Burglary	1.41	.23	NONE
Larceny & Auto Theft	2.30	.07	NONE
Part I Arrest in Past 5 Years	3.69	.01	Comparison-81 * Comparison-83

* F values unadjusted for difference in age

** Only indicates pair of arrestees different from each other <.05 level.

Table 6-3

Percent of Arrestees in 90th Percentile
by Offense and Officer Group

	ROP-81	Comparison-81	ROP-83	Comparison-83	N
Proportion of Total Arrestees	(26)	(25)	(22)	(27)	(100%)
All Arrests	23.3	26.2	40.0	13.5	103
All Part I's	24.3	26.1	31.5	18.0	111
Robbery*	23	24	28	24	303
Aggravated Assault*	26	33	19	22	216
Burglary*	23	32	25	22	231
Larceny & Auto Theft	23.1	28.2	31.6	17.1	117
Part I Arrests in Previous 5 Years	23.7	33.3	25	17.9	156

*Proportions reported for these offenses represent percent having ever been arrested for the offense rather than the 90th percentile because of the infrequency of such arrests.

A final test of the differences among the arrestees, shown in Table 6-4, used regression to compare their criminal histories after removing the effect of age which was included as an independent variable to control for differences between the groups in the number of adult years at risk of arrest. The regression coefficients again indicate that 1983 ROP arrestees had significantly more total arrests, Part I's, and Part I arrests in the past five years than the 1983 arrestees of the comparison officers. It also suggests the importance of controlling for age which was significantly associated with number of total, Part I, and recent Part I arrests.

B. Inside ROP: Comparisons Among ROP Targets

The data on all ROP targets collected in conjunction with the experimental study permit comparisons among ROP targets that differed in origin, type, and outcome. Table 6-5 shows the significant difference between the targets deliberately selected by ROP and those type 3's that became ROP targets only after being serendipitously arrested by a ROP officer during the course of other activities.

The type 3 arrestees had far fewer total, Part I, and violent Part I arrests and Part I convictions than persons deliberately targeted by ROP, both without and with controls for age. This suggests that if only those persons deliberately arrested by ROP had been compared with the comparison-83 arrestees, the differences would have been even greater than those that were observed.¹ Furthermore, although the ROP selection process did not specify any particular criminal history criteria, it resulted in the choice of targets with significant longer prior records than would have occurred by chance.

Table 6-6 shows the percentages of randomly assigned targets, authorized exceptions, and Type 3's that have ever been arrested, convicted, or incarcerated for various crimes. It indicates that within the previously

Table 6-4

Significant Differences in Prior Arrest History
(Age Adjusted)

	b	Standard Error of b	F	R ²
TOTAL ARRESTS				
ROP-81	1.04	.573	3.30	.10
Comparison-81	.98	.575	2.87	
ROP-83	1.62	.594	7.49**	
Age	.25	.025	101.52**	
Intercept	-2.35			
TOTAL PART I's				
ROP-81	.38	.267	2.03	.04
Comparison-81	.62	.267	5.4*	
ROP-83	.78	.276	7.9**	
Age	.17	.012	34.3**	
Intercept	-.22			
ROBBERY				
ROP-81	.081	.092	.77	.01
Comparison-81	.153	.093	2.72	
ROP-83	.264	.096	7.62**	
Age	.004	.004	1.26	
Intercept	.253			
PART I ARREST IN PAST 5 YEARS				
ROP-81	.131	.132	.98	.02
Comparison-81	.392	.132	8.76**	
ROP-83	.369	.137	7.28**	
Age	.014	.005	6.21**	
Intercept	1.32			

Standard error of the b coefficient

* Significant <.05

** Significant <.01

Table 6-5

Criminal Histories of Adult ROP Target
by Target Assignment Category

	Previously Selected Targets# (N=462)	Serendipitous Arrests (N=69)	t value: difference of means test
Mean Total Arrests	7.5	3.6	5.88***
Mean Total Part I's	3.5	1.2	7.77***
Mean Violent Part I's##	1.4	.4	6.45***
Total Arrests per Expososure Year ###	.69	.39	4.26**
Part I Arrests per Exposure Year	.35	.16	3.22***
Violent Part I Arrests per Exposure Year	.15	.05	4.75***
Part I Convictions	1.35	.42	6.68***
Part I Convictions per Exposure Year	.13	.03	7.49***

* = Significant <.05

** = Significant <.01

*** = Significant <.001

Includes experimental and exceptional targets whether arrested or not.

Violent Part I offenses include murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault

Arrest per exposure year standardized for differences in age by dividing the number of arrests by the difference between the arrestee's current age and 17. There is no adjustment for time in prison or jail because reliable data on time in incarceration were not available.

Table 6-6

Prevalence of Prior Arrest, Conviction and Incarceration of
Adult ROP Targets by Assignment Category*

% Ever Arrested for Crime Type	Randomized (N=364)	Exception (N=98)	Type 3 (N=69)	Chi ²
Any Part I	81	70	46	.01
Homicide/Rape	8	5	1	n.s.
Aggravated Assault	22	21	8	.05
Robbery	45	37	17	.001
Burglary	40	22	13	.001
Larceny	50	40	26	.001
Auto Theft	23	20	14	n.s.
Narcotics	42	46	39	n.s.
Weapon	21	23	16	n.s.
Violent Part I Convictions	32	26	12	.01
Incarcerated for More than 1 Year	43	33	21	.001

*Prevalence refers to the percent ever arrested, convicted or incarcerated for the offense type.

selected target category randomized targets consistently were more likely than the exceptions to have ever been arrested for various Part I offenses, to have been convicted for a Part I offense, and to have been imprisoned in Washington, D.C. The exceptions, in turn, were more likely to have had an arrest, conviction, and incarceration when they were initially targeted than the type 3's.

Table 6-7 shows that experimentals were the most likely and type 3's the least likely category of target to have been in the community on some type of conditional release by the court or to have escaped from an incarcerative institution. Furthermore, 35 percent of the experimentals but only 14 percent of the type 3's had both one case pending and an additional conditional release or were currently serving an incarceration sentence when they were targeted.

Table 6-8 indicates that there is no significant difference between the criminal histories of the previously-selected warrant targets and ROP-initiated targets. Although the latter tended to be arrested by ROP officers for property crimes (see Chapter 7), they were as likely to have been arrested previously for a violent offense as the warrant targets. Finally, focusing only on the experimental targets to determine whether ROP officers arrested the less criminally active targets, Tables 6-9 and 6-10 suggest that this was not the case. There were only marginal differences between the prior records of targets that ROP arrested and those they did not.² The ROP arrestees had significantly fewer Part I arrests but were more likely to have been arrested in the six months prior to targeting than those who were not arrested. There was no difference between the groups in liberty status at targeting. These findings coupled with fact that substantially more of the returned than arrested experimentals did not originate from any outside source (30 percent versus 58 percent) and fewer were generated by a squad (56 percent versus 73 percent)

Table 6-7

Liberty Status at Targeting by Assignment Category

Percent in Status	Randomized (N=390)	Exception (N=96)	Type 3 (N=84)
Free	29	38	54
Probation	11	14	11
Parole	11	7	10
One Case Pending	14	19	12
One Case plus Probation, Parole or Additional Case	21	15	13
Jail, Absconder or Escapee*	14	8	1

Chi² = 28.94 DF = 10 P < .001

* Includes five persons located in jail against whom a detainer was filed (see Footnote 4, Chapter 4) as well as juveniles who "absconded" and adults who escaped from the institutions to which they had been sentenced.

Table 6-8

Criminal History of Adult Previously-Selected Targets*
by Target Type

	Warrant (N=316)	R.I. (N=148)	Probability
Mean Total Arrests	7.0	8.4	n.s.
Mean Part I Arrests	3.4	3.5	n.s.
Mean Violent Part I Arrests	1.3	1.4	n.s.
Mean Total Per Exposure Year	.65	.76	n.s.
Mean Part I Arrests per Exposure Year	.34	.36	n.s.

*Includes randomized targets and exceptions.

Table 6-9

Criminal Histories of Adult ROP
Experiments by Targeting Outcome

	Arrested (N=79)	Returned# (N=82)	t-value
Mean Total Arrests	5.99	7.82	1.76
Mean Part I's	2.58	3.61	2.02*
Mean Violent Part I's	1.10	1.39	.98
Total Arrests per Exposure Year##	.54	.71	1.90
Part I's per Exposure Year	.27	.34	1.22
Violent Part I's per Exposure Year	.13	.15	.49
Part I Convictions	1.0	1.4	1.47
Part I Convictions per Exposure Year	.9	.13	1.82

* Significant <.05 ** Significant <.01

Non-ROP arrests were deleted from this analysis. When the tables were rerun including the non-ROP arrests as "returned," the same items were significant.

Arrests per exposure year standardized for differences in age by dividing the number of arrests by the difference between the target's age at targeting and 17. There is no adjustment for time in prison or jail because reliable data on incarceration time was not available.

Table 6-10

Time Between Last Arrest and Initial ROP
 Targeting of Adult Experimental Targets
 by Outcome (in percent)

Time from Last Arrest to Initial Targeting	Arrested (N=79)	Returned (N=89)
6 months or less	45	25
6-12 months	15	28
13-36 months	17	24
More than 36 months	18	16
No prior arrest	6	6

Chi² = 9.19 DF = 4 p = .06

suggest that the crucial factor in a "successful" targeting was information about the target beyond the criminal record, whether it came from the police, informants, or the ROP officers' investigation.

C. Summary and Discussion

Both the comparative and internal data indicate that ROP is targeting and arresting persons with extensive, serious, and recent criminal histories. While the prior records of comparison officers' arrestees in 1983 tended to be less serious than those of the comparison officers arrested in 1981, the persons arrested by ROP officers in 1983 had longer and more serious criminal records than those persons they arrested in 1981 and had significantly more extensive and serious records than the 1983 comparison arrestees. This difference cannot be attributed to the fact that ROP arrestees tended to be older. These differences among arrestees' prior records became magnified after distinguishing between those persons deliberately targeted by ROP and the 30 percent of the ROP arrestees that were serendipitously arrested. Finally, ROP's "successes" (i.e., arrestees) were generally similar to its failures with respect to length, seriousness, and recency of prior arrests. They differed, however, with respect to origin. Arrestees were more likely to have been suggested by a source outside ROP than internally generated and to have been carried forward or initiated by a squad rather than by the target committee.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of these measures to assess ROP's targets and ROP's target selection strategy itself? Can one conclude that ROP is selecting the "best" (i.e., most active and dangerous) targets from the universe of D.C. offenders? The major problem with these data--and all such studies that rely on arrest records as indicators of criminal activity--is the uncertain relationship between criminal activity and arrest.

Moore et al. (1984) criticize the conventional wisdom that suggests that in accumulating a criminal record and being punished by the criminal justice system, a bias runs against dangerous offenders who, once known to the police are more likely to be suspected and subsequently rearrested. On the contrary, they maintain, it is more likely that the most active criminals--even if more frequently caught than less active ones--are caught disproportionately less often. Thus the arrest records of the most active criminals understate their true criminality relative to those of less active criminals.

A series of studies by the Rand Corporation based on self-reports of criminal activities of inmates in three states has shed some light on the issue of the relationship of individual crime rates and arrest rates. Although the validity of the Rand findings is threatened by many methodological problems (see Vischer, 1984; Cohen, 1984) these studies found that: the distribution of offense rates was highly skewed (Chaiken and Chaiken, 1982); offense rates reported by inmates active in a particular crime type were stable over age for most offense types (Peterson and Bracker, 1980 - Table 30); average individual rates of offending were higher for persons with more extensive arrest histories; and the most active group, the "violent predators," tended to be quite young (Chaiken and Chaiken, 1982). When they created models that included a variety of official record variables for predicting who among the inmates were the high rate offenders, although they were generally accurate in selecting low-rate offenders, they did uniformly poorly in predicting high-rate offenders. Well over half of those predicted to be high-rate offenders were, in fact, low raters (Chaiken and Chaiken, 1982 - Table 3-7). Furthermore, among the various official record items tested, arrest history was found not to be a significant predictor except in distinguishing low-level property offenders.

Other studies of the relationship between official record data and self-reported offending by juveniles have found that a higher proportion of persons admitting to be highly criminally active have arrest records than those reporting low or no criminal activity, but that the majority of the self-reported criminally active had no arrests during the period of study. (See Elliot et. al., 1984; Cernkovich et al. 1983).

The data clearly have shown that ROP is targeting and arresting active offenders. Because ROP officers often rely more heavily on "inside knowledge" about active offenders than on official record information, they may be quite accurately selecting the very active from the far larger pool of active criminals. However, several factors suggest that an unknown but possibly substantial proportion of ROP targets are not very high raters or person that meet ROP's selection criteria. First, the proportion of all active offenders that commit crimes five or more Part I offenses (ROP's primary targeting criterion) is quite small. Based on the RAND estimates, which are probably too high (see Vischer, 1984), ROP is seeking the most active 15 to 20 percent of those persons who were subsequently convicted and incarcerated³ who themselves are a very unrepresentative sample of all offenders. Second, ROP's information about adult targets' juvenile criminal records and drug use is very limited and knowledge of adult drug use and criminal history often is incomplete (the latter being limited to the D.C. record). In the absence of "source" information, the officers must rely on their police "sense" in reviewing limited criminal history data. Third, a variety of informal internal pressures lead to targeting persons who may not meet ROP's criteria. Although there are no arrest quotas, squads are occasionally reminded that they must "put some meat on the table" and are encouraged to respond to requests from other Metropolitan Police Department units and outside departments. Often these units were not fully aware of ROP's

targeting criteria and requested help on targets that did not "fit."

Nevertheless, to assure a continuing flow of information and foster cooperative relations, ROP "did favors" for others by targeting such persons who were wanted for a variety of reasons (e.g., an informant "burned" the officer or the person was charged with a particularly heinous crime). Thus, until criminals keep logs that criminologists can review or a follow up study obtains self-report data on the criminal activity of convicted ROP arrestees (see Chapter 9), all that one can say with certainty is that ROP selects and arrests active criminals who tend to be older than the average arrestee and who have longer than average criminal records even after controlling for age. The true proportion of ROP targets in the "worst" or most active 20 percent and the incapacitation effect of ROP's selection of older targets will remain uncertain.

Chapter 6 Footnotes

1. This was not possible because of the differences in the data collected on ROP targets in the experimental and comparison components of this study.
2. Only experimentals were used in this analyses because 91 percent of the exceptions were arrested. This very high arrest rate suggests that squads did not leave a paper trail on many of the non-experimentals that were not arrested. All exceptions were consequently deleted to eliminate potential bias.
3. See Footnote 5 in Chapter 2.

Chapter 7

ROP ARRESTEES IN THE COURTS: DISPOSITIONAL OUTCOMES

In this chapter, findings from the comparative and experimental data sets are examined to determine what happened to ROP, non-ROP, and comparison officers' arrests at various stages in case processing.

A. ROP and Comparison Officers' Arrests and Dispositions

The goal of ROP is to reduce crime through the increased incapacitation of repeat offenders. This may come about in several ways: 1) increasing the seriousness of the average arrest charge without changes in court policies; 2) increasing the length and seriousness of the prior record of arrestees, since prior record consistently has been found to strongly affect sentence length (Bernstein et al. 1977; Chiricos and Waldo 1975; Lizotte 1978); 3) making stronger cases by providing more witnesses and better evidence. Changes in case strength was indirectly measured as change in the proportion of cases accepted for prosecution, convicted on top charge, and sentenced to incarceration, and in sentence length after controlling for other confounding factors.

Because a variety of factors may affect case outcomes, what appear to be the effect of ROP's activities may, in fact, be the result of changes in the criminal population, the criminal law, screening and plea bargaining practices, and the sentences given by judges in response to prison crowding, public pressures or other factors. Thus the task of this research was to determine whether ROP had any overall impact on case outcomes and whether these were independent of changes in offender characteristics, the nature of the offense, and court practices.

Table 7-1 indicates that the type of arrest charge made by ROP and comparison officers do not differ from each other very much in 1981 and differed only in the "fugitive etc." and "other" arrests in 1983. The difference is due primarily to ROP officers' increase in arrests of fugitives, escapees, parole or probation violators from one percent in 1981 to 26 percent of all arrests in 1983 and a corresponding decrease in "other" arrests from 35 to 15 percent of total arrests. From 1981 to 1983, comparison officers increased "other" arrests from 24 to 30 percent of their total. Although most arrests in both of these categories rarely result in cases presented for prosecution in the D.C. Court, they differ substantially in seriousness. The "other" category includes disorderly conduct, soliciting for prostitution, traffic offenses, and vending law violations. Most minor offenders elect to forfeit (E.F.) collateral posted at the police station (in essence pay a fine). In contrast the charges underlying fugitive arrests are almost always felonies, probation and parole violations often result in incarceration, and escapees are immediately reincarcerated.

Figure 7-1 shows the flow through the courts of arrests made by the ROP and comparison officers.² It presents both the actual number of cases (on the left side of each box) and the percentages of outcomes based on cases presented for prosecution.³ For example, of the 153 ROP arrests presented for prosecution in 1983, 14 percent were rejected at initial screening (not prosecuted); 29 percent were subsequently dismissed, nolle, or acquitted; 46 percent were convicted; 18 percent were sentenced to some incarceration, and 12 percent were still pending disposition as of December 31, 1984.

As indicated by the second row of the figure, there was little difference between the proportion of ROP and comparison arrests that did not result in new

Table 7-1
Original Arrest Offense Type

Percent Arrested Charge Type	ROP-81 (N=308)	Comparison-81 (N=300)	ROP-83 (N=261)	Comparison-83 (N=308)
Violent Part I	12	12	12	9
Simple Assault	3	3	1	2
Property Part I	15	20	12	13
Property Part II	4	4	6	4
Weapon	3	3	3	4
Drug Dealing and Possession with Intent to Distribute	4	2	3	4
Drug Possession	18	17	13	16
D.C. Case on Bench Warrant*	5	8	8	11
Fugitive, Escape, Parole or Pro- bation Violation	1	7	26	8
Other**	35	24	15	30
	100%	100%	99%	100%

* Failure to appear at any point in the processing of a criminal case led to the issuance of a bench warrant for the rearrest of the accused.

** Includes sexual solicitation, operating a lottery (gambling), disorderly conduct, unlawful entry, violation of vending regulations, and all traffic offenses.

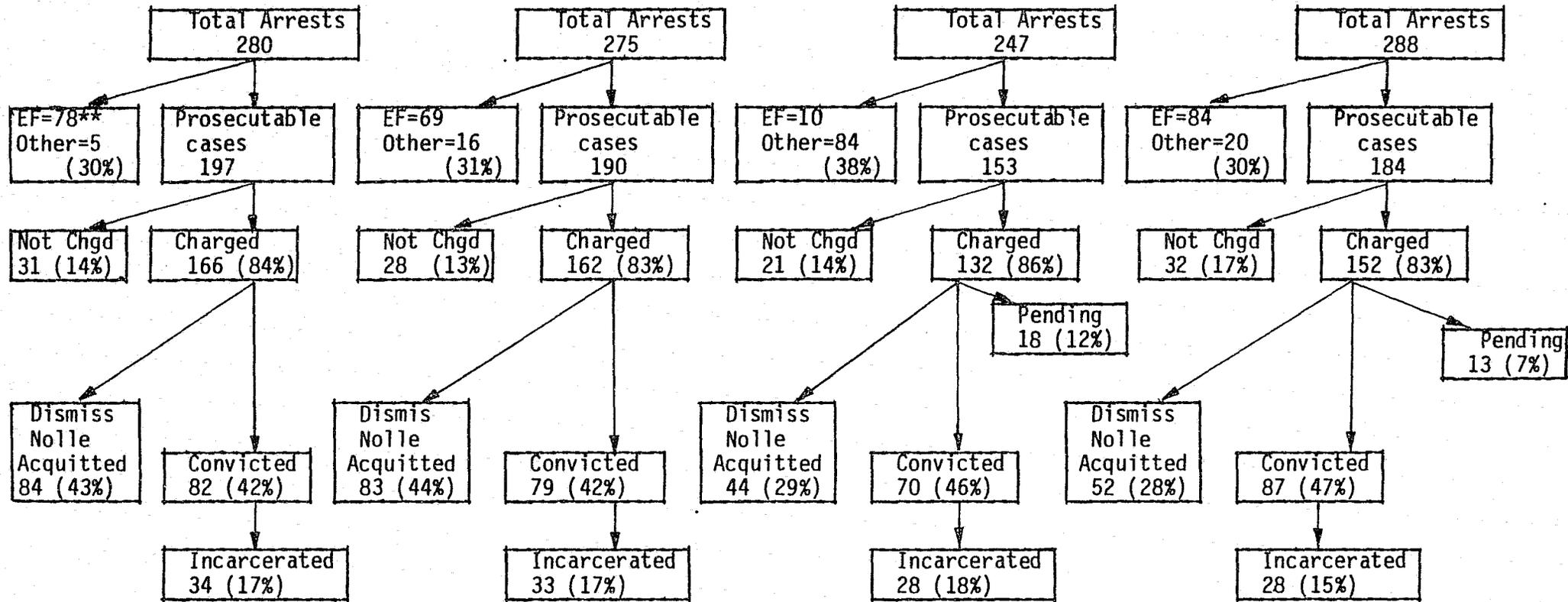
Case Processing and Dispositions: (Including Bench Warrants)*

ROP-81

Comparison-81

ROP-83

Comparison-83



Median Sentence = 10.5 mos.
Mean Sentence = 24.4 mos.

Median Sentence = 11.6 mos.
Mean Sentence = 18.8 mos.

Median Sentence = 6.2 mos.
Mean Sentence = 32.0 mos.

Median Sentence = 6.2 mos.
Mean Sentence = 30.5 mos.

* Differences in total arrests shown in this figure and in Table 6-1 are due to missing data in court records.

** E.F.=elect to forfeit collateral posted at police station rather than take the matter to court.

7-4

cases presented to the court in 1981. In 1983, ROP officers both increased and changed the type of non-prosecuted arrests. As a result, cases disposed by forfeiture of collateral (E.F.) fell to only 11 percent of all ROP's non-prosecution cases in 1983 but continued to comprise 81 percent of the comparison group non-prosecution cases.

Although Figure 7-1 suggests that the rate at which the prosecutor accepted cases at initial screening was similar for all four groups, a closer look at initial prosecutorial decisions shown in Table 7-2 indicates sharp differences. In 1981, there were no differences between ROP and comparison officers in the proportion of new cases prosecuted as felonies although ROP officers had a larger proportion of cases prosecuted as misdemeanors and a smaller proportion of previously charged bench warrants. In 1983, the proportion of ROP arrests prosecuted as new felonies sharply increased from 25 to 44 percent of all ROP arrests presented to the U.S. Attorney, and the proportion prosecuted as misdemeanors correspondingly declined from 52 to 31 percent. In contrast, the proportion of comparison arrests charged as new felonies decreased from 28 to 21 percent of all cases presented to the prosecutor while the proportion charged as misdemeanors remained the same. Consequently, ROP increased the seriousness of the cases its officers brought into the courts at the same time that the seriousness of comparison officers' new cases declined.

Focusing on case dispositions, Table 7-3 shows that there was no difference in the overall conviction rates of ROP and comparison cases in either 1981 or 1983. However, there was a general increase in the proportion of cases resulting in conviction from 49 percent in 1981 to 63 percent in 1983.

Table 7-2

Initial Prosecution Action

Prosecutorial Decision	ROP-81		Comparison-81		ROP-83		Comparison-83	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Charged as a Felony	50	25	54	28	67	44	39	21
Charged as a Misdemeanor	103	52	83	44	48	31	83	45
Previously Charged Bench Warrant	13	7	25	13	17	11	30	16
Not Charged	31	16	28	15	21	14	32	17

Chi² = 33.6
 DF = 9
 p < .001

Table 7-3
Dispositions of Prosecuted Cases

Percent of Disposition	ROP-81 (N=166)	Comparison-81 (N=162)	ROP-83 (N=114)	Comparison-83 (N=139)
Felony Conviction	19	21	24	16
Misdemeanor Conviction	30	32	38	47
Total Conviction	49	49	63*	63
Nolle, Dismiss, Acquit	51	51	37	37
Total	100%	100%	100%	101%

Chi² = 28.9
DF = 9
p < .001

* Felony and misdemeanor convictions not total 63% due to rounding.

Examination of type of conviction indicates that important changes in the seriousness of cases occurred so that the type of disposition in ROP and comparison officers' cases differed in 1983. In 1981, similar proportions of ROP and comparison cases resulted in felony and misdemeanor convictions. In 1983 the proportion of ROP officers' felony convictions rose slightly, from 19 to 24 percent, while the proportion of comparison felony convictions dropped from 21 to 16 percent of all case outcomes. Consequently, in 1983 a higher proportion of ROP than comparison cases ended with felony convictions. At the same time, misdemeanor conviction rates for both officer groups increased although more sharply for comparison officers. As a result, the overall increase in the conviction rate in 1983 appears to be due principally to a general increase in misdemeanor convictions.

Looking at conviction rates by offense type (data not shown), in 1981 similar proportions of ROP and comparison officers' arrestees were convicted for each type of case but bench warrant arrests. In 1983, although conviction rates for most types of crimes rose for officers in both groups, ROP officers' increases in violent and property offense convictions were substantially greater. As a result, ROP conviction rates were noticeably higher than those of comparison officers for violent crimes (63 percent versus 50 percent convicted respectively) and property cases (69 percent versus 60 percent).

A regression analysis using a dummy coded dependant variable (conviction or not) was used to distinguish the effects of ROP case preparation on case disposition after statistically adjusting for the underlying arrest charge type, year of arrest, officers' assignment, arrestees' age, and prior arrest record by including these variables in the model. In the analysis officer group, offense type and assignment were also dummy coded. The suppressed categories, represented by the intercept, were the 1983 comparison group, property offenses, and SOD warrant squad.⁴

The findings, shown in Table 7-4, indicate that there was no significant difference in the likelihood of conviction of ROP and comparison cases in 1983 after controlling for officers' assignment offense type, offender's age, and number of prior arrests. There was, however, the significant period effect already noted. This increase in the likelihood of conviction for both ROP and comparison cases in 1983 appears to have occurred across types of offenses (except the small "other" group), and achieved significance for bench warrant arrestees for whom the underlying charge is unknown.

B. ROP's Impact on Sentencing

Turning from conviction to sentence, the proportion of persons sentenced to incarceration for each conviction offense type is presented in Table 7-5. The table shows that 40 percent of the convicted persons arrested by ROP officers in 1983 were incarcerated, in contrast to only 32 percent of the convictees of the 1983 comparison group. The absence of a ROP increase over 1981 incarceration rates is puzzling given the increase in felony convictions. An increase over the 1981 rate may yet occur when the 18 pending ROP cases involving serious offenses are disposed.⁵ In addition, overcrowding in the local correctional facilities may have contributed to an overall drop in incarceration rates. The absence of a decrease in ROP incarceration rates in 1983, therefore, may be interpreted as a positive ROP effect.

The lower incarceration rate of ROP arrestees convicted of violent crimes is probably a temporary artifact of the absence of dispositions in six pending cases. Also notable in the table is the fact that 38 percent of the ROP arrestees convicted for narcotics offenses but none of the comparison narcotics offenders were sentenced to incarceration. This suggests that their cases differed significantly in seriousness.

Table 7-4

Regression of Disposition of Prosecuted Cases on Officer Group,
Offenders' Age, Prior Arrests, and Offense Type

	b	Standard Error of b	F
ROP-81	-.196	-.073	7.24**
Comparison-81	-.153	-.068	5.08*
ROP-83	-.120	-.104	1.32
Total Prior Arrests#	.000	.002	.10
Age	.000	.002	.10
Patrol	.149	.107	1.95
Tactical	.219	.094	5.38*
Vice	.160	.140	1.31
Detective	.016	.117	.02
Violent	.118	.072	2.65
Weapon	.056	.124	.20
Narcotics	.026	.070	.14
Bench Warrant	.218	.085	6.52*
Other Offense	-.213	-.115	3.39
Intercept	.426		

* Significant <.05 level.

** Significant <.01 level.

R² = .09

F = 2.77

DF = 14, 376

Table 7-5

Proportion of Convicted Arrestees
Sentenced to Incarceration by Conviction
Offense Type

% Sentenced to Incarceration	ROP-81 (N=82)	Comparison-81 (N=79)	ROP-83 (N=70)	Comparison-83 (N=88)
Total	41	42	40	32
Violent	50	59	47	64
Property	50	38	32	38
Weapon	33	20	50	17
Narcotics	28	35	38	-
Other	33	-	-	20
Bench Warrant	50	56	50	48

ROP's effect on the likelihood of incarceration was also explored using regression that introduced statistical controls for offender's age, prior arrests, officer assignment, and offense type into the equation. Again, we used dummy coding for officer group, assignment, and offense type with comparison-83, SOD, and property offenses as the suppressed categories. As Table 7-6 shows, after statistically adjusting for these variables, ROP had no independent effect on the likelihood of incarceration. The number of prior arrests and the conviction following from an arrest on a bench warrant, however, each were significantly associated with an incarceration. Thus the best explanation for the higher proportion of ROP than comparison convictees sentenced to incarceration in 1983 is that it is due to the difference in their arrest histories.

The final analysis examined the length of the incarcerative sentence of those persons sentenced to serve time. The mean and median months of sentence displayed at the bottom of Figure 7-1 indicate an increase in the mean and a decrease in the median length of sentences for both ROP and comparison cases in 1983. The higher means probably are the result of a few very long sentences; the lower medians are probably a temporary reflection of the fact that the cases most likely to result in long terms are still pending. Thus the findings on sentence length are equivocal.⁶

The effect of ROP on sentence length also was examined using regression to statistically control for prior arrests, convictees' age, and conviction offense type. The regressions were run 4 times: the first two runs used the normal form and included, respectively, total and Part I prior arrests. The next two used a logarithmic transformation of the coefficients to control for the effects of a few extremely long sentences on the overall pattern. After statistically controlling age, prior arrest history and offense type, ROP convictees got longer sentences than those of the other groups. This difference was

Table 7-6

Regression of Incarceration (Given Conviction) on Officer Group
Age, Prior Arrests, and Offense Type

	b	Standard Error of b	F
ROP-81	.009	.093	1.11
Comparison-81	.123	.086	1.99
ROP-83	.133	.129	1.10
Total Prior Arrests#	.017	.004	16.38**
Age	.073	.013	.03
Violent	.159	.091	3.01
Weapon	.037	.152	.06
Narcotic	-.082	.091	.80
Warrant	.216	.101	4.52*
Other Offense	-.065	.167	.15
Patrol	.099	.138	.52
Tact	.111	.119	.86
Vice	.059	.183	.10
Detective	-.108	.162	.45
Intercept	.041		

R² = .148

F = 3.58

DF = 1,206

The regression was run twice. First it included total prior arrests, then it used prior Part I arrests. Each measure of prior record was significant but the other findings were unaffected.

* Significant <.05

** Significant <.01

statistically significant in the log-transformed model shown in Table 7-7. The difference was present but did not achieve statistical significance in the normal form equations (not shown). This finding suggests that ROP had an effect on sentence length apart from the length of convictees' prior arrest record, age, and the type of offense for which he or she was incarcerated.

Without further information about the particulars of the crimes, the strength of the evidence presented in cases, and the U.S. Attorney's plea bargaining standards, however, it is impossible to determine why this finding occurred. It is possible that the longer sentences resulted from stronger evidence presented in ROP cases enabling prosecutors to negotiate for longer terms. It is more likely, however, that it is due to differences in the seriousness of the conviction offenses of ROP and comparison cases within each of the broad offense type categories.

In sum, ROP appears to have affected the outcomes of the cases of persons its officers arrested in 1983 in several ways. First, although there were no differences among officer groups in the proportions of arrest for various offense types, ROP-83 had a higher proportion of arrests prosecuted as felonies. This suggests that ROP's arrests were more serious than those of the comparison officers but that the differences were hidden within the broad offense categories. Second, ROP-83 arrestees were more likely to be convicted for a felony offense than comparison-83 arrestees although both groups had higher overall conviction rates than they had in 1981. Third, convicted ROP-83 arrestees were more likely to be incarcerated than those of the 1983 comparison group but not than the 81 convictees. This difference in 1983 incarceration rates disappeared when controls were introduced for prior record and offense type suggesting that ROP does not have an independent effect on incarceration. However, since ROP arrestees were found to have longer prior records (see Chapter 6), ROP appears to have affected the incarceration rate through its

Table 7-7

Regression of Log-transformed Sentence Length on Officer Group
Age, Prior Arrests, and Conviction Offense Type*

Variable	b	Standard Error of b	F
ROP-81	.445	.468	.95
Comparison-81	.101	.464	.05
ROP-83	1.073	.491	4.78*
Total Prior Arrests	.003	.017	.03
Age	.064	.024	7.25**
Violent	1.38	.452	9.35**
Weapon	.570	.779	.54
Narcotic	.108	.540	.04
Warrant	.157	.464	.12
Other Offense	.538	1.05	.25
Intercept	3.55		

F=3.14
R²=.32
DF=3,73

* Significant <.05 level.
** Significant <.01 level.

selection of persons with long criminal histories. Fourth, the data on sentence length, although still incomplete suggest that ROP arrestees get longer sentences independent of their prior record, age and offense type. This may be a result of the strength of the evidence presented in ROP cases or, alternatively, stem from differences in the seriousness of the offenses within the broad categories used in this study.

B. Dispositions of Experimental Arrestees

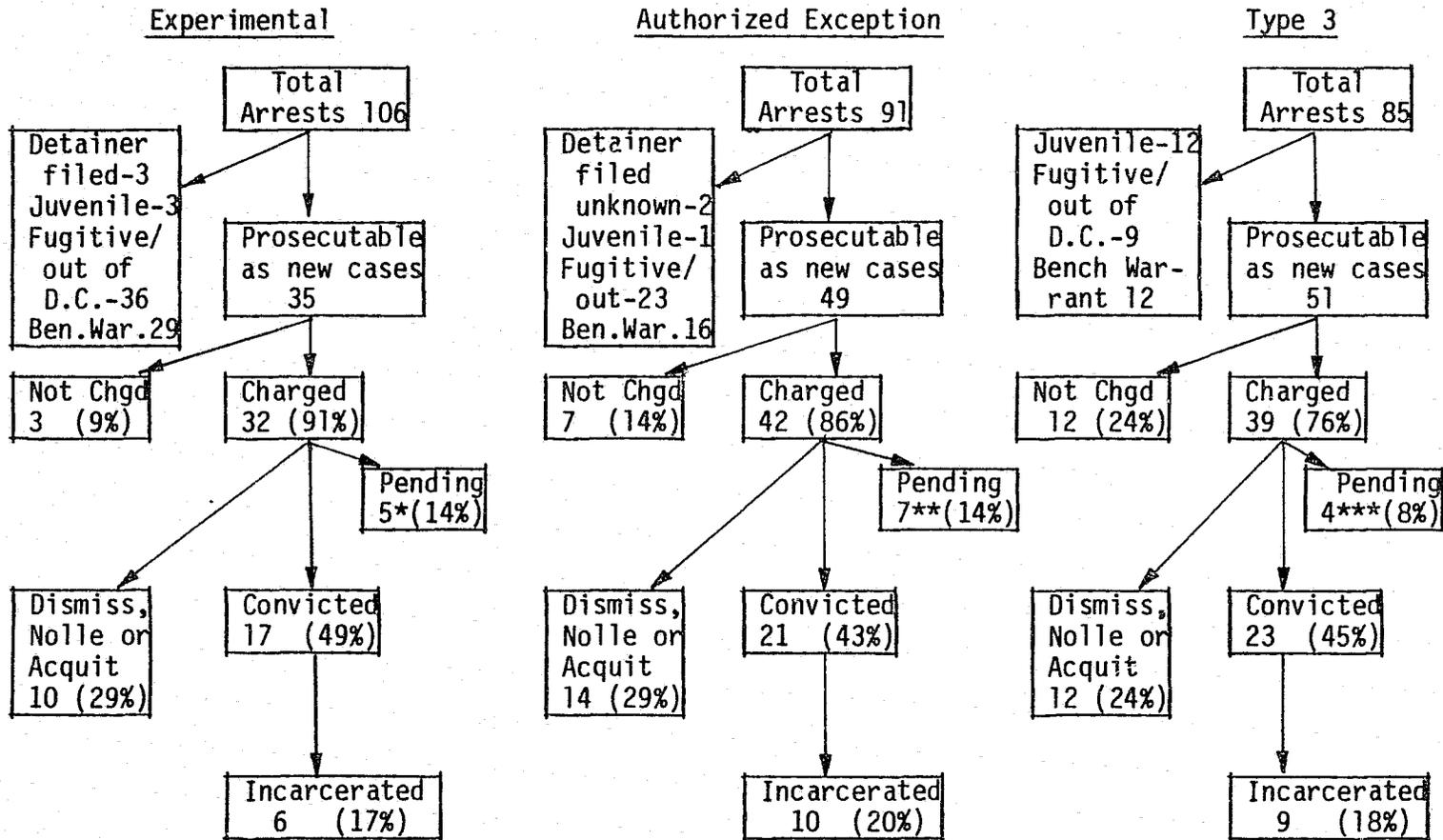
The experimental data set permits analysis of variations in the case outcomes of ROP arrests by assignment category and type of target. Since almost a third (85 of 282) of the arrests occurred serendipitously, it is useful to distinguish between the dispositions of these cases and those where the target was deliberately selected; to compare the outcomes of ROP-initiated cases with those of warrant targets; and to examine whether the dispositions of experimental arrests were different from those of exceptions.⁷

Figure 7-2 shows the case flow from arrest through sentencing for experimental, exceptional, and type 3 arrests. As detailed in Table 7-8, exceptional and experimental arrests differ from each other in that the latter were more frequently arrested as fugitives or on a felony bench warrant; the former were more frequently arrested on serious property charges. Type 3 arrests differed from both experimentals and exceptions by being far more likely to be arrested on misdemeanor charges. The pretrial release rates for D.C. cases, including juveniles and bench warrant arrests, were also very similar for experimentals and exceptions (41 and 40 percent detained respectively) but different from Type 3 arrestees, only 18 percent of whom remained in jail or were returned to the detention facility from which they had escaped.

Table 7-9 shows substantial differences among the targets with respect to initial prosecutorial action. A much larger proportion of the eligible experimental arrestees were prosecuted (91 percent) and charged as felonies (71 percent) than type 3 arrestees (77 percent prosecuted, 25 percent as felonies

FIGURE 7-2

Case Processing of ROP Arrestees
by Target Assignment Category



7-17

* Includes cases for aggravated assault, burglary, petty larceny, receiving stolen property and trafficking in stolen property.

** Includes two murder, two armed robbery, two weapons, and one drug case.

*** Includes one case not tried and three in which the defendant failed to appear and is currently wanted on a bench warrant. The cases are for aggravated assault and three drug cases.

Table 7-8

Arrest Offense Type by Assignment Category

Percent Arrested on Offense Type	Experimental (N=106)	Exception (N=91)	Type 3 (N=85)
Violent Part I	12	12	13
Other Felony	19	33	28
Felony Bench Warrant	17	7	11
Misdemeanor	8	11	34
Misemeanor Bench Warrant	10	12	4
Fugitive and Out-of-D.C. Arrest	34	25	11
	100%	100%	101%

Chi² = 45.9
 DF = 10
 Signif. <.0001

Table 7-9

Initial Prosecutorial Action by Target
Assignment Category

Percent of Prosecution Decision	Experimental (N=35)	Exception (N=49)	Type 3 (N=51)
Charged as felony	71	59	25
Charged as misdemeanor	<u>20</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>52</u>
Total Prosecuted	91	84	77
Not Charged	9	16	23

Exceptions were between the two in terms of acceptance rate (84 percent) but similar to experimentals in their likelihood of prosecution as felonies (59 percent). Overall, ROP cases were accepted for prosecution at rates similar to the 19 percent department-wide acceptance rate.⁸

There also were differences among the targets in the types of cases brought. As illustrated by Table 7-10, half the experimental cases were for property offenses and a third for violent offenses; drug, weapon and other cases were relatively infrequent. The exceptions, in contrast, were less likely to involve property crimes and more likely to involve weapon and drug charges. This is not surprising since receiving a "hot tip" and having to execute a search warrant to find these items were the bases for exempting a target from the experiment. Type 3 arrests, in contrast to both types of deliberately-selected targets, involved primarily drug charges and correspondingly fewer violent and property crimes.

Sixty-three percent of all disposed cases resulted in convictions with little difference in conviction rates by target assignment category. However, when one distinguishes cases in terms of seriousness of conviction offense, differences become evident. Sixty-five percent of the experimentals but only 33 percent of the exceptions and 30 percent of the type 3s that had been convicted, were convicted of felonies. The proportion of felony convictions of both experimental and exceptions is virtually certain to increase since 4 of the 5 pending experimental and all 7 of the pending exceptional cases are felonies. Most of the deliberately-targeted arrestees were convicted for property offenses (9 of the 17 experimental and 8 of the 21 exceptions convicted); most type 3 convictions were for drug offenses (11 out of 23 convictions).

Table 7-10

Prosecution Charge by Assignment Category

Percent Prosecuted by Offense Type	Experimental (N=32)	Exception (N=39)	Type 3 (N=42)
Violent	34	32	15
Property	50	29	18
Weapons	3	19	8
Drugs	6	19	60
Other	6	2	-
	99%	101%	101%

A higher proportion of convicted exceptions was sentenced to incarceration (48 percent) than either experimentals (35 percent) or type 3s (39 percent) but the numbers are small and the differences not significant. Similarly, the mean minimum sentence of the exceptions (49.5 months) was longer than the mean experimental (36.5 months) and both were much longer than the Type 3s mean (8 months).

Comparison of deliberately-targeted warrant and ROP-initiated arrests is complicated by the large number of warrant cases for which no disposition data were available. Although there were 129 warrant target arrested, 44 were fugitives or arrested outside D.C. and another 44 were arrested on one or more bench warrants. Thus, for 68 percent of the warrant target arrests (and 25 percent of R.I. target arrests) there was no dispositional followup. Focusing just on new D.C. cases, warrant target arrests and their outcomes differed from those of R.I. targets. As indicated in Table 7-11, 54 percent of the warrant targets but only 8 percent of the ROP-initiated targets were arrested for violent offenses. In contrast, 58 percent of the ROP-initiated targets and 37 percent of the warrant targets were arrested for property offenses. This probably explains why a far higher proportion of warrant than ROP-initiated targets were detained following arrest (58 and 16 percent respectively), and were prosecuted as felony cases (76 percent versus 55 percent, as indicated by Table 7-12).

Total conviction rates for warrant and ROP-initiated targets did not differ although the former were much more likely to be convicted of a felony, as shown in by Table 7-13. Not surprisingly, a higher proportion of warrant than ROP-initiated targets were sentenced to incarceration (50 percent and 38 percent respectively) and those sentences were substantially longer (mean terms of 40 and 19 months respectively).

Table 7-11
Arrest Offense by Target Type

Percent Arrested by Offense Type	Warrant (N=41)	ROP-Initiated (N=51)
Violent	54	8
Property	37	31
Weapons	2	16
Drug	7	16
Other	-	2
	100%	100%

Table 7-12

Initial Prosecutorial Action on ROP Arrestees
with New Cases in D.C.

Prosecutorial Decision	Warrant		ROP-Initiated	
	N	%	N	%
Charged as Felony	28	76	27	55
Charged as Misdemeanor	5	15	13	29
Not Charged	3	9	8	16
	36	100%	48	100%

Table 7-13

Dispositions of Prosecuted Cases*
by Target Type

	Warrant		ROP-Initiated*		Type 3	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Convicted of Felony	10	38	8	22	7	20
Convicted of Misdemeanor	<u>6</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>46</u>
Total Conviction	16	61	22	61	23	66
Nolle, Dismiss or Acquit	10	38	14	39	12	34
Total	26	99%	36	100%	35	100%

*Excludes 7 warrant, 5 ROP-initiated and 4 type 3 cases that are still pending.

C. Discussion

The internal comparison of ROP targets suggests that those that were deliberately selected resulted in arrests for more serious charges than occurred when officers made serendipitous arrests as a consequence of being "at the right place at the right time." Furthermore, deliberately-targeted arrestees were more likely to be accepted for prosecution, prosecuted as felonies, convicted of felony offenses than serendipitous ones, and, if incarcerated, given longer mean sentences. Although ROP's offender-oriented targeting strategy has increased case seriousness, it has not resulted in higher rates of conviction or incarceration for deliberately selected than serendipitously arrested targets.

The internal data support and specify the findings from the comparative data. Because the arrests in each data set are not identical, however, caution must be used in comparing them. Nevertheless, ROP's Type 3 arrests and their dispositions show greater similarity to those of the 1983 comparison group than the 1983 deliberately-selected targets. For example, after excluding felony bench warrant cases, 21 percent of the comparison group arrests were rejected at prosecutorial intake and 23 percent of ROP's Type 3's were similarly rejected (compared to only 13 of deliberately targeted arrests). There also were similarities in the rates at which comparison group and type 3 arrestees were prosecuted as misdemeanors (54 percent and 52 percent of all prosecuted cases respectively versus 22 percent of deliberately targeted) and convicted for misdemeanors (50 percent and 46 percent respectively in contrast to 32 percent of the deliberately arrested). Thus the arrests of persons not deliberately targeted closely resemble the arrests made by other units that were responses to calls for service, tact squads' location-oriented strategies, or the service of warrants without prioritization.

The examination of ROP internal data also indicates differences between experimental targets and authorized exceptions. The experimentals were more likely than the exceptions to be prosecuted as felonies, to be convicted, and to be convicted of a felony offense. Given the hostility of some officers to the experiment and their efforts to exempt as many targets as they could from it, this finding is surprising. In designing the experiment we feared that permitting many exceptions would result in experimental targets in which ROP squads had little involvement or investment and in a group of cases that was unrepresentative of ROP's target pool. Instead it appears that when ROP supervisors exercised closer administrative control (as they had to do for experimental targets) and targets were more methodically screened and developed through intensive investigation, the unit made stronger and more serious cases than when it responded immediately to "hot tips" and to requests guided by network-building considerations.

Finally, comparison of warrant and R.I. targets suggests the difficult dilemma ROP has faced in selecting targets. A higher proportion of warrant targets than R.I. targets were arrested for violent offenses (54 versus 8 percent), prosecuted as felonies (76 versus 55 percent), and convicted for felonies (38 versus 22 percent) and sentenced to incarceration (50 versus 38 percent). In picking warrant targets, particularly those developed by the target committee members, ROP squads generally sought persons wanted for violent offenses. In targeting those persons who were not already wanted, ROP officers tended to select persons involved in informally-organized property crime networks.

How should these criminals and their crimes be weighed and balanced from a crime control policy perspective? Most street crimes, particularly robberies, are the work of individual entrepreneurs (Roebuck and Cadwallader 1961; Einstadter 1969; Thomas and Hepburn 1983). In contrast, professional criminals

tend to be non-violent and to commit burglary, sneak theft, confidence games, and forgery (Inciardi 1974; also see Shover 1973 about the organization of burglary). They protect themselves through informal organization of their activities but also increase the danger that under police pressures others may "snitch" on them. This suggests that to apprehend persons for violent offenses, in the absence of additional information, ROP's best strategy may be to select warrant targets whom the officers only have to locate. The prospects for developing their own cases for violent crimes are less promising because the information network is much more limited. ROP's tactics put it at an advantage in initiating investigations of organized property crime, penetrating organized theft rings, and attacking fencing outlets that provide an essential service to thieves (Shover 1973). Although the RAND data (Chaiken and Chaiken 1982) suggest that there is no tradeoff between seriousness and "catchability" if ROP is apprehending the most active "violent predators," without knowing who they are through self-report data, the dilemma posed by differences in the outcomes of the cases of different types of targets will remain.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 7

1. The analyses of the comparative data were carried out by Doug Smith of the University of Maryland. His contribution is gratefully acknowledged.
2. Differences in total arrests shown in Table 7-1 and Figure 7-1 are due to missing data. In a number of instances the names, arrest dates and charges found in the district arrest logs could not be matched with court records.
3. The totals include arrests on bench warrants for cases previously accepted for prosecution but not yet disposed. Technically these arrests do not represent new cases. However there is little difference in the arresting officers' role (limited) and possible longer term impact of the arrest (substantial) between serving an arrest warrant for armed robbery obtained by another officer and serving a bench warrant on the same individual if he or she fails to appear at court on the robbery charge. Because of the large number of such bench warrant arrests in the comparison study data, they were retained in the analysis but treated as a separate offense type.
4. A regression using ordinary least squares was run rather than the technically more correct logit for two reasons. First, interpretation of the data is much more straight forward; second, where the dependent variable is within a 75-25 percent split, there is little difference in the outcome (see Goldberger, 1964).
5. The pending ROP and comparison 1983 cases involved the following types of offenses:

	<u>ROP</u>	<u>Comparison</u>
Violent	6	5
Property	2	3
Weapon	1	3
Narcotics	5	2
Bench Warrant	2	-
Other (gambling)	2	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	18	13

Final incarceration rates were projected assuming that 63 percent of the cases in each group (11 and 8 respectively) would be convicted and that half of each of these would be incarcerated (6 and 4 respectively). The projected final incarceration rates were 42 percent of ROP-83 convictees and 33 percent of the comparison-83 convictees.

The mean is quickly increased by one or two extremely long sentences. However, in calculating the mean, any sentence longer than a ten-year minimum (120 months) was counted as 120 months, depressing all the true means somewhat.

7. In this chapter only those randomly assigned experimentals arrested by ROP officers were included in the discussion and tables; the 17 non-ROP arrests of experimentals were excluded.

8. Memorandum for the Court Liaison Division to the Chief of Police, dated April 21 and August 5, 1983.

Chapter 8

SOME COSTS AND BENEFITS OF ROP:

IMPACT ON OFFICER ARREST PRODUCTIVITY

This chapter explores the impact of ROP on officers' arrest productivity in terms of changes in the number of total, serious, and Part I arrests. By comparing ROP officers with comparison officers in other assignments after controlling for 1981 arrest activity level and differences in opportunity to make arrests that are related to district and assignment, it indicates some of the costs and benefits of creating a ROP unit.

A. Data Analysis

The comparative quasi-experimental data set (see Chapter 3) was used for the analysis of officer productivity. The dependent or outcome variable, the number of arrests made by ROP and comparison officers in 1983, was examined using three different measures: total arrests including violations of municipal ordinances and traffic laws; Part I offenses; and serious offenses. This latter includes arrests for all Part I offenses plus weapon and drug dealing (i.e., a charge of distributing or possession with the intent to distribute) offenses and arrests on a felony bench warrant. Control variables include the officer's 1981 arrest rate, district, and assignment.

The mean and median number of arrests by ROP and comparison officers in 1981 were examined by district and assignment to determine the differences that existed among each group of officers and between them in terms of officer activity and arrest opportunity prior to the creation of ROP. Next we examined mean and median number of arrests by officer group and district in 1983 to distinguish between trends characteristic of both groups and changes in ROP officers' productivity related to that assignment. We then used regression to more rigorously statistically control for differences related to district, assignment, and the officers' initial 1981 activity level.¹ In the regression analysis we developed six models for looking at each of the three

arrest measures. Each model was run twice: first as a partial model to explore only the relationship between 1983 and 1981 arrest rates using comparison assignment as a dummy variable; second, as the full model, with the addition of controls for district and assignment (with the first district and patrol officers the omitted categories).

Model 1 included all ROP officers without adjusting either for the number of weeks in ROP during T2 or for the effects of sharp changes in the arrest rates of a few very active officers. In models 2 through 6 various combinations of adjustments for time in ROP and for the effects of a few extreme values on the group measures were introduced. The time adjustments were used because all comparison officers had to be in their assignment the full 26 weeks in both T1 and T2 to be included in the sample. But 17 of the ROP officers were in that unit less than the 26 weeks in T2. To eliminate bias against ROP related to officers' time in the unit, two adjustments are introduced. In Models 3 and 4 (labeled adjusted), time in ROP was adjusted by proportionally weighting upwards the number of arrests made by those ROP officers in the unit less than 26 weeks. In Models 5 and 6 time in ROP was controlled by eliminating from the analysis the five officers who were in ROP less than 13 weeks during the study period. To adjust for the skewing effects on the entire sample of the extreme changes between T1 and T2 that were found in the arrest rates of a few formerly very active or inactive officers, logarithmically-transformed arrest rates rather than the normal form using gross numbers of arrests were used in models 2, 4, and 6.²

B. Findings

Prior to examining the effect of assignment to ROP on officers' arrest activity, we sought to determine whether officers selected for assignment to the "elite" ROP unit differed from the comparison group in their demographic

characteristics and police experience. An examination of the ROP and comparison officers' characteristics indicated that the groups did not differ in racial composition, but that the ROP officers were significantly younger, (ROP mean age = 32.6; comparison mean age = 34.8; $t = 3.22$; $p < .01$), less experienced, (ROP mean years of police service = 9.22; comparison mean = 11.58; $t = 4.47$, $p < .001$), and more female ($t = 2.05$; $p < .05$) than the comparison group. However, these difference in group characteristics (due principally to the greater age and experience of the comparison detectives) were controlled in the regressions by including 1981 arrest rates in the equations. By statistically controlling for prior level of activity in measuring change between T1 and T2, any effect of group characteristics on the change rates was also controlled.

Table 8-1 shows mean and median number of arrests for total, serious, and Part I crimes made by ROP and comparison officers in 1981 and 1983 by district.³ It indicates that there was wide variation among both ROP and comparison officers' arrest activities across districts on all three arrest measures in 1981. For example, the median number of total arrests in the district with the most active officers (the Third) was nearly four times as large as the median number of arrests in the least active district (the Fourth) for both groups. Variation in the median number of serious and Part I arrests was wider among ROP than comparison officers; in practically all districts on each of the three arrest measures, ROP officers made more arrests on the average than comparison officers in 1981; in 1983, the mean and median arrests rates of comparison officers in most districts, were similar to those in 1981, but both serious and Part I 1983 arrest rates decreased. Special Operations Division's warrant squad officers, in contrast, substantially increased their average total and serious arrest rates but Part I arrests remained the same as 1981. ROP

TABLE 8-1

Mean and Median Arrests
by Officer Group and District

District	# of Offs.	ROP-81						COMPARISON-81						
		Total		Serious		Part 1		# of Offs.	Total		Serious		Part 1	
		\bar{X}	Med	\bar{X}	Med	\bar{X}	Med		\bar{X}	Med	\bar{X}	Med	\bar{X}	Med
1st	5	20.8	9.0	6.6	4	3.6	3	30	13.3	7.8	4.8	4	4.2	4
2nd	8	7.6	6.5	3.5	3	3.5	3	33	5.6	5.2	3.1	3	2.8	3
3rd	10	22.4	16.5	4.8	3.5	3.4	2.5	20	15.6	17.0	5.2	4	3.5	2
4th	6	4.0	4.5	.7	.5	.7	.5	26	7.3	4.5	2.5	2	2.2	1
5th	4	8.7	9.0	5.2	5.0	4.5	4.5	17	9.7	7.0	3.6	3	3.0	2
6th	4	14.5	9.0	5.0	5.0	4.5	4.5	11	7.4	4.7	2.7	1	2.8	1
7th	3	24.3	19.0	4.7	5.0	4.3	4.0	18	17.9	12.5	5.0	4	3.2	3
Subtotal SOD Warrant Squad	40	14.9		4.2		3.3		155	10.7		3.9		3.1	
	-	-		-		-		14	18.1	15.5	11.7	10.0	3.0	3
Total	40	14.9		4.2		3.3		169	11.3		4.5		3.2	

TABLE 8-1 (Continued)

Mean and Median Arrests
by Officer Group and District

ROP-83								COMPARISON-83							
Former District	# of Offs.	Total		Serious		Part I		# of Offs.	Total		Serious		Part I		
		\bar{X}	Med	\bar{X}	Med	\bar{X}	Med		\bar{X}	Med	\bar{X}	Med	\bar{X}	Med	
1st	5	6.6	7.0	3.8	4.0	2.0	2.0	30	13.6	8.5	3.7	3.1	2.9	2.7	
2nd	6	5.8	4.0	4.7	3.5	1.8	1.5	33	5.0	3.7	2.2	1.5	1.9	1.3	
3rd	9	8.1	6.3	4.0	3.3	1.0	1.0	20	14.3	10.5	3.7	3.2	2.2	1.5	
4th	6	5.7	3.5	4.2	2.5	.67	.5	26	9.0	6.2	2.2	1.5	1.1	.9	
5th	4	5.3	4.5	3.0	2.0	1.5	1.0	17	7.8	6.3	2.5	2.0	2.0	1.4	
6th	4	9.3	8.0	6.3	6.0	2.0	2.0	11	9.3	5.3	3.5	2.0	1.9	1.7	
7th	3	10.0	13.0	7.3	9.0	2.7	2.0	18	18.4	14.5	5.9	3.2	2.6	2.0	
Subtotal SOD Warrant Squad	37	7.1		4.5		1.5		153	10.7		3.4		2.1		
	-	-		-		-		14	30.1	33.0	16.1	16.6	3.2	2.8	
Total	37	7.1		4.5		1.5		169	12.3		4.3		2.2		

officers in 1983 on the average made only half as many total arrests as they had in 1981, (dropping from a mean of 14.9 to 7.1), and half as many Part I arrests (declining from a mean of 3.3 to 1.5). However, they increased the average number of "serious" arrests for Part I's plus drug dealing, weapons offenses, and bench warrant charges from a mean of 4.2 to 4.5. The ROP decline in total arrests and increase in serious arrests differ from the comparison officer pattern; the drop in Part I's appears to be part of a broader trend.

Mean and median arrests on all three measures also varied by assignment. In 1981, in both officer groups, tact officers had the highest and detectives the lowest mean and median number of total arrests. Tact officers also had the highest mean and median number of serious and Part I arrests and vice officers the lowest in both groups. There was very little difference between the ROP and comparison detectives and patrol officers on each of the arrest measures. ROP tact and vice officers tended to make more arrests than their comparison officer counterparts.

Table 8-2 presents the findings from the regression of ROP and comparison officers' total arrest rates on their 1981 total rates without (partial model) and with (full model) controls for district and assignment. In interpreting Tables 8-2 to find the 1983 rate for first district patrol officers, multiply the 1981 coefficient times the number of arrests in 1981. Thus a first district patrol officer who made one arrest in 1981 would be predicted to have made .492 arrests in 1983; one with 10 arrests in 1981 would likely have made 4.92 arrests in 1983. For all comparison officers in other districts and assignments, their 1983 arrest rate can be found by multiplying their 1981 arrest rate by the 1981 arrest coefficient (which is not shown) and then adding the constant. To find a ROP officer's likely 1983 arrest rate, the 1981 arrest coefficient is multiplied

Table 8-2
Regression of 1983 Arrest Rates on Officer Group,
1981 Arrest Rates, District and Assignment

All Arrests

	# Model 1 (UNC)	Model 2 (ULC)	Model 3 (ANC)	Model 4 (ALC)	Model 5 (UNP)	Model 6 (ULP)
81 Arrest Rate##	.492** .455 (.066)	.402** .404 (.063)	.490** .454 (.066)	.401** .406 (.063)	.492** .456 (.067)	.384** .391 (.063)
ROP Exp.	-5.71** -.172 (1.82)	-.215 -.089 (.134)	-5.14** -.155 (1.82)	-.122 -.051 (.134)	-5.71** -.163 (1.96)	-.116 -.046 (.142)
Constant	7.22	1.27	7.21	1.27	7.27	1.32
Adj.R. ²	.435	.420	.429	.416	.427	.412

Part I Arrests

81 Arrest Rate##	.349** .300 (.069)	.294** .301 (.061)	.347** .299 (.069)	.292** .300 (.061)	.345** .297 (.070)	.288** .294 (.061)
Exp.	1.27 .097 (.658)	.391** .186 (.118)	1.59 .122 (.657)	.471** .225 (.061)	1.63* .118 (.702)	.483** .220 (.124)
Constant	1.48	.615	1.49	.616	1.45	.608
Adj.R. ²	.517	.433	.516	.401	.518	.406

Arrests for Serious Crimes

81 Arrest Rate##	.265** .358 (.051)	.269** .308 (.060)	.264** .357 (.051)	.267** .306 (.060)	.264** .357 (.051)	.268** .308 (.060)
ROP Exp.	-.621 (.352)	-.165 (.112)	-.565 (.352)	-.143 (.112)	-.514 (.377)	-.097 (.119)
Constant	1.72	.689	1.72	.694	1.69	.667
Adj.R. ²	.205	.198	.201	.192	.194	.186

In the models, U=unadjusted for time; A=adjusted for time by weighting; N=normal; L=logged form; C=complete sample P=partial with five ROP officers in the unit less than 13 weeks deleted.

Uppercoefficient is unstandardized regression coefficient; middle is standardized for (Beta); standard errors are in parentheses.

* Significant <.05 level.

** Significant <.01 level.

by the number of 1981 arrests, and to this are added the constant and the ROP coefficient. Thus illustrating with the full form of model 1 in Table 8-2, the ROP officer who made 10 arrests in 1981 would have $4.92 + 7.22 + (-5.71)$ arrests or 6.4 arrests in 1983. An officer with 40 arrests in 1981 would be expected to make 21.1 in 1983.

Table 8-2 indicates that across all the models, assignment to ROP had a significantly depressive effect on officers' total 1983 arrest rates. The magnitude of this ROP effect is reduced, but its significance remains, with the introduction of controls for variation in arrest rates due to district and assignment in the full model. The number of arrests per ROP officer in 1983 was about half the number in 1981. Adjusting for time in ROP does not alter the significance of the finding. However, in the logarithmically-transformed form that reduces the effect of extreme changes from T1 to T2 (models 2, 4, and 6), the significance of the reduction in 1983 arrests disappears. This suggests that the negative ROP effect is largely the result of a substantial decrease in the number of arrests made by a few formerly very high-rate officers rather than a change observed across the sample. The data also clearly indicate that an officer's 1981 arrest rate is a consistent and strong predictor of subsequent arrest activity and (not shown in the table) that for the comparison officers, assignment but not district significantly affected 1983 total arrests, with significant increases for SOD warrant squad and decreases for detectives. The consistent increase in the amount of variation explained (which is shown with the measure R^2) by the full model that controlled for district and assignment in contrast to the partial one, suggests that these variables made important contributions in explaining the 1983 arrest rate.

The effect of ROP membership on Part I arrests is shown in Table 8-2. The significant depressive effect previously observed disappears; assignment to ROP appears to have no effect on its officers' Part I arrest activity. Once controls for district and assignment are introduced, the significant negative effect observed only in the partial form of model I disappears. The amount of variation in 1983 Part I arrests explained by the model is less than that found in the models of total arrests because for both ROP and comparison officers Part I arrests substantially decreased between 1981 and 1983 (see Table 8-1).

Table 8-2 indicates that ROP appears to significantly increase the number of serious arrests its officers make after introduction of controls for district and assignment. The ROP effect found in five of the six full models, although stronger in the logged models, is also present in unlogged models 3 and 5, suggesting that the increase occurred across the ROP officer population. The substantial increase in explained variance after addition of controls for district and assignment in each of the models, suggests that for both ROP and comparison officers changes in the serious arrest rate are related to these variables. Significant increases not shown in the tables occurred for vice, tact, and SOD warrant squad officers. Since there was a general decrease in the rate of Part I arrests by ROP and comparison groups, the increase in serious arrest which include Part I's, is attributable principally to arrests for illegal possession of weapons, drug dealing, and especially for failure to appear in court on a felony charge which resulted in arrest on a felony bench warrant.

C. Discussion

The foregoing examination of the effect of assignment to ROP on the number and nature of arrests made by officers in that unit, suggests that ROP had costs as well as benefits for the department. Assignment to ROP resulted in a

consistent but contradictory change in its officers' arrest behavior. It depressed their total number of 1983 arrests, largely as a result of the effect of extreme changes in arrest rates for a few, highly active officers. It increased the rate at which they made serious arrests in comparison with their 1981 rates. And had no significant impact on the number of Part I arrests.

These changes in officers' arrest behavior can be interpreted as indicating that ROP is achieving its goal of focusing officers' effort on serious offenders but that by altering officers' work activities, officers' overall arrest productivity is also reduced. The decline in arrests most simply is explained as a conforming response to ROP's goals and norms of making "quality" arrests of serious repeat offenders and a consequence of ROP's organization that makes the squad the basic work group. ROP's command staff has made clear that the officers are to concentrate on investigation and surveillance of pre-selected targets and are expected not to make traffic, disorderly, or other minor arrests that previously constituted the bulk of their arrest productivity. While officers still occasionally make such arrests when they observe offenses in the course of surveillance, they are discouraged from doing so by informal peer pressure such as jokes about lowering ROP's standards and formal exclusion of minor arrests from ROP's internal arrest book and its biweekly report to the Chief. In such a work setting most officers have conformed by markedly changing their arrest patterns.

Conformity to ROP's norms has led to far fewer petty arrests, and an increase in arrests on weapon possession, drug dealing, and felony bench warrant charges. However, it has not resulted in increases in the number of Part I arrests by ROP officers make for several reasons. First, ROP officers usually spend more time on each case than they did previously. They now routinely do preliminary investigations and sometimes have time-consuming follow-ups.⁴ In addition, ROP officers work as members of five or six person squads in contrast to patrol, tact, and vice officers who work alone or with a partner

and respond to radio runs or covertly cruise in high-crime areas or locations identified as "problems" hoping to observe criminal activity.

Second, ROP's warrant targets may be wanted for Part I crimes on a D.C. arrest warrant, or alternatively wanted on a bench warrant for failure to appear in court, violation of the terms of probation or parole, or for a crime committed elsewhere making them fugitives from justice in Washington, D.C. Seventy percent of ROP's warrant targets were wanted on one or more bench warrants. Because information about the underlying charge was not consistently available for all arrests in the study, bench warrant arrests were analyzed as a separate category regardless of the underlying charge. However, examination of ROP's internal records indicated that most actually involved Part I offenses.

Third, while seeking persons believed to be committing Part I's, ROP officers found that surveilling suspected burglars and robbers rarely led to catching them "in the act." To increase the unit's productivity, the command staff and squads made several adaptations. One was adopting a policy of arresting R.I. targets on any legally appropriate charge rather than waiting for a Part I arrest. Because of high proportion of high-rate offenders are drug addicts and dealers (see Chaiken and Chaiken, 1982) and are frequently armed, it is far easier to apprehend and make a strong Part II case against such individuals for possessing or selling a gun, drugs, or stolen property than to observe them in the act of committing Part I crimes such as robbery or burglary.

Fourth, ROP officers have aggressively cultivated informants and "hot tips" provided by a variety of sources. The information that they receive on which action can most easily be taken is related to the location of wanted persons or

those in possession of contraband (guns, drugs, and stolen property). Because there is an organized illicit market in such goods, information about the criminal activities of the participants in it is more readily available than information about unorganized crimes such as murder, rape, and robbery. Thus ROP's informant-oriented strategy has led to a variety of arrests that are neither "serious" nor Part I crimes such as trafficking in stolen property, drug possession and fugitive from justice as well as to an increase in "serious" arrests.

Finally, ROP added trafficking in stolen property to its initial targeting criteria and has devoted substantial amounts of officer time and energy to several long-term investigations of organized fencing operations. These have led to the recovery of large amounts of stolen property and arrests of a few highly active "fences," but few Part I arrests.

In sum, in operating ROP the police department pays a price in reduced officer-arrest productivity as well as the removal from uniform service of a group of active officers. The arrests forgone tend to be mostly for traffic and minor offenses but also include a reduced number of Part I arrests. At the same time the department gains in focusing officers' apprehension efforts on a smaller number of highly active repeat offenders and increasing the rate at which they arrest persons for such serious offenses as drug dealing and weapons charges, and on bench warrant charges stemming from failure to appear in court on felony charges while on pretrial release and probation or parole violations. Is the tradeoff in quantity for quality worth the cost? The answer depends, in part, on the seriousness of the immediate arrest charges and more importantly, on whether the ROP arrests result in higher conviction and incarceration rates. It is to these questions that we turn in the next chapter.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 8

1. The analyses of the comparative data were completed by Doug Smith of the University of Maryland. His contribution to this study is gratefully acknowledged.
2. Regression analysis assumes that the underlying relationships among the variables are both linear and additive. In certain instances where this is not the case, and a simple linear model therefore is inadequate, a transformation of the original variables is necessary to permit the resultant relations among the transformed variables to become linear. One type of nonlinearity can be overcome by using a logarithmic transformation. The model then becomes $y = a + b \log X = a + bZ$ where each X score is transformed into a new variable, Z , which is its log. Such transformed models often are useful when the independent variable, X , takes a wide range of values but where once a certain value is reached, further increases or decreases have less and less effect on the dependent variable. Thus where extreme values affect the outcome, it is preferable to relate Y to $\log X$ since taking the logarithm of the independent variable will reduce the effect of extremely large scores on the overall outcome (see Blalock, 1960).
3. ROP officers work citywide rather than in districts. The Table only includes those officers who previously had street assignments and displays their arrests by their former district to indicate where the greatest changes have occurred.
4. Handling property seized as stolen or suspected proceeds of crime has been quite time consuming. The officers seek to determine if each item has been stolen and to locate rightful owners and they must complete extensive paper work.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Summary of Findings

This study has examined the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department's Repeat Offender Project as an innovative and potentially replicable model of a proactive police unit designed to implement a policy of selective apprehension. Such an assessment, in addition to exploring the unit's effectiveness, must consider the related issues of institutional costs, consequences, and potential dangers posed by the creation of similar proactive units by other departments.

To measure ROP's effectiveness we conducted an experiment, compared ROP officers and their arrestees with a sample of other officers and their arrestees, and carried out extensive field observation of the ROP target committee and squads. We focused on both decision making processes and the outcomes of activities and apprehension strategies. The findings from the various research components support each other in suggesting that ROP is successful using several criteria.

The experiment found that the unit increased the likelihood of arrest of the persons that it targets. Using broad flexible targeting criteria, ROP appears to have selected persons who were criminally active. Most targets were wanted for at least one serious offense and were at liberty in the community under court supervision on probation, parole, or pretrial release for another offense. The comparative data indicated that ROP arrestees had longer and more serious criminal records than a comparable group of persons arrested by D.C. officers in various other assignments even after the introduction of controls for differences in the age of the arrestees in each group. Furthermore, a

higher proportion of the ROP arrestees than the comparison arrestees were charged with felonies, convicted of felonies, and sentenced to incarceration.

These differences cannot be attributed simply to the assignment of an "elite" group of officers to ROP. A comparison of the arrest activities of ROP officers prior to assignment to ROP and a sample of officers from diverse assignments and districts at the same time period, indicated that there were no significant differences in the arrest rates of the two groups of officers after the introduction of controls for assignment and district. (Other measures of officer effectiveness were not available.) At the same time, the observation data clearly suggest that ROP has reshaped the behavior of its officers most of whom came from patrol assignments and have developed a variety of new investigative and undercover skills. It is the method of police work, rather than the personalities of the officers, that seems to make the difference.

B. Costs, Caveats, and Other Considerations

Although these findings appear to suggest that ROP is effectively selecting, apprehending, and contributing to the conviction of repeat offenders, several caveats regarding the reliability of our findings and the costs and consequences of the unit are necessary.

1. Costs

a. Direct costs

Creating and operating ROP has entailed substantial costs. The department's initial expenses included \$68,000 for cars and other equipment (some of which would have been purchased in any case). Monthly expenditures on funds for confidential sources during the study were about \$400.¹ The costs of the "bait property" used in fencing operations (for which figures are not

available) have been borne principally by members of the Board of Trade rather than the Metropolitan Police Department.

b. Officer productivity

ROP has also affected its officers' arrest productivity. The average total number of arrests made by its officers during the study was half of what it was prior to assignment to ROP. However, the arrests forgone have been largely for traffic and minor criminal charges which ROP discourages, whereas the number of arrests for serious offenses increased significantly. The effect on crime prevention, citizen fear of crime, and public satisfaction with the police following the transfer of officers from other assignments to ROP could not be determined.

2. Caveats and Other Considerations

ROP poses a policy tradeoff in which neither costs in arrests, convictions and incarceration foregone nor the crime reduction benefits arising from the arrest and incapacitation of fewer, more criminally active offenders are known. To the uncertainty about the costs and benefits of ROP, several other factors should be noted.

a. ROP as a Departmental Resource

ROP provides the chief with a readily-mobilized city-wide operational unit with a broad range of knowledge and skills, an extensive network of cooperative relationships and sources of information throughout the metropolitan area. These assets have enabled it to act swiftly and avoid bureaucratic red tape. And ROP's successful, high visibility raids and dramatic arrests foster the public image of the police department as actually and effectively fighting crime that is politically advantageous to city officials.

b. Targets' Criminal Activity

Although there is evidence that most persons targeted by ROP are criminally active, it is impossible to determine what proportion of ROP targets meet the unit's targeting criteria of committing 5 or more Part I offenses per week and are among the most active 20 percent of the criminals in D.C. The "source" information on which ROP relies heavily in selecting targets indeed may be a far more reliable indicator of criminality than criminal histories which have been found to be modestly correlated with self-reported crime rates. However, in the absence of independent confirmation of the targets' criminal activity, our findings about their activity, based largely on criminal history, must be regarded as, at best, suggestive.

Observation of targeting decision making, examination of information in ROP jackets, and consideration of the probability of error in predicting a relatively low-rate phenomenon (Monahan, 1982, Gottfredson and von Hirsch, 1983) all strongly suggest that some proportion of the ROP targets---even those with long records---were low rate offenders. Particularly likely to be in this less active group are persons who were targeted as a "favor" to another officer unconcerned with ROP's selection criteria, in response to a "hot tip" to which a ROP squad responded to gain an easy arrest, as a likely source of information about a potential target who was believed to be quite active, or at the suggestion of an informant who had a variety of motives for selecting the individual including making money and hurting an enemy or competitor.

c. Criminal history data

Contributing to the uncertainty about the extent of targets' actual criminality is the incompleteness of the criminal history data to which the

study (and, to a lesser extent, the ROP officers) had access. The criminal history information reported in this study included only those arrests made in Washington, D.C. and convictions and incarcerations that occurred in this jurisdiction. While this means that our data reflect what ROP and other officers generally knew about the target, it also understates the criminal records of many ROP targets and of all arrestees. The extent of this understatement is suggested by ROP records that indicated that at least half of its targets had been arrested or were wanted in at least one other jurisdiction.

Juvenile records were completely unavailable to the study and were only available on a limited basis to ROP officers. They could find out prior juvenile records of persons still under 18 but could not learn the juvenile records of youthful offenders once they turned 18. The unavailability of this information substantially reduced the number of juvenile and young adults targeted by ROP.

Police access to juvenile records raises many thorny legal and ethical issues. It may be preferable to maintain the traditional barrier between the juvenile and criminal justice system records to protect the rights of youth. On the other hand, the aim of a proactive repeat offender unit is to focus on those persons most actively committing crime. Self-report studies of imprisoned offenders (Petersilia et al. 1978) indicate that they tend to be more criminally active at younger rather than older ages. Thus the unavailability of information about the prior serious juvenile arrests of youthful potential targets between 18 and 21 who are believed to be committing crimes also may have negative consequences. First, reduces the likelihood that ROP will target and arrest persons during their most active phase of criminality. Second, it makes

the selection of such youthful targets almost entirely dependent on informally obtained "source" information.

d. Generalizability of the findings

The findings reported here must be viewed with caution because of the danger of generalizing from a case study. What works in Washington may be related to the unique characteristics of the city, department, or personnel assigned to ROP and may not be easily transplanted other large departments. Although ROP appears to "work," in the absence of other units or groups with which to compare it, it is difficult to determine which aspects of its organization and tactics are idiosyncratic, which may be effectively replicated in a different setting, and which might be improved.

ROP's newness may well contribute to a "Hawthorne effect" that will not be observed in a second generation of proactive units or in ROP after policies and practices become routinized. As a new unit in which the department invested substantial resources and the subject of ample internal and public scrutiny, all members felt pressure to "try harder" and prove its value. This has contributed to the development of a dynamic, highly motivated, cohesive unit. It is unclear whether routinization and long term assignment to ROP will lead to a relaxation of efforts, burnout, boredom and/or overexposure of its officers and whether imitators will have ROP's "pioneer" spirit, flair for the dramatic, and charismatic leadership.

The personal impact of Captain Spurlock's leadership in shaping ROP cannot be measured but should not be ignored. He is a dynamic, ambitious, articulate, and intelligent man about whom few people feel neutral. In creating ROP he selected a balanced, effective team of supervisors; cultivated well placed friends and supporters to assure ROP the resources it needed to operate; and flexibly adjusted ROP practices and policies to eliminate what appeared to fail, test out new strategies, and expand on successes. He has been consistently concerned with morale and developing loyalty and cohesiveness in ROP personnel.

He "rehabilitated" several "burned out" officers and supported others through personal and family crises. He built up ROP morale when it was flagging by involving far more officers than necessary in raids because the ensuing arrests were the "meat" with which he symbolically "fed his hungry lions." Sergeants have wide latitude in selecting and investigating targets but the captain informally keeps close tabs on squads activities, reviews all arrest reports, participates in major raids, and, by virtue of the fact that the ROP office consists of a single large room, is in close and frequent contact with all ROP personnel.

e. Legal, Ethical and Policy Issues

Additional caveats relate to legal, ethical, and policy questions. ROP has avoided lawsuits, major complaints of harassment and violation of due process, and incidents involving use of firearms. Its commander has worked hard to avoid any such embarrassments in the politically sensitive environment in which he operates. Nevertheless, it is necessary to consider the potential dangers that units such as ROP pose and ways to reduce them.

Where officers face great uncertainty and have broad discretion to select the persons on whom they focus their investigative and apprehension efforts, there is a substantial opportunity for them to harass people, select targets representing their own priorities rather than those of the unit, and violate the due process rights of citizens. To the extent that persons targeted are already "wanted" by the system, legal challenges to the justifiability of their selection and efforts to arrest them are made less likely. The service of warrants that is prioritized in terms of the seriousness of the underlying offense and number outstanding against the individual, appears to be both ethical and an efficient use of resources. Where selection is based on the

other criteria previously noted, targeting may raise questions both about the efficient use of resources and fairness.

The selection of ROP-initiated targets who are more vulnerable to entrapment and the onus of stigmatization as "career criminals" or "repeat offenders" on weaker grounds raises more difficult questions. It is essential that there be clear statements of the unit's objective, priorities, and procedures; that these be closely related to the target selection criteria; and that all of these are written, frequently reviewed, and their integrity monitored by administrative procedures and controls that make targeting more organization-centered than investigator-centered.

Proactive policing also poses the threat of intrusiveness and the violation of privacy rights through the development of formalized information networks and interlocking computer systems, as well as informal ties and cooperative arrangements among diverse agencies and organizations that give the police readily-available access to a variety of records and information. What police may view as good investigative practice also poses a threat to the rights to privacy of not-yet-convicted citizens if the police have access to information that they provided to bureaus of licensing and inspection, pretrial services agencies, and bailbondsmen. If the effectiveness of a proactive police unit depends on access to privileged information, difficult decisions regarding limits on the unit's often informal access to it and the development of monitoring system to protect citizens are necessary.

Another ethically troublesome question is the impact of the stigma of being targeted or labeled a "repeat offender" by a proactive policing unit prior to (or in the absence of) conviction. The effect of ROP targeting on prosecutorial handling of its cases currently appears to be limited. Despite initial plans for

the Career Criminal Unit (CCU) of the U.S. Attorney's office to review all ROP cases at intake, only 10 of ROP's approximately 250 adult arrests between March 27 and September 28, 1983 were among the more than 500 cases selected for more intensive handling by the CCU from among the cases accepted for prosecution. This is the result of a gap between ROP's offender-oriented targeting criteria and those of the CCU which are based on the seriousness of the instant offense, a specified criminal history, and strength of evidence.²

A final issue turns on a broader policy question: the interpretation of the unit's mandate particularly with respect to community priorities in the use of police resources. For example, ROP initiated an extensive, six-month investigation of area-wide shoplifting activities that resulted in the closure of more than 40 cases in 5 jurisdictions, recovery of more than \$100,000 of property, and more than a dozen arrests. The targets of this investigation clearly fit the targeting criteria; there is ample evidence that the professional shoplifters operating in as loosely-organized group were committing more than 5 Part I offenses per week. However, these offenses were the least serious Part I offenses and the offenders rarely armed or violent. Such an initiative illustrates the issue of how much of its finite resources such a unit should devote to property crimes, including those involving organized networks of offenders, and how much it should devote to working on violent crime.

C. Recommendations

1. Policy

The adoption of ROP-type proactive police units by large departments confronted with serious crime problems is recommended. However, such units must be tailored in the city's or jurisdiction's problems and department's goals and resources. This includes an assessment of the characteristics and legal

status of the population responsible for the most serious crime problems as a basis for defining the targeting criteria.

Interagency cooperation has been an important element in ROP's effectiveness. To increase resources and communication, particularly in areas where several departments have a common crime problem and face fiscal constraints, a metropolitan or regional ROP may be more effective than a smaller unit in a single department.

Clearly written program statements, policies, and procedures should precede creation of such units and should be modified as policy changes are implemented.

Target selection criteria should be written and their integrity monitored by administrative procedures to assure that only persons fitting the criteria are selected.

Targets should include both persons wanted on warrants and unit-initiated targets except in those departments where warrant service is so effectively carried out that there is no backlog of "wanted persons" at liberty. Since there appears to be little difference in criminal history or current activity between warrant and R.I. targets, an emphasis on the former is both more just and efficient in producing arrests of persons for violent offenses. ROP-initiated targets tend to require greater investigative skills of unit officers, take more time and efforts, and are more uncertain in their outcome. However, they promise greater "payoff" in terms of information about other crimes and criminal activities when they are part of a larger investigation and constitute the unique proactive aspect of such a unit's operation, distinguishing it from a warrant squad. Because they pose the dangers of entrapment and violation of privacy rights, however, they require careful

specification of targeting criteria and administrative control over target selection and apprehension activities, particularly those involving lengthy, extensive, interorganizational operations.

2. Research

Far more research on proactive police units is desirable. As new units are created by departments in various locations and regions, they should carefully document policies and practices so that it is possible to replicate the study reported here at several sites.

Since there are no data on other proactive units with which to compare ROP, comparative studies of several units (including ROP) should be undertaken. These should be designed to permit comparisons of such characteristics as goals, scope of activities, size of unit, specialization by squad, variation in the balance of target types, administrative style, targeting criteria, and apprehension strategies.

An interview or a self-report follow-up survey using the RAND instrument should be conducted with a sample of convicted arrestees targeted by ROP and a comparison group of convicted offenders to determine how effectively ROP is selecting the most active repeat offenders.³

Since the goal of a career criminal police unit is crime reduction through the incapacitation of offenders, it is essential to have a better understanding of the relationship of such police units with the prosecutor and court, particularly with any specialized career criminal unit within it. Future studies should focus on the interface between proactive police units and prosecutors and judges to shed light on case processing and more fully explain case outcomes and the crime reduction incapacitation effects they may produce.

Footnotes

Chapter 9

1. Memorandum from Captain Spurlock to Susan Martin, November 10, 1983.
2. The Career Criminal Unit of the U.S. Attorney's Office only considers for intake defendants against whom that office has moved for detention without bond prior to trial; defendants charged with a crime of violence while on probation, parole, juvenile court supervision, or pretrial release for a crime of violence; felony defendants with a CCU case pending; defendants deemed appropriate by the unit's chief due to special circumstances.
3. Such a follow up was added as a modification of the research design for this study, contingent on completion of other phases of the research within the time and budget. Unfortunately, financial limitations and the limited number of arrestees whose cases were disposed and who were sentenced to incarceration by August 1, 1984 made it impossible to conduct this phase of the research within the grant period.

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