



## One Week in Heron City\* — A Case Study

### Teaching Notes

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#### Executive Session on Policing and Public Safety

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#### Introduction

The Heron City case study is divided into three parts — Case A, Case B and **Teaching Notes**. The case study is designed to serve as a basis for discussions regarding: (a) the relationships among a range of current policing strategies, and (b) the nature of analytic support that modern operational policing requires.

The broad strategic or organizational approaches discussed in the case study include:

- Community policing.
- Compstat (as an organizational approach to crime-reduction tasks).
- Problem-oriented policing.
- Evidence-based policing.
- Intelligence-led policing.

Police departments across the United States vary in how many of these approaches they have embraced, and which ones. Moreover, implementations of any one of these strategies vary enormously from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and over time. As implementations mature, they tend to become more versatile and better

\* Heron City is fictional. So are all the characters in this narrative.

adapted to local circumstances, departing from more standardized models originally imported or copied from other jurisdictions.

To some extent, this case study caricatures these strategic ideas by presenting narrow or minimal versions of them. These stripped-down versions of the various strategies focus on the core elements of each idea, i.e., on those elements most commonly shared across implementations and more typically focused upon by academic commentators within the relevant policing literature. The reason for reducing these ideas to their bare bones within the Heron City case is not at all to diminish their value but rather to facilitate two of the core teaching purposes for this case, by:

1. Clarifying the distinctions among these core strategic ideas by distinguishing between them rather sharply and not allowing them to overlap very much.

2. Opening up the space between these ideas so that police executives can develop a clear sense of the dangers of standardized and formulaic implementations, which tend to be narrow in scope and suitable only for certain types of problems. The case thus provides a basis for police executives to explore what else they might need, in addition to their existing methods of operation, to support effective action across the full range of police tasks.

The three issues, or task areas, that the mayor lays out for Chief Laura Harrison at the beginning of Case

A have been deliberately designed to expose the potential limitations of standardized approaches. As the narrative unfolds, the actual shape and structure of Heron City's various crime problems is slowly revealed. It becomes increasingly obvious that neither the luxury car-theft problem nor the pervasive fear of stalking resulting from the Hayley Scott murder is "precinct-shaped" or geographically based problems and that frustrates the Compstat method. Nor does either of these problems involve serious or prolific offenders known to the police, which frustrates the offender-focus at the core of the intelligence-led policing model used in this department. Moreover, none of the issues the mayor raises lend themselves to control through standardized crime-prevention programs of the types so far "approved" through the program-evaluation techniques espoused by the evidence-based policing movement, which presents proponents of evidence-based policing a serious challenge with respect to operational relevance.

Moreover, the Heron City community at large apparently does not care much about the epidemic of luxury car thefts because this particular category of auto theft hurts the profit margins of the auto-insurance industry more than the interests of the vehicle owners. Meanwhile, the community is sorely perturbed by the pervasive fear that results entirely from a single murder, as yet unsolved. These examples reveal a serious misalignment between a community's concerns and a police department's ordinary operational imperative to reduce overall crime statistics.

## Major Topic Areas for Discussion

The Heron City case could be used to provoke several different conversations, depending on the needs of different audiences. The following list identifies four major issues that the case narratives raise. It is most unlikely that any one audience could cover all of these subjects in a single 90-minute discussion period. Hence, the division of the narrative into two components, Cases A and B, offers the possibility of two separate class sessions, with some time between them for Case B to be read.

If used separately, Case A most naturally supports a discussion about available police strategies and their apparent limitations in the face of Heron City's problems. Case B then focuses more heavily on methods and types of analysis, and the need to close the gap between the interests of scholars and the analytic needs of operational policing.

Given only one classroom session, and assuming that both cases have been read by an audience in advance as a single narrative, then one might fashion a discussion around any of the items in the following menu, picking those items according to their relevance for a particular audience.

### 1. Potential Tension Between Community Priorities and Centralized Strategic Planning

This tension surfaces during the conversation between Chief Harrison and Captain Lawrence. In his closing remark, Captain Lawrence describes two distinct phases in the historical development of the community

policing idea. In the first phase, police first set the agenda and established priorities, and then enlisted the community as their eyes and ears to help detect crime and accomplish broader police purposes. The second phase brought a more balanced, two-way deal (generally believed to be more sustainable) whereby the police and community worked together to define purposes and establish priorities, and then worked together to accomplish the goals upon which they had agreed.

Looking to the future, as police employ a more sophisticated set of analytical, targeting, surveillance, investigative and forensic techniques, the question arises as to whether community policing will need to evolve further. Some have even suggested its influence might diminish over time.

Discussions about the continuing evolution of community policing might usefully be prompted by any or all of the following questions, using Chief Harrison's conversation with Captain Lawrence (coordinator of the Community Policing Unit) in Case A as the starting point:

- Should the insurance industry be properly regarded as a part of the community in Heron City?
- Is the idea of community policing inherently focused at the level of residential neighborhoods? If so, is this an appropriate focus?
- To what extent do a community's expressed preferences provide reliable guidance for policing priorities? What limits should be

placed on the degree to which community preferences drive police action?

- Have changes in the mix of police problems (e.g., elevated risks of terrorism) altered the weight that should be given to community concerns in police planning?
- Have changes in the mix of police methods and technologies (e.g., advances in forensic science, and growth in surveillance of public spaces) altered the degree to which community policing is still relevant?
- Is there any natural tension between the core values of community policing and more centralized approaches to planning and strategy development, such as the use of intelligence-led policing and evidence-based policing in selecting priorities and designing interventions?
- How should such tensions, where they exist, be resolved within the department and among the various stakeholder groups?

## **2. Problem-Oriented Policing: Unfinished Business**

Problems for policing come in many different shapes and sizes. Some problems are genuinely local, some citywide, and some (such as major security and terrorism threats) are national or international in scope. Some problems are geographic (and therefore susceptible to place-based or hot-spot analysis), but many are not. Recognizing the pervasiveness of the use of pin-maps as a form of crime analysis within the police profession and recognizing that, with the advent of modern technology, spatial and temporal

analysis remain the principal and pre-eminent form of analysis, Professor Herman Goldstein sought:

... to jolt the profession into a broader analytic versatility, pointing out that crime problems come in many different shapes and sizes, and geography and time represent only two of at least a dozen relevant dimensions. Some crime problems revolve around repeat offenders, even though the crime locations are dispersed. Other crime problems result from competition or conflict between rival criminal enterprises in the same business. Some patterns involve particularly vulnerable classes of victims (e.g., single-manned convenience stores as targets for robberies), or repeat victims, or methods of attack, or specific behaviors (e.g., glue sniffing in the schools), or specific commodities (e.g., Oxycontin-related pharmacy break-ins), or features of architectural design that create opportunities for crime, and so on.<sup>1</sup>

Many problems, therefore, come in awkward, in-between, shapes and sizes that do not align neatly with existing organizational or jurisdictional boundaries. Effectiveness in problem solving demands organizational fluidity and a willingness to form partnerships across functional and geographic divisions. The underlying principle for effective problem-oriented action is clear:

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<sup>1</sup> Sparrow, Malcolm K., *The Character of Harms: Operational Challenges in Control*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 94–5.

Respect the natural shape and size of the harm itself. Fashion your response around its structure, rather than forcing the harm into your structure. Use a control structure which mirrors the structure of the harm itself.<sup>2</sup>

The conversations that Chief Harrison has with Major Fred Lucius (director of Compstat) and with Captain Josephine Smithers (director of Intelligence-Led Policing) in Case A each reveal the relative inflexibility of the two systems in which these two officials operate. Compstat most naturally deals with problems that are precinct-shaped (or even more tightly defined geographically), and intelligence-led policing, as portrayed in this case, focuses heavily on serious and prolific offenders. One is therefore curious as to what these officials might make of crime problems that — in terms of size and shape — do not align either with their analytic traditions or with the organizational machinery available to them. Two behaviors seem all too common in practice, and the case narrative anticipates both of these. Officials confronted with awkwardly shaped problems will be tempted, either to:

- Carve the problem into pieces so that the pieces do fit their existing machinery, or
- Assume that if the problem does not fit their system, then controlling it cannot possibly be their responsibility.

Major Lucius' attitude illustrates the first behavior, as he staunchly defends the view that the Compstat approach is basically good for anything. And Captain Smithers' behavior illustrates the second — without the involvement of any serious and prolific offenders — she really has little idea how her unit's normal modes of analysis and intervention can help. She therefore seems eager to pass the responsibility on to other units.

Both systems — Compstat and intelligence-led policing — can be regarded as organizational approaches to delegation; that is, they represent methods for defining and dividing crime-control work. Each of these strategies has its own relevant analytic methods. Notice, in the narrative, how the uses of data, and the forms of analysis that each approach recognizes, serve to reinforce that particular organizational approach. Compstat does the analysis of reported crime rates by precinct because the Compstat process subsequently divides and allocates the responsibility by precinct. Similarly, intelligence-led policing does the analysis by offender (or offender group) because intelligence-led policing subsequently sets the agenda and prioritizes the department's attention by ranking and targeting offenders and offender groups.

What Chief Harrison needs, and clearly has some trouble finding within her department, is a more genuinely versatile problem-solving capability. The car-theft problem — once Nigel Jewett successfully unpacks it for her (in Case B) — turns out to consist of three distinct subparts. None of the three conform, in shape, to precinct

<sup>2</sup>Sparrow, Malcolm K., *The Character of Harms: Operational Challenges in Control*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 119.

boundaries or to known persistent offenders. What Chief Harrison needs, and which Nigel eventually provides, is a more open-minded approach to crime analysis, with the capacity to consider a much broader range of potentially relevant dimensions. Such an approach increases the chances of recognizing problems for what they really are, and understanding their natural dimensionality and scope, without being unduly biased or influenced by the nature of the machinery that the department already operates. Once the problems have been discovered and accurately defined in ways that respect the true shape and size of the problems themselves, Chief Harrison then needs an organizational mechanism sufficiently flexible to organize resources and attention around each identified problem and, in the case of the car-theft problem, around each of the three identified subcomponents of the problem.

In terms of the policing literature, none of this is new. The challenge of problem-oriented policing, laid down by Herman Goldstein and developed further by many others since, emphasized:

- The uniqueness of individual problems.
- The need to disaggregate problems into their component parts.
- A willingness to consider a broad range of dimensions and potential sizes in so doing.
- The need to define problems carefully and accurately, capturing and considering multiple perspectives on the problem.
- An open-minded search for tailor-made solutions.

- A commitment to methodological rigor in evaluating outcomes.

In terms of policing practice, however, a lot of this represents unfinished work. Even though the broad challenge of problem-oriented policing was laid out more than 20 years ago, the intervening years have seen a variety of more concrete operational methods proliferate. These systems — such as Compstat and intelligence-led policing — give police departments a recipe for action, a tangible way to proceed. At the same time, unfortunately, they threaten to narrow the police profession’s vision of problem solving.

Implementations of Compstat have undoubtedly focused management attention on certain types of crime-reduction imperatives and have produced important results. In many departments, however, Compstat implementations have been treated as de facto substitutes for any broader problem-solving approach, thereby restricting or narrowing both the types of problems police can address and the range of solutions they are able to consider. The Compstat model, as it is generally understood, can be decidedly narrow in several of the ways in which problem solving is supposed to be broad. In its more bare-bones versions, the Compstat model might be restrictive in any or all of the following ways. Compstat models may:

- Focus only on reported crime data, thus potentially neglecting the use of other data sources and shortchanging problems not properly reflected in reported crime data.
- Focus solely on “reducing the numbers” (which could result in a lack of sensitivity to

underreported crimes and introduce or exacerbate the dangers of recording biases and data distortions resulting from high-pressure use of numerical performance imperatives).

- Analyze crime patterns principally by precinct, and within precincts, with a heavy emphasis on geographic and temporal analysis (i.e., potentially overlooking all of the other dimensions in which crime patterns might naturally be defined).
- Automatically delegate responsibility for control to the precinct commanders, regardless of the size and shape of the problems to be addressed.
- Emphasize particular types of intervention (e.g., focusing on aggressive order-maintenance tactics for establishing police control over streets and public places).
- Employ distinctive managerial styles (e.g., replicating the famously aggressive and adversarial tone with which the early Compstat meetings in New York City were conducted).

The concept of intelligence-led policing has so far spawned less obviously concrete manifestations, in terms of operational decision-making, than those produced under Compstat. Nevertheless, the core of the intelligence-led policing notion most often described in the literature — namely, its focus on persistent and serious offenders — is also narrow in its own way. Adopting an “offender focus” serves departments well, of course, when they confront problems that do, in fact, stem

from the conduct of a small number of egregious actors. For these problems, dealing with the few key offenders provides an efficient focus. However, for any other kind of problem, an offender focus is not useful; it is neither the right way to think, set priorities nor organize action.

The Heron City narrative demonstrates the tension between the particularity of current models of operation (such as Compstat and intelligence-led policing) and the generality of more versatile and mature problem-solving approaches. Departments that rely too heavily on one or another of these particular implementations may end up forcing problems into the wrong mold and missing the opportunities for effective action that might materialize — if only they could organize around the problems themselves rather than automatically trying to make the problems conform to predefined departmental modes of operation.

Problem solving works best when a department retains a task focus and organizes itself in ways that reflect the structure of the risks, harms or problems in the field. In the case narrative, both Major Lucius and Captain Smithers illustrate a tool focus or system focus wed to their own particular apparatus. Both officials have become so committed to their own analytic and operational methods that they can no longer recognize when theirs is not a relevant approach. The systems they run have become, in their minds, “the way we do business — *any* business.”

The table below provides a series of diagnostic study questions that police executives might consider using if they want to challenge their organization on the maturity and versatility of its problem-solving capabilities and infrastructure. The table is based on a very simple definition of problem-solving success, namely, the ability “to spot emerging problems

early and suppress them before they do much damage.”<sup>3</sup> It recognizes the formidable challenge of turning that simple idea — spotting and suppressing emerging risks — into a form of professional competence for a sizable organization. The left-hand column presents an organizational problem-solving or operational

### Elements of an Effective Problem-Solving System

Element	Related Diagnostic and Study Questions
1. The ability to identify crime patterns and other risk concentrations early in their life cycle, before they do much damage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Where, within the department, does responsibility lie for spotting emerging problems?</li> <li>b) What methods are used for this task?</li> <li>c) Is the department better at spotting certain types of problems than others?</li> <li>d) Does the department have difficulty spotting problems of shapes and sizes that do not align naturally with existing organizational structures?</li> </ul>
2. A commitment to scan proactively for emergent and unfamiliar risks, using a broad range of data sources, information-gathering techniques and a set of exploratory and imaginative analytic and data-mining approaches sufficient to reveal issues never seen before as well as recurrence of familiar ones.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) What data sources and analytic methods does the department use to identify developing patterns and trends early in their life cycle?</li> <li>b) Where does responsibility for this task lie?</li> <li>c) How much is the department biased toward familiar types of analysis (e.g., spatial and temporal hot-spot analysis, division of crime rates by precinct) at the expense of a potentially broader range of methods?</li> </ul>
3. The organizational fluidity to elevate identified risks to the appropriate level so that the organization can gather relevant resources and attention around them, taking care to respect the natural size and dimensions of the problem or risk concentration itself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) What delegation options are available within the department for tackling problems of different shapes and sizes?</li> <li>b) At how many different levels within the department can problem-solving projects be organized and conducted?</li> <li>c) Do managers know how to organize projects that require the involvement of multiple units within the department, but which are not actually departmentwide?</li> </ul>
4. A willingness to engage in an open-minded search for tailor-made solutions sufficient to mitigate each identified risk to acceptable levels and in a resource-efficient manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) How broad is the range of solutions actually deployed in response to identified problems?</li> <li>b) To what extent is the solution set biased towards traditional methods (e.g., directed patrol and street-level, order-maintenance tactics)?</li> </ul>
5. A formal managerial system for managing and monitoring the department’s portfolio of risk-mitigation/problem-solving projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Is this type of work centrally coordinated?</li> <li>b) Does the department effectively track, and can it report the progress of, its portfolio of projects underway?</li> <li>c) Are mid-level managers familiar with the phases or stages of major problem-solving projects?</li> <li>d) Has the department developed formal systems for periodic review and oversight of problem-solving projects?</li> <li>e) What proportion of middle- and upper-level managers have experience in conducting periodic project review meetings?</li> <li>f) Do the department’s external reporting mechanisms formally incorporate project-based accomplishments?</li> </ul>
6. A system for organizational learning so that those engaged in problem solving can access knowledge accumulated by others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) What form does this system take, and where is it located?</li> <li>b) How rich is the information contained within it?</li> <li>c) What proportion of the department’s personnel have ever accessed it?</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Sparrow, Malcolm K., *The Character of Harms: Operational Challenges in Control*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 143–44.

risk-management capability divided into six distinct elements.<sup>4</sup> The right-hand column poses a number of diagnostic questions, related to each of these six elements, which any management team might use to assess their department's progress in developing the systems necessary to support a fully versatile problem-solving capability.

### 3. Misalignment Between the Needs of Operational Policing and Evidence-Based Policing

The conversations in Case B between Chief Harrison and Dr. Tom Boden, the compliance monitor, clearly do not go well at all! Dr. Boden is skilled in the art of program evaluation and convinced that his particular brand of “high science” should govern policing. Dr. Boden, as portrayed, combines scholarly arrogance with complete irrelevance in terms of the operational challenges facing Chief Harrison. The resulting clash of perspectives serves as a somewhat extreme illustration of the rift that sometimes exists between operational police officers and academics seeking to advance the cause of evidence-based policing.

The Harrison–Boden conversations in this case narrative are designed principally to challenge those on the academic side of this rift rather than the police profession, although the range of arguments Harrison advances may also help police

executives crystallize their own needs as well as their own criticisms of this particular movement in its current form.

The operational issues Chief Harrison confronts are all quite plausible, and Dr. Boden has little or nothing to offer in support of the Chief's practical objectives. In fact, the harder Dr. Boden struggles to find anything relevant on the very short list of “approved” crime-prevention programs, the more ridiculous he begins to sound.

Evidence-based policing will never influence the police profession much unless it can, as a movement, establish its relevance and utility for police executives and managers. Chief Harrison gives Dr. Boden quite a serious grilling regarding the nature of evidence-based research, the analytic methods it employs, and, especially, its relationship to Goldstein's original vision of problem-oriented policing. Chief Harrison raises a series of questions that Boden is essentially unable to answer convincingly. Serious proponents of evidence-based policing should be able to answer them all. The main lines of questioning are reproduced below, in summary form.

Practical analytic support is provided to the chief, finally, by the young marine biologist Nigel Jewett. This presents a further challenge for evidence-based policing. Nigel shows up with his “can-do” attitude and broadly versatile analytic skills as well as a somewhat naïve disregard for issues concerning data confidentiality and citizens' rights. The mindset and methods he employs — which enable him to satisfy virtually all of the

<sup>4</sup> The elements in the left-hand column of the table have been adapted from an analysis of the organizational capabilities prescribed under the heading “Safety Management Systems” in civil aviation. For details, see *Managing Risks in Civil Aviation: A Review of the FAA's Approach to Safety*, by Malcolm K. Sparrow (principal author), Edward W. Stimpson (Chair), J. Randolph Babbitt, William O. McCabe, and Carl W. Vogt. Report of the Independent Review Team, a Blue Ribbon Panel appointed by Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters, Washington, DC, September 2, 2008, p. 48.

chief's immediate analytic needs — contrast rather starkly with the rather particular set of experimental and program-evaluation techniques typically emphasized by scholars. So sharp is the departure, in fact, that Dr. Boden tells Chief Harrison in a subsequent telephone conversation that Nigel, despite his apparent intelligence and operational usefulness, is “not qualified” to be an analyst on the grounds that he has not mastered the science of program evaluation.

Why is Nigel's work so relevant, whereas Boden has nothing operationally useful to offer in this situation? The most obvious answer is that Nigel provides a completely different type of analytic support. But, if that is true, then the proponents of evidence-based policing must surely admit that a great many forms of analytic support are needed to support police decisionmaking and that their particular set of preferred methods constitute only a small part of the analytic repertoire. They might also have to admit that there are a great many operational policing decisions, perhaps even a majority of them, that the “high science” of program evaluation does not and will never inform. Such admissions might go a long way toward helping both sides recognize the narrower set of circumstances within which sophisticated program-evaluation techniques can and should be used. A more modest sense of scope would, in turn, help the Evidence-Based Policing Movement shed its appearance of arrogance; that might make the police profession a little more inclined to listen when scholars have genuinely important findings to report.

The following questions summarize these various challenges to the evidence-based policing movement. Scholars should probably be able to give rather serious and persuasive answers to each of the following questions if they want to build a substantial bridge to operational policing:

- What other values, concerns or factors should police executives normally consider in choosing any particular course of action other than measurable and demonstrable impact on overall crime levels?<sup>5</sup>
- As Chief Harrison points out to Dr. Boden, “Goldstein starts with problems; you start with programs.” By focusing on a small number of major crime-prevention programs, rather than working on specific and carefully defined crime problems, has the evidence-based policing movement in fact imitated the evidence-based medicine model, or has it departed from it in important ways?
- Highly sophisticated and expensive evaluations of programs may indeed be warranted when the programs being evaluated are themselves large, expensive, potentially permanent and of uncertain value. Similar modes of evaluation clearly do not make sense for operational decisions at the opposite end of the spectrum, where police are required to deal with smaller or novel problems, and where police deploy ad hoc,

<sup>5</sup> Mark H. Moore provides a discussion of several different frameworks for assessing the value of public agencies' contributions. Programmatic effectiveness and efficiency count, as do democratic responsiveness, client service, client satisfaction, adaptability, building capacity (both internal and external), distributional equity, procedural justice, and so on. See *Creating Public Value*, by Mark H. Moore, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995, section titled “Different Standards for Reckoning Public Value,” pp. 31–8.

tailor-made and time-limited interventions. Can the evidence-based policing movement define for itself an appropriately modest scope for action? If so, how should that scope for action best be defined?

- List at least five characteristics of Nigel Jewett’s mindset and methods that make him operationally useful. Has the evidence-based policing movement exhibited these same features so far? Does it need to? If not, why not?
- What are the important differences between the research traditions of the social sciences on one hand, and the natural sciences on the other? Which aspects of Nigel’s behavior belong more firmly in one camp than the other? Which parts of the policing enterprise are best served by each of these two important traditions?

#### **4. The Nature of Analytic Support For Operational Decision-Making**

The last major subject raised by this case involves analytic support for routine operations. Police executives reading the Heron City case quite naturally respond, “I need Nigel! Where can I find people like him? And where would I put them (within my department), if only I could find them?” Given the natural enthusiasm for “people like him,” it may be helpful to demand a more precise account of what it is, exactly, that makes Nigel’s skills and support appeal so much to managers and executives. It is quite plausible that many police managers actually do not know and cannot

describe what they need in terms of analytic support, but they know it when they see it. And maybe they see it — or at least certain aspects of it — in Nigel’s work.

Here are a few notable observations about Nigel, as he is portrayed in the case:

- He had been wasted. He turns out to be much more capable than his current boss knew. The job he had been given was routine and undemanding. (Many organizations have talented analysts on their payrolls but essentially waste them by not recognizing their value or knowing how to deploy them.)
- In terms of analytic traditions, he is organizationally unattached. Although he works within the IT<sup>6</sup> department he is not connected directly to any one of the operating traditions or systems of the department. Many analysts are attached. Some might support the Compstat process directly, and others work within the Intelligence-Led Policing Unit on a full-time basis. Attached analysts tend to work the same way, on the same data, using the same analytic methods, and in support of the same types of decision-making, month after month. Nigel has no such attachments and therefore remains a relatively free spirit as he considers what to do, and which analytic methods might count.
- His analytic approach is iterative and exploratory as he sifts, sorts and filters various

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<sup>6</sup>Information Technology

datasets. He likes to “dive in and swim around, and see what you see,” rather than prescribing an entire analytic project up front and then sticking rigidly to the plan. The iterative and exploratory nature enables him to change course as soon as important analytic objects come into focus that beg further investigation.

- He instinctively assumes that major problems, such as car theft or road accidents, have parts (that is, they have an underlying texture or structure comprising a number of distinct and separable objects). Thus, he is determined to search for these parts, even before he knows for sure that they exist. This mirrors closely Goldstein’s notion of systematic disaggregation of problems into their principal components. When Nigel finds a new component or concentration, he works out what to do next to try to make better sense of what it is, whether it really is one object and whether it needs to be disaggregated further.
- He appreciates the multidimensional nature of different problems and the importance of considering many possible shapes and sizes. Nigel’s approach to problem disaggregation involves slicing and dicing the data in multiple ways and trying different dimensions and combinations of dimensions until something shows up.
- He displays a broad analytic versatility. He is not wed to any particular set of analytic methods or tools.
- He knows the importance of data platforms that support user-driven, ad hoc manipulation without the need for programming. He bemoans the absence of such platforms within the IT department.
- He knows that data itself, even of high quality, has no inherent value until the process of analysis converts it into meaningful and operationally useful insights.
- He takes care to explain his methods and present his findings in a way that is accessible to a less-technically qualified audience (in this case, the chief).
- He displays initiative, creativity and imagination in devising tailored analytic approaches to specific operational problems. He has the confidence (based on his experience with scientific inquiry as a marine biologist) to open up new lines of inquiry as necessary, abandon them when he thinks they are useless and generally direct his own research efforts in pursuit of the most fruitful paths.
- He recognizes the value of spotting emerging problems early so that harm can be minimized (e.g., when he discovers the growing subclass of road accidents possibly resulting from women drivers’ fears about being stalked). He gives more weight to the operational imperative of suppressing emerging problems than he does to the theoretical questions about statistical significance and inference. (In relation to the emerging accident problem, he says to Chief Harrison, “But I thought you’d want to know about this before it got to be statistically significant.”)

All of these features seem quite significant in terms of understanding what makes Nigel’s contribution valuable in an operational setting. These few observations merely raise a broader set of questions, diagnostic in nature, about the nature of analytic support for modern policing:

- Are these qualities generally appreciated within the law enforcement profession?
  - To what extent are they available?
  - How should analytic resources, both human and technical, best be organized or located within a department so that versatile analytic skills will be broadly available to multiple functions and at every level of the department?
  - How can a department prevent analysts from getting “captured” by the assumptions or operating traditions of a particular division or policing model?
- What training might police managers need in order for them to make better use of analysts and analysis?

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**Professor David Sklansky**, Professor of Law, Faculty Co-Chair of the Berkeley Center for Criminal Justice, University of California, Berkeley, School of Law

**Mr. Sean Smoot**, Director and Chief Legal Counsel, Police Benevolent & Protective Association of Illinois

**Professor Malcolm Sparrow**, Professor of Practice of Public Management, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

**Chief Darrel Stephens**, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (retired)

**Professor Christopher Stone**, Guggenheim Professor of the Practice of Criminal Justice, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

**Mr. Jeremy Travis**, President, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

**Mr. Rick VanHouten**, President, Fort Worth Police Association

**Professor David Weisburd**, Walter E. Meyer Professor of Law and Criminal Justice, Director, Institute of Criminology, Faculty of Law, The Hebrew University and Distinguished Professor, Department of Administration of Justice, George Mason University

**Dr. Chuck Wexler**, Executive Director, Police Executive Research Forum

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