

The Social Psychology of Violence*

Hans Toch

Professor, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich.
Project CoDirector, Institute for the Study of Crime
and Delinquency, Sacramento, California

I accepted your Program Committee's invitation -- or, to put it more accurately, I eagerly jumped at this opportunity-- because I have somewhere along convinced myself that we -- my collaborator and I -- have built a more effective (or at least a more congenial) mouse trap. I could try to document this conceit by offering you an inventory of dead mice, but as you know there are less offensive vehicles for that kind of report. Instead, I propose to deal here with several more or less distinctive aspects of our work, and I shall give you the flavor of some of the impressions we have been accumulating.

But before I turn to the "social psychology of violence" I must tell you about the social psychology of our project, and I have to start with the claim that our staff is probably collectively superior to the personnel of other projects. Our top researcher, for example, is an interdisciplinary social scientist for whom I cannot find enough praise. His name is Manuel Rodriguez, and his

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academic background consists of an eighth grade education, a term in the U.S. Army Supply School and a short course in automobile repair.

But Rodriguez has other academic qualifications. Before the age of eighteen, he was arrested for malicious mischief and assault. Later, he was sentenced for such offenses as armed robbery, burglary, firearms possession, narcotic addiction and drunk driving. (I might as well confess that since joining us Manuel has been arrested once again, this time for driving without a license while engaged in research.)

Rodriguez has spent fifteen of his thirty-six years behind bars, mostly in the California State Prison at San Quentin. And it was as an inmate at San Quentin that Rodriguez became interested in the subject of our research. He himself describes the beginning of his interest as follows:

"I was assigned to the weight-lifting section of the gymnasium. Most of the more violence-prone inmates come here to blow off steam at one time or another. It is also sort of a refuge where an inmate can get away from the pressures of staff scrutiny and the yards. We try to keep violence nonexistent, if possible, in this section. This was part of my job, although it was not explicit. In many cases--as a peacemaker-- I had to convince both would-be combatants that they could retreat without losing face or pride.

Most inmates contemplating violence will usually go to a respected member of the prison community for advice on "shall I kill this guy or not?" I and a friend of mine were two of these persons so respected. When these guys who are straddling the fence between violence and non-violence came to us we began to actively prescribe non-violence..."

As you can see, Rodriguez started out as an informed layman, with a completely pragmatic concern with violence. Today he is a sophisticated researcher, and he is an expert on the subject.

Manuel's transmutation began in early 1965, when he became a trainee in the New Careers Development Project directed by my collaborator, J. Douglas Grant. This revolutionary program is aimed at converting standard clients of professional services (such as Manuel) into dispensers of professional services--or at least, into intermediaries between clients and professionals. Research work seemed one obvious target for this effort--for one reason, because subjects are too often unconcerned with research, and therefore fail to participate wholeheartedly in it. Inmate Rodriguez was thus put to work, during his training period in prison, on the first stage of our study. His work included research design, as well as code construction, interviewing and coding. After Manuel Rodriguez was released on parole, we were happy to be able to hire him as a staff member.

Outside, Rodriguez has acted as our principal interviewer. He has interviewed parolees with violent records and citizens who have assaulted police officers. He is not only a sympathetic and incisive interviewer, but became unusually successful in stimulating interest among potential subjects. I might add that Manuel is 5' 10" tall and weighs 175 pounds. He generally wears shirts

that allow an unimpeded view of two arm-fulls of tattoos. In addition, when we began the police assaulter interviews, Manuel grew a bushy moustache to make himself look -- as he puts it -- more "subculture". This prop undergirds an invitation to participate that starts with the words, "We are not a snitch outfit", but then proceeds to a thoughtful, honest exposition of our objective.

In our project, we have tried to study the social psychology of violence in two special settings. One is that of conflicts between police officers and citizens; the other is the penal institution. In our prison studies, we operate with a resident research staff that combines sophistication, practical experience, and the ability to inspire confidence in our informants. Our group in San Quentin, for instance, consists of six men whose graduate training adds up to 83 years of confinement. Their competence to study violence in prisons is partly exemplified by the fact that five of our six researchers also qualified as subjects.

But then, I must stress that in our study we have tried to blur the line between the observer and the observed. Each of our interviewees, for example, is invited to sit down with us to conceptualize the data obtained from him. Each one is asked to help us find common denominators in the particulars obtained in the interview. Each one gets the same opportunity we do to play scientist, and becomes a minor partner in our enterprise.

I wish I had the time to illustrate for you here the extraordinary sophistication of the material we obtain from our non-professional collaborators.⁽¹⁾ But I must pass over this issue, and tell you something about our theoretical approach and about our data:

I like to refer to our perspective as "social psychological", not only out of loyalty to my upbringing, but also because we try to focus--probably more than other students of aggression--on the inter-personal events that lead up to violent acts. We try to find consistencies or patterns in the games people play with each other that lead one or another to physical harm. In our analysis of documents and in our interviews with several hundred contending parties, we have carefully divided the antecedents of violent acts into stages or steps or moves or actions, and catalogued accompanying feelings and underlying assumptions. We have then tried to group these subjective and inter-personal sequences into types.

Let me illustrate the method and its results with one or two brief examples. First, I should like to tell you what we mean by a type of violence-producing personal inter-action. Second, I shall try to introduce you to what we understand by a pattern of violence within a

(1) The written version of this address contains an appendix with samples of this material.

person. Lastly, I'll try to place two recurrently violent persons in opposition to each other so that we can consider the collision of their patterns.

Taking first the problem of typing violence-prone interactions, consider the research area I previously mentioned, the increasingly popular participation sport of assaulting your neighborhood police officer:

To arrive at an understanding of how such incidents arise, we started by content analyzing 444 police descriptions of assaults on themselves. We then interviewed as many of the assaulters as we could conveniently locate, and we extendedly conferred with their ostensible victims. I might add that our work was made easy through the full cooperation of the Oakland Police Department. I, for one, have found no evidence to confirm an anti-research stereotype of police agencies, given a situation like ours in which there is an open interchange of concerns and speculations. I should also add that in our police interviews we have followed our procedure of approximating peer interviews by securing the services of Raymond Galvin, a professor of Police Administration, to act as our interviewer. I honestly shudder to think that anyone could talk more candidly than some of the officers we have interviewed in this fashion.

Our content analysis showed that police assaults tend to occur as a result of fairly standardized games

between officers and citizens. In 266 out of 444 incidents, for example, orders or instructions by the officer played some kind of precipitating role. In 246 of the incidents, the violence occurred after the assaulter had expressed his contempt for the officer, and the officer had continued to press his case. In 67 of the conflict situations, the final precipitating act of the officer consisted of placing his hands on the potential assaulter, after he (the officer, that is) had concluded that verbal injunctions were ineffective. The most frequent sequence we encountered begins with an order or request by the officer, which elicits a contemptuous response from the citizen, (sometimes punctuated with picturesque language.) The sequence repeats itself and ends a variable number of steps later--in some instances after a notification of arrest, in others without it. This Basic Sequence accounts for some 40% of the incidents we examined.

Let me illustrate by reading verbatim two of the briefer police reports descriptive of the basic pattern. Identifying names have been changed, but the flavor of the original is obviously preserved. The following is the simple form of the sequence:

While patrolling Golden Gate Park this date in plain clothes, I observed suspect loitering around and looking in an auto. As auto boosting is a constant problem in the Park, I approached suspect, identified myself and asked him what he was doing around auto. He said that he was looking at it. Suspect was carrying motorcycle-type helmet and I

asked him if the motorcycle parked nearby was his. He replied that it was. I then asked suspect for some identification and he stated that he would show me nothing. He then walked over to the motorcycle and removed a knapsack from it and walked away. I followed the suspect and again showed my identification; he said that he understood that I was a policeman but would refuse to talk to me. As the suspect was walking rapidly away, I attempted to block his line of departure. Suspect then pushed me aside and stated, "If you touch me, I'll hurt you." I attempted to physically restrain the suspect and we both fell to the ground. The suspect continued his threats of bodily harm and upon arising attempted to pull me to the ground.

The second example is a somewhat more complex version of the same sequence. The officer writes:

While on routine patrol, at 2:15AM, this date, the reporting officers observed a group of young men who appeared to be under 18 years of age, which would place them in violation of curfew. Officer Sunshine called to the group to stop as they were walking away from the reporting officers. The whole group stopped and turned to Officer Sunshine except suspect #1, who kept walking. Officer Sunshine again called to suspect #1 to stop and to produce his identification. Suspect #1 continued walking in an apparent attempt to avoid being stopped. It was necessary for Officer Sunshine to reach out and grasp suspect #1 by the shoulder to stop him. At this point, suspect #1 turned and grabbed Officer Sunshine's arms and attempted to push Officer Sunshine back against the building. At the same time, he shouted, "Why should I show you any I.D.?" Officer Sunshine then took the suspect into custody and attempted to take him to a nearby callbox. Instead of cooperating, the suspect struggled and kicked in his efforts to get free. Suspect #2 then approached and attempted to free suspect #1 and it was necessary for Officer Moonbeam to forceably restrain suspect #2. Suspect #1 continued to resist while he was being handcuffed and made verbal threats against the officers. Sgt. Geronimo Moss and Officer F. L. Clover arrived on the scene and aided the reporting officers in subduing the suspects.

The second most frequent sequence we encountered, which covers some 27% of the incidents, is one in which violence is already manifest as the officer enters the stage. In such instances, extreme delicacy is obviously required to insure that the action does not transfer to the officer. Unfortunately, only too often the requisites for a peaceful solution are not present, and an abbreviated version of our basic sequence follows. In the two illustrations I have selected for you, one contains some preliminary verbal exchange, and the other does not. Here is the first incident, which is fairly typical of a degenerating domestic dispute encompassing a police officer. The report reads:

Reportee stated that her husband, the suspect, had arrived home shortly before and had broken the window next to the door, entering the premises located at 387 Peyton Place. The suspect was asked by the reporting officers what had occurred and he stated he had broken the window and did not like our presence in his apartment. When told we were requested to come up by his wife, he became very belligerent and stated that we never come through his doors without a warrant. He was advised that we were merely attempting to ascertain what had occurred in the interests of preserving the peace and in the interests of his wife's safety. She was emotionally distraught and literally shaking in what was assumed to be fear. The suspect became very bellicose and ordered us from the "blank, blank house." At this time he took a swing at Officer Octane. In the course of the next few minutes it took considerable effort to restrain his onslaught of fists and feet. Officer Octane incurred a severe laceration on the index finger of his left hand. Once handcuffed, the suspect attempted to further carry on with his violence to the point that it was necessary to handcuff his ankles together.

The second illustration is the type of incident in which violence is so much the order of the day that the officers become almost incidentally victimized:

At approximately 4:10AM, this date, Sgt. Searchlight and I were called by the above complainants who stated to us that the below arrested person came into the World Wide Hot Dog Stand, picked up the pushbroom and struck the Counter, causing considerable damage to said counter. The below arrested then ran into McGee's Do-Nut Shop and deliberately pushed over a large tray of do-nuts. Upon seeing reporting officers enter, he ran to the extreme rear of the premises whereupon he picked up a ladder and attempted to strike officers and he then threw a ladder at Sgt. Searchlight's head. Considerable force was necessary in properly restraining him and during which time both officers were repeatedly kicked and struck with fists. In removing him from this rear room he deliberately kicked over a large rack containing snails and do-nuts. He then kicked over a metal container with approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon of jelly in it. Upon taking him to the sidewalk area, he attempted to kick the plate glass window of the adjoining premises, and during that time, both officers were kicked again. At this time Sigmund Watson insisted that this situation was not being properly handled. He demanded that we release the below arrested and interferred to the extent that it made it far more difficult to perform our lawful duties. Watson was warned to leave but refused. Both men taken to City Prison and booked.

Of course, a typology of sequences such as these does not represent an answer to the question of how violence comes about--rather, it poses the question. It provides us with the stage setting in which the game takes place and furnishes an outline of the plot. Thus equipped, we can proceed to find out how each character contributed to the proceedings. The main research objective becomes a specification of who does

what to whom to cumulatively produce violence--and why he does it.

The emphasis in our study is thus not on the typology of violent incidents, but on the typical genesis of such incidents by typically violent persons. We have tried to understand and to classify persons who recurrently participate in violent incidents. Even in our police study, we have concentrated on chronically assaulted officers and on citizens with assaultive records. The aim is to find patterns among the incidents of violence in which a given person has been involved.

Such patterns are essentially of two kinds. One includes types of attitude or personal reaction. The chief source of patterning here lies in the limited range of situations that a violent person defines as justifying or as requiring force. For example, whereas one individual may feel that physical action is in order when some rule has been violated, another may tend to retaliate against what he sees as arbitrary authority, and a third may habitually use force to acquire desired commodities. A second category of violence-prone personal reaction is responsiveness to what we have called "the chorus"--that is, to other persons (real or imaginary) who exercise influence in the direction of violence. This type of responsiveness ranges from the desire for status in a

group that prizes combativeness, to participation in a mutual protection association or in a fighting team.

The second broad category of personal patterns of violence is that of violence-prone strategies, and the most dramatic of these is that of habitual clumsiness, either in handling inter-personal problems or in assessing their import. The police officer who habitually "comes on strong", for instance, falls into this group. Another kind of violence-prone strategy consists of techniques designed to bring about situations the person can define as requiring violence. The range covers such strategies as a penchant for threatening or challenging others, a predilection for hostile verbal play, and the tendency to feel persecuted and to react accordingly.

But again, I feel I'm becoming somewhat abstract, and I shall therefore give you an example, consisting of two incidents involving the same individual. These incidents are drawn from one of our interviews with persons on parole who have been classified by the Parole Division as habitually assaultive. The first excerpt relates to an event that occurred in a state prison. Our subject is describing a cozy evening by the institutional fireside:

S: Well, they got barracks there like camps and were living in the barracks at the time, and we were all jacked up on beans, and we were watching this card game.

I: You were loaded on Benzedrine pills?

S: Yeh, and we were watching these cats play cards, and we were standing behind this colored dude. He was one of these big iron lifters, you know. About ninety feet wide, you know, he was one of those. And he turned around and told us, "Whitey, man, don't stand behind me, punk, when I'm playing," you know. And I just looked at my partner and he looked at me, you know, and didn't say nothing, just stood there. Cause we were running the barracks anyway. We felt we did.

I: Who was Whitey?

S: He was my partner. I just looked at him for his reaction, and he looked at me for mine. I just smiled and he smiled and we stood there. We felt like, you know, more or less, what I said was, "Do what you want, I'm with you." And he looked at me like, you know, "You there?" You know, because he wasn't about to whip that big sucker. And he turned around again and he said, you know, "I told you not to stand behind me." And he said, you know, "Bless you, man." And the dude got up, man, so I hit him on one side and the other dude hit him, and we were both on him, man. And we beat him to a pulp. Fixed him up bad, man. And nobody jumped in, you know. Course we had about six or seven partners in the barracks and at the time there was only about four colored dudes in there. And they didn't get into it; you know how they are, man, about half of them got to have tin with them. So they didn't get in it, so we just, once we got going, we just wasted the dude. And that was that. Sent him on down to the hospital. And after that I felt like a king, man. I felt like, you know, "I'm the man." You're not going to mess with me.

What inspired our subject to resort to an act of physical aggression? Among the elements making up the incident, you may have noticed the following significant ones:

- (1) The prospective victim was perceived as a large black bully,
- (2) Our subject felt that his substantial reputation was at stake,
- (3) Our subject felt that a challenge had been issued, and
- (4) Our subject viewed himself as loyally supporting a friend.

You might also have noted the initial presence of chemical stimulation, the psychological role of which is not clear. And in focusing on the final stage of the incident, it may have struck you that our subject showed unambiguous joy at the considerable damage he had inflicted, and felt good about the presumed solidification of his empire.

Now let us turn to an incident involving the same subject, several years later, in a tavern. He relates:

S: I was down here at the Tulip Room and I was drunk on wine, and I can't drink wine, man, at all. I get mean, you know, go out of my mind, forget what I'm doing. And I was with my boss's son and we'd been out drinking wine and hitting all the bars and drinking whiskey too. Pretty juiced. We're in there, you know, and it was packed, and it was with a colored dude and he was giving off one of these impressions again, you know. Typical loud-mouthed type. For some reason there, I just can't communicate with them at all. I have no patience with them. And he walked by me and poked me out of the way, walked right up front and I thought, "That's the way it goes," you know. I was mad, and we stood there for about, I guess, about ten minutes or something, and we were going to leave and he was coming back and he poked my boss's son out of the way, and was coming like he was going to do it to me, and I just fired on him and decked him. And that was it. And everybody jumped on us, you know, and I split.

I: You were drinking wine?

S: Yeh, wine's the only thing that'll do that to me. And I think what it was is he pushed me back to what was going on in the penitentiary, you know. This kind of disgusted me.

I: The guy was a bully?

S: Well, that's what he was doing, you know. Pushing people out of the way, growing a little goatee and all that, you know, and looking like something else.

I: Was he pushing other people around?

S: Yeh, he was bumping into everybody, man, you know. And he wasn't loud-talking or nothing, you know, but he-- I could see it in him. And I think it flashed me back to the penitentiary which was an unpleasant thing. And this brought my anger on more and then, when I seen that he was going to bump into me, I just blew it completely and tried to smash what I seen.

I: You wanted to hurt him?

S: Yeh, I would have really wasted him, but I got jumped on.

I have selected this incident for you because in addition to illustrating our standard finding that motives are replicated, it contains an even more dramatic form of patterning--one of causal connectedness between incidents. You'll also notice that our subject showed signs of insight into his own pattern--a form of psychological activity that we promote in all our interviews. I might add that eventually my collaborator and I hope to build on this type of awareness. We expect that the active understanding, by a violent person, of his own violence can become a first step in a tailor-made program designed to help him to respond non-violently in new situations.

Before closing this description of our research, I must mention one last type of pattern with which we have been concerned--that of social intersections. This is the type of event created by the collision of two personal patterns; it is an act of violence produced when

two violence-prone persons meet, and each serves as an instigator for the other. It is the type of outcome you get when you combine two persons who--in the words of one officer in the Oakland Police Department--"are programmed for each other and press each other's button."

I hope you don't misunderstand me to assert that I deny the existence of blatant aggressors and passive victims. Unlike the tango, it doesn't necessarily take two to produce violence. What I do maintain is that the actions of the prospective victim matter, and sometimes considerably so. And as I have indicated before, on many occasions the victim is an appreciably more violent person than the aggressor.

Let me briefly illustrate the sort of dialectic I have been alluding to, by excerpting from parallel descriptions of an encounter between a police officer and a young citizen. The incident starts with the officer contacting a Negro boy who is sitting on a school yard bench late at night. We begin with the boy's version:

So he said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "I was just sitting here." So he says, "Come around here." So the setup was that there was a long fence--and I was sitting right in the middle of it--with two doors. And the way it was, we were right in the middle. So he said, "Come all the way around." And I said, "I was on my way toward home." So he said he wanted to talk to me. So I said, "Well, I haven't done anything wrong; talk to me right through the fence," you know. So, he says, "No. Come around here. I want to talk to you." Then he asked my name, and I said, "I haven't done anything wrong. I'll tell you my name if you tell me what I did wrong."

So he goes back to the car and says, he says something about a youth or a man into the radio. Such-and-such a street what we were on. And then he comes back and he says, "Look, I don't want any trouble from you." And I said, "Look, I don't want any trouble either." So he walked to one end of the fence, to the opposite side of the fence; so I started walking in the other direction, up to the end of the bench about ten or fifteen feet. So, he walks up that way and I walk back the other way. So he says, "Listen, here, I don't want any trouble from you." I said, "I don't want any trouble either, just tell me what I did wrong and we can talk. I haven't done anything wrong."

So he gets into his car and he drives up to one end of the fence. And all of a sudden I'm thinking to myself, you know, "this is a dumb cop." I says, "I'll just play around with him, he's so dumb." So he gets out of his car and he turns on his flash light and he starts running 'cause I could hear him jingling. So I started running to the other end of the playground and I yelled to him, "You'll never catch me this way."

So I don't think he knew the area too well. Up around there where I live there's lots of little alleys and stairways. So I ran down the hill and down another street and up this little alley....

You'll note that the policeman is perceived as arbitrary and that he mobilizes a stubborn, resentful response in our young friend. The boy brings into play a pattern of aggressive playfulness designed to produce an evening's amusement for himself and considerable frustration to the other player. How does the officer, who is already upset, respond to this game? We must turn to the officer's version of the incident for an answer to this question. The officer tells us:

He gets up off the bench and he turns around, and at this point I think he's either under the influence of alcohol or dope or something, cause he's

got a goofy, dreary look about him, and he gives me a little cynical laugh, and backs up on his feet facing me, with the fence between us, and he says, "Come on in and get me." Well, at this point I was ready to go in and get him. There's two gates. It's a block long, and one's at the west end of the school, and the other at the east end of the school. I'd walk west, he would walk east; I'd walk east, he'd walk west; and we played this little game for about three or four minutes, and I finally walked over to my car with my one eye on him, and I grabbed the horn, and told them that I needed another unit there, I had somebody in the school yard who refused to identify himself or to come out. So I heard them dispatch a unit out there, and I turned to put the mike back, and I saw him walking fast away from me, which would be north across the school yard.

So I get in the car and I blast up to the west end of the yard. I ran through the gate, he saw me and he changed his course and he ran out east, through the gate, and slammed it as he was running down the road, and he was laughing like crazy, you know. And I hear him yell something about, "You're going to die," or some stupid thing. Well, I'm out the gate, and he's gone, you know, it's very obvious to me that I'm never going to apprehend him, he was running like a deer.

So, now, my vehicle is a block away, so I run back to my vehicle, get on the radio and I told them that there was a possible 50-50 loose, which is from the Welfare and Institute's code, referring to a person that is mentally unbalanced. He had yelled something, that in my opinion, was a possible threat to my life, and I think that we should get somebody up here and flush him out before he hurts somebody.

You'll note that the officer feels that he must persevere after having made his opening move. He copes with the boy's playful response by convincing himself that he is faced with a raving, dangerous, lunatic. He also concludes that his opponent must be speedily curbed. This fact has consequences in the next scene of the drama,

which follows when the young man decides to return and renew the sport. This second scene is described as follows by the officer:

It was just a second, and I was on him. And he's turned around facing me, but backing away up the hill. I'm walking at him like this, you know, talking to him because I honestly believe at this point that the guy is a nut. To coin a phrase, 50-50. But, anyway, I told him, "Look, kid, now, I don't want to chase you. Come back." I estimated his age at this time at about 19 years old. He was 16. He says, "Look, man, what do you want me for? I didn't do anything." Well, I says, "Look, if I have to chase you, there's going to be a real problem. You might as well come over here." And he's still backing away, only now he's taking a few bigger steps. And I guess I'm about as close as from here to the cabinet, five or six feet. So, then I come out with, "Now, look, I don't want to shoot you." Which was the classic statement. I didn't have my revolver out, and I would never have taken it out 'cause, naturally, a misdemeanor (refusal to identify, 647E of the Penal Code) is certainly no grounds. But it did shock him enough, so that he stopped and said, "What do you mean, shoot me?" And when he stopped I grabbed him by the right arm. I got sort of a half-nelson on him, and I'm walking him back to the car, and I says, "Look, you get in the car." And then the beef starts. He comes out with, "Get your hands off me, you (obscenity), I'm not getting in no police car." And the beef's on. The kid was big, and I don't mind telling you, he gave me one hell of a hassle. We were all over the street.

As you can see, the officer has parleyed himself into a state of fear such that he loses control of himself, and even offers to shoot the young boy. He then attempts to physically control the dangerous monster he has mentally created, all the while continuing to exaggerate the magnitude of the opposition. This new development, of

course, presents the boy with a somewhat different type of playmate from the "Dumb Cop" whom he had originally tackled. The dawning of this discovery is traced for us in the boy's version of the return engagement:

So I came up the stairs and soon as I got back on to the main street, where the school was, here he comes flying down this hill; he almost hits me; he stops the car; he jumps out, and I back away. He says, "Now, listen here, you nut," or something like that, and he says, "If you run or try to get away again, I'm going to shoot you." Well I have a fairly good knowledge of the law, and I know that you have to have done a felony or he can't shoot you. And I hadn't done a felony or anything, but he looked kind of frightened. So I just stood there. And he says, "Come get into the car and we'll talk." So, I knew right then and there that that was a lie, right there. First of all, he wants to talk, now he wants to get me into the car. I said, "No, I'm not going to get into the car unless you tell me what I did wrong." Then he keeps trying to ask me my name. I wasn't going to tell him my name or anything, unless I could get some understanding why he wants me.

So he starts coming toward me, and I can't run cause he'll shoot me, so I just stood there, so he comes up, runs up to me, and he jumps on me. You know, he doesn't have, you know, he just overpowers me and gets me into a full-nelson. Well, right then and there I knew it was hopeless to run or try to get away, so, you know, naturally your body's going to tense up when somebody grabs you. So I told him, "Let me go. I'm going to go over to the car and let's talk." In the meantime he's really struggling with me and I'm trying to tell him to let me go, I'm willing to talk. All of a sudden he gets this attitude that I'm strong. "Strong as a horse," his exact words. He said, "He's strong as an ox (or horse)."

The tables have turned, and it is now the boy who perceives the officer as irrational. In fact, later in the

interview he refers to the point of his return as an experience of discovery. He tells us:

I was feeling pretty good right then cause I figured, "This cop, he's dumb. I haven't done anything wrong, I should give him trouble; he was giving me trouble, I should give him trouble." But, then, after he grabbed me, I says, "Oh, no. This can't be, it's all over now. We're through playing games, I have to talk to him, now. He means business."

At this juncture, both men are suffused with panic, and have become unable to transact business with each other. Whereas the boy feels ready to throw in the sponge, the officer conceives of himself as engaged in a desperate fight to the death. The lines of communication by this time are nonexistent. We turn to the officer's description of this final debacle:

So, then I really start putting the heat on him. And he starts bucking a little bit. All you can hear out of him, "You're choking me." See, but he's starting to slow down a little bit. So I figure, well, this is it. Boy, I'm getting tired, I'm either going to have to do him in now, or forget about it. So, I gave it all I had and finally put the kid on the ground.... As I recall, I had exerted so much strength, that my left arm, I couldn't even unfold my hand the muscles were so cramped up.... And this is what it took to get the kid down. And he's put into the car. That was the incident.

So far, we have seen how two persons may interact to produce violence, but we have not yet shown that these persons may have reacted typically. In order to

illustrate this point, consider the following incident involving the same officer, at a time when the latter is serving as custodian of a police paddy wagon. The officer in this excerpt is discussing a prisoner who had been arrested for prowling:

He didn't give the reporting officer, the arresting officer any trouble whatsoever, completely cooperative. Quiet, hardworking man, type thing over-all. Obviously from his hands, you know, the man worked. I opened the door of the patrol car; we got to the wagon, and I says, "All right, step out of the car," I said, "Put your hands up on the back of the wagon." "What for?" "I want to search you." "I haven't got anything on me," and he starts to go into the wagon. I've got one side open and I pulled him back, and I said, "You're going to be searched." Naturally, anybody that gets in my car, now, is searched. And I don't care if he has been searched fifty thousand times, you know, exaggerating a bit. If he's getting in my car, when I'm inside with him, he's going to be searched. This is a common good safety practice. That's it. He refuses to put his hands up on the back of the wagon. So I grabbed his big right paw and I slap it up on the back of the wagon, and my partner's got the other one, and we searched him. He's not struggling. He's jerking a little bit, but it's all for the crowd which is about 30 strong now. You know, shucking and jiving individuals, teen-agers. I said, "All right. Get in the wagon and sit up front." He turns around and he has one step on the wagon. He steps up on it, and he says, "What?" "Get in the wagon and sit down up front," you know. If we have to stop fast and somebody's in the back, it's kind of painful, you know. He turns around and he says, "You make me get in." This is typical... Anyway, he turns around facing me up on this one step and I say, "All right, now, get in." I'm going to push him back and close the door. The man is immense, and I don't particularly want to fight him. At this point, he grabbed me by my badge and my shirt, and yanks me, and I went right over that top step and right into the wagon. We're both inside now. In fact, both my shins were skinned, in that I didn't step on the step, I went right over the top

of it. And the beef's on. All I want to do is get out of that wagon... I'm like one of those rubber balls on the end of a paddle, because he's throwing me around like nothing, you know... So, finally, I give a big yank, like this, and he comes in on top of me, and I whack my head on the lock up on the front of the wagon, and I can feel the blood trickling down my neck. So I figured, "Fellow, the hell with you." I was mad--angry, I don't think I was mad. My head was split open. I put the wood to him as much as I could.

You will note that the officer is again persevering in the face of obvious danger signals; that his inflexibility and his tendency to classify people again produce an inevitable clash; that he sees himself again as a giant-killer, and that he again resorts to extreme force in a moment of panic. To complete the parallel, consider the brief after-play which occurred several minutes later, while the wagon was under way.

So we're going in, and he says, "White fella, someday you're going to be alone on that street, and I'm going to kill you." And I tell him, "Mr. Smith, if you ever even look like you're going to kill me, I'm going to put one right through the middle of your head." Not ashamed to admit it. Cold hard facts. Mr. Smith can break my arms off and serve them to his family for dinner if he wants to, and I won't fight him again; I'll kill him first.

In case you are curious about the boy who had assaulted this officer, I might tell you that he has been expelled from several schools, in every case for fights involving serious damage to other children. Typically, these fights started with persistent harassment of an opponent, in a

cumulatively degenerating game.

What then, can we say--by way of final summary-- about the patterning of violence? First, I have tried to suggest that in certain explosive situations (such as contacts between police officers and suspects) stereotyped inter-personal dilemmas can produce relatively homogeneous manifestations of violence. I have further suggested that persons in whom violence is replicated become successively violent in roughly equivalent ways, because their violence is a function of relatively permanent personality traits and dispositions. Lastly, I have attempted to show how variations on violent themes may emerge through the dialectic inter-action of psychological constants.

Appendices

Appendices A - C

Sample Summaries of Personal Patterns Extracted
from Incidents by Joint Professional--Non-Pro-
fessional Case Conference

Appendices D - E

Sample Inmate Interviewer Comments Relating to
Inmate Interviewees

Appendices A-C

Sample Summaries of Personal Violence Patterns
Extracted from Data by Joint Professional-Non Professional
Case Conference Groups

Appendix A

It looks as if the main fights or at least the most dramatic sets of sequences of fights occur with this man when he wants to amuse himself or himself and others by spontaneously attacking casual victims whom he happens to encounter. One fairly spectacular sequence of this kind consists of him pulling drivers out of cars that patronize a drive-in and assaulting them physically. And another sequence occurs as he and a friend go from one party to another on a weekend, antagonizing people. In the course of this expedition they assault gas station attendants, their host in one of the parties, and a set of guests who happen to arrive on the scene at another.

While in prison, the subject appears to be somewhat careless in baiting several people in succession in such a way that by the time he's finished, his situation looks precarious to an outsider.

The role of others in this man's involvement is not always the same. In some situations there is team work involved and he appears to enjoy a kind of camaraderie with another violent individual. And there is some team spirit in this kind of sport. In other situations he's an entertainer, acting for an audience. In still other instances he gets himself into a violence-prone situation, counting apparently with the support of people who, assessing this same situation, decide that they don't wish to become involved. And then he proceeds anyway, since he has, at this point, no real option. There also appears to be some tendency for him to gain an unjustified feeling of immunity. That is, it looks as if he does not take very careful stock of the odds in several of the situations in which he encounters violence.

Another point is that after the sequence of events begins, he won't back out, he won't change his strategy until he's either knocked out or the fight's over.

It also appears as if, in at least some of the situations with this individual, the word "strategy" isn't as applicable as the word, "game". That is, there is a kind of spirit of enjoyment and levity about the proceedings. And

it is as if he doesn't take account of the fact that the victim may not share the enjoyment as much as he and his friends do. (Although in at least one instance, the enjoyment was so infectious that the one victim gets into the spirit of the game before he was flattened.) There appears to be some evidence here that at least in the majority of instances, violence for this man might be an end in itself. The clearest situation where this occurs is at a party where the guests discover that another set of guests is arriving, and our hero announces that whoever they are, he's going to lick them. And as soon as the first of the new group of guests arrives, our friend hits him in the face with a mop that he happens to have been mopping the floor with.

Appendix B

This man can be classified by his pattern as a rep-defender. Interestingly enough, this is exactly the label the man gives himself. There seems to be a very consistent pattern here, over innumerable incidents in which there's always a chorus and there's the struggle of the good guy versus the bad guy and the bad guy is always bigger, uglier, and the good guy is always, at first, the underdog. The good guy is the more polished, has better manners, respects his mother better, talks nicer to girls, probably dances better. He manages too, in spite of having innumerable physical conflicts, to be liked by friends, enemies, and the law.

He shows considerable ability, here, to time what he does in a given sequence in ways that will reinforce the role. That is, he doesn't just wildly blurt out with aggression at the first incitement or the first accusation of any kind. He doesn't retreat from an incident that would let him look like a coward, or be perceived as a coward, but he can delay making his motions. He can even stand by and watch one of his own race very badly beaten up by a large group of people from another race, and his cues are more than just that the crowd hasn't arrived yet, the audience hadn't arrived yet, but when the audience does arrive, then he does get involved in the action.

One senses a man who is always on stage, and that the stage is a very real place for him. Again, this is the theme he states he is playing, and it seems like he can document it very well.

This man is under 5'6", small but muscular and quick in reactions. And it seems that the rep he's trying to maintain is that of a little giant-killer. And he manages to set everybody up as a giant, even if the guy might not see himself as a giant. Another point that has been brought out is the importance the man places on having everybody like him and everybody see him as a good guy, including the giants that he whips. And this comes into every pattern: he carries the sequence out until he eventually shows that the guy is now a good friend of his.

Appendix C

This man's pattern appears to be one of taking advantage of others through procedures such as cheating in gambling, short-changing, blatantly running out on his wife, informing, and eventually using up his credit with the victims of his cheating efforts. He tries rather clumsily to ward off any open attack or reprisal, but when cornered, does fight. Once he senses that he might have the upper hand in the fight, he becomes extra aggressive and extra vicious. There's some feeling there of having lost status by having the fact that he was trying to cheat uncovered. He may be trying to get back some sense of his own manhood or some sense of his own worth by being over-aggressive in a situation where he can look somewhat powerful.

In the sequence of events, it seems that once he is caught and people are ready to accuse him, or it's blatantly clear that he's been cheating, he isn't able to confess or he doesn't just run off and terminate the game, but that he still tries to deny, and this leads to his getting in a corner, with the aggression coming out in the victims, and the ultimate conflict.

This aspect in the pattern comes out in the interviewing process also, because in most instances one has to infer the dishonesty from circumstantial evidence. For instance, the police mysteriously arrive after his wife has damaged two of his teeth with no mention of his having done anything to her, and in two cases in which he is attacked after having gambled, there's no mention of any possible provocation for these attacks, although it is obvious he must have been cheating. And in an incident in the prison stockade, the first indication we have of his having been an informer, is that somebody comes and calls him a snitch after which, as usual, he gets vicious.

Appendices D and E

Sample Inmate Interviewer Comments
Relating to Inmate Interviewees

Appendix D

Although the subject came to the interview in his work clothes, which were covered with paint, it is obvious that he takes pride in his appearance. His build is stocky and he stays in shape by constant exercise. He has a harelip and numerous scars on his face.

Because the subject has not been involved in an act of violence for almost three years, it would seem that he has, as he claims, undergone a change. In his own words, "I've only been thinking for about two years. I used to be a low-rider and talk myself into being stupid. I've got purpose now." The subject's story is best described in his own words.

"When I was a kid I had no home life; no discipline. I could go and come and do what I wanted to. I've always been envious of people who had a home and not just a house. A home is where you get love and concern. To compensate I went to the street and joined a clique. A group of guys was my home, my family, because we could depend on each other. There was little verbal communication as there was no need for any. We understood how each other felt. Communication isn't dependent on words, but on feelings. I joined the Hell's Angels and had to prove I was somebody by whipping people. Then it became fun. I did a lot of crude things; things I wouldn't even want my mother to know. I guess I was just a boy-man. Finally I got in trouble and went to jail and found these same clique-friends. I guess this was one of my biggest mistakes, running with guys who accepted me without really knowing me. I'd play my tough guy role and they'd accept me."

"I started to change when I'd see a guy on the yard do something stupid...and I'd think to myself, 'What a stupid punk'. Then, maybe a week later, I'd find myself doing the same thing. Of course at first I wouldn't admit that I was a punk too."

"The biggest thing that happened was when I walked away from a fight the first time. The feeling was between being a coward, and that I'd done the right thing. One

thing, though, I couldn't explain these feelings to any of the guys I knew."

Apparently the subject needed new friends to support his newly acquired values.

"When I started to avoid trouble I discovered that I could get along with the people I had been hasseling with. If I couldn't, then I could always walk away without losing face. I started looking at myself personally; my actions, and the way I talked to people. I soon realized that many of my past actions had been my fault."

"It's easy to think of doing the right thing, but it's still hard at times for me to do the right thing. I had to learn to say, 'pardon me,' 'excuse me,' and 'I'm sorry, it was my fault'. I guess too, I developed a sense of humor rather than being hard faced.

"I've had my problems with custody too. I guess they just don't believe that people can change, or that they may want to. A lot of the 'bulls' try to hold you down from being a man by using their ball point pen. But now I know that there are even some good 'bulls'. Besides, it never did do much good for me to curse them out or talk out of the side of my mouth."

"Now, I have to continue to practice my new way of living, and learn to judge what I'm doing. And I will."

Appendix E

The subject is chubby, dark-complected, and has the distinctive aquiline nose, prominent cheek bones, and coarse black hair of an Indian. He has a disfiguring scar on his upper lip that gives one the impression of his having a perpetual sneer. He rarely smiles, and when he does it is only facially.

There is, between the interviewers, two different interpretations as to the motivation of the subject's violence. One interpretation seems to be influenced by the subject's storied loquaciousness rather than the incidents themselves. Is the subject's behavior, as he claims, the result of his being an Indian leader, and having to intercede in their behalf, or is it because of his need to establish a personal reputation as a prison tough guy? I choose the latter interpretation; an interpretation based on how the subject has behaved, not how he thinks he has behaved. His behavior speaks for itself, and it is this physical language that must be interpreted, not the words that are being shaped by the subject's psychological mechanisms.

We can't discount the fact that the subject is an Indian. He looks like one, he was raised as one, and he thinks like one. An Indian functions within the rigid framework of rules. "There are family codes, tribal codes, and Indian laws," is how he puts it. But there is also another link in the sequence that must be considered. A joint code that he is well aware of. "The cons have their own rules, and one of them is that they step on the weak." The subject has already learned that unity is power. On the reservation his brother is a sub-chief and a member of the tribal council. "Our family ran the reservation. We did whatever we wanted to and no one ever messed with us." The subject has to belong and his attitude, which is domineering and demanding, dictates that the method to use is violence. In prison, the Indians that the subject begins to associate with just happen to be low-riders. Even though he is well versed in Indian culture he is not accepted as a leader.

The first incident that the subject becomes involved in is the rat-packing of an Indian child-molester in order to ostracize and punish the molester, and also to solidify his position among the low-riders. So, rather than being a leader of these Indians, he is using his Indian blood to further his own ends. He wants to be a tough con, someone to be feared and respected. "The new guys that come in, no one knows about them." "Once you get a reputation you have to protect it." The above statements, and others similar in nature, were made by the subject during the course of the interview. There, significance is self-evident.

How does the subject go about building a reputation? As he says, fighting for home-boys, and interceding for other Indians? No. Of the 10 incidents--actually 9, because #1 and #9 are the same--#6 no violence occurred; #2 involved helping a friend, although the details were vague; #7 was a fight of his own making; #9 he was attacked, and #10 was the rat-packing incident. The remaining four involved custody. He was proudest of #8. In regards to this incident the following dialogue occurred.

I: Do you think this incident helped your reputation?

S: It sure as hell did. I knocked down the Captain.

I: How did you feel just before you knocked him down?

S: Like a big man.

I: During?

S: I sure am doing it right this time.

I: Now?

S: Pretty funny.

The subject is also proud of the fact that at one time he had spat on the warden.

Obviously the subject feels that these things scare people, when in fact they are childish and impress only those who would do the same thing to build what they consider to be a feared reputation.

Why use custody? Although there are certainly cases in which custody has beaten convicts, they don't generally beat anyone to death. They don't stab or maim, and rarely hospitalize their victims. The extent of damage is usually a few lumps, perhaps a few scars, and the realignment of some teeth. For the subject, the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages, as he is able to build a reputation on these beatings, and without seriously endangering his own life. We must resolve the inconsistencies between what the subject says and his behavior.

The word circulates that he has fought with the 'bulls', implying that he will jump on a convict with little provocation. The facts are never pursued, but accepted prima facie, because those who pass on these rumors and exaggerations are the very ones who are most impressed by them. The rumor returns and the subject begins to believe his own yard reputation. These seeds need only to be planted; they will be cultivated by the rumor-mongers.

Our subject has completed the building of his reputation, petty though it is, and now he and his low-rider friends can observe and honor it. Not that the cons on the yard do, but the subject feels that they do, and this is all that really matters. If anything he is tolerated, not respected and feared as he would like.