

INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE CODE

TENTATIVE CODE FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF INMATE ASSAULTS ON OTHER INMATES

Format:

TYPE OF INMATE AGGRESSOR, CLASSIFIED IN TERMS OF THE MAIN PURPOSE SERVED BY THE ACT OF VIOLENCE (++)

Institutional Violence Code Designation

(MORE GENERAL VIOLENCE CATEGORIES WHICH ARE MOST APPLICABLE TO THE TYPE) (+++)

Description or definition of the type or category.

**Illustrations

(++) NOTE: Where a sequence of inmate vs. inmate violence causes is involved in any incident, the coder need only classify the precipitating or primary cause. (See Introduction to Police Violence Code).

(+++)
NOTE: In using General Code, code whichever categories in the list of potentially applicable categories actually ~~applies~~ apply to the incident. Draw from outside the list if necessary. USE AS MANY GENERAL VIOLENCE CATEGORIES AS APPROPRIATE.

PREFATORY NOTE

This Code focuses on the relationship between the aggressor and his victim which gives meaning (for the aggressor) to the act of violence. It deals with the "why" of violence -- with the intended objectives which violence never quite serves.

But it is obvious that on any really violence-prone "stage" -- that is, in any situation in which we often observe people becoming violent -- the causes of violence go beyond the moves and counter-moves of actors. Much of the responsibility for violence must be ascribed to the problems and pressures, the facilities and resources, the limitations and rules within which the potentially violent person operates. At the very least, the way in which violence occurs, the nature of the occasion for it, is a product of the opportunities and constraints presented to the person by his institutional surroundings.

There are non-coded climate variables which are almost universal in the incidents to which this Code will be applied. Prison violence occurs in a context in which the expression of human needs is circumscribed, and in which trivia acquire an enormous, monstrous proportion. It occurs where self-respect and prestige depend on almost imperceptible shades of maneuvering and manipulating -- in which strings are clasped as if they were life-saving ropes -- and in which these strings sometimes break.

It is because these incidents occur in prison that a carton of cigarettes becomes a pound of flesh, an angry word is a challenge to a duel, and that grown men slaughter each other over infantile perversions and furtive attachments. It is the un-natural psychological climate of prison which enhances the display of violence and shapes the patterns in which it is displayed.

But our study assumes that the habitual persons who become frequently violent inter-act with climate so as to produce the specific occasions for concrete acts. And we further assume that for such persons violence manifests itself in a restricted range of life situations. A search for consistency between violence "inside" and "outside" -- between violence in various types of climate -- seems a potentially convincing and conservative test of the hypothesis that violence reliably serves constant personal ends.

HOMOSEXUAL MONOGAMIST
(HOME PROTECTOR, etc.)



This type of inmate is a homosexual who is unable to accept the End of an Affair, and uses violence to (1) attempt to recapture his ex-partner, (2) revenge himself on his ex-partner or on the latter's new mate, or (3) express his displeasure with the turn of events. In addition to the primary code, the homosexual monogamist may also fall into the classifications of RETALIATOR, TOUGHNESS DEMONSTRATOR, INTIMIDATOR, EXPLODER, and PUNISHER.

** Inmate B arranges for M to come to the vicinity of his cell, where he has further arranged for M. to be slugged by C and knifed by G. The motive for the incident is provided by M's involvement (in another institution) with a homosexual who "belonged" to B, and by B's desire to "straighten up" the matter.

S.Q., June 29, 1965

** A "homosexual liaison" had existed between R and W which was unilaterally "terminated" by W, who subsequently took up with B. R, unhappy about this, began to harass B and W. In the incident, he arrives with a knife and challenges B to a duel ("get your knife," "cut it out with me"). When B turns down the invitation, R orders W to come with him. When the latter refuses, R attempts to knife both men.

S.Q., June 15, 1965.

I, continued

** A "close relationship" has been known to exist between B and K, who have on several occasions been discovered in compromising and unseemly positions. Their relationship, however, appears to be disintegrating. In the incident, K wants to talk to B, who doesn't want to talk to K. K tries to take B to the yard for a conversation, and a fight is on.

CMF, September 7, 1964

HOMOSEXUAL SNUB REJECTOR

II

(TOUGHNESS DEMONSTRATOR)

This type of inmate is an aggressive homosexual whose overtures have been rejected by a prospective partner.

Violence is used to redress hurt self-esteem, and to heal wounded pride.

** Inmate R is asleep in his cell; D enters and beats him about the head with a cell stool. Investigation reveals that D has pressured R for homosexual favors, and R has reacted by indicating that he did not indulge in such interactions with "niggers." D became angry because of the rebuff, and because he has been called names.

CMF, June 21, 1965

** M's regular homosexual partner, C, is transferred to another institution. M tries to substitute J, but J "repulses" him. In response, M stabs J in the doorway of their wing.

CMF, March 20, 1965.

HOMOSEXUAL RAPIST

III

(SEXER, INTIMIDATOR)

This type of inmate uses violence to help him secure an otherwise unwilling homosexual partner. In some instances (Type 1) violence serves as a direct means of promoting submission; in others (Type 2), violence is part of an effort to create a climate of receptivity, although this distinction may sometimes be difficult to make.

HOMOSEXUAL RAPIST, 1

IIIA

(SEXER)

** Inmate A sits in C's cell listening to C play his guitar; four other inmates enter. The situation looks sufficiently unpromising for A to attempt an exit, but he is stopped as he tries to leave. He gets a beating from C (which fractures his jaw). Following this beating, A is forced to lie down on the floor, where C performs sodomy on him. After lunch, A is "escorted" back to A's cell, where another inmate (M) rapes him.

CTF(N),
November 28, 1964

** A try is made by two inmates to sexually assault Inmate C. One of the attackers holds C while the other man beats him in an effort to persuade him to cooperate.

S.Q., March 8, 1965

III, Continued

HOMOSEXUAL RAPIST, 2

IIIB

(INTIMIDATOR)

** Inmate C is stabbed on his way to breakfast by his cellmate, H. H sports abrasions and a bloody nose, showing that arguments have already taken place. Further investigation reveals that H is a homosexual pressurer, and that "an attempt to establish a homosexual liaison appears to be the motive for the attack."

S.Q., June 24, 1965

SELF DEFENDER

IV

(PANICKER)

This type of inmate uses violence to neutralize people who are a danger to his integrity or his physical survival. The effort here is to get out of a corner by eliminating whoever is blocking the exit.

SELF-DEFENDER, 1: HOMOSEXUAL SELF-DEFENDER IVA

(PANICKER)

This type of inmate is subject to homosexual pressure, which he is afraid he cannot continue to resist, and he uses violence to eliminate the pressure.

IV, Continued

IVA, Continued

** F stabs M repeatedly in an elevator and in a corridor. It develops the attack was "caused by panic on F's part, because he was afraid M would renew his homosexual advances ... (he was) in great fear for his own safety."

CMF,
December 19, 1965

** Following a heated altercation between inmates S and L, S obtains a razor blade, enters L's cell, and cuts L about the face and chest. S testifies that L had visited him to involve him in homosexual activities, and had been pressuring him. Other inmate sources point out that S has been under pressure from several homosexuals.

CMF, April 9, 1965

SELF-DEFENDER 2: NON-SEXUAL

IVB

(PANICKER)

This type of inmate also attacks persons whom he views as a threat to his continued existence, but the threat is not homosexual pressure. Frequently, such an inmate anticipates his own prospective execution, inspired by his infraction of the Inmate Code or by a personal feud.

** Inmate F is interviewed by Inmates G, S and K about a canteen debt to G. The next day, F attacks G with a gong brush, inflicting a lesion on the back of G's head. G admits that he had recruited two friends (S and K) to scare F. (This incident is complicated by the fact that G may also be an attempted self-defender, afraid of F; if F is the original source of pressure, the incident is a link in a Self-Defender Chain Reaction).

CMF, June 1, 1965

CONTRACT ENFORCER
(PUNISHER)

V

This type of inmate uses violence against other inmates who have indicated their intention (or confessed their inability) to comply with contractual obligations. The Contract Enforcer is primarily a Punisher, because he executes judgment which is implicitly sanctioned by the inmate culture, upon a violator of accepted rules. The Contract Enforcer does not hope to secure further cooperation from his victim, and therefore is not an Expediter or Intimidator.

CONTRACT ENFORCER 1

VA

(PUNISHER: Retaliator)

To the extent to which revenge may generally be assumed to play a part in motivating punishment, the Contract Enforcer is also a Retaliator. This assumption is most plausible when the Enforcer is the aggrieved party or his hired agent. The "Type 1" Contract Enforcer is defined as the aggrieved Contract Participant or his employee.

** JR owes RR several cartons of cigarettes. (RR reports that this debt covers gambling losses; JR insists he has been paying for protection.) RR gives JR two months to settle, but JR is unable to do so; the best he can do is supply several hobby shop lamps, which only cover half the amount owed. At the end of the two-month period, JR is stabbed in the yard by M, who is frequently used by RR to "collect debts."

S.Q., April 15, 1965

V, continued

VA, continued

** H is stabbed to death in a shower room, with L doing the stabbing, and D holding H until he collapses. H had owed L five cartons of cigarettes, and also had incurred a debt (of 15 packs) with D. L indicates that he had decided that if H "did not pay me the cigarettes he owed me, I was going to kill him." He stabbed H some 16 times, and explains that "I wanted to kill the guy. The motherfucker deserved it."

CMF, January 7, 1964

** Inmates J and F attempt to trade a ten dollar bill they have smuggled into the institution for four cartons of cigarettes. P refers them to E, and transmits the money to E. E keeps the money, and offers three cartons, which is considered unacceptable. Under the impression that E will not release the funds, several people hunt for each other to "execute judgment." By the time it has been discovered that E has relinquished the money (which has been confiscated by custodial officials) J has begun to stab him.

S.O., April 16, 1965

CONTRACT ENFORCER 2

VB

(PUNISHER; MANHOODER; DEFENDER)

The "Type 2" Contract Enforcer is an inmate who is not a party to the broken contract, but takes it upon himself to discipline the contract violator. He may involve himself out of loyalty or sympathy for the offended contractor, because of his feelings of contempt, indignation or outrage, or simply because he perceives it as his role to mete out justice, right wrongs, and provide enforcement where needed.

V, continued

VB, continued

** M has been "having trouble" with S "over the attentions" of an inmate homosexual. M and S make a date for a fight in the main corridor, and T goes along with M to insure that "it was a fair fight." T and M find S accompanied by eight other inmates. T is disgusted by this fact, by unproductive "loud talking," and by M's failure to use his knife. T takes matters into his own hands and stabs S, intending to kill him.

CMF, May 25, 1965

** Inmates R and G are released from their jobs at the laundry, where they have been having a "verbal altercation" over the use of laundry equipment. As R proceeds to his housing unit, he is informed that C is "waiting for him for the purpose of fighting with him." R delays going to his cell until he is further informed that G has "changed his mind." However, G enters R's cell with a knife and his to be physically restrained from using it on R. Later, J encounters G and asks G whether he has broken his word. ("You entered the sissies cell in order to kill him, didn't you?") When G admits that he has, J stabs him.

CLAIM STAKER

VI

(INTIMIDATOR)

This type of inmate uses violence to expropriate another inmate's possessions. The process is generally one where the victim is made to feel that his continued safety is dependent on parting with the requested items or franchises. Violence may also be used to demonstrate to the victim that he has been unwise in resisting expropriation efforts, or to

VI, continued

eliminate the owner of the merchandise to be expropriated.
(The latter two efforts may be coded as PUNISHER and
EXPEDITER, respectively.)

** Inmate MD is beaten and stabbed by three other inmates, JS, S, AND HD. They attacked him in furtherance of "their efforts, which he resisted, to take over and control an operation involving the sale of volatile liquids, used by other inmates for the purpose of 'sniffing,' thereby inducing a state of intoxication." MD's commercial enterprise had brought a 1,200% return to investment --"a very substantial profit and one to be coveted by other inmates."

S.Q., January 25, 1965

** Inmate A has made a name for himself as a "dumb hillbilly," and this is viewed as an invitation to extort cigarettes from him. One inmate approaches him and informs him that if he does not deliver two cartons of cigarettes "we'll get the shit on." A replies that he owes no cigarettes, and has no objection if this should lead to a fight. The next day, he is stabbed in the back while on his way to his cell.

S.Q., June 29, 1965

CLAIM DEFENDER

(RETALIATOR, TOUGHNESS DEMONSTRATOR, PANICKER) VII

This type of inmate is an individual who uses violence to defend himself against the demands of a Claim Staker.

THIEF EXECUTOR
(PUNISHER, RETALIATOR)

VIII

This type of inmate has been the object of a theft, and feels he knows who is responsible. He proceeds to take matters into his own hands, and avenges himself or punishes -- often after having given his suspect an opportunity to return what has been stolen.

** L attacks C in a large community group meeting, first using fists, and then a knife. L claims that C has stolen a pair of street shoes from him the previous evening, and when requested to return same, had responded "You know you aren't getting the shoes back, sucker."

CTF(N)
December 8, 1964

** Inmate M is rumored to have entered C's cell in the morning, and to have made off with 12 packs of cigarettes. C reports the theft, and indicates that he knows who was responsible for it. In the afternoon, C stabs M.

CTF(N), August 6, 1964

** G is in the process of removing several cigars and a handful of cookies from B's cell when B suddenly appears on the scene. B punches G in the nose.

GMP, 1963

INFORMANT EXECUTOR

IX

(RETALIATOR, PUNISHER)

This type of inmate uses violence to deal with another inmate whom he suspects of having discussed him adversely with authorities. Although the "execution" of an informant may be an act of personal revenge, it may also hinge on general indignation with the victim's infraction of the Inmate Code, thus bordering on Contract Enforcement (Punishment).

** C has been identified to authorities as having exerted homosexual pressure on several inmates -- among other, J. As a result of this information, C is assigned temporarily to the Adjustment Center. After C is released from this assignment, he hunts for inmates whom he suspects of having informed against him. He encounters J, and stabs him in the shoulder, since he mistakenly assumes that J was one of the informers.

CTF(N), July 1, 1964

** Inmate B is released from his daily exercise period, requisitions a "long-handled, heavy duty" brush, and assaults inmate attendant O with this utensil. He testifies that he "felt that O had been 'snitching' on him, that O was the cause of his cell having been searched by custodial personnel."

CNF, January 9, 1965

RACE DEFENDER

X

(TOUGHNESS DEMONSTRATOR, DEFENDER, RETALIATOR,
PANICKER)

The inmates in these incidents attack other inmates primarily because their victims belong to another ethnic group, whom they fear or hate.

RACE DEFENDER 1

XA

In these incidents, the inmate who is attacked is perceived as a key person in the hated group, and he is viewed as a threatening power figure, in addition to being hated for his racial identity.

** A clique of Whites headed by G has become involved in a feud with a Negro clique "over the homosexual favors" of a White inmate who had been "sold" to Negroes. This argument culminates in an attack by a Negro group on a group of Whites, during which G is killed and several other inmates -- most of them White -- are injured.

CTF(N)

November 11, 1964

** A, a Negro, enters the exercise yard, and is attacked by C and B, two White inmates. A warning shot by a guard interrupts this assault. Custodial personnel comment that "this incident had, to some extent, been anticipated. Racial tension had been building up for some time." A previous yard explosion had been narrowly averted, and A had been identified as a "catalyst in the matter."

S.Q., January 12, 1965

X, continued

XA, continued

** During a period of racial tension, a clique of White prisoners had issued an ultimatum to Negroes, prohibiting them from entering the TV Room. Negro inmate T resolved to "lead his people" (against everyone's advice) by watching television. T and C enter the TV Room, and are immediately assaulted with some home-made blackjacks by a group of Whites. Staff prevents the murder of the two men.

CTP(N)
November 11, 1964.

RACE DEFENDER 2

XB

In these incidents, the victim is singled out exclusively because of his ethnic identity, or because of his membership in an ethnically homogeneous inmate group.

** Movies are being shown in the prison gymnasium when a "mass disturbance" breaks out. After inmates disperse -- or are herded away, two men are found lying in pools of blood. One of them (D) is dead, and the other (R) badly stabbed. The investigator writes that "results of interrogation lead me to believe that it was a racial incident, that victims were not singled out for any specific reason, they just happened to be in the immediate area when the disturbance started.

S.Q., February 23, 1965

** While walking along a corridor, Inmate M (a "Mexican") is knocked unconscious by a Negro inmate. The next evening, several inmates of Mexican origin push a Negro as the latter leaves the TV Room. "This causes the races to group and arm themselves." Chairs are thrown, and men are hit with socks containing soap. The real battle is averted by the staff.

DVI, June 5, 1965

FRIEND AVENGER

XI

(RETALIATOR, DEFENDER)

These inmates use violence against persons whom they perceive as responsible for danger or harm to another inmate, to whom they feel loyal or attached. This category can border on Contract Enforcing, except for its primary emphasis on retaliation rather than punishment. In the following illustration, there is also a Race Defender element, because the sparking incident had involved a Race Defender, and because of the ethnic affiliation of the Avenger and his victim.

** Three months before, a "racial disturbance" had occurred between Negro inmates and inmates of Mexican origin, in another institution. One member of the "Mexican" group (G), had been killed, and the suspicion fell on L, a member of the Negro clique. After this incident, several members of both factions were transferred to their current location. Then, in succession, (1) S, a close friend of L, is stabbed while passing through a group of "Mexicans;" inmate C is known to be responsible for this stabbing; (2) C is stabbed to death by unknown assailants.

S.Q.,
February 11, 1965

INSULT AVENGER

XII

(RETAIATOR, TOUGHNESS DEMONSTRATOR, EXPLODER)

This type of inmate reacts with violence against what he perceives as an intolerable personal affront. His reaction may be an act of pure retaliation (instant or delayed), or may be a "toughness demonstration" resulting from damaged pride or hurt self-esteem. "Exploding" is involved when the response is to a "last straw" by an inmate who considers himself badly harassed. In the latter case, the incident may border on an act of Irritation Removing (see below).

** L and P have words in the TV Room, L hits P twice in the face. P does not hit L back, because he is much smaller than L, and knows that he would get licked. However, he waits for L in the evening, and hits him with a stick.

CMF 1964

** CA is in debt to CH, and CH requests at least partial repayment. CA replies by becoming abusive, and CH tells him to "forget about it," and goes to take a bath. CA is unwilling to "forget about it," and follows CH to the bath room, where he subjects him to "vile names." CH administers one blow to CA, which knocks the latter unconscious. CA is only 4'11" tall, is very conscious of his size, and is known as "Toughy" among friends. When several inmates make remarks to him about the bathroom incident, he is unable to cope with these, and decides to take "revenge." The next day, he approaches CH, who is seated at a table, and stabs him twice.

CTF(N) June 17, 1964

XII, continued

** M and S are watching television, and M asks S to be quiet. M then leaves the TV Room, and S follows him out and strikes him on the face.

CMF, 1964

** A number of inmates stand around talking about group therapy. C, who has been participating in the discussion, leaves -- then returns, and hits Inmate A; as the two are being separated, C picks up a can used as a butt receptacle and crows A with it. He later explains that A had remarked that he (C) "looked like he was sick." He also indicated that "he was not going to let these guys talk to him like that," and that "he wanted to be left alone."

DUELIST

XIII

(MANHOODER, RETALIATOR)

This type of inmate uses violence as a formal means of settling disputes. He either attacks another inmate after notifying the latter to arm himself, or he accepts a formal challenge and strikes first.

** W and B have been arguing, and B had told W to secure a weapon, because he would "need it." Shortly thereafter, W is caught chasing B in the food services area with a pick axe.

S.Q., April 1, 1965

XIII, continued

** G and R had an argument in the laundry. At the time, G invited R to fight, but R "declined." In the afternoon, G visits R in his cell and "attacks him." R in turn slashes G with a knife, and seriously injures him. (R may be a Self-Defender; G is a Duelist.)

CMF, 1964

IRRITATION REMOVER

XIV

(EXPLODER)

This type of inmate is under nervous strain, and uses violence as a reaction against people who grate on his frayed nerves.

** H and C have been standing in front of a gate, waiting for the guard to let them out. Suddenly C turns around and strikes H in the face. C claims that H had been calling him names (an allegation which witnesses deny), and that H had been "agitating" him for some time. (In the event H had made a remark, C would have been viewed as an Insult Avenger.)

CMF

FANTASIZER

XV

(FANTASIZER)

This type of inmate uses violence as a consequence or in support of delusional systems or other radical reconstructions of reality.

** B fatally stabs S, then tries to commit suicide. He admits the killing, but does not know why he did it. The record notes that "B has a history of Mental Illness, where 'Voices' have told him to 'stab' and 'kill.'" "

CMF

January 29, 1965

SELF-DESTRUCTOR (Various Types, as Listed Below)

XVI

(SELF DESTROYER; may also have elements of EXPEDITER, RETALIATOR, PANICKER, SELF DEFENDER, etc.)

This type of inmate is the target of his own violence, but self-destruction may not be his exclusive or primary objective. Thus, although an attempted suicide is obviously self-destructive, it may have as its main object the desire (1) to be moved to another institution or location, (2) to remain, when threatened with reassignment, or (3) to offend or protest against staff. A "pure" suicide would represent unhappiness with imprisonment (or with life), or disappointment with adversity, in the shape of official action or fate;

XVI, continued

it would show an unwillingness to expend further effort on unrewarding tasks. In addition to "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" suicide attempters, Self Destroyers would also include inmates who mutilate themselves or are accident-prone by design.

INTRINSIC SUICIDE (ATTEMPTOR): DESPAIR XVIA

EXTRINSIC SUICIDE (ATTEMPTOR):

EXPEDITER XVIB1

ATTENTION GETTER XVIB2

ACTION PREVENTOR XVIB3

PROTESTOR XVIB4

etc. XVIBn

INDIRECT OR PARTIAL SELF DESTROYER XVIC