

2015

# A Forensic Psychological Perspective on Criminal Looters, Suicide by Police Seekers, and Bad Cops: An Imperfect Cross Cultural Storm

Ronn Johnson  
*University of San Diego*

Eric Jacobs  
*University of San Diego*

David B. Ross  
*Nova Southeastern University, [daviross@nova.edu](mailto:daviross@nova.edu)*

Rande Matteson  
*Saint Leo University, [rwmatteson@aol.com](mailto:rwmatteson@aol.com)*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://nsuworks.nova.edu/fse\\_facarticles](https://nsuworks.nova.edu/fse_facarticles)

 Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

## NSUWorks Citation

Johnson, Ronn; Jacobs, Eric; Ross, David B.; and Matteson, Rande, "A Forensic Psychological Perspective on Criminal Looters, Suicide by Police Seekers, and Bad Cops: An Imperfect Cross Cultural Storm" (2015). *Fischler College of Education: Faculty Articles*. 245.

[https://nsuworks.nova.edu/fse\\_facarticles/245](https://nsuworks.nova.edu/fse_facarticles/245)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fischler College of Education: Faculty Articles by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact [nsuworks@nova.edu](mailto:nsuworks@nova.edu).

A FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON CRIMINAL LOOTERS, SUICIDE BY  
POLICE SEEKERS, AND BAD COPS: AN IMPERFECT CROSS CULTURAL STORM

A Forensic Psychological Perspective on Criminal Looters, Suicide by Police Seekers, and Bad  
Cops: An Imperfect Cross Cultural Storm

Ronn Johnson, Ph.D., ABPP<sup>1</sup>

Eric Jacobs, M.A. Candidate<sup>1</sup>

David B. Ross, Ed.D<sup>2</sup>

Rande Matteson, Ph.D<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*University of San Diego*

<sup>2</sup>*Nova Southeastern University*

<sup>3</sup>*Saint Leo University*

## A Forensic Psychological Perspective on Criminal Looters, Suicide by Police Seekers, and Bad Cops: An Imperfect Cross Cultural Storm

### Overview

Incendiary events can escalate placing police officers on the offensive and peaceful protesters into criminal looters or rioters. In recent events, the media has glorified violence and poor decisions of both police officers and protesters. The media has brought more attention to criminal looters, suicide by police seekers, and *bad cops*. Law enforcement agencies educate officers using different strategies to handle potentially violent situations. Strategies such as “siege mentality,” where the officers engage in excessive force to ensure protection and deescalate tense situations has been favored by many departments following the riots in the 1960s and the Rodney King riots (Chaney & Robertson, 2013; Kane & White, 2009). Long standing racial prejudice still influences police departments today. Bad cops are often a byproduct of socioeconomic status, poor, rash decisions, and inflammatory media coverage exacerbating the event. Forms of police misconduct can include police crime, police corruptions, and abuse of authority (Kane & White, 2009). Bad cops often take the law into their own hands, feeling they need to do whatever is needed to complete the task. In other events, the officers truly feel their life or the lives of others are in danger and use excessive force as a last resort. Research has shown that police officers who are less educated tend to be the most aggressive and have the most complaints filed against them (Chaney & Robertson, 2013). Black males are often viewed as the “prototypical criminal,” holding the stereotype of being more aggressive and criminal than their White male counterparts. Due to this stereotype, police officers are more likely to justify the use of disproportionate, excessive or deadly force (Kane & White, 2009). Social events surrounded by racial controversy often generate unnerving emotions and actions in

otherwise peaceful protestors. Media inflammation of these events and protestors can sway an event to provoke riots, looting, and other crimes. According to California Penal Code 463, criminal looting is when someone commits burglary, grand or petty theft, or grand theft of a firearm in a state of emergency or local emergency. This includes earthquakes, floods, fires, riots, or other natural or manmade disasters (Penal Code 463 (d) 1-3; Government Code 8629 & 8630). Civilians may in turn lose trust in law enforcement officers, feeling there is a double standard and lack of respect for citizen rights (Chaney & Robertson, 2013). Social events, where officers' decisions may be questionable can often lead peaceful protestors to break the law; protestors may disagree with the officers' judgments. Media coverage may exacerbate already high-tension feelings as in some situations, the officer must use deadly force to subdue the perpetrator. According to Kingshott (2009), suicide by cop is the term that describes a suicidal incident whereby the suicidal subject engages in continuous, life-threatening behaviour until a law enforcement officer is compelled to respond with deadly force. Two other terms, *police assisted suicide* and *victim-precipitated homicide*, are often used when deadly force is used on a suicidal suspect (Kingshott, 2009). On occasion, the potential suicide victim threatens an officer's life or the lives of others in order to have their life ended by the police. In most suicide by cop situations, the law enforcement officer is rarely injured (Craun, Detar, & Bierie, 2013). With the term being controversial and ill-defined, the use of deadly force is highly objective and therefore can create tension after the trigger has been pulled (Craun et al., 2013). Bad cops, criminal looters, and suicide by proxy often lead to the "perfect storm" of conflict. It is important to examine each separately, addressing the issues at the core to prevent further issues from arising.

Police misconduct is not a burgeoning problem in the United States; it is an issue that has

prevailed for decades in United States, as well as globally (Chappell & Piquero, 2004; White & Escobar, 2008; White & Kane, 2013). Despite its persistent occurrence over time, there is a limited research exploring this controversial topic. Salient topics that will be examined in this section, in regards to bad cops, are risk factors, protective factors, perceptions of police officers, and factors that influence these perspectives.

Research has delineated factors that lead to police misconduct and factors that influence proper police behavior. Research has examined police misconduct in a myriad of capacities, specifically, when examining career ending misconduct, White and Kane (2013) identified the following risk factors, limited education, prior history of criminal activities, and negative recommendations from their previous jobs. While on the force, those who accrue a large number of complaints indicated a high risk for career ending misconduct (Harris, 2010; White & Kane, 2013).

Conversely, research has indicated protective factors against police misconduct. Officers with college educations, those who joined the force at an older age, excelling in the academy, married while on the job, and rose through the departmental ranks often avoided early termination from misconduct. Interestingly, empirical data showed that military experience was related to career ending misconduct with individuals 10 years on the force or more (White & Escobar, 2008; White & Kane, 2013). However, the explanation for this finding is unclear and garners the interest for further research in this area. Additional research regarding the role of prior military service will be needed to further disseminate this rationale of this risk factor. Research has identified that most misconduct occurs in the early stages of their career. Misconduct that occurs throughout can lead to more egregious acts (Harris, 2010). Studying the lifetime trajectory of police misconduct is an area of burgeoning research that can delineate

specific causes and pathways to potentially career ending misconduct.

### **Theoretical Framework**

While looking at risk factors and protective factors is an important component, exploring the theoretical frameworks to help explain this behavior can be critical for a deeper understanding of police misconduct. Chappelle and Piquero (2004) offered Aker's Social Learning theory to conceptualize the emergence of bad cops. By exploring negative behaviors such as accepting public gifts, opportunity theft (e.g., stealing from crime scenes), and using excessive force, often times tenets of social learning can help explain these behaviors. Engaging in a shared belief system can often result in rationalizing delinquent or deviant behavior. Thus, police officers who do not view accepting gifts as police misconduct, can often influence newcomers in the field. Additionally, behaviors by other members of the police subculture can continually be reinforced, therefore if the behavior officers are being modeled is corrupt, they too can engage in this behavior (Chappell & Piquero, 2004).

Karp and Stenmark (2011) suggested that new officers feel immense pressure to become part of the team and adopt the beliefs of their fellow officers. The power of the police culture proves to be an extremely potent in the field. The shared beliefs of this subculture often influence and change the beliefs of individual's opinions of those on force (Chappell & Piquero 2004). Research indicated that new officers will take the opinion of their training officers more highly than information gleaned during time in the academy. When police officers begin their career, they are "eager to become part of the police collective and be accepted as equals by their colleagues and they learn the job and acquire police attitudes through interactions with the latter" (Karp & Stenmark, 2011, p. 11). If new officers are exposed to attitudes and beliefs that may not align with Garcia's 2005 points out that often times officers will value crime fighting over public

order maintenance and the provision of social service (Garcia, 2005; Karp & Stenmark, 2011).

Another theoretical lens to help improve upon difficulties between citizens and the subculture of police is the Relational Bureaucracy theory (RBT). This theory suggests that improving the racial parity in the police force and community they service can help align the interests of the two groups. Therefore by increasing diversity on the police force, slowly attitudes and value systems can be shifted to a common middle ground, with a focus on community needs. Preliminary data exploring the push for a more diverse police force for the Los Angeles Police Department occurring in the early 1990s and again in the mid early 2000s prove the application of RBT prove fruitful (Lasley, Larson, Kelso, & Brown, 2011).

### **Misconduct**

There has been a multitude of research exploring ideas of racial profiling, instances of biased and prejudice behavior by the police over the course of the years. Much of this research supports both sides of this: The idea that racial profiling is in fact an issue in our society, and identifying additional contextual factors in traffic stops, decisions to search, disparate arrest practices etcetera, is needed by police officers who have contact and communications with minorities (Cochran & Warren, 2012; Falik & Novak, 2012; Pickerill, Mosher, & Pratt, 2009). There does not seem to be a clear cut answer for issues surrounding police misconduct and race. For example, Pickerill, Mosher, and Pratt (2009) indicated that “age, sex and contextual factors are as good as—and perhaps better than—race as predictors of searches” and “factors in addition to race” increases the likelihood of arrest or stops (p. 20). What the research does agree on and what can be even more important to the community at large, is the perception of police officers in society. Weitzer and Tuch (2006) noted that Black and Latino citizens often harbor distrust of police. In general, Black citizens tend to have a higher level of distrust than Latino citizens.

Additionally, minority males tend to experience the greatest dissatisfaction with police officers than White or minority females (Falik & Novak, 2012; Weitzer & Tuch, 2006). In a study by Huggins (2012), the race of the officer as well as the race of the citizen often plays a role in how citizens perceive encounters of traffic stops with police. The most salient being Black citizens being the less likely to report a proper police behavior with White officers during traffic stops (Huggins, 2012). Recognizing this perception of the public is paramount for police to be aware of during their work in the field.

Paramount to exploring what perceptions exist in mainstream society are factors that influence perceptions. Media, as well as vicarious and direct experiences with police officers can impact perceptions. Citizens who hear about friends or family's experiences with police officers can shape their view. Additionally, frequency of these direct and vicarious experiences can influence perceptions of police officers. Finally, media plays an important role; Weitzer and Tuch (2006) indicated that exposure to mass media reports on the police can influence perceptions, and can often be one of the strongest predictors of perceptions of police misconduct. People who frequently read about or watch reports of police misconduct are inclined to believe that it is a common occurrence. However, is this the intention of mainstream media of propaganda (i.e., exaggeration, misrepresentation, lying)? This is another area for future research as stories could be created to be decisive and incite conflict (i.e., messages of hate) between many groups and cultures (Akin, 2005).

The best way to avoid instances of police misconduct is to screen out individuals who have the likelihood of engaging in it. This can be done through the use of personality assessments, background investigations, and clinical interviews (Johnson, 2013). The Peace Officer Standards of Training (POST) align with the International Association of Chiefs of



Police Guidelines (IACP), requirements for screening processes. IACP requires a written test battery, including objective and job-related psychological assessment instruments, should be administered to every candidate (Johnson, 2013). However, police agencies need to do a better job to help the candidates who make it through the screening process and who might engage in misconduct. If early red flags or risk factors are identified, further investigation of the individuals and the complaints against them, as well as increased supervision will be suggested and/or implemented if it is early on in their career (White & Kane, 2013).

### **Training and Policy**

As mentioned earlier there can be differences between academy training and field officer training during probationary periods. Closing the gap between the operational world and the classroom is an area that needs to be further developed in police training. Due to the complexity and diversity of the populations police officers interact with, proper training and screening must occur. Preliminary research identified issues of “colorblind racism” and its influence in police training and practice. Colorblind racial ideology ignores current racism and allows discriminatory practices to continue, by ignoring differences in among individuals (Schlosser, 2013). Schlosser’s 2013 study outlined a training program of a large Midwestern police academy, measuring racial attitudes and beliefs before and after training. Diversity training exists and is described as short and basic; review topics of stereotyping and prejudicial behaviors and appears to remain stagnant over the years (Haberfeld, 2002; Schlosser, 2013). The study indicated that recruits from this large Midwestern academy experience racist attitudes in the form of color blind ideology. While this study is still preliminary, it highlights a need for further research regarding the training given to police recruits (Schlosser, 2013). In order to fully understand the racial attitudes, White and Escobar (2008) underlined five major issues regarding

training for police officers. The issue pertains to changing the pedagogy of police training. Experts suggest bringing the training closer to actual police work by incorporating past experiences, adopting needs of the trainees, and advocating for critical thinking and creativity. Increasing the amount of community and problem oriented police work is important by acknowledging problems exist and making police officers more aware of community needs. Increasing levels of multicultural and diversity training is vital to improving police training. Shifting diversity training towards a “exploring the pervasive influence of culture, race and ethnicity on daily encounters between police officers and civilian employees” (White & Escobar, 2008, p. 127). The Multicultural Close Contact Training developed by Haberfeld, incorporates contemporary teaching methods focusing on nine topics such as, race, ethnicity, crime, cultural awareness, hate and bias crime, and cross cultural communication. Finally, a focus on improving technology, improve training for the use of technological advances so officers are able to use these innovations properly (White & Escobar, 2008).

Throughout history of any organization, there are many employees who do not follow the policies of the organization, and if the organization has policies aligned with local, state, or federal laws, the laws could be violated as well. This leads to many issues of the need for policy reform within an organization, but also inquiries into criminal or civil law violations. In the field of policy development, it is important that all stakeholders of any given organization have an interest to see the policies that most people would like to change or revise. This is a very proactive stance as most organizations face adverse situations regarding poor policies or no policies in place, primarily because they are not prepared. In the case of policy development for a law enforcement agency, the internal policy makers must invite the community and other outside entities; this will educate all parties of the policies, procedures, and the job requirements

of law enforcement . . . not to mention the situations and immediate critical thinking skills that are placed on law enforcement. Most people do not have the true vision of how law enforcement conducts business, at times, only by mainstream media. This is paramount because law enforcement personnel must follow policy; in addition, law enforcement personnel are civil servants who have constant interaction with the community. Policies must be reviewed, revised, and created to deal with violations of the agency as well as all local, state, and federal laws. There is never a perfect world, but law enforcement agencies need to be proactive when dealing with the public; there is no excuse for *bad cops*, or any other type of behavior to mislead the public.

There are common themes throughout the creation and/or revision of policies, including the implementation of the policies. These themes deal with the need for communication, collaboration, listening skills, open-mindedness, influence, patience, problem solving, conflict resolution, and teamwork between all stakeholders of the organization. Engaging others in any organizational process is important, as every person who is responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the policy must be included in the development stages; input is very important, especially for the “buy in” for policy change. Relevant training and professional development is needed along with creating a policy manual; organizations must be consistent. Having a proactive stance on issues and have funding available for set policies, are also important. Power of influence is another point, as this will create an atmosphere of teamwork and buy in. This shows a great characteristic of leadership; this is better than power of control as people want to work *with* others, not *against* one another. Setting guidelines and expectations of policies promotes a strong structure in policy development.

## **Looters, Suicide by Cops, and Bad Cops**

**Looters.** One of the first areas to discuss deals with the notion that an individual or groups of individuals can engage in various acts that are designed to sabotage. If so, more times than not, these acts are defined under either federal and or local statutes as felony crimes. If the incidents involve the use of destructive devices and or firearms, those acts enhance the penalties for the initial offenses. It is not unusual to find legal provisions that enhance the sentencing penalties to life felonies.

Considering the concept of looting; simply stated there are few real criminal statutes with this definition. Looting is basically burglary and most times includes the destruction of property and stealing articles-items. These types of offenses are in most states considered to be felony offenses. Possession of weapons or firearms increases the seriousness of the offenses to life felony crimes. Drawing from various examples throughout modern times, when businesses are the victims of organized groups who indent to create chaos and burglarize, steal and damage property, one of the outcomes is the loss of employment opportunities for innocent people not involved in the theme or event. It is not uncommon to find business owners not willing to reopen their businesses. The costs associated with a new start up-replacement business and high costs to rebuild and insure their businesses, becomes prohibitive. As a result, the tax revenue suffers and the local community may not be able to recover from the negative fiscal outcome.

The mentality of these affrays and riots generally involved people who are emotionally upset over local issues and feel their only recourse is to demonstrate and make their feeling known to local officials. Violence finds its way into the situation and more chaos and costs; there are considerable economic factors and costs that become fiscal burdens on local communities. Struggling communities may not be able to fund and support their utilization of

resources necessary to control certain types of behavior. If the federal government steps in to assist, the fiscal drain does not evaporate either. If one would consider the total economic costs among local and federal resources, the analysis is likely staggering. Consumer behavior and confidence (i.e., consumer spending) is shaken because of these types of activities and it may take a considerable amount of time to rebuild your community to restore safety and confidence among innocent citizens.

Regardless of the penalties for these types of offenses, we will most likely continue to find people who ignore the law. Some have previous experience in the criminal justice system and may not fear it. Others may be under the influence of some substance and are unable to think clearly, some may be angry and want to make a public policy statement and some may not be employed or have much going on in their lives and are seeking some form of adventure by being a cultural norm violator; antagonizing police to catch them if they can. It is likely the finger pointing will continue well into the future as there are few options outside the physical confrontation for communities to gain control and protect businesses and people. As sensitive as this topic has become, the ability to have meaningful and respectful frank conversations on personal responsibility and living a productive-meaningful life will not like suffice today. If we add the serious problem of unemployment and our economy the potential for more conflict is likely to polarize people to new levels.

**Suicide by cops.** Mental illness has its place in a society; in addition, dysfunction is part of how humans function in their world. Although detecting these behaviors has eluded experts for years, it is likely the ability to predict with certainty these behavioral traits may become more advanced. It is nearly impossible for anyone to predict when a person may act out and cause a serious situation to take place; it is the unknown that causes people much discussion and

angst. Police are unable to serve as clairvoyants and predict the future. Being ready for uncertainty is impossible and very costly; however, when an event takes place, the first responders are expected to respond with ample tools to stop and fix the situation.

Here is the reality, this type of proactive thinking is merely a fairy tale and impossible to provide to any community. Yes, law enforcement and other social service agencies can identify the citizens who have previous mental health and criminal records, but their ability to predict when if any of these people will act out is not likely. Absent some insider information, most law enforcement would agree this task is impossible (Aziz, 2011). We are not in a society that permits our system of justice without legal justification; the ability to lock up people we believe are potential threats. Given the opportunity a person may want to seek out some attention and conduct an act that would likely lead to their own death. The media will cover the story and provide some *no scientific analysis* as to the cause of the event, which is most times inaccurate; this is mainstream media's modus operandi. Most any venue today can be a place for any violent incident to take place. No one can afford to pay the associated costs to keep all of the society safe. Police are again thrust into situations that many times involve mental health issues for which they are not trained, and they must be ready to engage in that conflict to bring the situation in a peaceful conclusion.

**Bad cops.** Today, the stories we read, which people should be able to see through the media-hype, report cases of bad cops as the public then seems to like the mystery and secretive nature of the world of police. For the most part, law enforcement officers and support staff represent hard working and ethical people. We could find a tremendous amount of information involving all public and private sectors, regardless of the educational level and status in the community, as people are human and do stupid things that end up getting them in trouble. When

caught or exposed they make up stories and excuses or flatly deny the accusations. Upon a criminal conviction they may recant and ask the court for forgiveness to obtain a lean sentence. Yes, there are bad cops, lawyers, bankers, judges, politicians, doctors, military personnel, clergy, sports figures, housewives, teachers, research scientists, journalists, commercial pilots, CIA spies, and the list continues. The common factor involves the human factor . . . how and why a person chooses to engage in certain types of behavior becomes the real issue. Some feel or drawn to the activity because they feel it empowers them. Some folks may be attracted to people with power, either power of control or power of influence. Some people may not care any longer and suffer from cynicism or burn out and do not feel appreciated or are abused by their work.

Considering the multitude of excuses one will likely ask where it stops. Being accountable begins at a young age. If the person does not have much structure in their life, they may find sneaky ways to engage in types of behavior without being detected. Their feelings of being covert and getting away with the act could fuel their continued desire to take the opportunity to higher levels. The number of single family structures could also account for risky behavior. Police are no different. If they live and work in a culture that offers and affords them some level of prestige and power, they may become addicted to that feeling of being superior to others. Let us be real, police do enjoy certain perks and opportunities that others are not afforded, but so are many other professions . . . the list goes on. We tend to want to see law enforcement officers punished for their illegal conduct. Some citizens could create the argument that police should be held to a higher standard than other professions and should receive harsher punishment for tarnishing the public trust. In the final analysis, law enforcement personnel who are implicated in violations of law do end up in prison far more often than what one would think. The same holds for other occupations. It is likely that more information will be

uncovered and we will find more corrupt practices among police. Educating police and others can be an effective means to be proactive to avoid the conduct.

### **Ways to Approach These Situations**

When conflating criminal looters, suicide by police, and bad cops, it is inevitable for a “perfect storm” to arise. However, even alone, these situations are dangerous with a multitude of repercussions, therefore it is pertinent to discuss the ways in which to help correct these situations before they occur. Unfortunately, these preventative measures are not always taken and therefore, it is equally important to consider ways in which to approach these situations once they have already occurred. Enmeshing itself amongst these situations, the media then is a contributing factor and therefore an entity to be examined with respect to responsibility. The following section presents a discussion providing suggestions regarding ways to approach these situations with consideration of the media’s responsibility.

Criminal looters are often a byproduct of a chaotic environment. Although a majority of the time protests, marches, or rallies are rooted from a specific societal issue, for the most part their intentions are civil. There are many types of groups, crowds, and other organizational structures, but it is incredible how people change when they interact with people as an “individual” compared to as “in a group or crowd.” It is an interesting factor when researching how people act and when being judged as individuals; this is because we have general sense and self-awareness. But when people lose sense and personal responsibility in groups, it can lead to a mob mentality, which is known as deindividuation. Activists are usually focused on their specific beliefs with an aim to reach out to greater audiences while criminals are mostly driven by their own self-interest (Borum & Tibly, 2005). However, when high levels of disarray begin to escalate, it is difficult to assess scenarios and individuals from criminal looters and activists.



When bad cops are confronted by these situations, the repercussions only seem to spiral negatively as other issues of crowd management and suicide by police may arise. The media's interference then creates further consequences of these situations.

By crime being such a heavy component within the news and its blurred line amongst entertainment, the media is then an influential factor as to how acts of criminal looting, riots, and other criminal activities are perceived by the public (Dowler, Fleming, & Muzzatti, 2006). Due to the media's profound influence, their ability to shape the public's perception on crime is evident (Dowler, Fleming, & Muzzatti, 2006; Guastaferrero, 2013). Studies suggested that media contributes in perpetuating specific violent crimes in a disproportionate manner, with a great emphasis on property and societal issues (Eschholz, 2003). Therefore, criminal looters, situations arising from suicide by police, and bad cops are prime targets in news coverage.

Not only are these types of crimes being highlighted, but with a pressing aim for the media to *entertain* the factual information can be *distorted or misrepresented* (Dowler, Fleming, & Muzzatti, 2006). Aside from distortion and misrepresentation, police and protesters fluctuate as the social problem, depending on the media's bias and their tendency, *decontextualize* information from the overarching problems. The media frames certain information and highly dictates accountability (Schulenberg & Chenier, 2014). Consequently, it is imperative to discuss how these situations can be approached beforehand in order to prevent past situations from continuously occurring. Literature and several studies suggested multiple ways such situations can be approached from the perspective of the media, public, and law enforcement (Dowler, Fleming, & Muzzatti, 2006).

A common technique used by the media is *selection bias*, which determines what stories or issues to cover and which ones not to cover. Another form of bias used by the media is

*description bias*, meaning how the media describes a certain story or issues using particular words and adjectives. The media, depending on their perspective will decide to cover only a particular set of events, usually the ones with the greatest violent and then carefully use particular, mainly negative adjectives, to attribute responsibility to one of the parties (Davenport, Soule, & Armstrong, 2011; Schulenberg & Chenier, 2014). In order to disseminate such bias, the media can present its content with equal stress on both sides on the issue, such as the need for the desired outcome (i.e., the protester's goals) and the need for protection and safety (i.e., law enforcement's goals) then such chaotic consequences can be avoided (Mullen & Skitka, 2006). This preventative suggestion may be difficult for the media to achieve as there are several other factors that must be taken into consideration and can be further researched. Therefore, the preventative measures from the public perspective are also essential to examine.

It is important to note that it is difficult to assess a specific party in relation to the responsibility when these situations arise. Although it may easy to blame a particular entity for such a "perfect storm," it effective to focus on the preventative measures from all perspectives. From a public's view, it can be helpful to be knowledgeable about ways to approach such situations. The most relevant suggestion to propose is being aware of the different types of protest activities with the most non-violent options in mind. A study by Ratliff and Hall (2014) found the most common protest activities in the United States from 2006 to 2009 to be literal symbolic, and aesthetic, and sensory. Examples of these include: chanting, street theater, petitions, and flyers. These types of protest activities seem to be the most common and therefore, should be continued to be practiced while avoiding activities such as collective violent and threats (e.g., physical violence, throwing or objects, damaging property, etcetera) that can be lead to positions of chaos (Ratliff & Hall, 2014).

From law enforcement's direction, several approaches can be considered. First, it is crucial to examine the relationship law enforcement has with the media. Due to their proximate encounter with the media, the police have an advantage, that if utilized accordingly can help disseminate misconstrued information (Graziano, Schuck, & Martin, 2009). Mullen and Skitka (2006) suggested that government officials should give emphasis to the main goal that the justice system is to both guarantee that the right outcome is obtained and to safeguard the rights of defendants to obtain due process. Yet, this may not always be attained as police will still most likely run into chaotic situations.

Therefore, what can the police do in relation to public outcry turned to violence? One suggestion is using problem-oriented policing approach that helps manage violence in crowds. This is described to be effective in police units that have implemented such techniques (Madensen & Knutsson, 2011). This approach begins by identifying the issues that keep occurring and in this stance, the situations by criminal looters who cause suicide by police scenarios its harmful consequences. An analysis is then constructed regarding the causes and a detailed response plan is presented, followed by an evaluation regarding its effectiveness. Crowd management may help reduce the chances of violence and criminal looters, yet it may not provide suggestions as to when facing suicide by police situations.

Suicide intervention strategies and skills are then important for all police officers to understand and implement. Although it may be unclear at times whether a police officer is facing a suicide by police situation, assessing the scenario can help make that determination and further interventions. Kingshott (2009) and Lord (2012) provided specific cues that can help identify a suicide by police situation; cues such as *the subject is barricaded* or the subject has committed or stated a crime, such as just killing someone or *the subject says the he has a life-*

*threatening illness*. Such cues provided are only a few of several indicators; nonetheless, it is important to note each situation varies and therefore difficult to assess. However, police officers with sufficient training will be provided with the resources needed when faced in such predicaments. Suicide by police is a difficult situation for all parties involved and therefore, is suggested that all officers involved in such incidents be attentively observed and helped through their psychological recovery (Kingshott, 2009). Screenings after such incidents can help distinguish officers who may be unfit to continue with their duties, but screenings can also be ways to approach other situations, such as bad cops.

Regarding police misconduct, one of the most common suggestions is screening officers for any red flags that can indicate whether such individuals may involve themselves in police misconduct activities leading to labels such as bad cops. Police departments should then be responsible for adequately managing their departments and their fellow officers to help prevent the initiation or perpetuation of such incidents that make up a perfect storm. In addition, they must conduct truthful internal investigations and not headhunt their employees. Chappell and Piquero (2004) suggested keeping track of officer's behaviors as Arrigo and Claussen (2003) proposed specific pre-employment screening. The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory has been commonly used in the pre-employment screening phase of law enforcement; however, has been noted that other psychological tests such as the Inward Personality Inventory (IPI) and the Revised-Neo Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) to be more effective tools. By completing psychological evaluations, departments are able to screen out individuals who present any indicators of psychological or behavioral disorders and patterns of misconduct that can interfere in their ability to fulfill their duties (Johnson, 2013). These preventative measures can help avoid situations where police officers mistake an incidence as suicide by police or display clear

signs of police brutality.

It is evident that the media has a profound effect on criminal looters, suicide by police and bad cops. When combined, a whirlwind of consequences may arise. Therefore, the previous suggestions have been provided in order to help prevent or adequately intervene when one or several of these situations arise. Measures by the police departments, police officers themselves, the media, and the public should be implemented to avoid initiating or perpetuating a *perfect storm*.

## References

- Akin, J. (2005). Mass media. Retrieved from <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/mass-communication>
- Arrigo, B., & Claussen, N. (2003). Police corruption and psychological testing: A strategy for preemployment screening. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 47(3).
- Aziz, R. (2011). When individuals seek death at the hands of the police: The legal and policy implications of suicide by cop and why police officers should use nonlethal force in dealing with suicidal suspects. *Golden Gate University Law Review*, 41(2), 183-212.
- Borum, R., & Tilby, C. (2005). Anarchist direct actions: A challenge for law enforcement. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 28(3), 201-223. doi:10.1080/10576100590928106
- Chaney, C., & Robertson, R. V. (2013). Racism and police brutality in America. *Journal of African American Studies*, 17(4), 480-505.
- Chappell, A. T., & Piquero, A. L. (2004). Applying social learning theory to police misconduct. *Deviant Behavior*, 25, 89-108.
- Craun, S. W., Detar, P. J., & Bierie, D. M. (2013). Shots fired: Firearm discharges during fugitive apprehensions. *Victims and Offenders*, 8, 56-69.
- Davenport, C., Soule, S. A., & Armstrong, D. A. (2011). Protesting while Black? The differential policing of American activism, 1960 to 1990. *American Sociological Review*, 76(1), 152-178. doi:10.1177/0003122410395370
- Dowler, K., Fleming, T., & Muzzatti, S. L. (2006). Constructing crime: Media, crime, and popular culture. *Canadian Journal of Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 48(6), 837-850.
- Eschholz, S. (2003). Crime on television: Issues in criminal justice. *Journal of the Institute of*

- Justice & International Studies*, 9-19.
- Falik, S. W., & Novak, K. J. (2012). The decision to search: Is race or ethnicity important. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 28, 146-165.
- Garcia, V. (2005). Constructing the other within police culture: An analysis of a deviant unit within the police organization. *Police Practice and Research*, 6, 65-80.
- Graziano, L., Schuck, A., & Martin, C. (2009). Police misconduct, media coverage, and public perceptions of racial profiling: An experiment. *Justice Quarterly*, 27(1), 52-76.
- Guastafarro, W. P. (2013). Crime, the media, and constructions of reality: Using HBO'S the wire as a frame of reference. *College Student Journal*, 47(2), 264-270.
- Haberfeld, M. R. (2002). *Critical issues in police training*. Toledo, OH: Hippo Books.
- Harris, C. J. (2010). Problem officers? Analyzing problem behavior patterns from a large cohort. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38, 216-225.
- Huggins, C. M. (2012). Traffic stop encounters: Officer and citizen race and perceptions of police Propriety. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 37, 91-110.
- Johnson, R. (2013). Forensic psychological evaluations for behavioral disorders in police officers: Reducing negligent hire and retention risks. In J. B. Helfgott (Ed.), *Criminal Psychology* (p. 253). Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.
- Kane, R. J., & White, M., D. (2009). Bad cops: A study of career-ending misconduct among New York City police officers. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 8(4), 737-766.
- Karp, S., & Stenmark, H. (2011). Learning to be a police officer. Tradition and change in the training and professional lives of police officers. *Police Practice and Research*, 12, 4-15.
- Kingshott, B. F. (2009). Suicide by proxy: Revisiting the problem of suicide by cop. *Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations*, 9, 105-118. doi:10.1080/15332580902865110

- Lasley, J. R., Larson, J., Kelso, C., & Brown, G. C. (2011). Assessing long term effects of officer race on police attitudes toward the community: A case for representative bureaucracy theory. *Police Practice and Research, 12*, 474-491.
- Lord, V. B. (2012). Factors influencing subjects' observed level of suicide by cop intent. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 39*(12), 1633-1646. doi:10.1177/0093854812456689
- Madensen, T. D., & Knutsson, J. (2011). *Preventing crowd violence*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Mullen, E., & Skitka, L. J. (2006). When outcomes prompt criticism of procedures: An analysis of the Rodney King case. *Analyses of Social Issues & Public Policy, 6*(1), 1-14. doi:10.1111/j.1530-2415.2006.00100.x
- Cochran, J. C., & Warren, P. Y. (2012). Racial, ethnic, and gender differences in perceptions of the police: The salience of officer race within the context of racial profiling. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, 28*, 206-227.
- Pickerill, J. M., Mosher, C., & Pratt, T. (2009). Search and seizure, racial profiling, and traffic stops: A disparate impact framework. *Law & Policy, 31*, 1-31.
- Ratliff, T., & Hall, L. (2014). Practicing the art of dissent: Toward a typology of test activity in the United States. *Human & Society, 38*(3).
- Schlosser, M. D. (2013). Racial attitudes of police recruits in the United States Midwest police academy: A quantitative examination. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences, 8*, 215-224.
- Schulenberg, J. L., & Chenier, A. (2014). International protest events and the hierarchy of credibility: Media frames defining the police and protestors as social problems. *Canadian Journal of Criminology & Criminal Justice, 56*(3), 261-294. doi:10.3138



/cjccj2012.E12

Weitzer, R., & Tuch, S. A. (2006). Race and perception of police misconduct. *Social Problems*, 51, 305-325.

White, M. D., & Escobar, G. (2008). Making good cops in the twenty-first century: Emerging issues for the effective recruitment, selection and training of police in the United States and abroad. *International Review of Law Computers & Technology*, 22, 119-134.

White, M. D., & Kane, R. J. (2013). Pathways to career ending police misconduct: An examination of patterns, timing, and organizational response to officer malfeasance in the NYPD. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 40, 1301-1325.