U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Criminal Justice Information Services Division

West Virginia University.

Ambushes and Unprovoked Attacks

Assaults on Our Nation's Law Enforcement Officers

Ambushes and Unprovoked Attacks:
Assaults on Our Nation's Law Enforcement Officers

Jeffrey A. Daniels, Ph.D.
West Virginia University
College of Education and Human Resources
Department of Counseling, Rehabilitation Counseling, and Counseling Psychology

James J. Sheets, Ph.D.
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Criminal Justice Information Services Division
Crime Statistics Management Unit

Philip D. Wright
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Criminal Justice Information Services Division
Crime Statistics Management Unit

Brian R. McAllister
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Criminal Justice Information Services Division
Crime Statistics Management Unit

NOTICE

This publication was prepared by the United States Government. Neither the United States Government nor the United States Department of Justice, nor any of their employees, makes any warranty, expressed or implied, or assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed, or represents that in use would not infringe privately owned rights. Reference herein to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, mark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendations, or favoring by the United States Government or any agency thereof. The views and opinions of the authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the United States Government or any agency thereof.

Photographs in this publication are for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to be an accurate portrayal of real events or the people involved in the real events.

CONTENTS

Notice iii

Table of Contents iv

Executive Summary v

Introduction 1

Chapter 1: Definitions and Framework 7

Chapter 2: The Officers 13

Chapter 3: The Offenders 35

Chapter 4: Areas of Concern for Law Enforcement 57

Chapter 5: Case Analysis 95

Chapter 6: Summaries of Selected Incidents 109

Appendix A: Methodology 119

Appendix B: LEOKA Studies and Officer Safety Awareness Presentations 127

Appendix C: Human Reactions to Trauma 131

Appendix D: References 135

Appendix E: Author Biographies 139

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over a number of years, data collected by the FBI's Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) Program began to demonstrate an alarming trend in the number of officers who were killed in ambushes and unprovoked attacks. While the overall number of officers who were feloniously killed was declining, the percentage of officers feloniously killed during surprise attacks was increasing. The LEOKA Program launched a thorough examination of ambushes and unprovoked attacks in an effort to gain insight into the phenomenon and to provide information to enhance training programs for law enforcement officers. The research focused on the mindset and perceptions of officers involved and offenders who carried out those acts. In particular, why the incidents may have occurred and how those involved reacted to the situation.

Researchers selected incidents that met the LEOKA definitions for ambushes and unprovoked attacks, researched those cases, conducted in-depth interviews of officers and offenders involved in those incidents, and methodically analyzed the interview transcripts for useful information. Participants included both law enforcement officers and offenders who willingly agreed to participate. The officers had survived or witnessed an ambush or an unprovoked attack. The offenders had been tried and convicted of engaging in such incidents on one or more law enforcement officers.

Thirty-three officers were interviewed, and researchers identified several topics that officers frequently addressed when discussing the ambushes and unprovoked attacks. Some of the most commonly mentioned themes included: **Ambushed** (describing the attack), **Altered perceptions** (during the incident) **Backup, Reflections** (lessons learned), **Post-incident-Social support, Ambush cognitions** (thoughts during the incident), **Psychological impact,** and **Injuries sustained.**

Thirty offenders participated, and the LEOKA research team conducted interviews with them in various prisons throughout the United States. Most of the offenders were male (96.7 percent) and had a history of drug abuse (73.3 percent) and/or alcohol abuse (66.7 percent). Fifty percent of the sample reported one or more suicide attempts in the past. The transcripts of the interviews with offenders demonstrated that many lived lives of stress and strain, often coming from unstable homes and engaging in criminal activities early in life. From the information gathered from the offenders, the research team identified five overall motives behind their attacks:

Personal—*the overall motive for the ambush or unprovoked attack was for personal reasons (to accomplish a personal objective, e.g., avoiding arrest).*

Expressive—*the overall motive for the ambush or unprovoked attack was related to the offender's emotionality or experience of crisis—including suicidality.*

Economic—*the overall motive for the ambush or unprovoked attack was for economic gain.*

Political—*the overall motive for the ambush or unprovoked attack was political reasons, or to make a political statement.*

Social—*the overall motive for the ambush or unprovoked attack was for social reasons. As a result of attacking the officer, an offender stood to gain social standing within his circle.*

In addition, researchers identified micromotives from the offenders' interviews. Micromotives are defined as biopsychosocial influences that set the stage for the ambush or unprovoked attacked. These influences could include "the offender's worldview, or the actual needs, values, or desires that were involved" (Daniels et al., 2016, p. 252). Examples of the most common micromotives include: **Street life** (prior criminal involvement), **Substance use** (history of drug use), **Prepared for battle** (access to or obtaining weapons), **Negative background as a minor** (particularly family instability), **Mental state** (including cognitive reactions and remorse), and **Escape** (from the attack).

Whatever the impetus for an ambush or unprovoked attack, it is not known ahead of time, and such assaults seem impossible to mitigate. Even so, the analysis of the interviews LEOKA staff conducted with officers and offenders found common subjects that can, at the very least, be discussed and, in some cases, addressed with training. LEOKA staff compiled a list of issues and training suggestions for officers. The discussion includes topics such as altered perceptual acuity, engaging offenders, mental preparation, communication, backup, and the will to survive. Officers also cited specific trainings that they felt directly contributed to their survival.

Several narratives describing ambushes and unprovoked attacks included in this study provide further insight into the situations and reactions of both the officers and the offenders. In eight of the cases reviewed, researchers were able to interview both the victim and/or witness officers and the offenders who perpetrated the ambushes or attacks. Two in-depth case studies present the context surrounding each incident and the viewpoints of both the officer and the offender. The presented perspectives demonstrate how different the officers' perceptions of what happened were from the offenders' perspectives.

The appendices present information about the methodologies used in the study, the LEOKA Program itself, and a discussion of human reactions to trauma. The last topic is particularly useful to place the themes of this study in context. In the aftermath of a traumatic event, such as being ambushed or involved in an unprovoked attack, humans respond on four primary levels: physiologically, psychologically, behaviorally, and spiritually. All of these aspects are interrelated, so a negative response in one area may have a negative impact in another area. Despite receiving injuries and being psychologically and spiritually traumatized, people can develop effective coping strategies by relying on the resources in their environment. Such resources may include family, friends, coworkers, the community, one's religious/spiritual community and beliefs, and professional counselors and psychologists.

The officers, LEOKA staff, researchers from West Virginia University (WVU), and others involved in this study have spent hundreds of hours in sharing and gathering information, reviewing thousands of pages of case reports and interview transcripts, and preparing the results. As many of the officers shared during their interviews, they hope their experiences will help other officers by impacting the discussion and training practices concerning these surprise assaults. While ambushes and unprovoked attacks cannot be prevented entirely, hopefully, with the help of what has been learned from this study, officers can go into the field with a greater understanding of why these attacks occur, specific circumstances in which they have occurred, and what some officers have done to survive the attacks and handle the aftermath.

INTRODUCTION

Every day, nearly one million police officers[1] in the United States don their badges, depart their homes, and set out to work as patrol officers, detectives, undercover agents, administrators, or to perform other duties that preserve law and order in their communities. Law enforcement officers swear "to serve and protect" the citizenry of their jurisdictions; a noble undertaking that is not without risks. While the vast majority of citizens respect law enforcement officers and do not pose a threat to them, a small element of the population presents potential danger to the health and safety of officers. The FBI's LEOKA Program presents the research in this study in an effort to provide some explanations and insights into incidents in which officers are intentionally harmed during ambushes and unprovoked attacks.

The LEOKA Program is a subprogram of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program, which offers a national view of crime in the United States. The primary goal of the LEOKA Program is to reduce the number of law enforcement officer deaths and assaults by providing data, research, and instructional services related to law enforcement safety. The LEOKA Program collects data concerning incidents in which law enforcement officers are killed or assaulted in the line of duty. The statistics are used to identify circumstances and trends in the data. Law enforcement agencies can use the results to develop policies and training programs to improve officer safety. This information is directly shared via the program's annual publication on www.fbi.gov, responses to special data requests from the public, special studies available to law enforcement on the FBI's Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal, and LEOKA officer safety awareness presentations. See Appendix B for more information about previous LEOKA studies and presentations available to law enforcement.

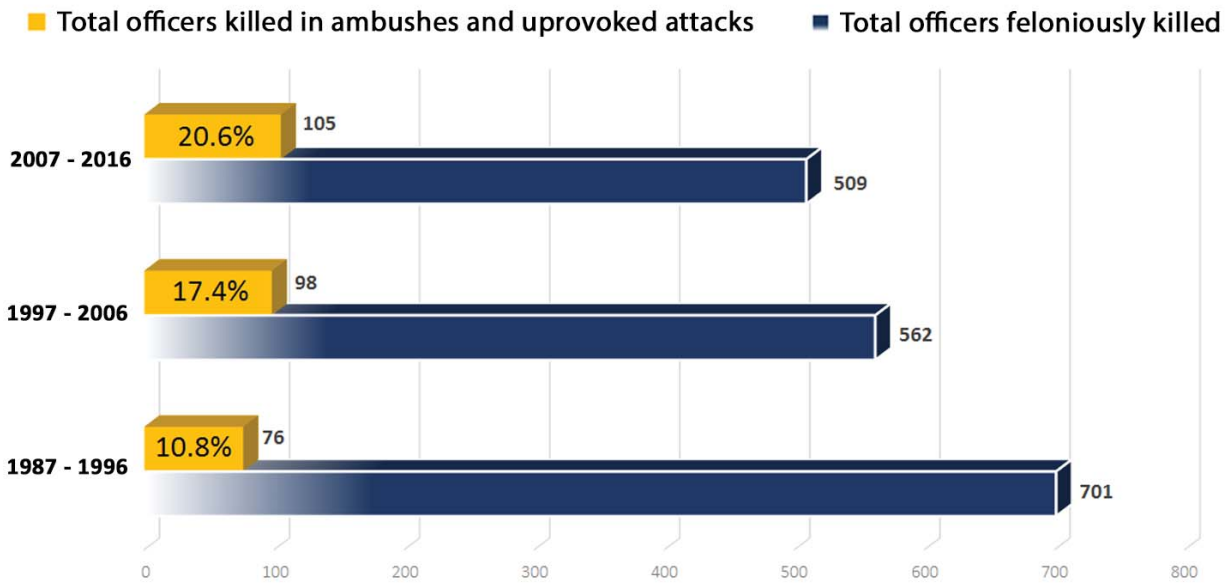
Why study ambushes and unprovoked attacks? Over a number of years, LEOKA data began to demonstrate a distressing trend in the number of officers who were killed in ambushes and unprovoked attacks. Overall, the number of officers who were feloniously killed was declining, but the percentage of officers feloniously killed during surprise attacks was increasing. To learn more about the nature of such attacks, LEOKA Program staff initiated this study. LEOKA staff, WVU researchers, officers who have been victims or witnesses to ambushes or unprovoked attacks, and others have spent hundreds of hours in sharing and gathering information, reviewing thousands of pages of case reports and interview transcripts, and preparing the results. Several of the officers said during their interviews that they hope their experiences will help other officers by impacting the discussion and training practices concerning these assaults. While ambushes and unprovoked attacks cannot be prevented entirely, hopefully, with the help of what has been learned from this study, officers can go into the field with

[1] *According to an estimate of the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund in 2016, there were approximately 900,000 sworn officers in the United States.*

a greater understanding of why these attacks occur, specific circumstances in which they have occurred, and what some officers have done to survive the attacks and handle the aftermath.

The data. As depicted in Figure 1, the total number of officers feloniously killed declined consecutively for each 10-year time period between 1987 and 2016. However, the percentage of officers whose deaths involved ambushes or unprovoked attacks steadily increased during the same 30 years.

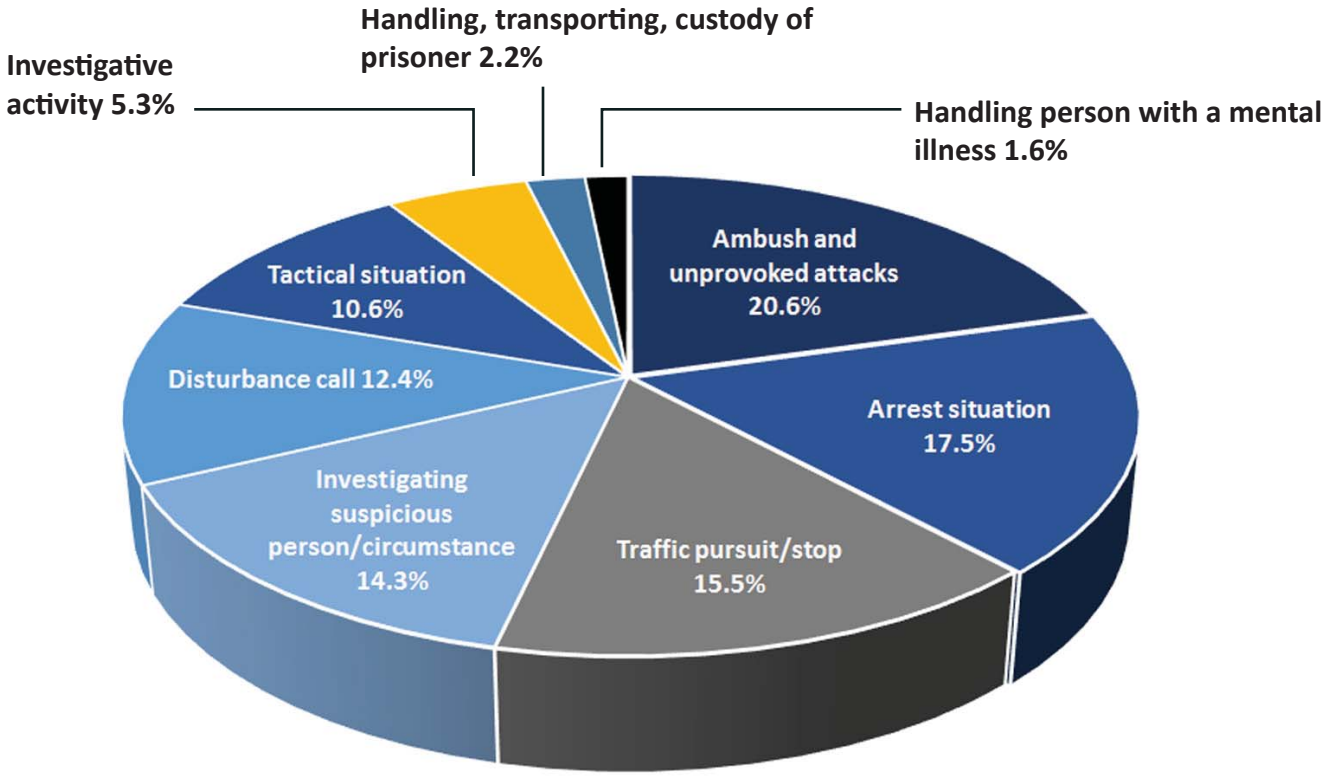
Figure 1
Law enforcement officers feloniously killed, **percent killed in ambush/unprovoked attack circumstances**, 1987-1996, 1997-2006, 2007-2016



Source: LEOKA database, 1987-2016, retrieved April 11, 2017

LEOKA Program staff took a closer look at the most recent data available for a 10-year period in Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 represents 10 years of data, from 2007 through 2016, and shows the percent distribution of the circumstances of the incidents during which 509 officers were feloniously killed. According to the data, circumstances involving ambushes or unprovoked attacks exceeded all other categories and were the reason for 20.6 percent of all deaths (105 officers). The next closest category was arrest situations, which accounted for 17.5 percent of officers (89) killed during the 10-year time period.

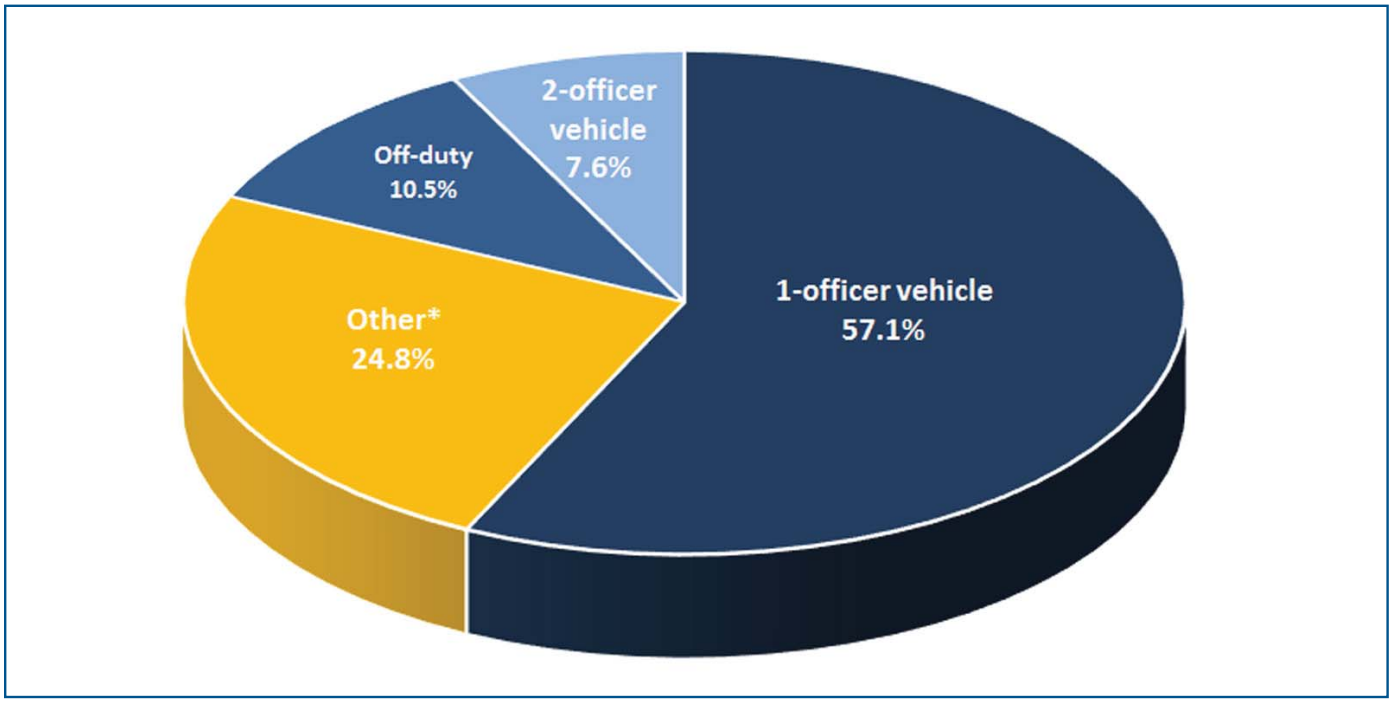
Figure 2
Law enforcement officers feloniously killed, **percent distribution* by circumstances at the scene of the incident**, 2007-2016



**Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100.0 percent.*
Source: LEOKA database, 2007-2016, represents 509 officers who were feloniously killed, retrieved April 11, 2017

Figure 3 presents the percent distribution by the types of assignments the officers were on at the times of the incidents. This graph includes data for the 105 law enforcement officers who were feloniously killed during an ambush or an unprovoked attack from 2007 through 2016. The data show that officers who were on assignment alone (60 officers) made up 57.1 percent of the felonious deaths that were connected to ambushes and unprovoked attacks.

Figure 3
Law enforcement officers feloniously killed, **percent distribution* by circumstances at scene of incident by type of assignment**, 2007-2016

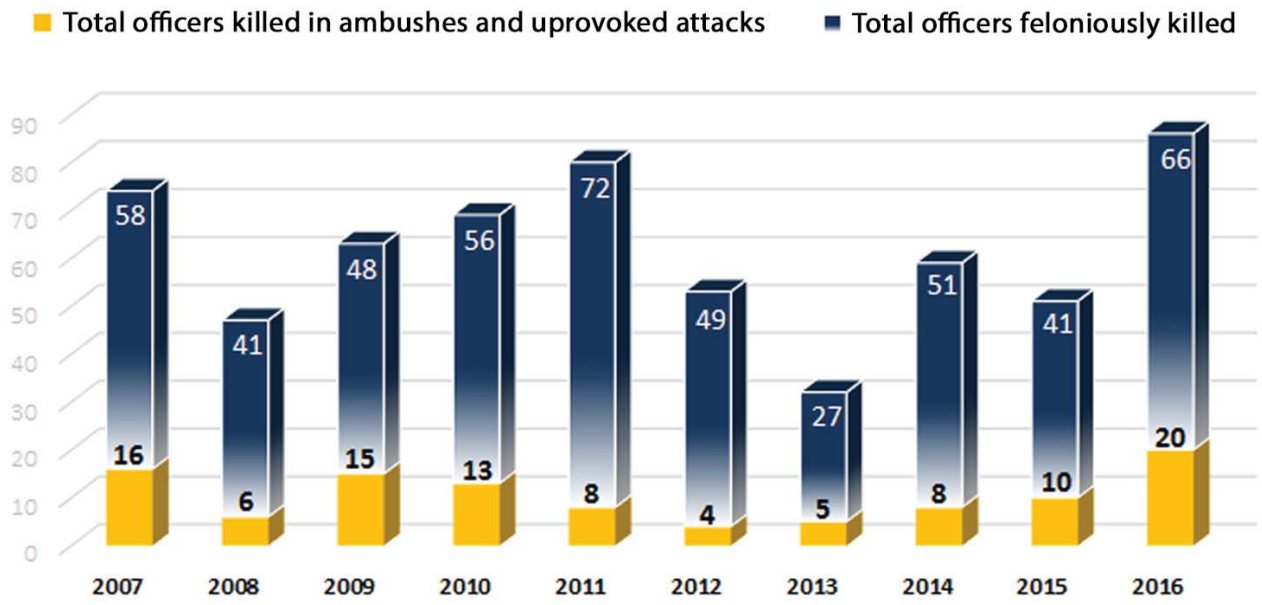


*Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100.0 percent.
**Other includes detectives, officers on special assignment, officers on foot patrol, undercover officers, and officers on other types of assignments not listed.

Source: LEOKA database, 2007-2016, represents 105 officers who were feloniously killed as a result of ambushes and unprovoked attacks, retrieved April 11, 2017

To give these data context, Figure 4 represents the same 10-year period, 2007 to 2016, and shows the total number of officers feloniously killed per year and the number of officers slain as the result of surprise attacks. Even as overall death rates fluctuate, ambushes and unprovoked attacks continue to be a serious issue for U.S. law enforcement officers.

Figure 4
Law enforcement officers feloniously killed, **number killed in ambushes and unprovoked attacks by year,** 2007-2016



Source: LEOKA database, 2007-2016 retrieved April 11, 2017

Overview of this study

This study of attacks on law enforcement officers presents the results of several years of meticulous research concerning specific occurrences of ambushes and unprovoked attacks. A 2015 officer ambush report that was coordinated by the Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office (Fachner & Thorkildsen, 2015) recommends that more in-depth studies should be conducted about ambushes on officers. Specifically, the COPS report suggests that researchers use "mixed-methods approaches that incorporate case studies, interviews, and other qualitative methods to help uncover *why* certain conditions do and do not give rise to police ambushes" (p. 27). *Ambushes and Unprovoked Attacks: Assaults on Our Nation's Law Enforcement Officers* represents such research in which mixed methods were employed to understand *why* people ambushed or attacked police officers.

Researchers reviewed information from 40 cases of ambushes and unprovoked attacks and received input from 33 law enforcement officers and 30 offenders. LEOKA staff conducted standardized, in-depth interviews with all 33 of the law enforcement officers and 27 of the offenders. To examine the information gathered, the LEOKA Program partnered with WVU's Department of Counseling, Rehabilitation Counseling, and Counseling Psychology within the College of Education and Human Services. The department chair, Jeffrey A. Daniels, Ph.D., and a team of counseling psychology doctoral candidates methodically analyzed transcripts of the interviews to identify notable concepts and recurring details addressed by the officers and offenders. Records and accounts of the incidents were also reviewed.

Strengths and limitations

Previous studies of police officer ambushes have relied heavily on quantitative analyses of national data or data from focus groups. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) conducted what is perhaps the most comprehensive study in 1974. That study included comprehensive records reviews and interviews with victim officers when possible.

A primary strength of this study is that the data includes reviews of case records, interviews with victim and witness officers, and interviews with offenders. No other ambush study has included the offender perspectives. A second strength of this study is the systematic methodology that was used to collect and analyze the data. A third and related strength is that, for the qualitative analyses, researchers used techniques to mitigate individual bias or expectation. (This study's methodology is detailed in Appendix A.)

Every study has limitations. Perhaps the greatest limitation of this study is that the sample is not random, but is a convenience sample of individuals involved in an ambush or unprovoked attack who were willing to be interviewed. Therefore, the ability to generalize the findings to any and all ambushes or unprovoked attacks is limited. Perhaps others who did not choose to participate and be interviewed hold different perspectives from those who did choose to participate.

Chapter descriptions

Each of the following chapters presents another piece of the larger puzzle that must be considered when studying an ambush or unprovoked attack.

- **Chapter 1: Definitions and Framework** provides the definitions for ambushes and unprovoked attacks that were used to choose incidents to analyze for this study and describes the theoretical concepts used as a framework to better understand ambushes and unprovoked attacks.
- **Chapter 2: The Officers** discusses the results of the study pertaining to the victim officers.
- **Chapter 3: The Offenders** provides the information analyzed from the offenders' perspectives.
- **Chapter 4: Areas of Concern for Law Enforcement** describes topics that law enforcement identified as concerns.
- **Chapter 5: Case Analysis** contains the case studies of three events. The authors of this study compare and contrast the perspectives of offenders and the victim officers.
- **Chapter 6: Summaries of Selected Incidents** provides case summaries for 28 of the ambushes and unprovoked attacks that were studied.
- **Appendix A: Methodology** details the methods used for this research, along with a discussion of this study's strengths and limitations.
- **Appendix B: LEOKA Studies and Officer Safety Awareness Presentations** describes additional resources available to law enforcement from the LEOKA Program.
- **Appendix C: Human Reactions to Trauma** shares research that can assist a reader to understand the host of physical and psychological perceptions and reactions a person may experience during a traumatic event in the moment it occurs and soon after it ends.
- **Appendix D: References** provides a bibliography of the resources used in this study.
- **Appendix E: Author Biographies**

CHAPTER ONE

Definitions and Framework

As mentioned in the introduction, the research conducted for *Ambushes and Unprovoked Attacks: Assaults on Our Nation's Law Enforcement Officers* involved choosing incidents that met the definitions for ambushes and unprovoked attacks, researching such cases, conducting in-depth interviews of officers and offenders involved in those incidents, and methodically analyzing the interview transcripts for useful information. In such a process, consistency is important. This chapter provides the precise definitions used for ambushes and unprovoked attacks and discusses the framework used to analyze the data. (For a detailed description of methods used in this study, see Appendix A.)

Defining ambushes and unprovoked attacks

Until recently, the LEOKA Program reported ambushes and unprovoked attacks under one category as "ambush situations." But now, the incidents are reported in separate categories. The *LEOKA Training Manual* distinguishes between assaults that entail entrapment and premeditation, and unprovoked attacks where an individual spontaneously attacked an officer who was not engaged with the individual in a law enforcement capacity. The specific definitions are:

Ambush (entrapment and premeditation): Situation where an unsuspecting officer was targeted or lured into danger as the result of conscious consideration and planning by the offender.

Unprovoked attack: An attack on an officer that, at the time of the incident, was not prompted by official contact between the officer and the offender.

Based on these definitions, all of the assaults included in this study are attacks that came with no warning. While this study uses the LEOKA definitions to analyze ambushes and unprovoked attacks on officers, the incidents included here also largely fit within the framework of the definitions for ambush presented in other reports, such as the 2015 study issued by the COPS Office, *Ambushes of Police: Environment, Incident Dynamics, and the Aftermath of Surprise Attacks Against Law Enforcement.* The authors of the COPS study, Fachner and Thorkildsen (2015), defined an ambush as "a planned surprise attack on a human target" (p. 2). The authors went on to identify four characteristics of ambushes, as initially described by the IACP (IACP; 1974). Those characteristics are: suddenness, surprise, lack of provocation, and excessive force.

Officer core ideas

During interviews with officers, LEOKA staff asked them detailed questions about their backgrounds and the ambushes and unprovoked attacks they experienced. The interviews were transcribed, and researchers at WVU meticulously examined the information. Topics that came up frequently in the interview transcripts were categorized into major themes or *core ideas*. Many of these core ideas were divided into one or more subordinate topics, or *domains*. For example, one core idea identified by officers was **Injuries sustained**, and a domain under it was *Medical treatment*. The analysis of the officers' transcripts identified 30 major core ideas presented by the law enforcement officers. Chapter 2 details the most common core ideas the officers shared during their interviews.

Offender motive

LEOKA staff tried to ascertain the overall motive for the ambush or unprovoked attack from every offender they interviewed. Researchers used a combination of broad and narrowly focused questions in an effort to understand each offender's motivations from a lifespan perspective, including questions such as:

- What were your childhood, family, and social life like?
- More specifically, what were your experiences in school, in the community, and with law enforcement?
- What was your adolescence like within each of these environments?
- How do you view the world, view authority, view the sanctity of life (or not)?
- Just prior to the ambush, what was your life like?
- What led up to the event?
- What were you thinking, feeling, and doing during the attack, and immediately after?
- How has the attack affected you since?

Questions such as these present a picture of the interaction between the offender and his or her environment, which provides insight into the individual's motives for attacking an officer. In a 2016 study of kidnapping (Daniels, Angleman, Vecchi, Bilsky, Leonard, Page et al.), one of the authors of this study, Jeffrey A. Daniels, Ph.D., defined *motive* as being "any stimulus, internal or external to the individual, which propels him or her to act."

This definition of motive takes a biopsychosocial perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) which considers the person's biological needs, urges and impulses; the person's psychological makeup of personality, needs, values, perceptions and attitudes; and his or her social environment, including family, school, community and other influences. An act such as committing an ambush or an unprovoked attack on a law enforcement officer involves the complex interplay of all of these influences. As these influences were examined, motives, or the reasons why the offender acted, began to emerge. Overall motives were categorized as either personal, expressive, economic, political, or social (these are defined in Chapter 3).

This study further processes an offender's motives into *micromotives*, another concept used in the previously mentioned kidnapping study. Micromotives are biopsychosocial influences "that set the stage for the captive-taking including the offender's worldview, or the actual needs, values, or desires that were involved" (Daniels et al., 2016, p. 252). The current study's definition of *micromotives* is "the multiple influences on the individual that led up to him or her believing that ambushing a law enforcement officer was not only an option, but an acceptable idea."

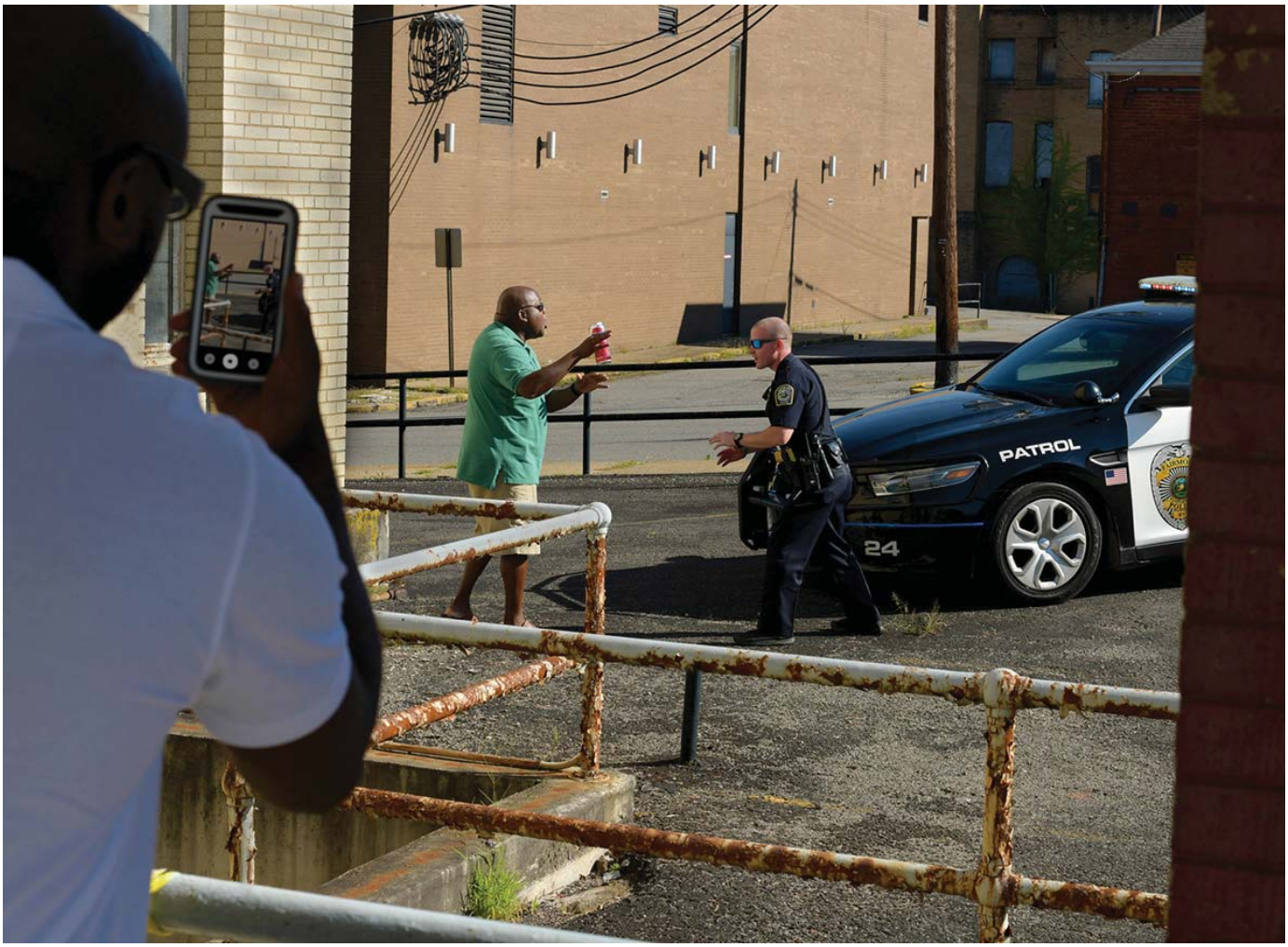
Researchers examined the interview transcripts and identified a total of 31 micromotives for the attacks. Many of these micromotives also have one or more submotives. Chapter 3 details the offenders' specific micromotives. Appendix A describes the process used to arrive at core ideas and domains derived from the data that ultimately defined the motives and micromotives.

Contextualized understanding

After conducting the interviews and initial analyses, the researchers evaluated the details reported by the officers and offenders, along with records concerning the incidents, using a framework known as *contextualized understanding* (Broomé, 2011). Contextualized understanding involves examining the full range of psychological phenomena that influence how a law enforcement officer or an offender recalls and makes sense of an incident. This construction gives context to the incidents because it takes into consideration that the viewpoint of any actor or witness to a traumatic event is impacted by *who* is involved, by *what* occurred in the moments of trauma, and by *why* each actor thinks the incident occurred. Contextualized understanding also takes into account any information contamination—experiences that may have altered a subject's memories—that may have occurred in the time since an incident happened.

Who. Within the contextualized understanding framework, *who* is represented by statements that offer insight into who the officer, witness officer, or offender is as a person. Researchers identified 11 core ideas/domains that helped them understand *who* the officers are as people. These include:

- Inflated self-perceptions
- Ambush cognitions
- Premonition
- Dedication to police work
- Vigilance
- Training
- Post-incident
- Psychological impact
- Officer's explanation for survival
- Officer composure
- Reflections



The viewpoint of any actor or witness to a traumatic event is impacted by the who, what, and why.

For the offenders in this study, 15 micromotives involved characteristics that demonstrated *who* they are:

- Victim mentality
- Acting on instinct
- History of substance use
- Suicide
- Confirmed psychopathology
- Inferred psychopathology
- Negative background as a minor
- Negative experiences as an adult
- Few Constraints
- Prepared for battle
- Street life
- Mental state
- Attitudes toward authority
- Extremist beliefs
- Denial

What. *What* represents information that illustrates the events surrounding the attacks. Researchers identified 15 core ideas/domains pertaining to what happened during the event from the officers' perceptions:

- Awareness of surroundings
- Routine response
- Procedures
- Lack of information
- Constraints
- Seeking cover
- Engaged offender
- Backup
- Offender conclusion
- Injuries sustained
- Prior encounters
- Ambushed
- Environmental conditions
- Physical altercation
- Conducting investigation

For the offenders, the researchers identified seven micromotives that answer the question of *what* happened:

- Escape
- Neutralize the officer
- Involvement with others
- Threats
- Arming self
- Incident resolution
- Altercation

Why. Ultimately, study authors and researchers tried to find an answer to the question, *why* did this person choose to ambush one or more law enforcement officers. From the officers' perspectives, researchers identified four core ideas that officers reported contributed to the attacks:

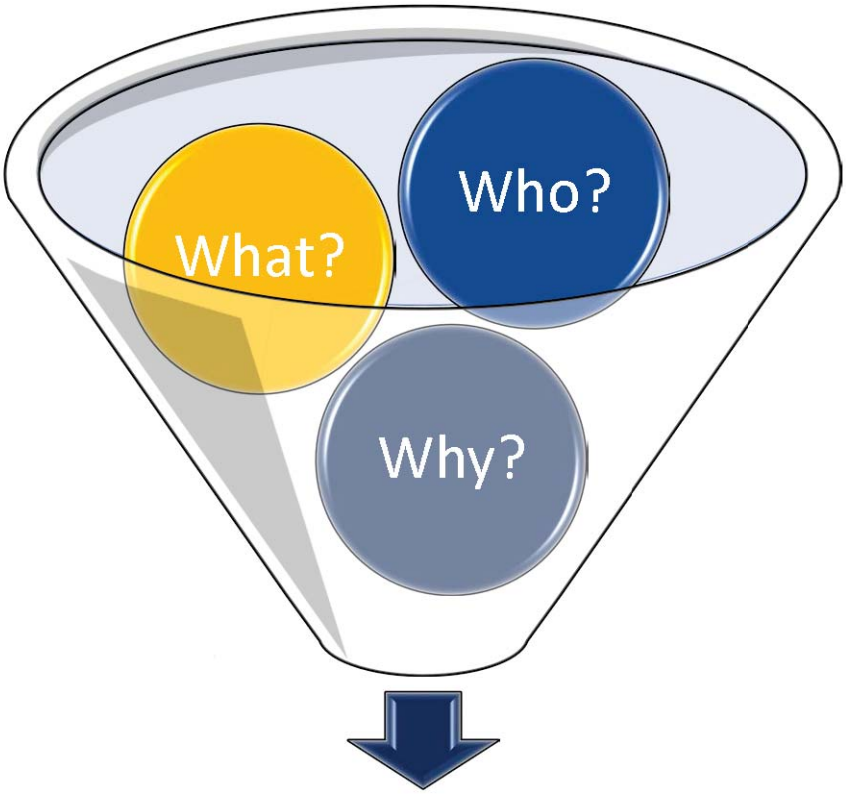
- Distracted
- Underestimated the threat
- Lack of awareness/alertness
- Officer's understanding of why

After reviewing the offenders' interview transcripts, researchers identified 10 overall micromotives that point to *why* the offenders decided to attack the law enforcement officers:

- Overall motive
- Maintain freedom
- Opportunity
- Mistaken identity
- Retaliation
- Survival
- Substance-use incident
- Premeditation
- Kill authority figure
- Triggers to violence

Studying ambushes and unprovoked attacks against law enforcement through the lens of contextualized understanding provided a broad perspective based on the perceptions of both the offenders and the law enforcement officers involved. Evaluating the *who, what,* and *why* helps to frame and understand each incident. This study expands on the deadly mix model presented in previous LEOKA studies to include practical prevention strategies for future ambush attacks. More importantly, it leads to a fourth major question: *Now what?*

Now what represents using the practical information from the data to inform, educate, and prepare law enforcement officers to consider and respond to ambushes and unprovoked attacks.



The following chapters further investigate the results of this study, and look more closely at the *who, what, why,* and *now what?* Chapter 2 examines results of interviews with victim and witness officers, and Chapter 3 reviews the results of interviews with offenders. In Chapter 4 the authors detail the issues that concerned the officers in this study and provide recommendations to address the matters whenever possible.

For those readers who would like to understand more about the host of internal and external physical and psychological phenomena that may impact how a person perceives a traumatic event in the moment it occurs and soon after it ends, please see Appendix C. Some readers may find it helpful to further understand these complex, emotionally charged incidents.

CHAPTER TWO

The Officers

The law enforcement officers who participated in this study shared their backgrounds and experiences and provided key information to examine the topic of ambushes and unprovoked attacks of officers. Thirty-three officers who had been victims of or witnesses to 27 incidents voluntarily contributed their insights. Some of the participating officers were critically injured during these incidents, and others witnessed offenders killing their fellow officers who were on the scene with them. The participating officers were aware that sharing their experiences might expose them to criticism of their actions from the law enforcement community. However, the officers who took part in the study recognized that if other officers could learn from their experiences, and if their contributions to this study could save lives, then it was well worth their time. None of the police officers with whom the LEOKA research team requested an interview declined participation, further demonstrating their dedication and commitment to the law enforcement community.

This chapter first provides quantitative details about the officers' backgrounds and experiences. Quantitative information includes statistics that can be measured or demonstrate patterns or identify facts about the data. The quantitative data is followed by the qualitative analysis of the interview transcripts in which the officers described their experiences before, during, and after the ambushes and unprovoked attacks. The goal of the qualitative analysis is to share the officer's insights about the incidents, such as their reasons, opinions, and motivations. When 50.0 percent or more of the officers discussed a particular topic, such as "psychological impact," the topic was included in the qualitative section. A topic may have also been included if it was particularly unique. (Conclusions and recommendations based upon the information in these analyses are provided in Chapter 4.)

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Officer demographics

Thirty-three officers were interviewed in this study. The following statistics provide demographic information, including the officers' educational and military experiences.

Gender

- 29 officers were male.
- 4 were female.

Race/ethnicity

- 30 officers identified as White, including 4 officers of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.
- 1 officer identified as Black or African-American.
- 1 officer identified as Asian.
- 1 officer identified as being more than one race, choosing the category of "other."

Average ages

- 36.1 years old was the average age of victim officers.
- 35.9 years old was the average age of witness officers.

Education

- 21 officers reported they had education beyond high school.
    - 7 officers had associate's degrees.
    - 12 had bachelor's degrees.
    - 2 had master's degrees.
- 7 had high school diplomas or equivalencies.
- 4 reported they had no degree.
- 1 did not report his educational level.

Military service

- 7 officers served in the military prior to their law enforcement careers.
    - 4 officers who served were in the military police.
    - 1 was in a medical position.
    - 1 was in the infantry.
    - 1 was a training instructor.
- 22 officers had not served in the military.
- 4 did not respond to this question.
- 4 officers reported military experience with a reserve component.
    - 2 of these 4 officers were enlisted previously
    - 1 who served in a reserve capacity was in the military police
    - 1 was in intelligence
    - 2 classified their duties as "other" (These two were the training instructor previously mentioned and a supply clerk.)

Officers' training experience

All of the officers in this study attended a police academy.

- 19 officers went to local academies.
- 7 went to regional academies.
- 7 went to state academies.
- None of the officers attended a federal academy.
- Academy training times ranged from 5 to 36 weeks, with an average of just under 22 weeks.
- Most of the officers reported their class standings.
    - 18 reported they graduated in the top third of their class.
    - 12 officers reported they graduated in the middle third.
    - 3 officers did not report their class standing.

Officers were asked to describe the training they had received prior to the assault under study.

- All of the officers (33) reported they had obtained sidearm training.
    - 117 hours was the average time they received sidearm training.
- 32 officers received shotgun training.
    - 28 hours was the average training time with a shotgun.
- 10 officers reported rifle training.
    - 333 hours was the average time spent in training with a rifle.
- 27 officers participated in interactive combat training.
    - 72 hours was the average time spent in interactive combat training.
- 15 officers were trained in Simunitions® using nonlethal ammunition.
    - 35 hours was the average time of training.
    - Some officers indicated this type of training did not exist at their academies.
- 32 officers learned defensive tactics such as martial arts, boxing, or wrestling.
    - 70 hours of defensive tactics was the average time spent.
- 27 officers received physical survival/mental conditioning training.
    - 24 hours was the average time officers participated in this training.

Law enforcement officers answered questions related to in-service training, including the length of time between their most recent in-service training and the attacks under study.

- All officers (33) reported that their agencies required in-service training with their sidearms.
- 30 of the 33 officers reported the length of time between their last in-service sidearm training and the incident.
    - 25 officers had sidearm training within 12 months before the attack.
    - 1 had sidearm training within 24 months.
    - 1 had sidearm training within 36 months.
    - 3 reported the time since their training as “other.”
- Of the 33 officers, 27 had in-service shotgun training.
    - 17 officers had shotgun training within 12 months prior to the attack.
    - 1 officer had shotgun training within 24 months of the attack.
    - 1 officer reported “other.”
    - 14 officers did not respond to this portion of the question.

Rifle in-service training was reported by 16 of the law enforcement officers in this study.

- 14 of those 16 officers received training within the 12 months prior to the assault.
- 2 officers reported “other.”

The ambushes and unprovoked attacks

Officer experience at the times of the attacks

- The officers in the study had been in uniform from just under 4 months to 32 years at the time of the attack.
- 11.5 years was the average years of service of the officers.
- Of these 33 officers, 22 were victim officers, and 11 were witness officers.
- 15 officers had been the victim of at least one prior assault.
- 10 officers reported being called to the location of the assault in at least one other instance.
- 7 officers knew the offender prior to the attack.
- 25 officers had no prior encounter with the attacker.
- 1 officer did not respond to the question about prior experience with the attacker.

Times of the attacks (See Table 2.1)

- Of the 27 incidents reported by officers, 22 occurred between 3:01 p.m. and 6 a.m.
- The seasons of the attacks were reported for 16 of the incidents.
    - 8 attacks occurred in the winter.
    - 3 occurred in the summer.
    - 3 occurred in the fall.
    - 2 attacks occurred in the spring

Table 2.1

Times of the assaults

Time span	Number of assaults	Percentage
Midnight – 3 a.m.	6	22.2
3:01 a.m. – 6 a.m.	2	7.4
6:01 a.m. – 9 a.m.	2	7.4
9:01 a.m. – 12 p.m.	0	0.0
12:01 p.m. – 3 p.m.	3	11.1
3:01 p.m. – 6 p.m.	5	18.5
6:01 p.m. – 9 p.m.	4	14.8
9:01 p.m. – 11:59 p.m.	5	18.5

Nature of the dispatch call

Of the 33 officers, 22 responded to a question about the nature of the dispatch call that led them to the scenes of the attacks.

- 8 officers answered calls for shots fired.
- 2 answered calls of rape.
- 1 responded to an assault.
- 1 answered a call to the scene of a vehicle incident.
- 10 officers reported their calls under the category of “other.”

Danger signals prior to the attacks

In some cases the offender attacked before the officer saw him; in other situations, there was some interaction prior to the attack.

- 18 officers reported no danger signals were apparent before they were attacked.
- 11 officers noticed some danger signals prior to the attack.
- 4 officers did not answer this question.

Officers who noticed danger signals reported these specific signs (they could choose more than one).

- 2 officers noticed the offenders' facial distortions.
- 2 reported threatening language.
- 2 reported the presence of a weapon.
- 1 officer noticed profuse sweating.
- 1 officer noted the offender's eye movements.
- 7 officers reported "other."

Backup

- 16 officers reported they requested backup,[2] either during or immediately after the attack.
- 13 officers said they did not request backup (in these cases, often another officer did).
- 4 officers did not provide data for this question.

Use of deadly force and weapons

- 16 officers responded they had the opportunity to use deadly force during the assault.
- 16 reported they did not have the opportunity to use deadly force.
- 1 officer did not respond to the question.

Officers were asked when in the attack timeline were they able to use their weapons, 16 officers responded.

- 7 of these officers used their weapons after the offender injured them.
- 5 used their weapons as they were being injured.
- 3 used their weapons as another officer was being injured.
- 1 used his weapon prior to being injured.

Offenders' access to weapons

When asked how the offender accessed his or her weapon for the ambush or unprovoked attack, 31 officers provided an answer[3].

- 25 officers reported that the offenders involved in the incidents brought their weapons to the scenes.
- 2 officers said the offenders obtained their weapons at the scenes.
- 1 reported that the offender used the officer's weapon.
- 3 reported the offenders accessed their weapons through "other" means.

Survival tactics and training

Interviewers asked several questions about what the officers believe aided their ability to survive the attacks.

- 29 of the 33 officers wore bulletproof vests prior to the assaults. In many of the attacks, the vests prevented bullets, knives, or other objects from fully penetrating the officers' bodies.
- 12 officers used some form of cover or concealment, including automobiles, buildings or other structures, vegetation, or other available resources.
- 10 reported there was no cover available to them.

Eighteen officers responded to a question identifying training instruction they received at the academy or during in-service training that the officers felt contributed to their survival. Their answers are summarized in Table 2.2.

---

[2] These numbers vary from the numbers presented in the qualitative analyses of ases. Qualitatively, if an officer called or requested in any way, Backup was coded. Quantitatively, officers were asked only if he or she requested backup. In some cases, it was another officer or citizen who made the call.

[3] Details about the offenders' weapons are provided from the offenders' perspectives in Chapter 3.

Table 2.2
Survival training*

Training	Number of officers	Percentage
Street survival	7	38.9
Self-defense	3	16.7
Psychology	2	11.1
Firearms	1	5.6
Other	5	27.8

**Based on 18 officers who responded.*

Injuries and hospitalization

Two-thirds of the officers (22) in this study received injuries that required hospitalization.

- 9 of the officers wounded received bullet wounds.
- Additional injuries included knife wounds, machete wounds, and others.
- 14.5 days was the officers' average stay in the hospital, with a range of 1 to 112 days.
- 12.2 days was the average time from an assault to the officer's return to duty.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

This section describes the qualitative results of the interviews of officers, including the issues and topics discussed most frequently by the officers. It is important to note while some numbers and percentages may appear similar to those in the quantitative analyses, the information in the following qualitative analyses may differ and is, therefore, complementary but not comparable. This discrepancy is the result of two main factors. First, some officers did not respond to all of the quantitative questions. Second, for the qualitative analysis, the researchers only documented a topic or issue if an officer specifically discussed it. It was necessary for an officer to provide more detail than a simple "yes" or "no" response for the information to be included in the qualitative analysis.

Most common core ideas and domains

The qualitative analysis of officer data for this study involved documenting recurring themes from the officers' interview transcripts and creating a codebook for the most common topics. The topics addressed by the officers were categorized into major themes or *core ideas*. Many of these core ideas were divided into one or more subordinate topics, or *domains*. For example, one core idea that was identified was **Injuries sustained**, and a domain under it was *Medical treatment*. The analysis identified 30 major core ideas presented by the law enforcement officers. Table 2.3 lists all the core ideas the researchers identified.

Table 2.3

Number of officers who addressed each core idea

Core idea	Number of officers	Percentage	CQR label
Injuries sustained	33	100.0	General
Ambushed	33	100.0	General
Backup	32	97.0	General
Post-Incident	31	93.9	Typical
Reflections	31	93.9	Typical
Officer's understanding of why	30	90.9	Typical
Psychological impact	28	84.8	Typical
Engaged offender	28	84.8	Typical
Offender conclusion	28	84.8	Typical
Officer's explanation for survival	26	78.8	Typical
Awareness of surroundings	25	75.8	Typical
Ambush cognitions	24	72.7	Typical
Training	22	66.7	Typical
Vigilance	21	63.6	Typical
Routine response	21	63.6	Typical
Environmental conditions	21	63.6	Typical
Lack of information	19	57.6	Typical
Constraints	17	51.5	Typical
Seeking cover	17	51.5	Typical
Prior encounters	17	51.5	Typical
Dedication to police work	16	48.5	Variant
Officer composure	16	48.5	Variant
Underestimated threat	14	42.4	Variant
Conducting investigation	13	39.4	Variant
Premonition	8	24.2	Variant
Procedures	7	21.2	Variant
Distracted	5	15.2	Variant
Lack of awareness/alertness	4	12.1	Variant
Invincibility	1	3.0	Unique
Physical altercation	1	3.0	Unique

The second column in Table 2.3 represents the number of officers who made one or more statements that reflect either the core idea or the domain(s) that comprise(s) the core idea. The percentage of officers who mentioned the core idea or its corresponding domain(s) follows in the next column. The final column of Table 2.3, Label, is a classification based on the number of officers who addressed each core idea. These labels are standard labels used in Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) to describe how common each topic is (Ladany, Thompson & Hill, 2012). See Appendix A for more information on CQR.

Table 2.3 shows that three of the 30 core ideas (10.0 percent) received the *General* label, meaning at least 32 of the 33 participants addressed each. The most commonly mentioned core ideas were **Injuries sustained, Ambushed,** and **Backup**. The largest number of core ideas (56.7 percent, or 17 core ideas) developed in this study received the *Typical* label. These core ideas were addressed by at least 17, and at most 31 participants. The *Variant* label was applied to 26.7 percent of the core ideas, and these core ideas were addressed by at least four and at most 16 individuals. Finally, two core ideas (6.7 percent) were identified as *Unique*. Although mentioned by only one officer each, these core ideas, **Invincibility** and **Physical altercation**, played an important role in those cases, so the researchers decided to keep them in the analyses rather than to delete them. The extent to which they are important for future research, or for officer training, remains to be seen.

While Table 2.3 listed all the core ideas mentioned by the officers, Table 2.4 lists the core ideas and the domains that were discussed the most. The topics included on this list were described by at least 50.0 percent of the law enforcement officers interviewed for this study.

Table 2.4

Most common core ideas and domains

Code	Number of officers	Percentage
Ambushed	32	97.0
Backup – *Backup arrived*	26	78.8
Ambushed – *Altered perceptions*	26	78.8
Reflections	26	78.8
Post-Incident – *Social support*	25	75.8
Ambush cognitions	24	72.7
Psychological impact	23	69.7
Injuries sustained	23	69.7
Awareness of surroundings	21	63.6
Vigilance	21	63.6
Injuries sustained – *Medical treatment*	21	63.6
Reflections – *Mental preparation*	21	63.6
Engaged offender – *Armed self*	20	60.6
Backup – *Called for backup*	20	60.6
Officer's understanding of why	20	60.6
Officer's explanation for survival – *Will to survive*	19	57.6
Reflections – *Enhanced training*	19	57.6
Post-Incident	18	54.5
Engaged offender	18	54.5
Injuries sustained – *Other officer*	18	54.5
Training	18	54.5
Psychological impact – *Mental health treatment*	17	51.5

*NOTE: Codes that are in **bold font** are core ideas; the codes in italic font are specific domains under the core idea.*

Discussion of core ideas and domains

The following paragraphs detail the core ideas and domains from Table 2.4. Each topic includes a definition of the core idea or domain and an explanation of the topic, if needed. For the most part, the topics follow the order from Table 2.4 with the exception of domains under the same core idea, which are grouped together. Examples for each

core idea and domain are provided by brief incident descriptions and sample statements from an officer who experienced an ambush and an officer who survived an unprovoked attack. The LEOKA definitions for ambush and unprovoked attack are:

> **Ambush (entrapment and premeditation)**: Situation where an unsuspecting officer was targeted or lured into danger as the result of conscious consideration and planning by the offender.

> **Unprovoked attack**: An attack on an officer that, at the time of the incident, was not prompted by official contact between the officer and the offender.

Ambushed

Descriptions of the actual ambush incident (or unprovoked attack), from first attack and throughout.

Thirty-two of the 33 officers (97.0 percent) interviewed for this study spoke in general about the attack. These discussions were labeled as **Ambushed**. (During the interviews, officers didn't differentiate between the technical definitions for ambush and unprovoked attack.) The **Ambushed** core idea was comprised of eight domains: *Confusion, Unable to see offender, Altered perceptions, Physiological reaction, Tunnel vision, Approached by offender, Bystander involvement,* and *Assisted by other law enforcement officer.* Every officer discussed some aspect of their attacks, and most addressed more than one of the **Ambushed** core ideas.

Ambush example. Two officers responded as backup to the scene of a domestic assault. The victim of the assault stated the offender was probably sleeping in the nearby trailer and had been taking methamphetamines. The officers went to the offender's property and did not find him in the trailer. One of the officers provided this account of what happened next as they were preparing the crime scene.

> As I was tying some tape, flagging tape, around the trees, the deputy was standing behind me . . . off to my right rear. Coming from the wood line, I heard a shotgun rap and immediately following that, a blast from a shotgun. I turned around just in time to see the debris and everything coming out of the shotgun—smoke and everything.

During the ambush, the officer who was interviewed and another officer were wounded, and a third officer was killed. The offender was later wounded in a shootout with police and arrested.

Unprovoked attack example. While patrolling in a residential area, the officer passed an outdoor party. Someone from the area of the party threw an object that hit the officer's vehicle. The officer recalled that he stopped and attempted to get out of the cruiser. "When I opened the door, grabbed the baton, and went to exit, he [the offender] was on top of me as I was trying to come out of the car." In the altercation, the officer was stabbed and beaten but never quit fighting. Eventually, backup arrived, and the offender was ultimately subdued and arrested.

Ambushed—*Altered perceptions*

Feeling like time was altered during the ambush, or altered perceptual acuity.

Altered perceptions is a domain under the **Ambushed** core idea. Altered perceptual acuity simply means the officer's perceptions of time and/or acuity were seen as different from one's normal daily experiences. With 78.8 percent of the officers reporting this phenomenon, altered perceptions is one of the more commonly described codes in this study.

Ambush example. The officer in this case initiated a traffic stop for an expired registration in a known gang neighborhood. While she was addressing the occupants in the car, an unknown assailant fired a weapon at her from down the street. The officer reported experiencing altered perception while under fire.

> It seems like my thoughts were so fast. My thoughts were very fast, but it seemed like it was in slow motion. You know? But it was like I could hear the rounds passing by us and I could see everything like in slow motion, but everything was really actually fast speed.

The officer was not wounded during the incident, but a backup officer was killed.

Unprovoked attack example. The law enforcement officer was assisting with the impound of a vehicle involved in a driving under the influence (DUI) situation early in the morning when a man approached on the sidewalk. Without warning, the man pulled out a gun and fired at the officer. The officer recounted ". . . it's just amazing how time stands still all the way around you. I mean, everything just stops. And it was very alarming not to be able to hear and to have that loud ring. I didn't know what it meant. I didn't know what it was."

The officer was not able to hear any of the additional shots fired at him, demonstrating both the perception of altered time and the alteration of senses. It was later learned that the offender who fired on the officer was the partner of the woman who had just been arrested for the DUI, and he was trying to free her.

Backup

Statements about backup officers at the scene of the attack.

Among the top codes in this study were two domains under the **Backup** core idea: *Backup arrived* and *Called for backup.*

Backup—*Backup arrived*

Descriptions of the arrival of backup or other officers, including the officer's thoughts or feelings about their arrival.

With respect to the *Backup Arrived* domain, the majority of the officers (78.8 percent) talked about the arrival of backup once the ambush or unprovoked attack commenced.

Ambush example. The officer responded to an officer-down call. The downed officer was lying in a field with a tree line just beyond his body. As the arriving officer crawled to check on him, she came under fire from the area of the trees. She was able to crawl back to safety and call for more backup. "So then all my [state patrol] people get there. Finally, they get there. I mean I'm just praying that they would get there. So they get there, and we form a perimeter around that wooded area."

Unprovoked attack example. Two officers responded to an auto accident on the interstate. Unbeknownst to the victim officer and his partner (the witness officer), the driver had crashed his car and then began shooting others who stopped to assist him. The victim officer described the arrival of backup officers, "…my cover squad started pulling up. I remember seeing a pickup truck just drive right up to me and two officers got out in plain clothes, and then I saw a squad car pull up…"

Backup—*Called for backup*

The law enforcement officer or others called for backup, either before the ambush or during it.

Twenty officers (60.6 percent) who were interviewed for this study talked about calling for backup. Most commonly, backup was called during the ambush, but in some cases, backup was called before the actual ambush, usually for an unfolding situation.

Ambush example. Two officers were getting ready to enter the police station to start their shift. As they approached the door, somebody approached them from behind and said, "Hey guys, how are you doing?" Immediately after asking this, the individual opened fire on the two officers. One victim officer took a bullet to the back of the head and died. The surviving officer said of the call for backup, "They dropped our Code 99, or whatever departments call it, where officer down or officer needs assistance…. our dispatch center did that."

Unprovoked attack example. Two officers responded as backup on a shots-fired call at an apartment complex. Many officers were already on site when these two arrived, so they pulled into the parking lot and were going to disperse the crowd that had gathered. As the officers exited their cruiser, they came under fire. This witness officer reported "I called [for backup] after I fired my round, and he [the offender] took off running. That's when I got on my radio."

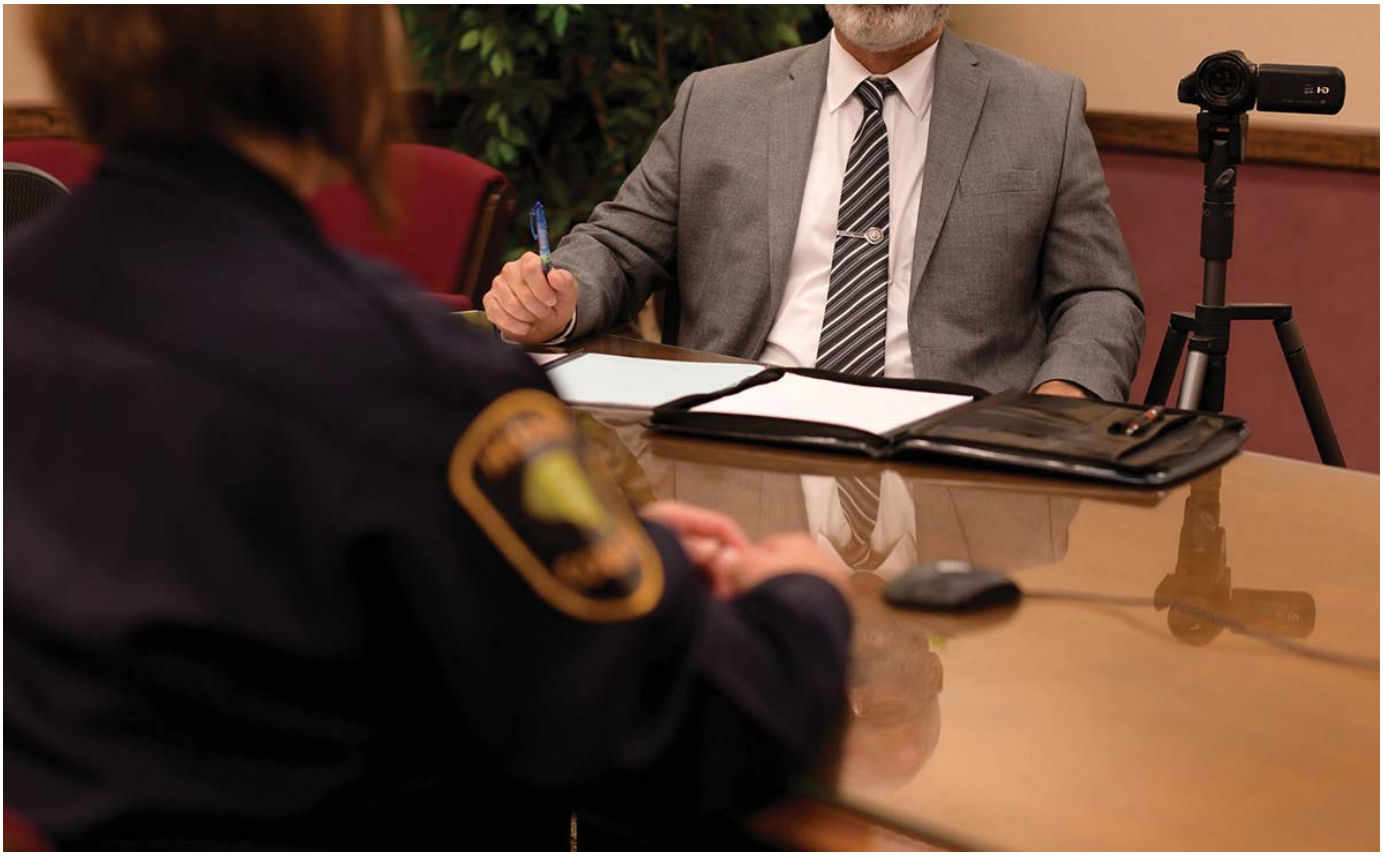
Reflections

The officer's thoughts about the event and responses to lessons learned. Differs from Post-Incident in that it is the law enforcement officer's here-and-now reflections.

Officers in this study were asked to think back on their experiences and discuss what they learned; if they could have done anything differently, what it would be; and what advice they would have for other officers who may encounter a similar ambush or unprovoked attack. The officers' answers to these questions are categorized under the core idea of **Reflections**.

To prevent overlapping **Reflections** with other core ideas and domains, the researchers decided if the law enforcement officer reflected on a specific topic that fell within another code, they would rate the other code, rather than double code. For example, if, in his or her reflections an officer talked about his or her thoughts during the attack, that block was rated **Ambush cognitions** rather than double-coding it as both **Ambush cognitions** and **Reflections**. Twenty-six officers in this study (78.8 percent) made statements that were classified as **Reflections**. Those statements were not better categorized within one of the six domains that make up the Reflections core idea, which are: *Enhanced training, Spiritual commitment, Mental preparation, Backup, Professional conduct; Recommending help.*

Ambush example. The officer who shared this reflection was on a stakeout in a field behind a fugitive's house. The fugitive, who was wanted for a prior shooting of a police officer, shot the officer and another officer, who later died. The surviving officer reflected on the ways he thought the ambush may have been prevented or mitigated.



> But I think if we would have had three people, we could have split our 360 into thirds and then, that way, when one person was looking at the house you don't have one other person to cover the remainder of your 360. Would that have . . . helped? You know, we may have still been shot. But I believe that we, we probably would have at least been able to get the suspect at that point.

Unprovoked attack example. In this example, an off-duty officer was working as a security guard at a grocery store. Near the time for the store to close, the officer was standing near the cash registers at the front of the store when an assailant attacked him from behind by hitting him in the head. The assailant struggled with the officer and attempted to gain control of the officer's service weapon. As the officer reflected on the struggle for his weapon, he stated:

> I guess the main thing is don't; what I would do—I did it and I'll do it again—is don't let that person get separation because if you back up you don't have any weapon. I mean, he has your weapon. If happens to you, if he has your weapon—don't back up and give some guy 3 or 4 feet to shoot you, to draw down on you. Stay on top of them. Glue yourself to them. Keep hitting.

Reflections—*Mental preparation*

The law enforcement officer suggests that others enhance their mental preparation for similar incidents (e.g., imagining different violent scenarios and how one would respond).

In addition to the statements that represented the overall core idea of **Reflections**, 63.6 percent of the officers reflected on the importance of its domain, *Mental preparation*. Some officers talked about running "what-if" scenarios through their minds as they are on patrol and then thinking about how they would respond. They also mentioned that this was an important exercise that had implications during the attacks reviewed in this study.

Ambush example. This example is taken from a situation in which two officers pursued a suspect into his house on foot after a car chase. While the witness officer was attempting to contain the offender's sister, the offender shot and killed the other officer in an adjacent room. In this example, the witness officer provided his perspective on how the ambush has altered his approach to law enforcement. He stated, "In your ordinary and everyday training, every once in a while you have to think of what could go bad, what could be the worst, and train like that as well." The notion of mentally preparing for worst-case scenarios was echoed by several other officers in this study.

Unprovoked attack example. In a case previously described (see **Backup**—C*alled for backup*), the victim and witness officers came as backup to a shots-fired call at an apartment complex. The officers intended to move the crowd back, but as they were getting out of their cruiser, they came under fire. Reflecting on mental preparation, the witness officer stated, "Stay in the game, you know. A lot of people get complacent after a while. In this line, you just never know when it's going to hit the fan. Just stay on your toes, and if you do encounter some situation like that, just stay in the game." The notion of not getting mentally complacent and staying in the fight was reflected by other officers in this study.

Reflections—*Enhanced training*

The law enforcement officer stated that as a result of the ambush he or she has enhanced his or her training as an officer, OR the officer recommended others to enhance their training methods.

Another commonly described **Reflection** is the *Enhanced training* domain; 57.6 percent of the officers discussed this point. *Enhanced training* may relate to adding something new to one's training or refocusing on something that has already been taught through the academy or in-service trainings.

Ambush example. In a case that was described earlier, the witness officer was the first to respond to an officer-down call (see **Backup**—*Backup arrived*). When the officer arrived, she saw another officer was down in the middle of a field. The offender had ambushed the officer by firing a weapon from an area of trees at the far end of the field. In her reflection about enhanced training, the witness officer said:

> I never thought of a foxhole. Never. I never even imagined that. But now, if I ever go to another scene like that ever again, that would be the first thing; he could have this. But see, out of all my training that I have ever had, none of that—that particular word—came up in training. They could be in a foxhole. Never. That's sort of like a military something. So, you know, I've never been in the military so that never came. I never had any training in that. So, I always was trying to look above the land, you know, up in a tree or on a structured building or something like that. So, I think if anything out of this, there should be more training with that type of thing, like a foxhole.

Unprovoked attack example. This example is taken from the previously described case in which the offender wrecked his car on the freeway and fired on people who approached to help him (see **Backup**—*Backup arrived*). The victim officer in this case reflected on training.

> I've always enjoyed training, but it opens up the floor to where maybe we need to expand training and think of better ways to do things, or more things to think of while we're out there. At least so we have it on our mind that this could happen. This could happen. And the only way you know that is by getting information from other agencies where it has happened. You know, you can't say that'll never happen. Well, it has happened.

Post-incident

Descriptions about thoughts, feelings, or outcomes following the incident.

The **Post-incident** core idea was a commonly described topic by participants in this study (54.5 percent). Because this core idea was comprised of eight individual domains, a specific topic was labeled **Post-Incident** only if the officer's discussion of his or her thoughts, feelings, or outcomes of the attack were not specified within any of the domains. These domains included *Relief, Concern for victims, Legal disposition, Recuperation, Social support, Criticism, Concern for family,* and *Altered procedures.*

Ambush example. In the previously described example of the domestic incident in which two officers were shot and a third was killed (see **Ambushed**), the second victim officer talked about how his family found out about the shooting.

> I was finally getting transported to the hospital. I asked them to radio and tell my wife that I was OK, but they never did that. So when the first ambulance arrived at the hospital, the school had already brought my son there. My wife and my son were standing outside with my brother at the ER.

Unprovoked attack example. One officer who had been shot in an unprovoked attack was asked about intrusive thoughts (the psychological impact of the shooting). Instead, he described a lack of psychological trauma post incident.

> . . . when I'm having more pain in my leg than usual, then I'm—like for the past month it's been driving me crazy—but that's usually when I . . . can't help but think about it. You're like, "D---, that leg's killing me. Oh yeah, I got shot there." You know, [the thoughts are] not really intrusive, just annoying.

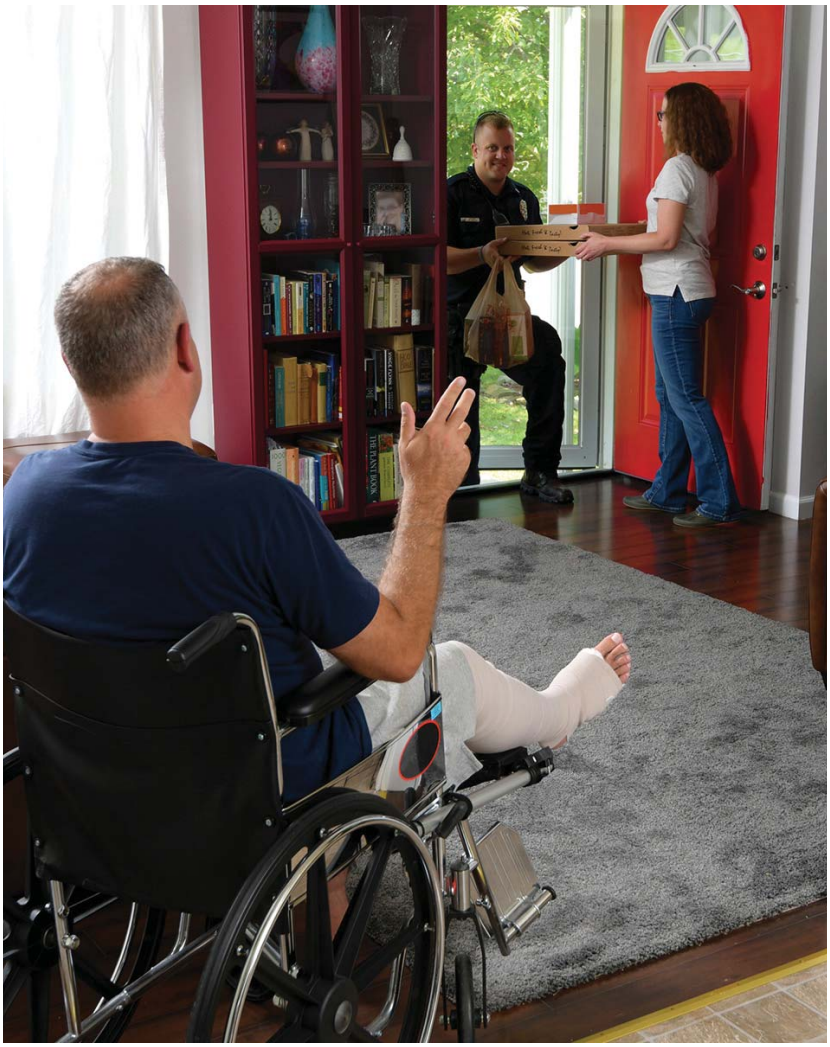
Post-incident—*Social support*

Statements about the social support the law enforcement officer received following the incident.

Under the core idea of **Post-incident** is the domain, *Social support*, which was mentioned by 75.8 percent of the officers. Social support could come from a number of sources, including family and friends, the department, or the community at-large. The officers who mentioned *Social support* endorsed it as a positive factor in their recoveries.

Ambush example. The victim officer who was on a stakeout (see **Reflections**) gave an example of family support. The officer stated, "Parents, sisters, brothers, you know, helping out, coming over, taking me [to] doctor's appointments, things of that nature. Yeah, they were supportive."

Unprovoked attack example. In this case, the officer was a victim of an unprovoked shootout at a campground. While he was talking about the day he was released from the hospital, he spoke about the level of support showed by his own and other departments.



. . . when I was coming back into the valley with my wife and her sister, we come to the county line and there's 15 police cars parked right there and highway patrol and our cars and our department cars. You know, some of my coworkers—all my coworkers basically—and they piled in behind us with one of the sergeants in front and then lined up behind us and escorted us all the way to my residence.

The importance of social support was mentioned by 75.8 percent of the officers.

Ambush cognitions

The officer's thoughts during the assault.

The **Ambush cognitions** core idea was not a part of the **Ambushed** core idea, because rather than a description of the attack, this core idea pertains to the officer's thoughts during the attack. A total of 72.7 percent of the officers addressed their thoughts during the ambush.

Ambush example. This example comes from the previously described ambush on two police officers as they were arriving at work (see **Backup**—*Called for backup*). The officer described what he was thinking as the attack occurred.

> The thing that ran through my mind the most was how quickly it happened. The whole thing took like 45 seconds. I mean, it was just—boom—and then it was done in a hurry. I just kept thinking to myself, *This happened so fast. What did I do? What did I see? What did I miss?* That kind of stuff was running through my mind. What did I not miss? I was trying to recollect everything that happened . . .

Unprovoked attack example. This case involved the victim officer who responded with his partner to a shots-fired call at an apartment complex (see **Backup**—*Called for backup*). When they arrived, they attempted to disperse the gathered crowd. The victim officer talked about his initial confusion when he took a hit. "I thought maybe my car door slammed on me, you know, that's my initial thought. But then, I see the muzzle flash, and I'm like, 'Holy crap' . . . "

Psychological impact

Statements about how the ambush emotionally and psychologically impacted the law enforcement officer.

Not surprisingly, many officers discussed the psychological impact of the ambush or unprovoked attack. Twenty-three officers (69.7 percent) reported information related to this core idea. The **Psychological impact** core idea includes nine domains: *Mental health treatment, Spiritual resources, Social support, Catharsis, Work as coping, Trauma, Revisiting, Impact on others,* and *Reassess priorities.* The statements in the next two examples didn't fit into any of the nine subcategories and are overall thoughts about the **Psychological impact** core idea.

Ambush example. This statement comes from the witness officer who was at a house, trying to contain a suspect's sister when another officer was shot in an adjacent room (see **Reflections**–*Mental preparation*). The officer talked about the psychological impact of getting another call at a later date to respond to the same house at which the shooting occurred.

> . . . Sometime right after the situation, [I] received the call to go right back down to the same house for something. I was pretty much told not to go by myself, but I would have. I don't know if I can sit here and describe to you what it was like to go back—same road, same driveway, same stairs, same living room, same kitchen—and have to go in there and deal with a situation that didn't have anything to do with this. But to go back down there and step in there and do my job, that was a big turning point of maybe handling the situation. I wasn't scared to go back down there, but I wasn't allowed to go by myself.

Unprovoked attack example. Three officers were eating lunch at a diner when a man came up to their table with a machete. The man slashed the machete at the officer who provided this statement.

> It kept popping into my mind, reliving it. Just . . . it was a horrifying incident what he did. Coming in like that, and coming so close to death. I think what bothered me the most was getting stunned, dazed, and not being aware of my senses. It could have been worse.

The attacker was shot once by one of the other two officers and then arrested. The victim officer suffered a severe wound to his hand, but his injuries were not life-threatening. Still, the psychological effects of the attack lingered more than a decade later.

Psychological impact—*Mental health treatment*

The law enforcement officer indicates that she or he saw a mental health professional as a means of coping with the psychological impact of the ambush.

Of the nine domains under the core idea **Psychological impact**, *Mental health treatment* was the only one of the nine addressed by at least half of the participants. These officers (51.5 percent) spoke about mental health services they received to help them cope with the aftereffects of the attack. In some cases, accessing mental health treatment was mandatory, and in other cases, officers sought treatment voluntarily. Most law enforcement officers who discussed this domain

stated that the treatment was helpful and suggested if consulting a mental health professional was mandatory it would diminish any stigma associated with seeing a "shrink."

Ambush example. In this situation, the officer responded to an officer-down call at a campground in a rural area. (This is a different incident than the one described under **Post-incident**–*Social support*, which was also at a campground.) The offender shot an officer and then took cover inside a trailer. After a long standoff, police opened fire on the trailer. The officer interviewed for this study unloaded his weapon at the trailer, and when a cease-fire was called, the offender shot him. Concerning his mental health treatment after the incident, the officer stated the following.

> I think counseling should be made mandatory—if it's not already—by our department. It might be. I might just be ignorant to that fact. I think it needs to be made mandatory to everyone involved, whether you're involved directly or indirectly. You need to be able to, at the very least, you need someone to talk to.

Unprovoked attack example. The officer who was shot at a campground (see **Post-incident**–*Social support)* talked about the quality of the mental health treatment he received.

> The individual they use, he's really like squared away and the good thing about him is he's involved with other agencies in our area, and it's all officer stuff so he knows what officers need and how to help them, and he doesn't rush. He doesn't rush. He has parameters, and he has steps that he goes through, and if you make it through those steps, then you go back to work. If you don't and you need more time, then he makes that determination. And my agency, I think, was great about it because they allowed that. No matter how much that affected staffing, they allowed that. He was the first and last say so on whether you come back to work, and they allowed him to be that.

Injuries sustained

Descriptions of injuries sustained to the law enforcement officer or others as a result of the ambush.

In each of the attacks studied, one or more individuals received injuries, many serious and some life-threatening. **Injuries sustained** is a core idea comprised of five domains: *Other officer, Attending to injuries, Unaware of injuries, Medical treatment,* and *Offender injuries.* **Injuries Sustained** was addressed by 69.7 percent (23) of the officers in this study.

Ambush example. This statement was taken from the victim officer who was ambushed while on a stakeout (see **Reflections**).The officers reported that after the offender stopped shooting, the officer turned his attention to his injuries, "Yeah, I assessed my injuries, I tried to verbalize with my partner to try and get an idea. Initially, I tried to verbalize with him to try and find out the extent of his injuries so I could relay that." In this case, the officer's partner later died at the hospital.

Unprovoked attack example. In this example, the officer was sitting in his patrol vehicle in the parking lot of a convenience store. It was near the end of his shift, and he was completing some paperwork. A subject approached the patrol vehicle and asked a question, and then began to attack the officer through his car window, stabbing him multiple times with a screwdriver.

> I was using my left hand to block the majority of the strikes with the screwdriver. So, as a result, my left hand kind of took a lot of the beating from the screwdriver because I got stabbed a bunch of times with it, and then mostly all over the side of the left side of my neck. I think there was a total of like four or five stab wounds later that we had identified . . .

Injuries sustained—*Medical treatment*

Descriptions of medical treatment from either paramedics or hospital staff for injuries sustained in the ambush.

In addition to the 23 officers who reported about the core idea of **Injuries sustained**, 63.6 percent also described the medical treatment they received as a result of their injuries. Officers may have remarked on immediate, on-site medical treatment and/or medical treatment received later at the hospital; both are part of the definition for the domain of *Medical treatment*.

Ambush example. One officer, who was shot while investigating a domestic violence incident (see **Ambushed**), discussed his treatment when the medics arrived on-site.

> They had the medics there. They started taking off all my clothes, cutting off all my stuff, taking off all my clothes, which I thought was really weird at the time. What they do is when they take you in, if you're in a traumatic incident and they take you into the hospital, you have to be stripped. Plus, they collected all my stuff for evidence. They took everything away from me. Everything was gone. Threw me in an ambulance, drove me somewhere . . . everything happened so quick . . . a few blocks away, put me in a helicopter, and off we went.

Unprovoked attack example. In this situation, an officer pulled to the side of a highway to assist a motorist whose truck had broken down. Fearing he would be arrested for drunk driving, the offender pulled out a shotgun and opened fire on the officer. The victim officer described the medical treatment he initially received from the first backup officer on the scene, who was also a paramedic.

> He's a paramedic and a registered nurse and has a lot of medical knowledge, and he assessed the injuries at that point and, due to our close proximity to the hospital, we got into his vehicle and went to the hospital on our own. That was a quicker response than waiting for an ambulance.

Injuries sustained—*Other officer*

Descriptions of injuries to another officer on the scene.

In many cases more than one officer responded to a call. It is not surprising, then, that 54.5 percent of the officers interviewed mentioned the domain *Other officer* in the context of **Injuries sustained**.

Ambush example. In a previous case concerning the three officers who responded to a domestic violence call (see a description of the case in the **Ambushed** paragraphs), one of the victim officers described seeing the other victim officer get shot.

> He [the offender] came out of the woods here, [and] engaged Joe[4]. Joe was behind the door of this car, and I was here at this point waiting for anything this way. When I heard the gunshot, I actually saw Joe, and it was surreal because when he got hit with the slug—with the pellet—I could literally see it go through his leg. So I was like, "Oh my God! That looks like a femoral shot. He's going to bleed out!" I was really worried at that point about Joe. But Joe returned fire, and he returned fire enough to back him off.

Unprovoked attack example. The following is an example of a witness officer's description of the case where another officer was injured during a machete attack (see **Psychological impact**).

> . . . I thought his fingers—I don't know if—we were looking around to see if his fingers were on the floor. Luckily, looking back on it, the machete wasn't as [sharp] . . . I've seen some machete fights out here on the street, and they can do some damage, and luckily this wasn't as sharp as some of these machetes, because, if not, he would have cut right through his fingers.

[4] *Names presented in this research have been changed to protect the identities of the individuals involved.*

Awareness of surroundings

The officer talked about the importance of being aware of his/her surroundings or made statements about his/her awareness of the surroundings.

Twenty-one officers in this study (63.6 percent) discussed the importance of being aware of their surroundings in any encounter. Statements categorized under this core idea, **Awareness of surroundings**, relate to the importance of being aware or to descriptions about the officer's awareness of the setting. This core idea had one domain related to it, *Awareness of cover*. In order to be rated as **Awareness of surroundings**, the statement by the officer could not be related to cover.

Ambush example. From a previous example in which an officer pulled a car over for expired tags (see **Ambush**—*Altered perceptions*), the officer was well aware of the potential danger in the neighborhood in which the car stopped. She remarked, ". . . according to my partner and I, we were like, 'This is really not a good neighborhood to have them impound the car, [it may be dangerous to] have [the car's occupants] walk from here . . . So what we're going to do is, we'll give them a citation. Have them be on their way.'" In this case, the officer's awareness of her surroundings led her to consider the safety of the occupants of the car prior to the ambush.

Unprovoked attack example. In this example, an off-duty officer was working as a security guard at a grocery store. (This is a different incident than the one described under **Reflections**, which also involved an off-duty officer.) The officer reported being aware of a person who had been sitting across the street. "I was working an extra job and throughout the evening, I saw an individual sitting across the street, and I thought he was a panhandler." It turned out, the person across the street had just purchased a gun and was actively psychotic. Later that night, the individual opened fire on the officer as he walked the store's manager to her car.

Vigilance

Statements about remaining or acting alert at all times or as a means of prevention or mitigation of attacks.

Somewhat related to the core idea of **Awareness of surroundings, Vigilance** goes beyond mere awareness to a more purposeful awareness. **Vigilance** is alertness as a means of seeing potential problems *before* they become problems. Twenty-one officers (63.6 percent) who were interviewed in this study mentioned remaining vigilant. **Vigilance** was a core idea that did not have any other related domains.

Ambush example. The victim officer who was shot while coming to work (see **Backup**—*Called for backup*) talked about how, since the ambush, he is extremely vigilant at all times.

> Guys are like—to this day—guys are like, 'Man, you still stay pretty vigilant when we're looking in these windows and we're doing this, and there's nothing in there.' I'm like, 'What are you going to do if there's something in there? You need to be prepared if there's something in there.'

The officer uses his heightened level of vigilance as an instructional opportunity for fellow (often newer) officers.

Unprovoked attack example. One of the witness officers to the machete attack that was previously described (see **Psychological impact**) spoke of how he remains vigilant, even when off duty.

> *Interviewer:* "Do you find yourself more vigilant now?"
>
> *Officer:* "Even when I go to a restaurant when I'm not at work, I'm off duty. I sit watching the door, I'm aware of the surroundings more. . ."

Engaged offender

Descriptions of efforts to engage the offender once the ambush/shooting commenced.

The core idea, **Engaged offender**, relates to responding to the offender once the ambush or unprovoked attack begins. Engagement is when the officer returns or prepares to return fire. This core idea is comprised of

three domains: *Armed self, Prepared to engage offender,* and *Pursue offender.* Just over half of the officers in this study (54.5 percent) described efforts to engage the offender.

Ambush example. In this incident, a group of officers approached an apartment to arrest a suspect in a different crime. The officer who was interviewed described his engagement with the offender after his partner had already been shot.

> The suspect then opened the door as I was reaching for him [the officer's downed partner], and [the suspect] realized who I was, and then shot at me. Luckily another officer was there behind me, and pushed me out of the way as he shot that round. At the same time, I returned fire one time with my handgun.

In this case, returning fire was the officer's engagement of the offender.

Unprovoked attack example. An officer was sitting in his patrol vehicle in a parking lot and witnessed a driver speed through a stop sign. While responding to an unrelated call for service, the officer encountered the same vehicle stopped in the road in a residential neighborhood. As the officer pulled up, the driver jumped out of the vehicle and started shooting at him. The officer slid out of his cruiser, "And I thought he was still walking toward me. So when I rolled over, I started shooting under the door. Well, he was running back to his vehicle." It was later determined the driver started shooting because he was afraid he would lose his license if he received a DUI.

Engaged offender—*Armed self*

Descriptions of drawing his/her weapons or getting weapons to fight back.

Engaged offender—*Armed self* pertains to actions taken by the officer once the ambush or unprovoked attack had commenced. Twenty of the officers (60.6 percent) in this study addressed arming themselves to fight back against the perpetrator.

Ambush example. This statement came from the officer mentioned earlier who responded to an officer down call at a campground (see **Psychological impact**–*Mental health treatment)*. The officer commented, "I got there. I parked my car and left it right in the middle of the street—lights on—and got the door open, run out, un-holster my weapon." Knowing that one officer had already been killed, he prepared to engage the offender by arming himself as soon as he arrived on the scene.

Unprovoked attack example. In this example, the perpetrator shot and killed his infant daughter and texted pictures of the baby's body to his estranged wife. He then killed his estranged wife's mother and set her house on fire, while he was still in it. When the responding officers arrived, the offender began shooting at them, injuring one of the two officers. When asked about the timing of drawing his weapon, the officer responded that after he pulled up to the scene and got out of his patrol vehicle, he drew his weapon. "I never had a target to shoot at but I always had it out in a ready position if I needed to, based on the nature of the call."

Officer's understanding of why

The officer's response to the question: Why do you think the offender attacked you?

Each of the officers was asked why they thought the offender chose to ambush or attack him, her, or another officer. While some did not know how to respond to this question, 60.6 percent offered their understanding. A variety of reasons were given, which resulted in seven domains that make up this core idea–*Opportunity, Revenge, Maintain freedom, Suicide by cop, Substance use, Social decay,* and *Mental illness.*

Ambush example. In the situation where an officer responded to an officer-down call at a campground (see **Psychological impact**–*Mental health treatment*), the officer revealed the offender gave his reason for the shootings after he was apprehended.

> He [the offender] was in the cruiser when they were arresting him, and in jail and court it was recorded that he hates police officers. 'I like you, but when you put on your

> uniform, I don't like you.' He hates police for no apparent reason. He just hates police. He doesn't hate me; he hates the police, and I think that's what he did that day, and the officers arrived on scene to investigate. I think he thinks he perceived them as a threat, so he shot and killed one of them.

Unprovoked attack example. The officer who was shot on the side of the road during a DUI auto impound (see **Ambushed**—*Altered perceptions*) offered what he had learned about the shooter's motive.

> Well, it turned out that it [the offender] was the husband of the female that was arrested for driving under the influence. The investigation showed that she, from the back of the patrol car, had been able to text him, though we don't know what was in the texts. There were a number of them back and forth in a very short period of time after she had been arrested. She should never have been allowed to have a telephone, but unfortunately that wasn't caught. I think that he came there to either rescue her, or we had heard there was a relationship issue. Maybe he was there to hurt her.

It was never clear to this officer whether the offender was attempting to rescue his wife or if he was there to hurt her. However, given that the offender shot the officer and not his wife, it ultimately appeared he was attempting to rescue her.

Officer's explanation for survival—*Will to survive*

The officer attributes his/her survival to the will to survive/reliance on will to survive training.

The core idea, **Officer's explanation for survival**, was defined as "Descriptions of why the officer believes she or he survived the ambush." This core idea was composed of three domains: *Spiritual, Will to survive,* and *Reliance on training*. Only *Will to survive* was addressed by more than half of the participants (57.6 percent).

Ambush example. One of the officers who was shot during an investigation of a domestic disturbance (see **Ambushed**) described *Will to survive* very clearly.

> I think mindset is important. I can only go based on mine, and mine was always—I felt like I always came out of things one way or another. I don't know that it really crossed my mind that I maybe wasn't going to survive it. I always survived everything that I ever encountered, so it really didn't cross my mind so much. I think the only real reality check was seeing the deputy lay there. That definitely was a reality check. Beyond that, I felt like we were going to succeed and win this battle one way or another.

Unprovoked attack example. The officer who was attacked by a man wielding a screwdriver while the officer was parked in a convenience store parking lot (see **Injuries sustained**) reflected on the will to survive.

> . . . my mindset was . . . *Ok, I'm in a fight right now, and I'm going to win this fight*. A little bit of that fighting blood kicks in. I wanted to catch him. I wanted to go run after him and handcuff him myself. It's like, you took the fight to me, and now I'm taking the fight to you.

Once he was able to fend off the attacker, the officer made an effort to chase him on foot, but his injuries prevented him from doing so. The officer told backup officers the direction in which the offender ran, and they were able to apprehend him shortly thereafter.

Training

The officer's descriptions of any and all training he or she received, or the importance of training. It was not rated under Training if the example was given as the reason for his/her survival or reflections.

The **Training** core idea consisted of two domains: *Self-training* and *Automaticity*. Only the core idea was addressed by more than half of the participants (54.5 percent). A topic was labeled as **Training** only if the officer reported on the training he or she had received or talked about how important training is for officers.

Ambush example. The officer who was ambushed as he approached the front door of an apartment (see **Engaged offender**) discussed how his training kicked in during the ambush. The officer said, "I believe that when we actually had some training after the academy where you go out there and you have some scenarios where things go bad, it does kick in, and it does help you when something like this does happen."

Unprovoked attack example. The following officer was called to respond to a shots-fired call in a rural location. The offender had been shooting at his mother and girlfriend, and then he shot a car that was passing on the road in front of their house. This officer reflected on his extensive training in the Marine Corps and as a member of the SWAT team.

> A lot of it, I think, came from Marine Corps training. I had a drill instructor in boot camp [who] was really big on, 'You don't quit.' As long as you're breathing, you don't stop. You keep coming and coming and coming, and you don't stop. I think that also went into a lot of the SRT [special reaction team] SWAT training we did. Hey, you've got to roll with it. OK, you're getting ready to make an entry and you get spotted, you roll, you go, and you don't stop. I think that's part of it.

CHAPTER THREE

The Offenders

Thirty offenders participated in this research; 21 of them (70.0 percent) were connected to unprovoked attacks, and 9 (30.0 percent) to ambushes. All of the offenders were previously tried and convicted of the murder or attempted murder of one or more of the law enforcement officers they assaulted. Of the 30 offenders who contributed information, 27 participated in interviews. The LEOKA research team conducted the interviews in various prisons throughout the United States. The three offenders who declined to be interviewed consented to the collection of statistical information.

This chapter describes the quantitative information, or measureable statistics, about the 30 offenders including demographic data and details about their backgrounds and experiences. Following the statistical information, a qualitative analysis is presented from the transcripts of the interviews with the 27 offenders. The qualitative data provides the perspective of the offenders, including descriptions of offender motives. While some inferences from the data are discussed in this chapter, additional conclusions and recommendations are provided in Chapter 4.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Offender backgrounds

Gender

- 29 offenders were male.
- 1 co-offender was female

Race

- 12 offenders were Black or African-American.
- 9 offenders were White.
- 6 were Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander.
- 2 were American Indian/Alaska Native.
- 1 offender did not report race.

Average ages

- 28 years old at the time of the attacks was the average age of the offenders.
- Offenders' ages ranged from 16 to 55 years.

Education

- 18 offenders reported they had a General Educational Development (GED®) certificate or a high school diploma.
    - o 12 of the 18 held a GED®.
    - o 6 held a high school diploma.

- 9 offenders neither graduated from high school nor earned a GED®.
- 3 offenders did not report their educational level.

Military service

- 18 offenders reported they never served in the military.
- 1 offender reported military service with an honorable discharge.
- 11 offenders did not respond to this question.

Employment

- 17 offenders reported they were employed at the times of the assaults.
    - 4 were laborers.
    - 1 was a technician.
    - 1 was in a service occupation
    - 11 offenders described their employment as "other."
- 1 offender was a student
- 10 offenders were unemployed.
- 2 offenders did not respond to this question.

Youth and home life growing up

Parents

- 15 offenders reported growing up with a father present.
- 14 stated that their fathers were either mostly absent or had never lived with them.
- 26 lived with their mothers most of the time.
- 2 never lived with their mothers.
- 18 offenders stated they had warm and close relationships with their mothers growing up.
- 7 reported their relationships with their mothers to be cold and distant or hostile and aggressive.
- 12 offenders reported warm and close relationships with their fathers.
- 10 reported negative relationships with their fathers.
- 5 reported variable relationships with their fathers.
- 3 offenders did not respond to this question.

Mental health and placements

- 4 offenders said they experienced physical abuse.
- 7 experienced psychological abuse.
- 12 offenders reported they ran away from home at some time during their youth.
- 6 stated they had been thrown out of the homes before the age of 18.
- 10 of the offenders were institutionalized during their adolescence.
    - 3 were placed in orphanages or state homes.
    - 2 were placed into the foster care system.
    - 5 reported "other."
    - 5 offenders stated that they were first institutionalized between the ages of 14 and 15 years.
    - 2 offenders were first institutionalized between the ages of 12 and 13 years.
    - 2 offenders reported they were institutionalized at age 11 or younger.
    - 1 offender reported he or she was first institutionalized at age 16 or older.

Substance abuse by caregivers

- 12 offenders reported known or suspected substance abuse by their fathers.
- 3 reported known or suspected substance abuse by their mothers.
- 5 of the offenders reported known drug abuse by their fathers.
- 5 reported known drug abuse by their mothers.

Substance abuse by offenders

Of the 30 offenders, 25 said they had a history of regularly consuming alcohol.

- 20 offenders reported drinking between once per week to daily.
- 14 reported consuming 4 to 11 or more drinks in each instance.
- 22 offenders reported regular use of illicit drugs prior to the attacks.
    - Frequency of use ranged from 2 uses per week to daily use.
    - Marijuana was the most commonly used drug.
    - 2 offenders reported they exclusively used marijuana.
    - 7 offenders engaged in polysubstance abuse, which included marijuana plus a variety of other drugs.

When researchers asked offenders if they had ever committed a crime in order to get money for drugs:

- 13 of the 30 offenders said they had never committed a crime to get money for drugs.
- 8 offenders said they had committed crimes to get money for drugs.
- 9 offenders either reported no drug use or did not answer the question.

Suicide

- 15 of the 30 offenders reported they had attempted suicide one or more times prior to the ambush.
- The number of attempts reported for each offender ranged from 1 attempt to as many as 20 attempts.

Prior criminal involvement

Offenders in this study reported numerous encounters with law enforcement prior to the ambush or unprovoked attack.

Age of offenders when they first committed a crime.

- 14.5 years old was the average age the offenders first committed a crime, with a range from 6 to 25 years old.
- 10 of the offenders reported being involved in confrontations with law enforcement officers before being involved in the incidents in this study.

Table 3.1 lists the crimes that offenders reported they had previously committed.

Table 3.1

Prior crimes reported by offenders*

Crime	Number of offenders	Percentage
Murder	3	10.0
Assault	19	63.3
Robbery	1	3.3
Burglary	7	23.3
Larceny/theft	16	53.3
Vandalism	5	16.7
Weapons offenses	8	26.7
Drug offenses	11	36.7
Disorderly conduct	10	33.3
Other	8	26.7

**Based upon information for 30 offenders.*
***The percentage for these crimes do not add to 100 because some offenders listed multiple crimes.*

The ambushes and unprovoked attacks

The 30 offenders in this study were involved in 27 ambushes or unprovoked attacks. Please note: The data concerning the incidents from the officers' perspectives (Chapter 2) are not comparable with the data in this chapter. This discrepancy is due the fact that only eight of the incidents in this study included interviews and information from both the officer(s) and offender(s). Therefore, readers should interpret these findings with caution.

Times of the attacks

- Offenders reported the times of the attacks in 18 total cases. (See Table 3.2)
    - 14 assaults happened between the hours of 6:01 p.m. and 6 a.m.
    - No ambushes or unprovoked attacks occurred between 9:01 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- The seasons of the attacks were reported for 27 incidents.
    - 12 incidents occurred in the summer months.
    - 7 incidents happened in the winter.
    - 4 took place in the spring.
    - 4 incidents happened in the fall.

Table 3.2

Times of the assaults – reported by offenders*

Time span	Number of assaults	Percentage
Midnight – 3 a.m.	6	33.3
3:01 a.m. – 6 a.m.	1	5.6
6:01 a.m. – 9 a.m.	2	11.1
9:01 a.m. – 12 p.m.	0	0.0
12:01 p.m. – 3 p.m.	0	0.0
3:01 p.m. – 6 p.m.	3	16.7
6:01 p.m. – 9 p.m.	2	11.1
9:01 p.m. – 11:59 p.m.	4	22.2

**Based on 18 cases (3 of these incidents had more than one offender).*

Location of the assaults/arrival at the scene

The offenders responded to questions about the locations of the incidents and when they arrived on the scene.

- 24 of the 27 assaults did not occur at the same location in which the offender first encountered the officer(s) according to the offenders' answers to this question. Note: The interview transcripts contradict this conclusion, and indicate most of the assaults did occur in the location of their first encounter.
- 23 offenders provided data on the means by which they arrived at the scene of the assault.
    - 12 offenders arrived via motor vehicle.
    - 6 offenders walked to the scene.

Offender's frame of mind

Researchers asked the offenders about their frame of mind immediately before, during, and after the attack

- 26 of the 30 offenders reported their frame of mind prior to the assault. The most frequently reported emotions prior to the attacks were:
    - Angry/hostile
    - Anxious
    - Scared
    - Calm
- 25 responded for their frame of mind during the assault. Once the assaults commenced, the most common emotions were:
    - Scared
    - Angry/hostile
    - Anxious
- 23 reported their frame of mind immediately after the assault. As the attacks ended, the offenders most frequently reported feeling:
    - Scared
    - Confused

Tables 3.3 through 3.5 list the responses for each of these circumstances.

Table 3.3

Offender's frame of mind *prior* to the assault*

Reported mood	Frequency	Percentage
Angry/hostile	6	23.1
Frustrated	2	7.7
Agitated	1	3.8
Anxious	6	23.1
Excited	1	3.8
Scared	4	15.4
Confused	0	0.0
Calm	4	15.4
Desperate	0	0.0
Other	2	7.7

**Based on 26 offenders who responded.*

Table 3.4

Offender's frame of mind *during* the assault*

Reported mood	Frequency	Percentage
Angry/hostile	4	16.0
Frustrated	2	8.0
Agitated	2	8.0
Anxious	4	16.0
Excited	0	0.0
Scared	6	24.0
Confused	3	12.0
Calm	1	4.0
Desperate	0	0.0
Other	3	12.0

**Based on 25 offenders who responded.*

Table 3.5

Offender's frame of mind *after* the assault*

Reported mood	Frequency	Percentage
Angry/hostile	2	8.7
Frustrated	1	4.3
Agitated	2	8.7
Anxious	2	8.7
Excited	1	4.3
Scared	6	26.1
Confused	5	21.7
Calm	1	4.3
Desperate	1	4.3
Other	2	8.7

**Based on 23 offenders who responded.*

Table 3.6 reviews the most frequent emotions reported by the offenders by the type of attack—ambush or unprovoked. Those who engaged in an unprovoked attack most commonly felt angry and hostile before the attack, but as the event unfolded, these feelings become less intense. Offenders who ambushed officers reported feeling calm before the attack. Calm feelings diminished as the incident progressed, and offenders noted feeling scared during and after the ambush. Note: The offenders who engaged in an ambush were a smaller sample size and had fewer similar responses.

Table 3.6

Offender's frames of mind at different times during the ambush or unprovoked attack*

Reported mood	Ambush			Unprovoked attack		
	Prior	*During*	*After*	*Prior*	*During*	*After*
Angry/hostile	1	2	1	5	2	1
Anxious	1	0	0	5	4	2
Scared	1	3	3	3	3	3
Calm	3	0	0	1	1	1
Confused	0	2	1	0	1	4

**Based on 26 offenders who responded to "Prior to the attack," 25 who responded to "During the attack," and 23 who responded to "After the attack."*

Offender's behavior surrounding initial confrontation

Participants were also asked to describe their behavior surrounding the initial confrontation with the law enforcement officer(s). Of the 30 offenders, 14 provided an answer, but no clear pattern of responses emerged. The remaining 16 offenders did not provide an answer. The descriptions of their behaviors concerning the initial confrontations are presented in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7
Offender's behavior surrounding initial confrontation*

Behavior	Frequency	Percentage
Went for weapon	3	21.4
Attempted to feign cooperation	2	14.3
Sudden blitz	2	14.3
Attempted to flee	1	7.1
Attempted to verbally intimidate	1	7.1
Looked for opportunity to escape	1	7.1
Other	4	28.6

**Based on 14 offenders who responded.*

Offender's reported stressors prior to the assault

The researchers asked the offenders about whether they had experienced a precipitating stressor in their lives prior to the assault.

- 17 offenders responded that they had experienced one or more stressors.
- 4 did not respond.
- At least 2 offenders responded "yes" for 10 stressors each.

The list of stressors and the number of offenders reporting them are presented in Table 3.8.

Offender's descriptions of the assaults

When asked to describe the assault, 26 offenders responded and 4 offenders did not provide an answer.

- 13 offenders described the assault as "impulsive."
- 5 said the assault was "planned."
- 3 reported the assault was "premeditated."
- 5 described the assault as "other."

When researchers asked offenders how long the attack lasted, 25 offenders responded.

- 11 reported that the attack started suddenly and was a blitz attack.
- 4 of the offenders said the incident lasted longer than 10 minutes.
- 3 said it lasted 30 to 60 seconds.

Table 3.8

Offender's reported stressors prior to the assault*

Stressor	Number responding yes
Change in sleeping habits	4
Separation	3
Divorce	2
Jail	2
Marriage	2
Pregnancy	2
Change in financial condition	2
Death of a close friend	2
Change in spousal arguments	2
Other	9

**Based on the responses of 17 offenders, some offenders provided more than one response.*

- 3 more reported a length of 1 to 10 minutes.
- 2 offenders said 10 to 30 seconds.
- 2 offenders answered this question "other."

Weapons

Twenty-six offenders reported on how they obtained their weapons during the incidents.

- 20 used weapons they had brought with them during the assaults.
- 2 offenders used weapons of opportunity.
- 1 offender used the law enforcement officer's service weapon.
- 3 offenders reported "other" when asked about how they obtained their weapons on scene.

Consideration of officer's body armor

- 1 offender reported he took the victim officer's body armor into account.
- 15 offenders did not consider the officer's body armor.
- The remaining offenders did not respond to this question.

Offender's intentions for the assault

Twenty-one offenders responded to the question concerning their intentions behind their assaults on law enforcement. These results are presented in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9

Offender's intentions for the assaults*

Intention	Frequency	Percentage
Frighten the officer	3	14.3
Immobilize the officer	2	9.5
Avoid arrest	2	9.5
Escape	2	9.5
Kill the officer	1	4.8
Kill the officer + avoid arrest	1	4.8
Immobilize + frighten the officer	1	4.8
Wound + immobilize the officer	1	4.8
Other	8	38.1

**Based on 21 offenders who responded.*

Post-Assault

Following the incidents, very few offenders tried to conceal their identity or hide any evidence of the assault.

- 3 offenders said they used a disguise.
- 1 offender took evidentiary items from the scene to dispose of them.

Twenty-eight offenders reported the ways in which they were apprehended.

- 9 offenders said they turned themselves in.
- 4 were arrested following a police investigation.
- 4 were caught in the act.
- 3 offenders reported multiple means by which they were apprehended.
    - o 1 captured through a combination of a police investigation, crime scene evidence, and a third-party informant.
    - o 1 turned himself in, following a police investigation that was aided by a third-party informant.
    - o 1 was apprehended after being turned in by a third-party informant and then caught by a citizen.
- 1 offender's apprehension involved a third-party informant.
- 1 was identified by the victim officer.
- 1 was caught by a citizen.
- 5 offenders reported their apprehensions fit within the category of "other."

Twenty-seven of the offenders who provided data concerning their apprehensions also shared the locations of their arrests. The majority of the offenders were not arrested at the site of the assault.

- 9 were arrested at their residence.
- 5 offenders were arrested while fleeing the scene of the attack.
- 4 offenders were arrested at the crime scene.
- 9 of the offenders said they were arrested "elsewhere."

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Researchers assembled the statistical information presented in the first section of this chapter from the quantitative analysis of the data for all 30 offenders, unless otherwise reported. This section describes the qualitative results, or the insights and concepts identified, from the in-depth interviews conducted with 27 offenders. These interviews lasted an average of 4 hours, and subjects answered questions about their background, family structure and environment, entertainment preferences, attitudes toward authority, criminal history, weapons training and use, characteristics of the scene and encounter, and their description of the offense. Just as with the data about the officers, the information about the offenders may differ between the quantitative and qualitative analyses. The results are complementary but not comparable.

Most common codes: overall motives and micromotives

Analysts documented recurring themes from the offenders' interview transcripts and created a codebook for the most common topics. Further analysis of the codes resulted in the identification of overall *motives* that influenced the offenders to commit the attacks. As with the officers' data, several major themes, i.e., *core ideas*, emerged from the transcripts, with some of the core ideas being divided into one or more subordinate topics, or *domains*. Only for offenders, researchers used the core ideas and domains from the transcripts to identify *micromotives*. Micromotives are the multiple influences that contributed to the offender's decision to attack an officer.

Based on the review of the offenders' transcripts, researchers pinpointed:

- 5 overall motives, which were not labelled as core ideas or domains.
- 31 core ideas.
- 58 domains.

In line with previous offender research conducted by one of the authors of this study (Daniels et al., 2016), the core ideas and domains represent micromotives that contributed to the offenders' reasons for perpetrating the assaults. The first part of this section is about the five overall motives, followed by a discussion of micromotives (core ideas and domains). Note: Although the offenders did not differentiate between the technical definitions for ambush and unprovoked attack during their interviews (see Chapter 1 for definitions), the researchers categorized the incidents accordingly during their analyses.

Overall motives

The research team identified five overall motives, **Personal, Expressive, Economic, Political,** and **Social.** After reading through each transcript, each member of the team made a determination regarding the motive for each assault. In cases where the group could not reach total agreement, team members discussed the motive until they attained 100.0 percent consensus. Through this method, an overall motive was determined for 26 of the 27 offenders. In one case, the interviewee was a co offender and was not the individual who attacked the law enforcement officer, so the team did not determine a motive for that particular subject. Therefore, for the Overall motives section only, percentages are based on the 26 offenders for whom the research team established motives. Each overall motive is listed below and includes a definition in italics, an explanation of the motive, and quotes from offenders for an ambush and/or an unprovoked attack.

Personal

The overall motive for the ambush or unprovoked attack was for personal reasons (to accomplish a personal objective, e.g., avoiding arrest).

The most common motivation for the offenders to assault law enforcement officers was *Personal*, with 13 of the 26 offenders (50.0 percent) reporting their offenses were carried out for this reason.

Ambush example. The offender tried to collect money owed to him by another individual. The two began to fight, and while the struggle was going on, the other individual called 911. The fight ended with the offender shooting the victim. As the offender was leaving the residence, a police car pulled up. The offender opened fire on the car, killing the officer. The team categorized the motive as *Personal* because the offender was attempting to flee another crime and was trying to avoid being arrested.

Unprovoked attack example. When interviewed, the offender stated that a particular officer had been harassing him for years. On the day of the attack, the offender was already in a state of crisis. He encountered the officer at a gas station, and the two exchanged words. The offender went outside and waited in his vehicle for the officer to drive by. When the offender saw the officer's patrol vehicle passing by, he rammed it with his vehicle. When the officer exited his patrol vehicle, the offender had already exited his own vehicle in order to assault the officer. The team categorized the offender's reason for the attack as a personal motive because he believed he was retaliating for a long list of perceived mistreatment by the victim officer.

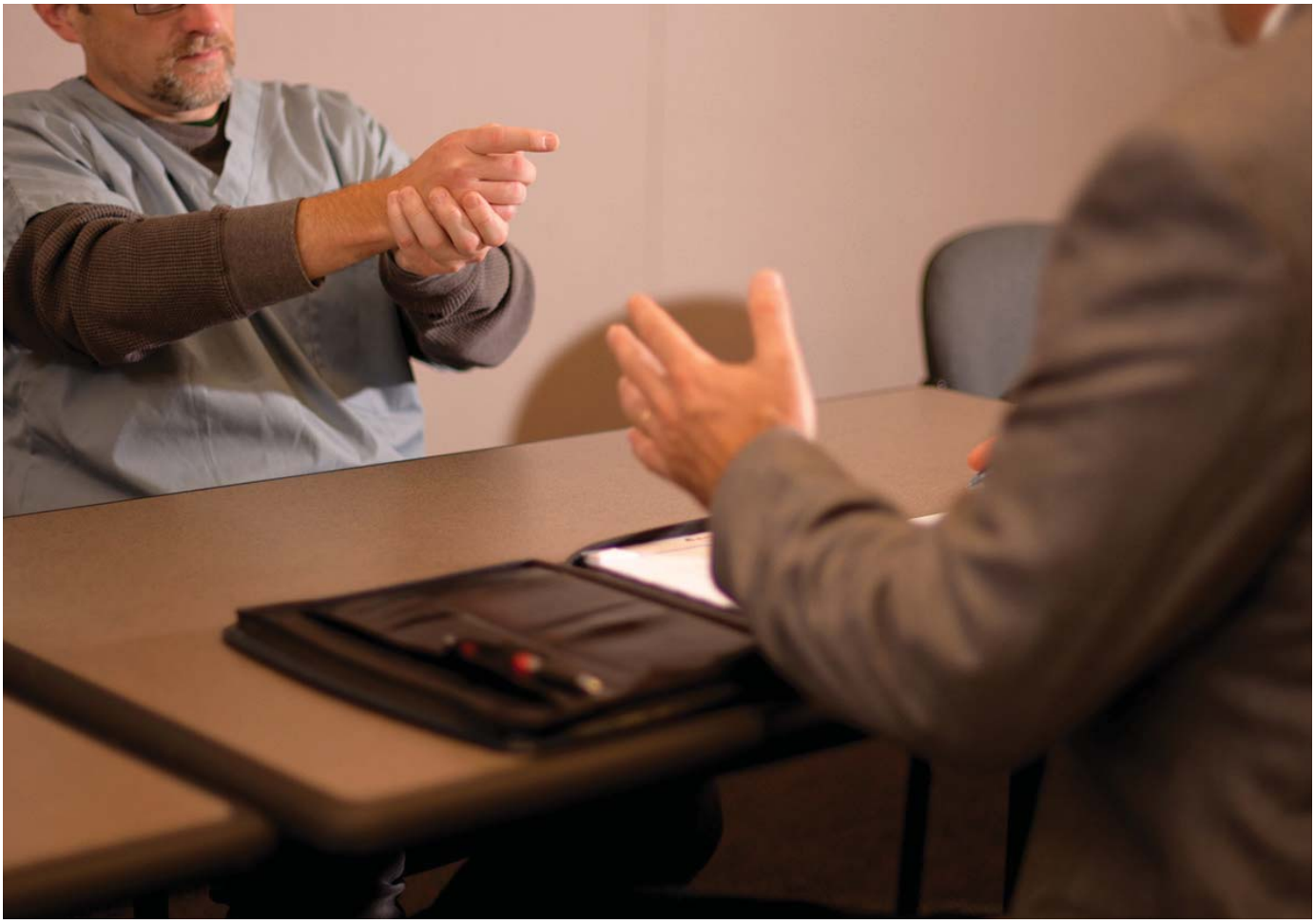
Expressive

The overall motive for the ambush or unprovoked attack was related to the offender's emotionality or experience of crisis—including suicidality.

The team determined that nine participants (34.6 percent) initiated assaults on officers due to an *Expressive* motive.

Ambush example. In this case, the offender was a passenger in a car that had been pulled over by a law enforcement officer. As the officer approached the vehicle, the driver sped off, leading two officers in separate cars on a high-speed chase that ended at the offender's house. The offender and others fled into the house, followed by the officers. The offender ran into his bedroom, emerged with a 16-gauge shotgun, and shot the victim officer in the head at point-blank range. The team categorized the motive as *Expressive* because the offender was suffering from mental illness and was in a state of psychological crisis at the time of the assault.

Unprovoked attack example. The offender had been out drinking with friends. As he was driving them home, he ran a stop sign. When the offender saw flashing lights in his rearview mirror, he panicked. He worried if he received a DUI, he would lose his license, and consequently,



his job. Instead of pulling over, the offender drove off, and the officer followed him. The offender temporarily lost the officer in a residential neighborhood, then stopped in the middle of the street. While responding to an unrelated call for service, the officer then came upon the stopped truck. As the officer pulled up, the offender jumped out of the truck and started shooting at him, wounding the officer. The offender escaped but turned himself in several days later in another state. The team categorized the offender's overall motive for this incident as *Expressive* because of the combination of the offender's drunken state and his panic.

The remaining overall motives were expressed by one offender (4.0 percent) each. These overall motives included *Economic, Political*, and *Social.* Because these motives were applicable to 1 offender each, only one example incident is available for each motive.

Economic

The overall motive for the ambush or unprovoked attack was for economic gain.

One participant (3.8 percent) initiated an assault on an officer due to an *Economic* motive.

Ambush example. The offender was selling drugs for a gang. He claimed he was paying a "dirty cop" to ignore his operation. The offender and some of his associates grew resentful of the money they were giving the officer and the harassment they received from him. The offender and two others ambushed the officer and killed him. They believed they stood to gain financially by eliminating the officer.

Political

The overall motive for the ambush or unprovoked attack was political reasons, or to make a political statement.

One participant (3.8 percent) initiated an assault on officers due to a *Political* motive.

Ambush example. The offender in this incident reported he had spent his life studying antigovernment laws and had experienced several run-ins with the police. He held extremist antigovernment views and believed the government continuously infringes upon citizens' rights. Prior to the ambush incident, the state needed to widen a highway that ran in front of the residence that belonged to the offender's parents. The offender claimed the state workers were trespassing on his parents' property and resisted their efforts to work on the project. After several weeks of resistance, an officer finally came to the residence to address the issue. According to the offender, the first officer kicked in the door, so the offender shot and killed him. When other officers arrived, the offender shot and killed a second officer in the yard. However, the offender claims he missed the second officer and insists that a third officer, who was behind the second victim officer, returned fire and killed the second officer. The team determined the shooting to be politically motived because the offender believed he was within his rights to kill trespassers.

Social

The overall motive for the ambush or unprovoked attack was for social reasons. As a result of attacking the officer, an offender stood to gain social standing within his circle.

One participant (3.8 percent) initiated an assault on an officer due to a *Social* motive.

Ambush example. The offender never felt like he fit in, so he complied with his brother-in-law's request to borrow the offender's gun in order to shoot an officer the brother-in-law disliked. The offender claims he did not think his brother-in-law was serious, but he also worried about becoming an outcast in the family if he did not comply. The offender though his wife's family would like and respect him more if he provided the gun. In his words:

> It was something to do with pressure, accepted pressure, I guess you could call it. I'm saying because I felt this is my brother-in-law. We've only been married [the offender and his wife] for three months. You know what I'm saying? Let me make an impression, not an impression as much as, you know, he might hold this against me if I don't help him out.

This offender is now serving a life sentence for Accessory to Capital Murder. He was motivated to participate in this ambush incident in order to gain social status, recognition, etc. from his brother-in-law.

Table 3.10

Number of offender responses for each micromotive (core idea)

Micromotive (core idea/domain)	Number of responses	Percentage	CQR label
Mental state	26	96.3	General
Negative background (Minor)	24	88.9	Typical
Negative experiences (Adult)	24	88.9	Typical
Street life	24	88.9	Typical
Incident resolution	23	85.2	Typical
Substance use – History	21	77.8	Typical
Prepared for battle	20	74.1	Typical
Escape	16	59.2	Typical
Victim mentality	16	59.2	Typical
Inferred psychopathology	15	55.6	Typical
Neutralize the officer	14	51.8	Typical
Suicide	14	51.8	Typical
Attitudes toward authority	13	48.1	Variant
Substance use - Incident	13	48.1	Variant
Involvement with others	12	44.4	Variant
Triggers to violence	11	40.7	Variant
Maintain freedom	10	37.4	Variant
Survival	10	37.4	Variant
Premeditation	10	37.4	Variant
Arming self	10	37.4	Variant
Denial	9	33.3	Variant
Altercation	9	33.3	Variant
Opportunity	7	26.0	Variant
Threats	7	26.0	Variant
Confirmed psychopathology	7	26.0	Variant
Acting on instinct	6	22.2	Variant
Retaliation	5	18.5	Variant
Few constraints	5	18.5	Variant
Mistaken identity	4	14.8	Variant
Kill authority figure	3	11.1	Variant
Extremist beliefs	1	3.7	Unique

Micromotives (Core Ideas/Domains)

Complementing the overall motives, micromotives (core ideas and domains) provide additional insight into the reasons why these offenders assaulted law enforcement officers. Researchers used the CQR methodology to analyze the topics addressed by offenders in this study (Ladany, Thompson & Hill, 2012). Table 3.10 lists each of the most commonly occurring micro-motives and displays how frequently offenders mentioned each one.

The *Number of Responses* column in Table 3.10 represents the number of offenders who made one or more statements that reflect the micro-motives listed. The percentage follows in the next column. The final column, *CQR Label*, is a classification based on the number of responses each micromotive received. Researchers used the standard labels from CQR to classify how frequently participants addressed each topic. See Appendix A for more information on CQR.

As shown in Table 3.10, researchers labeled one of the 31 core ideas as *General*, meaning at least 26 of the 27 participants addressed the topic. The team labeled 11 of the core ideas as *Typical*, which meant between 14 and 25 offenders discussed them. The group labeled most of the core ideas, 18, as *Variant*. Two to 13 participants addressed *Variant* core ideas. Finally, the team labeled one core idea as *Unique*. One individual mentioned this core idea, **Extremist beliefs**, but it was included in the list because his beliefs served as a motive for the offender's assault on law enforcement.

The micromotives (core ideas and domains) categorized as *General* or *Typical* (mentioned by at least 50 percent of the participants) are detailed in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11

Most common micromotives (core ideas and domains)

Core idea – domain	Number of offenders	Percentage
Street life – *Prior criminal involvement*	23	85.2
Substance use – History - *Drugs*	21	77.8
Prepared for battle – *Access/obtaining weapons*	20	74.1
Negative background (Minor) – *Family instability*	19	70.4
Mental state	17	63.0
Mental state – *Cognitive reactions*	17	63.0
Mental state – *Remorse*	16	59.3
Negative background (Minor)	16	59.3
Escape – *From the ambush*	15	55.6
Mental state – *Affective reactions*	14	51.8

*NOTE: Codes that are in **bold font** are core ideas; the codes in italic font are specific domains under the core idea.*

Discussion of most common micromotives (core ideas and domains)

The remainder of this chapter presents each of the most mentioned micromotives (core ideas/domains) from Table 3.11. Just as with the overall motives, each micromotive is defined and an explanation is included, if necessary. Each section provides a brief synopsis of an ambush and/or an unprovoked attack associated with the micromotive. Some cases include pertinent quotes from the offender. Additional conclusions and recommendations are located in Chapter 4.

Street life

The offender describes how street life shaped his/her attitudes, beliefs, values, and/or thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

This core idea consists of two domains: *Prior criminal involvement* and *Drug sales/dealing*.

Street life–Prior criminal involvement

Descriptions of prior involvement in, or convictions of criminal activities, separate from negative experiences with law enforcement officers, including delinquency.

Twenty-three of the 27 (85.2 percent) offenders in this study addressed *Prior criminal involvement*. LEOKA staff advised the participants they should only discuss crimes for which they had been convicted, otherwise the research team would be required to inform the authorities of any details of unsolved crimes that were mentioned in the interviews.

Ambush example. On trial for rape, the offender attacked a court guard, shot the judge and the court reporter, and then went on a spree throughout the city, ultimately killing four people and injuring several others. The offender reported several prior crimes, including the rape for which he was charged, although he denied that the incident was rape. He related the following incident.

> I was on probation for possession of marijuana and there was an incident where I was arrested for obstruction of justice, and it was several different charges that resulted from an argument with the police officer, and it happened while I was on probation, so I had to go to the jail, for like 30 days. . .

This statement refers to a possession of marijuana charge, several charges related to arguing with a police officer, and a third, unmentioned crime for which he was on probation.

Unprovoked attack example. The offender in this unprovoked attack had been taking pills and drinking for more than a day. He wanted to go buy more pills and became aggravated with his girlfriend because she would not give him her car keys. He retrieved a firearm and started shooting the residence and her car. Then he shot the responding officer as the officer approached the residence. The offender had a history of similar crimes. The interviewer asked him, "You've only been arrested for the DUI?" The offender responded, "I had three of them [DUIs] and a domestic violence prior to this crime, prior to [the reason] I am here."

Substance use–History

The offender reports a history of substance use or abuse.

The core idea **Substance use—History** is comprised of two domains, *Drugs* and *Alcohol*. Of the two, more than half of the offenders discussed a history of drug use. In the qualitative portion of the interviews, offenders did not mention history of alcohol abuse frequently enough to be analyzed in this chapter. This in contrast to what they reported for the quantitative portion of the interviews (see Quantitative Analysis, *Substance abuse by offenders*, earlier in this chapter).

Substance use–History—Drugs

The offender reported a history of drug use/abuse.

Twenty-one offenders (77.8 percent) reported a history of drug use. Drugs ranged from marijuana to methamphetamines and illegally obtained prescription pills.

Ambush example. After several days of being high on methamphetamines, the offender sped past a patrol officer in his vehicle. The offender rammed another police car and fired shots at an officer but managed to escape after leading officers on a high-speed chase. The next morning, the police came to his house, where a shootout and standoff ensued. This individual admitted, "I smoked a little weed, but what was my downfall was I ended up taking methamphetamines, and it just took control of me pretty well."

Unprovoked attack example. The offender was delusional at the time of the attack. The officer he attacked was his neighbor. The officer was preparing to take his daughter to the doctor because she was ill, but the offender believed the officer was harming the child. Consequently, the offender killed both the officer and the officer's wife. When asked about prior substance use, he responded that in addition to frequent marijuana use, "I did some methamphetamines, but I had quit all of that."

Prepared for battle

The offender had taken steps to prepare him or herself for battle in general (not for this incident).

Offenders who expressed this core idea had the mindset that one must be prepared to fight at all times. Three domains make up this core idea: *Mental preparation, Street combat Veteran*, and *Access/obtain weapons*.

Prepared for battle – Access/obtaining weapons

The offender reported a history of obtaining and/or using weapons.

This domain was discussed by 20 of the participants (74.1 percent). Researchers noted this domain if the offender's intent for the weapons was for self-protection or for use to commit crime. Researchers did not code this domain if, for example, the offender talked about collecting guns for hunting or sport—unless those guns were then used for self-defense or to commit a crime.

Ambush example. The offender suffered from paranoia and was delusional at both the time of the ambush and at the time of the interview. Before the ambush, the offender stole a friend's gun and hid in the desert. When the police came searching for him for stealing the weapon, he ambushed one of the officers and killed him. When asked why he stole the weapon, he stated, "If necessary to get them out of the way, I was going to kill them, but this is why I stole the assault rifle, just to prepare for it, just in case it was necessary." When the offender referred to "they" and "them," he was talking about demons that were part of his delusions.

Unprovoked attack example. Previously described in the unprovoked attack example of the **Expressive** overall motive, this incident involved an offender who had been out drinking. The offender failed to stop for an officer because he was afraid he would lose his job if he got another DUI. Regarding being armed in certain places, the offender said:

> It [the gun] would be at the house. I don't know if I just had it on me unless I was about leave the house. And there's certain places you can't go into with them so I'd have to leave it in the vehicle, but other than that I always had it on me.

Negative background as a minor

Negative events and experiences in the offender's history (while a child or adolescent).

Sixteen of the participants (59.3 percent) in this study talked about the core idea **Negative background as a minor.** These general negative experiences included reports of poor living conditions, poor relationships with peers, and other factors. The core idea **Negative background as a minor** is comprised of eight domains, including: *Exposed to violence, Family instability, Gang violence, Poor academic performance, Substance use/ abuse, Sexual assault, Incarceration,* and *Negative experiences with the police.* Examples for the overall core idea follow.

Ambush example. An individual who was going through a divorce had been drinking all day. While fighting with his wife, he declared he was going to commit suicide in the garage. The man's family called the police, and while the offender fumbled with the shotgun in the dark, a blast from the gun killed an officer who was outside of the garage window. The offender claimed he dropped the weapon, causing it to discharge. When discussing his background, the offender talked about being disrespected by a teacher when he was younger, saying, "They threw a chalk eraser at me." Although many people would not be unduly distressed by this experience, it had a negative impact on this participant.

Unprovoked attack example. The offender grew up in an impoverished environment. His father had been deported to his home country after being arrested for a DUI. The offender's father, after returning to the United States, was stopped by police in front of the offender's home for another drunk driving offense. A backup officer arrived, and the father was arrested without incident, but the offender went into the house and came out the back door with a rifle. The backup officer had driven

around the corner when she spotted the offender acting suspiciously. As the officer pulled into a parking lot, the offender opened fire, emptying his 30-round magazine. Despite being struck six times, the officer survived and was able to return fire. When describing his childhood, this offender stated:

> [I was] trying to look for something, happiness, you know? Trying to, you know, have to have much, you know, but trying to help someone out, you know, when they're down. Things like that. That's what I was looking for, you know, a handout. I never got one. And the people that would give them to me, they were in the same situation I was.

Negative background as a minor–Family instability

The offender was exposed to violence during his/her formative years (e.g., domestic violence, abuse, broken home). Includes history of family criminal activities.

Nineteen offenders (70.4 percent) talked about family instability while growing up. This domain does not include sexual abuse—which was included in the *Sexual assault* domain of this core idea.

Ambush example. The offender and two other individuals robbed a gun store, using a stolen truck to drive through the front window. Early in the morning, they were in a park transferring guns from the truck to a car, when an officer pulled into the park to investigate their actions. The offender opened fire, emptied his magazine, ran over the officer with the car, and ordered one of the co-offenders to shoot the officer in the head. During his interview, the offender described a bit of his childhood.

> *Interviewer:* As far as your biological father, you never knew him at all? Any reason why he left, or was he never in the house at all?
>
> *Offender:* My mother threw him out when I was two because he was molesting my sister.

Unprovoked attack example. This incident was previously described under the **Street life**–*Prior criminal involvement* example. The offender had been taking pills and drinking. When an officer arrived at his residence, the offender fired on him. The offender had a prior history of similar crimes. Relevant to the *Family instability* domain, the offender stated his parents divorced when he was 16.

> *Interviewer:* What was the reason for your father leaving?
>
> *Offender:* I believe it was infidelity.

Mental state

The offender described his/her mental state surrounding the ambush.

The **Mental state** core idea is composed of three domains: *Affective reactions, Cognitive reactions*, and *Remorse*. This is the only core idea that was not only discussed by more than 50 percent of the participants, but all of its three domains were also discussed by more than 50 percent of the participants. Seventeen (63.0 percent) of the offenders addressed this core idea.

Ambush example. This incident was previously described in the **Social motive**. The offender's brother-in-law had asked to use his firearm to harm a police officer. Here, the offender gave his thoughts about whether his brother-in-law was serious about his intention to shoot the officer.

> As a sense of acceptance, you know what I'm saying? But in the back of my mind, I told myself several times, *There's no way that he's going to go through with this over some traffic tickets.* This is an attention grabbing—what do you call it? A fiasco. 'Hey look at what I can do!' You know what I'm saying?

The offender believed his brother-in-law was just attempting to get attention by talking about shooting the officer.

Unprovoked attack example. The offender in this example was experiencing a psychotic episode at the time of the attack. He had decided he needed to kill an authority figure, so he bought a gun and waited outside of a grocery store until closing when he knew an off-duty officer would arrive. The officer worked part-time as a security guard at the grocery store. The offender described both his thoughts and his feelings around the attack.

> I see him come out. He had a broom or a mop or something like that, you know a few little groceries in his hand. So I say "OK it's time" again. So I dropped the bag and take the gun out, drop the bag and now its prey. I'm on the hunt. Then I don't know what happened or for the moment of why. I guess it was just my heart–I had never done anything like that, the anger or nothing like that. It just exploded, fired off. Maybe five more yards, you know, would have been what I needed to complete the actual murder.

The offender wounded the officer, but the officer managed to return fire. The offender fled on foot and was captured shortly thereafter by responding officers.

Mental state – Cognitive reactions

Descriptions of the offender's thoughts/cognitions during the time of the ambush.

Seventeen participants (63.0 percent) described this domain, sharing their cognitive reactions to the attack.

Ambush example. The offender was a high-level member of a street gang, although he used the word "organization" rather than "gang" during the interview. The offender was at a gas station when several off-duty officers arrived. The offender and one of the officers had a long-standing dispute and got into an argument. Another officer threatened the offender, and the offender went out to his car. In the offender's words, the officers escalated the situation, and he ambushed them by pulling a gun and shooting. One officer died, and the other was paralyzed. In describing his thoughts about this situation, the offender stated:

> *Offender:* When he made the statement, I left. "Come on outside." And he chose not to, which was smart because I was already in the state of being where something [was going to] happen.
>
> *Interviewer:* You already called me out so now I'm going to have to. . .
>
> *Offender:* Yeah, I'm going to show you now.

The offender's thoughts revealed his great offense when he believed he was disrespected and his need to save face by "showing" the officer "how [he] really get[s] out."

Unprovoked attack example. The offender in this incident was driving drunk when his truck broke down on an interstate. A car filled with his relatives stopped, and then a passing officer stopped to offer assistance. The offender feared being charged with a DUI and was also afraid the officer would see the shotgun in his truck, so he opened fire on the officer. After fleeing the scene, the offender described his thought process.

> [I] went out to this park, ditched the ride, and I ended up hitchhiking a ride. Then I ended up on this back road and my plan was—I sat out there trying to think what to do. And then my plan was to walk back in and turn myself into the sheriff's office.

Before he could enact this plan, a hunter turned him in, and he was arrested. Although wounded, the officer survived the attack.

Mental state–Remorse

The offender expresses regret over the incident or the loss of life.

A total of 16 of the offenders (59.3 percent) reported feelings of remorse for their actions.

Ambush example. In this example, the offender was a passenger in a car that fled from an officer. A high-speed chase ensued, and the driver drove to the offender's house, where they jumped out of the car and ran into the house. The first two officers to arrive exited their vehicles and followed on foot. While one officer ran into the back of the house to apprehend another subject, the offender ran into his bedroom and retrieved a 16-gauge shotgun. He then walked into the living room, placed the gun to the other officer's head, and pulled the trigger. When asked how he felt about the ambush, the offender stated, "I feel bad about it, yes, sir."

Unprovoked attack example. The offender's situation was previously described (see **Personal motive**, unprovoked attack example). The offender discussed being harassed for years by a particular officer, and he attacked the officer at a gas station. The offender expressed regret for losing what he had and for almost killing the officer.

> I have no idea why I'm even here. I had a good family. They took care of me, but it was just something stupid I did, you know. I regret

it. I won't lie to you, you know. Again, I've got feelings of guilt constantly because I nearly took another man's life, and this man was a police officer, you know. And I'm not into killing cops, you know. Otherwise I wouldn't even be here.

Mental state–Affective reactions

Descriptions of how the offender felt at any time during the ambush event.

The third domain of the offender's mental state surrounding the ambush or unprovoked attack is his or her affective, or emotional reaction. Fourteen of the participants (51.8 percent) in this study discussed their affective reactions to the attack.

Ambush example. The offender in this example was involved in a high-speed chase and shootout in which an officer was injured. The offender escaped and went to his house, which was in another county. The next morning, the police arrived, and the offender engaged in a standoff with them. During the standoff, the offender's mental state went through a progression from a desire to kill the officers, to anger, and finally to calm after some time had passed. Significantly, the offender said his flashpoint came when his dog was killed by the police in the shootout.

> I mean, that was, my mind set at the time was, 'You want me get me; I want to get you.' And I just—like I said, I started firing then, but after that had initial, you know, anger of them killing my dog was gone, you know, maybe 15 minutes later. Whenever I had [gone] upstairs and could see them, I'd done, you know, [I] calmed down and wasn't in that mind frame [any] more.

Unprovoked attack example. This incident was previously described (see **Negative background as a minor**, unprovoked attack example). The offender's father had been pulled over for drunk driving, and the offender feared his father would be deported again. Here, the offender describes "snapping" because of a mixture of several intense emotions —stress, anger, and depression.

> *Interviewer:* OK. At some point in time, you elected to go into the house and retrieve the firearm?
>
> *Offender:* Yeah, that's when I snapped. I couldn't take it anymore. It was just too much stress, too much depression, anger, all that, you know. Every single downfall in my life came at that moment, you know? The whole weight of it came down on me. . .

Escape–From the ambush

Following the ambush or unprovoked attack, the offender attempted to escape.

The **Escape** core idea encompasses using the ambush or unprovoked attack as a means for escape. Fifteen participants (55.6 percent) reported escaping or fleeing from the attack.

Ambush example. The offender in this example had a long history of criminal activity and incarceration. Before the ambush that was the focus of the interview, the offender had been jailed for shooting an officer during a traffic stop. The offender escaped jail and was on the run for a couple of months. The police were staking out his wife's house, and as the offender approached the residence, he came upon two officers facing away from him. He claims his intent was to sneak up on them, strip them, and tie them up just to humiliate them. But when they heard him approach, the offender fired at the officers, hitting both of them. One officer later died at the hospital. After the shooting, the offender addressed his escape. "When the sirens got close, I took off, ran toward the woods. Ran toward the north; the back part there is north. Put a fresh magazine in the gun and kept going." He was captured several days later.

Unprovoked attack example. This incident was previously described in the unprovoked attack example in the **Negative background as a minor**–*Family instability* section. When an officer came to investigate the three subjects, the offender shot the officer multiple times, drove his car over the officer, and ordered one of his co-offenders to shoot the officer in the head. When asked what they did next, the offender stated:

> I jump back in the car. . . I threw the flashlight and jumped back in the car, and one of the other guys starts going through the cop's car. So I get out and I yell at him, 'We got to go, man! We got to go!' So we all get in the car and the other guy is asking me, 'Are you all

right, are you shot?' because the officer fired at me twice. I say, 'Yeah,' and we left. We went back up to where we were at the camp area.

Summary

This study of ambushes and unprovoked attacks did not have a random sample of participants. Rather, the sample was drawn from cases in which the offender survived, was convicted, and agreed to be interviewed. Therefore, the researchers could not develop a profile of the "typical" person who is likely to assault an officer. However, the team found some common characteristics among the 30 offenders described here. Most frequently, the offender was male (96.7 percent), who was a member of a racial minority (66.7 percent) with an average age of 28 years. Most (73.3 percent) of the offenders had a history of drug abuse, and the majority (66.7 percent) of the offenders (some of whom had abused drugs) had a history of alcohol abuse, as demonstrated in the quantitative data. A third of all the offenders had been involved in prior confrontations with law enforcement, and the majority of all offenders had engaged in prior criminal activities. Unexpectedly, 50 percent of the sample reported one or more suicide attempts in the past. Finally, most ambushes and unprovoked attacks enacted by these individuals occurred between the hours of 6:01 p.m. and 6 a.m., with the most common time being between midnight and 3 a.m.

The transcripts of the interviews with offenders demonstrate many of them lived lives of stress and strain, often coming from unstable homes, engaging in criminal activities early in life, and using and abusing alcohol and/or drugs. For some of the participants, this lifestyle related to frequent attempts to end it all through suicide. Their lifestyle, depression, and perhaps hopelessness may have steered these offenders on a path that ultimately led to their decision to kill, or attempt to kill, one or more police officers.

Many of the offenders lived lives of stress and strain, often coming from unstable homes.

CHAPTER FOUR

Areas of Concern for Law Enforcement

Although the LEOKA Program defines ambushes and unprovoked attacks differently, both types of assaults contain the element of surprise. Officers do not suspect the assault is coming, undoubtedly contributing to a sense of uncertainty every time they put on their uniforms. Some of the reasons offenders attack officers, as identified in this study, include avoiding arrest, retaliation, political motivation, social pressure, and mental illness. Whatever the impetus for an ambush or unprovoked attack, it is not known ahead of time, and such assaults seem impossible to mitigate. Even so, the analysis of the interviews LEOKA staff conducted with officers and offenders found common issues that can, at the very least, be discussed and, in some cases, addressed with training. This chapter identifies the most frequent areas of concern acknowledged by officers and includes recommendations whenever possible. Some of the topics identified by the officers overlap one another, but each one is addressed individually to allow readers to use this chapter as a reference guide. While this information was gathered specifically from instances of ambushes or unprovoked attacks, readers will find that most of the recommendations apply to any ongoing event.

AWARENESS, ATTENTION, DISTRACTION

Many officers in this study understood before they were assaulted that the circumstances involved higher-than-average threat levels, but they were still caught unaware when attacked. Most of the 33 officers interviewed referenced at least one aspect of awareness, attention, and distraction. Examples include being aware of the setting, the people involved, and the circumstances, as well as continuing to pay attention in order to recognize and respond to danger as quickly as possible. This section presents the information related to the topics of awareness, attention, and distraction that the officers most commonly mentioned: *Unable to see the offender, Awareness of surroundings, Distractions,* and *Closer attention to potential attacker.*

Unable to see the offender

While officers noted a number of awareness issues that impacted their responses to an ambush or unprovoked attack, being unable to see the offender was one of the most frequently mentioned concerns in this category. Of the 33 officers interviewed, 16 officers (48.5 percent) never saw the offender prior to the attack or did not know the location of an offender who was shooting at them.

In one such case, a uniformed officer was assaulted while working a department-approved security detail at a grocery store. The officer was standing near the front checkout area of the store when he was physically attacked from behind. The momentum caused the officer and the offender to fall into the display racks and onto the floor. During the struggle, the offender was able to remove the firearm from the officer's holster and fire one round. Fortunately, the round only grazed the officer. The struggle continued outside the store where the officer was able to subdue the offender until backup arrived. The officer described the situation:

> Well, I was there a few moments, and it all happened very quickly. I felt a nudge or something from behind, kind of on my right-hand side. I thought maybe someone just bumped into me with a cart or something as they were going past, and in the second that I thought about it, I felt myself . . . actually get thrown up against the checkout line. I got thrown up against a magazine rack. Now I know it's not an accident, and that same instance, I feel something pulling on my holster. So I . . . try to spin to my right and throw my hands down on top of the gun to keep it in the holster. And, at that point in time, I knew I had a problem.

Awareness of surroundings

Law enforcement officers can become a target of opportunity for no other reason than the uniform they wear and the authority they represent. An officer's awareness of his or her surroundings is essential to increase the chance of preventing or surviving an attack. When analyzing the officers' interview transcripts, the topics of *Awareness of surroundings* and *Vigilance* both came up regularly during the discussions. Of law enforcement officers interviewed, 63.6 percent (21 officers) made reference to awareness of his/her surroundings. Seventeen (51.5 percent) of the officers' comments particularly mentioned closer attention to surroundings, stressing the importance of being vigilant at all times in order to recognize and proactively address possible threats. Many of the officers had no warning whatsoever they were about to experience a life-threatening encounter. Even so, there were cases during which officers could have employed precautionary measures to minimize the effects of an attack if they had been able to better assess their physical environment and/or recognize their tactical disadvantage.

Officers can become a target of opportunity for no other reason than the uniform they wear and the authority they represent. An officer's awareness of his or her surroundings is essential to increase the chances of preventing or surviving an attack.

Distractions

Several officers noted distractions as a contributing factor in their critical incidents. Distractions prevented officers from giving their full attention to their surroundings, creating an opportunity for offenders to ambush or attack them.

On this topic, 15 (45.5 percent) of the law enforcement study participants talked specifically about the need to *remain focused on the greater task at hand and minimize distractions*. In at least two of the cases, officers assumed they were responding to the aftermath of a shooting, and that the offender had already left the area. In both cases, officers were ambushed by offenders who were still actively on the scene and armed.

In one case, an ambush occurred when three officers responded to a domestic violence call to investigate allegations of physical abuse and sexual assault. The complainant indicated the offender was living in a small camper on the property where she was assaulted. The officers also learned the offender was armed and had made statements implying he would shoot the first law enforcement officer he saw. The officers arrived and cleared the camper and surrounding area. They did not locate the offender, so officers turned their attention to placing crime scene tape to cordon off the area and begin processing for evidence. While the unsuspecting officers were distracted with this task, the offender appeared from the wood line with a shotgun and killed one officer and injured two others. The officer recounted the situation:

> As I was tying some tape, flagging tape, around the trees, the deputy was standing behind me, so off to my right rear, coming from the wood line, I heard a shotgun rap and immediately following that, a blast from a shotgun. I turned around just in time to see the debris and everything coming out of the shotgun, smoke and everything. At the time I didn't know it, but I had been hit. I'd been peppered with birdshot in my arm and my face.

Closer attention to potential attacker

Five (15.2 percent) of the officers specifically mentioned the importance of paying *closer attention to a potential attacker and minimize distractions.* One of the participating officers told of being attacked without provocation while he assisted another officer with an arrest for DUI. The officer agreed to process towing the vehicle. The officer and the tow truck driver were preparing the vehicle for towing when a subject approached them on foot and asked what they were doing with the car. The subject turned out to be the husband of the woman who had just been arrested for DUI. When he learned about the decision to tow the vehicle, the subject became angry and left the area on foot. Due to the man's behavior, the officer was concerned for his safety—concerned enough to watch the subject leave the area before he resumed processing

Officers should complete a preemptive assessment of their surrounding area and safeguard themselves as much as possible against a potential attack.

the vehicle. The officer expressed the sentiment in this way, "I knew there was a concern. I thought there might be a threat. I even made the statement of, 'Something's wrong with this guy. I'm not doing anything until he's gone.' And yet he still was able to sneak up on me and [shoot me]."

Once the subject walked out of sight, the officer began working with the tow truck driver to complete a vehicle inventory report. While the officer and the tow truck driver were distracted with the inventory, the subject returned to the scene and shot the officer in the back of the head, resulting in a nonfatal injury. Here are the officer's reflections on that moment:

> The tow truck again was idling very fast. It was a diesel truck, and I couldn't hear anything. I started to count. . . I saw some dollar bills in the wallet, and I counted, I think twelve. And the tow truck operator thought there were thirteen. He said, 'Count it again.' So I thumbed through them, and this was happening fairly quickly. Again, it was the end of my shift, and I'll admit I was in somewhat of a hurry to get done and get home.

In another example, an officer experienced an unprovoked attack while sitting in his marked police vehicle in a well-lit public area with high traffic. The officer frequently parked in that area to complete work on his laptop computer. While the officer was distracted with typing, the offender approached the officer's vehicle from the driver side. Through his peripheral vision, the officer observed the offender as he approached the vehicle. For safety concerns, the officer always exited the vehicle when speaking with someone; however, the offender was at the driver side door before the officer could get out. The officer became uncomfortable when the offender displayed odd behavior. Concerned for his safety, the officer decided to try to exit the vehicle to speak with the offender. As the officer attempted to open the door, the offender leaped through the window and began attacking the officer with a screwdriver, stabbing him multiple times. The officer commented:

> I'd say I'd been there for about 15 to 20 minutes typing, and every now and then I'd glance up and kind of scan, make sure everything was OK. So I had been in that same spot forever, that's usually where I go to type if I'm in that area, that side of town. I'm typing, so every now and again I'd scan, just stretch, kind of look around. In this particular moment, I looked up. From my left eye peripheral I could see a figure that wasn't there before, obviously. So by the time I turned my body, and my complete attention, I saw a male, probably at this time within 3 yards of my car, approaching me.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Awareness, attention, distraction

- *Officers should complete a preemptive assessment of their surrounding area and safeguard themselves as much as possible against a potential attack.*

As found in research for other LEOKA studies, the offender's motive is often to catch the officer off guard. Officers can always prepare for a potential attack and think about preventive measures they can use. A few suggestions are:

- Positioning oneself in a location that is less likely to be attacked from a blind side.
- Surveying the area upon arrival and continuing to pay attention to the surroundings.
- Follow sound training practices and procedures.

The uniformed officer who shared his experience of being attacked from behind while working at the supermarket said the following when he was asked what he would have done differently:

> I may have picked a little different spot. Where I was standing . . . left a part of my back and part of my right hand side, my gun side, open. If I'd been able to do it again, I would have thought a little differently, I may have picked the other end because there [are] nice big walls that you can stand against, and no one can get behind you or alongside of you. You would see them coming.

Applying sound practices every day will mitigate a potential risk of an attack or, at least, give the officer a greater advantage of seeing the attacker before the incident occurs.

- *Officers must ensure the scene is no longer active and all offenders are either gone or neutralized before*

initiating containment and scene protection procedures.

Because it is very difficult to assess those people who are active threats to law enforcement, all individuals require the officer's undivided attention. A common rule of thumb that applies in this situation is that it is best to consider all people present as a threat until proven otherwise. In a related case in the study, a shooter fled the scene only to double back and ambush officers who were in the process of securing the crime scene. One of the officers commented, "Basically it was just a case study to let everybody know that . . . just 'cause you're on a crime scene, doesn't mean there's not a threat there still. You've got to be ready for it."

- *Distractions cannot be avoided; however, officers can train themselves to recognize distractions as they occur and to make the necessary adjustments to redirect their attention.*

Distraction comes in various forms and officers noted it as a contributing factor to several incidents in this study. An offender can use an officer's distraction as an avenue to gain advantage over the officer. Officers can distract themselves with assignments, activity, and interactions with the public. Officers making a traffic stop can be distracted while writing a traffic citation, drawing their attention away from the occupant(s) of the vehicle or other approaching threats. Although these types of distractions are necessary to complete a law enforcement function, officers can take steps to mitigate the risk of an attack. Officers must make a concerted effort to continually and frequently check their surroundings when involved with distracting activities. Managing distractions is similar to wearing a seat belt. If officers make it a habit to put on their seat belts, they will instinctively do it without thinking about it. Managing distractions is no different—this learned behavior can increase officers' chances of preventing or surviving an attack.

Distractions cannot be avoided, however, officers can train themselves to recognize distractions as they occur and to make necessary adjustments to redirect their attention.

PERCEPTION

Perceptions can have a powerful impact on the decisions officers make and could be the difference between life and death. Of the officers interviewed, 17 (51.5 percent) made statements indicating perception influenced their decisions and/or reduced their awareness. Perception is defined as *"the way you think about or understand someone or something; the ability to understand or notice something easily,* and *the way you notice or understand something using one or more of your senses"* (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). As found in a previous LEOKA study, *Violent Encounters: A Study of Felonious Assaults on our Nation's Law Enforcement Officers* (Pinizzotto, Davis & Miller, 2006), the way officers process and perceive the circumstances of an incident can influence how they act. This phenomenon is referred to as an officer's perceptual shorthand. An officer's perception of the situation can diminish their awareness, making them more vulnerable to an ambush or unprovoked attack. Officers in this study most often addressed four areas of concern about perception: *Repetitive/routine calls for service or routine behavior, Perception based on the offender's behavior, Misperception of the offender's location,* and *Offender's perception.*

Repetitive/routine calls for service or routine behavior

Repetitive or routine calls for service as well as the officer's own routine behaviors were found to be an area of concern for officers in this study. Officers who perceived a situation to be common and predictable felt it made them more vulnerable to an attack. Awareness can diminish when an officer responds to several similar types of calls over a period of time without serious consequences. One of the participating officers provided an example of how his perception of a routine call led to complacency. The officer was investigating a suspect who made threats to shoot the first law enforcement officer he saw:

> I would say at that point in my career I was a little naïve, probably, because I'd heard people say, 'Oh, they'll shoot you, they don't like you,' or, 'He's going to fight you,' or, 'He's going to run.' Those are statements I had heard on the radio before, so it wasn't something unusual at that point in my career. So I kind of took it with a grain of salt, and figured we're going to do what we normally do, which is respond to the scene, gather information, figure out what charges we have, and then look for our bad guy. We're not going to do anything any different than any other call, because at that point that's what we had always done.

Routine behavior can have the same effect. Examples of routine behavior include such things as eating lunch at a restaurant, sitting in a vehicle at a traffic light, or tending to court matters. Over time, officers may not perceive these locations or activities as areas of vulnerability, causing them to lose their sense of awareness and their ability to potentially avoid or prevent an attack.

An incident in this study occurred during the officers' routine activity of reporting to work. Two officers arrived at their precinct during the shift change to begin their tour of duty. One officer said he noticed a box truck sitting in the parking lot of the precinct and believed its driver was making a delivery. Unknown to the officers, an offender had murdered the driver of the box truck and drove the truck to the precinct with a plan to kill police officers. Both officers walked by the box truck and were at the entrance door to the precinct when someone behind them said, "Hey guys, how are you doing?" followed by gunshots. One officer was killed while the other officer was shot in the face as he returned fire. The surviving officer described how being cautious of the situation never occurred to him:

> About the only thing I can think of that maybe I could have done a little better was look around the front side of the truck. But in hindsight, who does that? It just looks like a delivery truck that's parked there to me, as innocent as could be. Maybe if I'd have taken a look around the front side of the truck.

In another case previously mentioned in the *Distractions* section, an officer was attacked while sitting in his marked police vehicle typing on his computer. The officer frequently stopped in the same area to complete this type of work because he felt it was a safe area. "Keep in mind," he said, "I'm at this place where you would think it was fairly safe because I had been there before, it's a good location, high traffic area, well lit, all the check-off list." Over time, his familiarity and perception of the area as a safe place may have led to a false sense of security and a decreased awareness of his surroundings.

In one case, two officers responded to a townhouse where an individual was reportedly threatening suicide. The officers arrived and encountered a man standing on the balcony of the two-story townhouse. The man indicated his roommate was inside taking drugs and threatening suicide. When the officers asked the man to open the door, the man stated he was afraid to walk downstairs. Instead, he tossed the key for the front door to the officers. The officers gathered more information, then they entered through a gate and directed their attention to the front entrance. Unfortunately, the officers were not aware that the individual on the balcony had made a fictitious complaint to lure the officers there to kill them. He had purposefully acted compliant to alter the officers' perception and create a false sense of security. One of the officers commented:

> He [the man on the balcony] drops the keys down to us, we open that gate, we go down the walkway, which is a fence on one side and the garage on the other; we go down that walkway to the front door. My partner's on the right side where the door handle is because he has the keys. I'm on the left side of the door, not in front of the door but, outside of the door frame, and when he [the partner] goes to put the key in, that's when we get fired on.

The officer further described how the behavior of the offender influenced their perception, in turn, directing their attention away from him:

> I don't know what his mindset was, but from my interaction, my verbal interaction with him, everything . . . was normal. I mean, it didn't . . . cause me to have any type of heightened sense of security around that person that I [was] talking to. His behavior seemed 100 percent normal to me at the time. I remember he was 100 percent calm, I mean no indication he was nervous that he was about to partake in an attack like this . . . our mindset was [on] the suicidal roommate that was supposedly downstairs that we were dealing with. I never had a second thought about the suspect [actually being] the reporting party behind us.

Misperception of the offender's location

Misperception of an offender's whereabouts can impact an officer's behavior at the scene of an alleged crime or during an investigation. In this study, eight officers (24.2 percent) believed the offender had left the scene or was somewhere other than where the victim officer was located prior to the ambush or unprovoked attack. Misleading information from witnesses, dispatchers, third hand, or concluded through the investigation caused officers to believe the threat was no longer imminent.

In one of the case studies, two officers working together responded to an active shooter complaint occurring at an apartment complex. As both officers pulled into the complex, dispatchers provided updated information indicating the suspect had left the scene in a pickup truck. Based on this information, the officers' attention was now directed to containing the crime scene. The officer involved said, "Matter of fact, we're all handling it like we're protecting a crime scene, like an after-incident type deal." As the officers exited the vehicle to begin moving innocent bystanders from the crime scene, the offender fired on them. One of the officers was struck in the calf and the femur.

In another case, officers responded to a recreational vehicle (RV) park to investigate a shots-fired complaint. As soon as the first officer arrived, the offender began firing his weapon. The officer interviewed for this study responded to assist and was directed to enter the RV park from the rear to avoid crossfire. The officer went to the rear of the park and began to make his way on foot to the scene. Based on the information provided, the officer believed the offender was still located inside his RV, "[I] believed he was still in his RV . . . I did not believe he had exited the structure at all." As the officer was making his way to the RV in question, he was shot three times by the offender who was hiding in the cover of darkness among some large rocks.

The offender's perception

Offenders' perceptions of officers or circumstances can impact their decisions. What an offender sees or hears could influence whether or not he or she will attack an officer. As mentioned in the previous study, *In the Line of Fire: Violence against Law Enforcement* (Pinizzotto, Davis & Miller, 1997), two-thirds of the offenders interviewed

were looking for an opportunity to assault the officers they attacked but only when the opportunity presented itself. These same principles applied to the ambushes and unprovoked attacks in this study. Offenders often formulated a perception of an officer based on such things as the officer's mannerisms, appearance, awareness level, professionalism, distractions, and deviation from training. In one incident, a uniformed officer was ambushed as he was working a department-approved overtime detail at a local supermarket. As the officer walked across the parking lot, the offender began shooting a firearm at the officer. A gun battle ensued, and the officer received a nonfatal gunshot wound to the leg. The offender reported he wanted to kill a police officer and selected the supermarket parking lot based on past observations of officers who worked this detail. The offender discussed how he viewed the officers in that location as easy targets:

> It was just me knowing it, you know. I could kill one of them any time I wanted to and that's what it was about. Who, male or female, it didn't matter. It was about lashing out on authority because I know, hey they sit up there and they don't look or pay attention or nothing, what is or what's going on. I can just walk up, blow his brains out and walk off, you know, and that was the plan.

In another case study, an inmate convinced his soon-to-be-released cellmate to assist him in breaking out and fleeing from the correctional facility. Once released, the cellmate plotted the inmate's escape with help from the inmate's girlfriend. During the attempted escape, two officers were fatally shot. The LEOKA staff interviewed the inmate's girlfriend, who was convicted for her part in the crime. She described how her accomplices' perceptions of the officers in the correctional facility influenced their decisions and led them to believe they could overtake the officers. Note: The offender refers to the boyfriend's cellmate as "kid."

> While they [my boyfriend and the kid] were in there together, they paid attention. They didn't want to do it when one specific officer was working. They wanted to do it when two specific officers were working so they paid attention to and learned the officer's days off. The kid said the one [officer] is young and dumb, and the other one is fat and slow . . . The kid made the comment about one of them being real naïve and being too nice.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Perception

- *Officers should never treat calls for services as routine and should consistently follow protocols to evaluate their surroundings.*

Officers who face routine or repetitive calls for service can, unintentionally, fall into the misperception that the outcome will be the same. Training and practice can help officers to recognize this tendency and make the necessary adjustment to refocus their awareness level.

Most offenders had a history of drug abuse, and the majority abused alcohol.

- *Officers should identify their routine behaviors (like a common lunch spot, doing paperwork while sitting in the police unit, etc.) and make a deliberate effort not to perceive it as a safe situation.*

As indicated in a previous study, *In the Line of Fire* (Pinizzotto, Davis & Miller, 1997), offenders look for areas of opportunity to assault officers. When officers lower their guards during a routine or monotonous activity, it creates an opportunity offenders may be seeking.

- *Offenders may intentionally be nice and/or compliant to delude the officer, causing him/her to be more relaxed and less attentive.*

As discussed in a previous case study, the offender standing on the balcony lured the officers to his apartment for the purpose of killing them. The offender's cooperative demeanor misled the officers to believe he was not a threat. The officer reiterated, "Prior to the assault, I gave him the benefit of the doubt. You know, I don't know this guy. I don't understand why he wanted to do what he did."

- *Arriving on a scene, officers should consider all individuals a threat.*

Related to the previous recommendation, officers should not give anyone the benefit of the doubt.
Opportunities for offenders to assault officers can occur when officers direct their attention away from a potential offender, or formulate a wrong perception of an individual that causes officers to lower their guards. Officers should

go into every situation with an understanding of how their perceptions of those on the scene could influence their awareness. Keeping vigilance high and calling for backup when necessary can eliminate the opportunity a potential offender may be seeking to assault the officer.

- *Officers must continue to evaluate and maintain an awareness of their surroundings, even when the information or investigation indicates the offender(s) are no longer in the area.*

Even if an area has been cleared, if the whereabouts of the offender is not known, or even if it is believed to be known, officers should be mindful of the possibility the offender is nearby. For example, three officers on the scene of a domestic assault/sexual assault investigation cleared the area and concluded the offender had left. Even though the offender had threatened to kill the first officer he saw, and although there were places to hide surrounding the scene, the officers directed their attention to interviewing the victim and putting up crime scene tape. It was then that the offender appeared from a nearby wooded area and shot the unsuspecting officers.

- *An officer's mannerisms, appearance, distractions, lack of attention, lack of professionalism, deviation from training, etc. may be the reason an offender decides to attack.*

If officers understand that perceptions impact the way offenders view and react to officers, then they can take necessary measures to mitigate potential red flags. One of the offenders clearly stated during an interview; "Lack of attention. That's one of the big ones . . . somebody slips up when they're supposed to be watching you, and they don't. It's a common factor in prison, too. That's how a lot of guys get hurt. They're not paying attention." Every time officers put on the uniform, whether to investigate a circumstance or directly deal with a potential suspect, they must ask themselves, "How will an offender perceive me and my behaviors?"

ALTERED PERCEPTUAL ACUITY

The brain functions in unique ways, especially during high-alert or high-stress situations. One common theme demonstrated in this study was altered perceptions, or altered perceptual acuity, which includes such experiences as *time distortion, tunnel vision*, and *audio exclusion*. The brain slows down the intake of information, creating a variance in sensory perceptions. Officers may experience one, two, or all three altered perceptions during the same ordeal. These are the same altered perceptions as those reported in a previous study, *Violent Encounters* (Pinizzotto, Davis & Miller, 2006). Of the officers interviewed for the current study, 26 (78.8 percent) reported some form of altered perception.

Time distortion

The most common altered perception experienced by officers was the altered perception of time or time distortion. This phenomenon is not uncommon for officers to experience during highly intense situations. What took only 20 to 30 seconds to occur may seem like 2 to 4 minutes to an officer. One officer explained, "Even though it only lasted about 45 seconds to a minute total, it seemed like it was forever to us out there on the scene." As explained in *Violent Encounters* (Pinizzotto, Davis & Miller, 2006), when overwhelmed with information, the brain slows its processing down in an attempt to collect information, to rapidly make sense of it all, and control what is occurring. In addition, as time appears to slow down, officers may experience enhanced vision, recalling vivid details as the event unfolds. In some cases, officers report actually seeing the bullets as they are fired from the weapon. As one officer explained, "Your slide does its thing, you get your muzzle flash, out pops your round. I could see that plain as day, and I could see the bullets."

Tunnel vision

Another altered perception officers commonly experience is tunnel vision—a focused, narrow window of sight decreasing the ability to see what is occurring outside the narrow window or peripheral view. Several officers interviewed for this study experienced tunnel vision during their situations. Tunnel vision is a safety concern for law enforcement officers because it prevents the officer from identifying potential threats outside the narrow view. One officer explained how he experienced both tunnel vision and time distortion during his ordeal:

> I redirected my bullets there, I could see them leave the gun, enter the trailer and fly through, it was that clear, and it was tunnel vision . . . You lose your peripheral vision. You have tunnel vision, but that tunnel vision is so, so clear. It's amazing how clear it was before me.

Audio exclusion

Several officers in this study experienced audio exclusion. They recalled a reduction in noise or even complete hearing loss during their situations. Some officers who experienced audio exclusion during an incident reported the gunshots sounded more like popping noises while others did not hear the gunshots at all. One officer explained how audio exclusion and time distortion impacted him upon arriving at an apartment complex to investigate an active shooter incident. The officer was fired upon once he exited his marked police vehicle:

> I stepped out; as soon as I stepped foot out, shots start ringing . . . I hit the ground and then, everything, all of sudden as I remember, just goes quiet. He [the offender] is still shooting, [it] goes quiet. Next thing I remember, I have my gun in hand, and I remember pulling slack nice and slow, aiming. I fire; round goes. It's kind of like *The Matrix*, it was slow motion. Round goes, he ducks. The round hits the pillar right behind him. I even see the dust just come up, and he takes off running.

In another case, an offender barricaded himself inside an RV after shooting and killing an officer. The assisting officer was shot in the arm after becoming engaged in a shootout with the offender. The officer experienced both audio exclusion and time distortion during the incident:

> All of a sudden, I lost my hearing. I couldn't hear anything. It was almost like I had earplugs and earmuffs on; I could hear nothing. We're talking about at least four weapons that I knew of that were just going off, and I could hear nothing. But I had never seen more clearly in all my life during those 30 seconds. I could see the bullets leaving my gun, flying through the air, and I knew exactly where they were going. I could see them go through there and a part of me says, I don't know if it was a mind trick or what, but I could see him in that trailer after he fired his weapon again. Those 30 seconds seemed like forever. I think I told the initial investigator, when I was giving my first story, the first time after it happened, I told him it was like a minute and a half, maybe even 2 minutes long. After seeing the video and everything else, it was only about 30 seconds. Time stops.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Altered perceptual acuity

- *Officers should be aware of altered perceptual acuity and familiar with its characteristics, such as time distortion, tunnel vision, and audio exclusion.*

Officers in extreme situations commonly experience altered perceptual acuity. As previously mentioned, 78.8 percent of the officers in this study experienced some form of altered perception. By understanding this phenomenon, the effects of altered perceptual acuity can potentially be reduced, or at least be recognized by the officer as a natural reaction when involved in high-stress situations.

- *Officers should participate in realistic scenario-based training that addresses altered sensory experiences.*

Realistic scenario-based training can prepare officers to deal with one or more of these altered perceptual acuities and possibly mitigate the effects and increase officer safety.

TAKEN BY SURPRISE AND ENGAGING OFFENDERS

When discussing the circumstances of events, several officers said that the surprise elements of the attacks required them to engage with offenders under tremendous pressure.

Taken by surprise

Although some officers had an indication there was a potential for danger prior to the assault, 13 of the officers (39.4 percent) interviewed were completely unaware.

For instance, the officer whose case was previously mentioned in the *Unable to see the offender* section, was working department-authorized overtime in a grocery store when he was caught completely off guard by an unprovoked attack. He reported, "It all happened very quickly. I felt a nudge or something from behind, kind of on my right-hand side. I thought maybe someone just bumped into me with a cart or something." Within seconds, the offender threw the officer against the checkout line. The officer went on to say, "Now I know

it's not an accident, and that same instance I feel something pulling on my holster. At that point in time, I knew I had a problem."

Another officer was surprised by an attack as he finished a tour of duty. He was outside in a supermarket parking lot at the time and recalled, "As I started walking across the parking lot I hear what sounded like gunfire . . . I looked to my left. That's when I saw the actor coming toward me firing his weapon."

Other officers who were completely surprised indicated that although, in their particular incidents, they were in some way engaged in a law enforcement capacity with the suspect, the context of the situation did not indicate an assault was imminent. These attacks still caught the officers unaware. One officer described a citizen making contact with him while he was parked in his patrol car in front of a convenience store. "I saw a male, probably at this time within 3 yards of my car. . . At the time, I didn't think anything of it." After conversing with the man, the officer indicated the individual seemed a little odd but, "At that point, I had no immediate concern that this guy was going to do anything abnormal, crazy." The offender in this particular case forced himself through the open window of the patrol car and stabbed the officer. Another officer described how he understood the potential for an armed confrontation as he responded with other officers a routine call, but he was still taken by surprise. He said, "We were dispatched to just a report of shots fired, which happens in our area all the time. Deputies responded. First deputy arrived and started taking fire and needed additional units."

Officers should continue to regularly engage in realistic and effective training that includes situational awareness, weapons training, and mindset.

Engaging offenders

Because of the element of surprise, officers indicated they were forced to respond and to engage with offenders under duress. Eighteen of the 33 officers (54.5 percent) described their efforts to engage offenders and defend themselves during the incidents. Of those 18 officers, 44.4 percent reported they fought back after sustaining critical injuries. Fourteen of the 18 officers (77.8 percent) described their attempts to arm themselves during the incident. Officers articulated various defensive options they either attempted to use or were successful in using: personal weapons (hands, fist, or feet), less than lethal options, and the use of deadly force. In 14 instances where an officer was able to deploy defensive measures, 3 (21.4 percent) of the officers used personal weapons, 1 (7.1 percent) used less than lethal options, and more than half, 71.4 percent, used firearms. The cases below illustrate such examples.

An officer fighting to retain control of his service weapon stated, "I'm trying to keep [the offender's hand] off my gun and trying to hit him with my elbow. . . I was using my right elbow to hit his forearms and they weren't budging . . . [with] my right hand, I was hitting him trying to hit him in the head, hit anything."

One officer described being attacked while exiting his patrol car after observing a subject throw something at his vehicle. He used a side-handle baton to successfully defend himself:

> When I opened the door, grabbed the baton, and went to exit, he was on top of me as I was trying to come out of the car. When I thought he had ran on, he had ducked down in behind my car, and as I was getting out of the driver's door, he came from behind the car and stabbed me. . . I came up with my baton weighted across my arm, and he stabbed me in the arm at that point, and I used the baton to force him off so I could fully exit the vehicle.

Another officer described using a firearm to stop a machete-wielding attacker who drew the concealed machete and struck the officer's unsuspecting partner in a restaurant.

> I saw the victim go down, my partner go down, and I simultaneously got up, drew on him. Then he looked at me. That's when he looked at me. He was starting to wind up at me, but he saw that I had the draw on him, so he turned his back on me. I actually shot him in the back, the back shoulder blade, and he went down.

Unfortunately, the victim officer struck with the machete suffered serious permanent injuries to his hand, but his partner prevented the offender from continuing the attack.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Taken by surprise and engaging offenders

Officers who provided details about being surprised by the attacks and/or how they defended themselves once they were under attack also discussed recommendations. Common themes that emerged from these officers' statements included situational awareness, training, and mindset.

- *Officers should continue to regularly engage in realistic and effective training that includes situational awareness, weapons training, and mindset.*

Maintain Situational Awareness. Officers who sensed an attack may be coming and those caught unaware both identified maintaining situational awareness as important. In some cases, lack of situational awareness placed the officers at a disadvantage and affected their ability to successfully arm themselves and engage the offender. The officer who was attacked while in his parked vehicle explained it was his practice not to speak to citizens while sitting in his patrol car. On the evening he was assaulted, he noted that he was distracted, which allowed the subject to advance on the officer, prevent him from exiting, and stab him through the window. The officer was pinned against the console and was unable to draw his firearm. This was just one example that demonstrates the need for officers to maintain situational awareness at all times, remain cognizant of their positioning, and have unfettered access to their weapons.

Weapons Training. Law enforcement agencies identify weapons training as a common area of concern. The current research, including the discussions about engaging offenders, only further emphasizes an officer's need to maintain proficiency with all weapons issued

and available to them. Of 18 officers who discussed defending themselves, 14 (77.8 percent) of the officers in this study used with a variety of weapons ranging from personal weapons (hands, fists, or feet), less than lethal, and lethal force. An automatic response developed from effective training was also cited as critical to the officers' survival. One officer stated, ". . . the only thing that you can rely on is your training, and that's what kicks in and that's why it's so important to fight as you train, and train as you fight. . ."

Mindset Training. Officers also indicated that training was not only critical in developing proficient defensive skill sets but it also significantly contributed to developing a mindset to overcome and win. One officer commented:

> We do in-house academies in our agency, and they have a tendency to make it a very big point that if the situation ever comes about that you should never give up. The way they state it is until your dying breath you should continue to fight. . . I never once thought about giving up, and even when I was shot, my mind was to still bring the fight to him or else he's going to bring it to me.

All three of these topics—situational awareness, weapons training, and mindset training—are discussed in other sections of this chapter, including *Awareness, attention, and distractions; Training; Mental preparation;* and *Will to survive*.

OFFENDER ESCAPE FROM AMBUSH/UNPROVOKED ATTACK

Of 27 the offenders who participated in the research, 15 (55.6 percent) escaped the initial ambush or unprovoked attack and described their efforts to escape the area and elude capture. This section provides some of the offenders' descriptions of their escapes from crime scenes after assaulting officers. Some of the escapes turned deadly, and it may be helpful for officers to be familiar with what could happen and, in the case of these examples, what happened when offenders fled the scene.

Mindset and methods of escape

Some offenders did not have a plan, and their escapes from the crime scenes were reactionary. Other offenders knew that evading law enforcement would be a possibility and had at least thought about how to escape, and in some instances, had taken steps to facilitate their escape. Eight (29.6 percent) of the offenders fled on foot, with one offender hitchhiking. Sixteen offenders (59.3 percent) escaped in vehicles. Several of the vehicles were stolen, and one offender carjacked several vehicles.

An examination of the cases in this study shows that offenders commonly exhibit determination and commitment to escaping at all costs. After starting to flee a scene on foot or by vehicle, offenders would not hesitate to use violence against law enforcement or citizens if they believed it would improve their odds of escaping and maintaining their freedom.

Case study: Unplanned escape

One offender, who had murdered for vengeance and expected to die at the hands of police, described his mindset before the murders. "It was almost a euphoric type of feeling, because . . . you know, this was my day to die, and I was happy." The offender committed the murders, walked outside, and ran into a responding officer who was surprised by the sudden appearance of the offender. The offender shot and killed the officer. After surviving the encounter, the offender decided to flee. The offender explained the moment, ". . . I didn't have a place in my mind, a plan on where I was going."

Although lacking in prior planning and initially hoping to die in a shootout with police, he switched to a mindset of lethal determination to escape. He carjacked several cars at gunpoint. Later, he shot and killed another unsuspecting law enforcement officer and stole the officer's personal vehicle before taking a hostage and barricading himself in the hostage's apartment. The offender's hostage escaped and called the police, who responded outside the apartment with personnel that included snipers. An interviewer asked the offender, "You see the snipers. You know they have the ability to end your life. What changed your mind?" The offender stated, "You know, maybe I realized that I was scared to die."

Case study: Planned escape

Just as problematic as an offender acting on emotion and impulse are the offenders who have planned to escape crime scenes. One offender admitted to having

throwaway cars to help facilitate his escape. Another offender explained how he and his associates planned to burglarize a gun store and created a detailed escape strategy to avoid arrest:

> First off, to get into the place, we decided. We were going to a car lot—steal a pickup truck. We figured if you steal from a car lot on the weekend that plates aren't going to come up stolen or anything, because car lots always have a repair place and a place when the car is done for people to come and pick it back up. So we took somebody's personal truck that was finished being fixed. . .

These offenders then placed another car in a park with the intent to transfer the stolen weapons, leave the stolen truck, and evade arrest in the car. After successfully burglarizing the gun store, the offenders were in the middle of transferring the stolen goods in an empty parking lot when a deputy arrived. The offender remembered the events this way:

> I'm lying on the ground, on the edge of where the truck is. I just tried to duck out of the way, and I didn't know it was a cop until he came in . . . it kind of caught me off guard. I didn't know it was going to be a cop, and when he came and walked around, and I [saw] him, and then it was a split-second reaction.

The offender emptied a magazine toward the deputy, who then collapsed. The deputy still attempted to defend himself with his weapon, so the offender ran over the deputy with the vehicle. Another subject came over, picked up the deputy's weapon, and fired three more rounds at the deputy's face. The subjects then escaped the scene in their car.

Despite all their prior planning, the offender claimed the firearms they carried during the burglary were never part of a plan to be used against police to help them escape. Even so, these offenders demonstrated not only prior planning to escape but the determination and commitment to use extreme violence to avoid being arrested. Following an investigation, law enforcement coordinated a team of officers to outnumber and surprise the offender. He was arrested without incident.

Disposing of evidence after escaping the scene

Of 15 offenders who said they escaped the initial attack, 8 (53.3 percent) reported they attempted to hide or dispose of evidence. Offenders stated they hid the weapons they used in the attacks in wooded areas or holes, or completely buried them to evade detection. Other offenders stated they threw weapons out of car windows, often cleaning the weapon first before disposing of it. One offender said he lost his automatic rifle when he tripped while running through a wooded area in the dark and was unable to locate it.

Arrests of offenders during or after escapes

Six (40.0 percent) of the 15 offenders who were arrested during their escapes were apprehended while trying to escape on foot. Of the offenders who successfully escaped the immediate vicinity of the scene, 6 (40.0 percent) were arrested after they escaped to a residence. With the exception of one case, most offenders were arrested at residences other than their own. In some cases, neighbors or family members provided tips to law enforcement about the offenders' whereabouts, enabling local law enforcement to surround the homes and apprehend the offenders. In one case, the offenders were at their residence and were asked to come to the police department for questioning. They were escorted by several officers and were arrested once inside. Offenders in 20.0 percent of these cases turned themselves in. In two cases, law enforcement officers knew offenders were hiding in residences. In one of these cases, officers waited for the offender to exit the house, enter his car with his family, and start driving. They moved into position, blocked the road, executed a traffic stop, and apprehended the offender without incident. In the other case, an acquaintance of the offender cooperated with law enforcement by calling the offender to invite him to meet at a nearby location. The offender walked out of his house unarmed and was apprehended without incident. Only one offender in this study actively resisted arrest.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Offender escape from ambush/unprovoked attack, disposing of evidence, and arrests

- *Officers should continue to receive training on scenarios related to escapes and arrests, as well as being familiar with ways in which offenders may dispose of evidence.*

An agency's training likely addresses arrest tactics and when to pursue an offender. This section concerning offender escapes serves as a reminder of the importance of such training and provides examples that can increase officers' understanding of these topics.

BACKUP OFFICERS

Officers who experienced ambushes or unprovoked attacks called for backup in 60.6 percent of the 33 incidents in which they were involved. This section reviews the use of backup and the responding officers' actions during these incidents. Officers called for assistance at varying times during the course of the assaults. Prior LEOKA research has studied backup requests in relation to various types of incidents, such as arrest situations. One conclusion of that research was that some officers may have been spared critical injuries if they had called for backup prior to engaging an offender. As one would expect, calling for backup can be challenging at the onset of an ambush or unprovoked attack. Although backup officers in this study were not a significant factor in preventing the initial assaults, they often played a role in resolving the incidents.

Backup analysis

An interesting circumstance of the ambushes and unprovoked attacks examined in the study was the number of officers already in the area prior to the assaults. Twenty (60.6 percent) of the officers interviewed stated they were on scene with one or more officers when the attacks began. Many of these circumstances began with radio calls that typically elicit a multiofficer response, such as shots fired, person threatening with a firearm, or domestic violence complaints where the officers were advised that the suspect had firearms and posed a threat.

Because of the element of surprise and the fact that most victim officers were already present with other officers, it is not surprising that the research found none of the officers requested backup preceding the attack. One officer who was attacked from behind stated, "I never had a chance to use my radio because it happened so [quickly], but other people were calling 911. . ."

Thirty-five percent of the officers interviewed requested backup during the ambushes or unprovoked attacks. Three officers who were securing a crime scene came under fire and immediately radioed their situation in the midst of the attack. One of them commented, "I didn't know if it was a long rifle or a shotgun, but it was definitely three loud shots, and immediately I hear Tony yell, 'Shots fired! Shots fired!' I again came up on (the) radio and said, 'Shots fired! Shots fired!'"

Most of the officers who requested backup (45.0 percent), did so after the attacks. One officer who was shot six times radioed immediately after her attacker started to flee. She said, "I put out a radio traffic call saying that I had been shot, my location, and that I needed . . . medical personnel."

Targeted attacks on officers in groups

As noted before, there were two or more officers on the scene when most of the attacks began and backup officers were called to the scene in 60.6 percent of officers' cases. Having multiple officers in an area may have created a false sense of security for the officers, while also being an appealing scenario for some offenders. Interviews with offenders made it clear that in some incidents, they were consciously targeting police officers—and the more they could kill, the better.

In one incident, several officers responded to a shots-fired call from an apartment complex. When officers arrived on the scene, they did not hear gunfire, and could not identify a visible and immediate threat. Because of these observations, initial responding officers proceeded to render first aid to a victim. Two other officers stood nearby and held a conversation. When the last unit arrived to the area, the officers were surprised to encounter the offender, who was armed with a semi-automatic rifle that fired .308-caliber rounds. A firefight ensued. One officer, wounded during the exchange, shared this observation:

> I think we interrupted what he really wanted to do, which was work his way up to where the other officers were. . . There were two

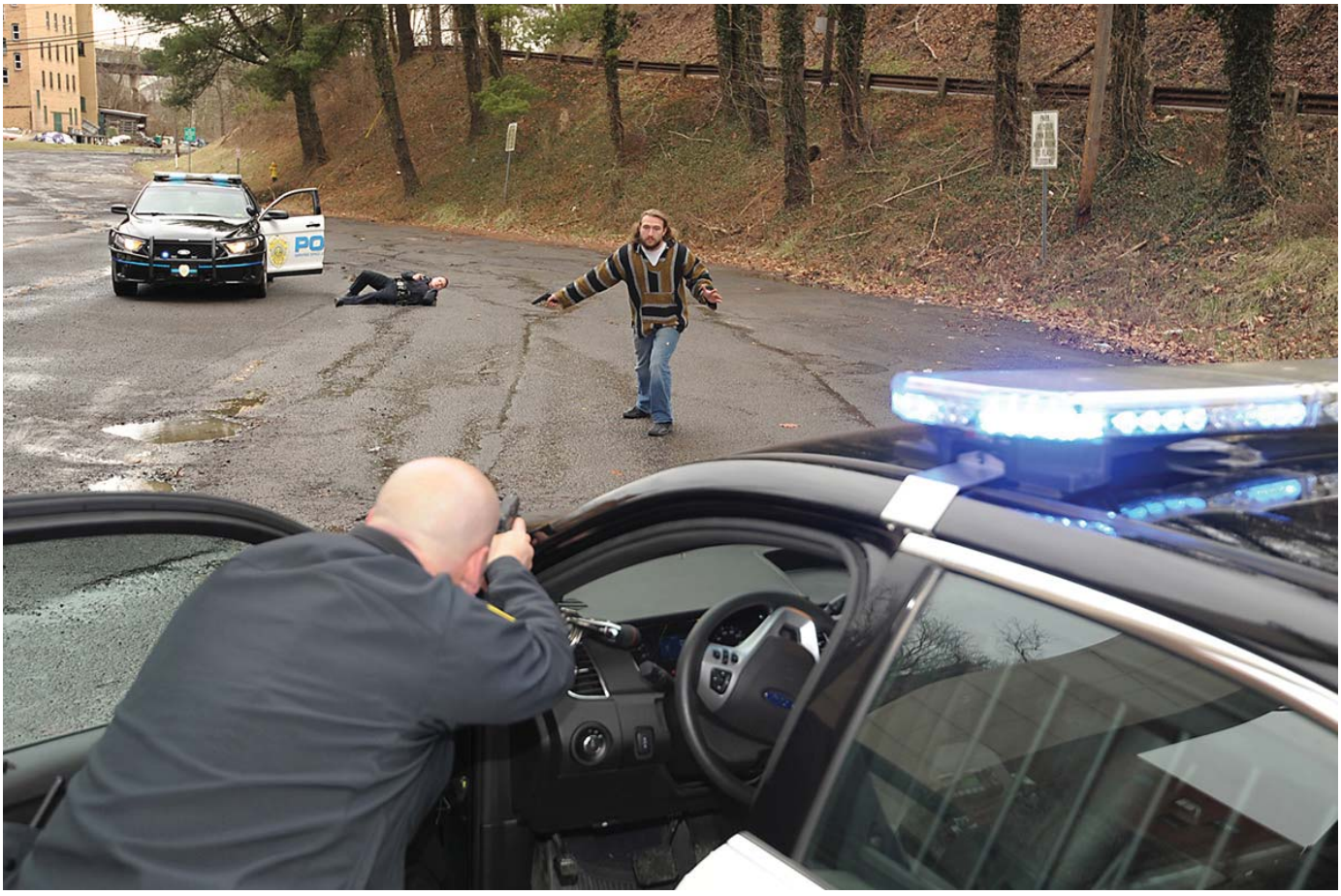
officers up attending to the victim, and there were a couple more officers downstairs in front of their car. They're just hanging out, just waiting on the ambulance to get there. I believe that he [the offender] was working his way up there to ambush them and take them out.

It was not a lack of backup during an attack that was an issue, but rather the responding officer's lack of situational awareness and his deployment when arriving on the scene.

Another officer involved in this incident also stated, "When we look back on it, we actually think he came back to the scene to kill as many police officers as he could. . ." The offender in this case was killed by one of his own weapons when it accidentally discharged while he was trying to climb a fence.

In a previously mentioned case, an ambush occurred during a shift change at a metropolitan-area police precinct. A meeting for all precinct officers was scheduled, and on-duty officers were in a parking lot in their patrol cars finishing reports, while incoming officers were walking into the precinct. As one officer held a door open for another, the assailant approached from behind them and opened fire on the officers, killing one and seriously wounding another. Several of the other officers came to investigate the shots, and the offender was killed in a shootout. Family and friends of the assailant later provided investigating officers with some insight into his mindset in the weeks leading up to the attack:

> He [the offender] had been going around the two weeks prior to that telling his family and telling all of his friends that he was tired of being pushed down, tired of being oppressed, and basically, in general, just sick of white people and officers, presidents, and authority bothering him . . . he was going to make something happen, and that everybody needed to just hold on and watch.



Backup units should evaluate the scene and not drive into the line of fire or into the threat.

Situational awareness when arriving on the scene

A number of the ambushes and unprovoked attacks lasted for extended periods before being resolved. Officers interviewed for this study discussed arriving on the scene while the situation was ongoing. In several cases, responding units, either in their rush to assist a fellow officer in imminent danger or to prevent flight by the offender, placed themselves in unsafe situations which either did, or could have, made a bad situation worse. One officer noted that the "fog of war" played a factor during the incident in which he was involved. Another discussed responders parking their vehicles in locations that blocked the ambulance. Another backup officer related the difficulty he had in responding to the scene where an officer down call had come from an officer who had been ambushed:

> I was unfamiliar with where we were . . . I'm on the radio trying to figure out where everybody is . . . 'Where are you guys?' They're trying to explain it to me, and I'm like 'I still don't know where you're at.' So I run until I find an officer. I ask him, 'What's going on?' 'Where are we at'? 'What's going on here?' He says, 'I think it's this trailer right there.' So I see the trailer, I'm looking, I'm like, 'All right, this is not a good spot. There's a better position to get into.'

In another incident, officers conducting a traffic stop were attacked without provocation by offenders who were not involved in the stop. As rounds began to hit around them in the dark, the officers were unable to locate the shooters. One officer was hit in the initial barrage of rounds, leaving the other officer to identify where the shots were coming from and to radio for backup. She stated her concern for the backup officers when they arrived on the scene:

So some [officers] arrived and got out of the vehicle, and they were in the middle of the intersection, like right in the middle of the street, and I was scared because I still didn't know if the aggressors were still there in the darkness.

Handling injuries, knowledge of first aid

In many cases, the backup officers responding to ambush or unprovoked attack calls arrived to find officers critically injured and in need of first aid. Responding officers had to move injured officers from the line of fire to safe locations. In one incident, a field training officer was shot from the front porch of a house and collapsed in the middle of the street, still exposed to gunfire. A rookie officer described his effort to retrieve his field training officer and get him to cover:

> At that point, I know I'm not going to leave him there by himself, so I run across the street. While I'm doing that, trying to like to back pedal/side step while keeping my gun pointed at the house just in case this guy comes back out. Once I get to my partner, I'm trying to figure out how I'm going to move him across the street, how am I going to get him to a position to cover while I have my gun out pointed at the house, all of this is in a matter of a second or two. (I) decided the only way I'm going to be able to move him is if I put my gun away. So I put my gun away and then do a fireman carry which is what we learned in the academy. . .

In many cases, the backup officers responding to ambush or unprovoked attack calls arrived to find officers critically injured and in need of first aid. Responding officers had to move injured officers from the line of fire to safe locations. Officers should continue to train and maintain proficiency on first aid and CPR.

An officer who was shot three times described the efforts of the backup officer to remove him from the ambush scene, "I hear rounds going off behind me, and my partner picks me up, puts me in her patrol car, and exits me out of the area."

In some jurisdictions, emergency medical service (EMS) personnel cannot come to a downed officer's aid until the scene is declared safe. Backup officers, in some instances, had to assess an injured officer and make immediate decisions on what course of action to take, whether to wait for EMS or, if time was critical, rush the officer to the hospital in their patrol vehicles. Two officers who received gunshot wounds when they were ambushed made it to a safe area and waited for backup. They discussed the responding officer's decision-making process, "They . . . got information from us and assessed some of our injuries, and then waited for EMS to get there and take us to the hospital."

Another officer, ambushed and shot in the feet, was unable to walk. He shared that the officers arrived before EMS and provided first aid, "It's those burning bullets in my boots that hurt. . . And that's what I wanted relief from . . . that trooper came in . . . the officer came in the other way at about the same time, and they started cutting my boot off."

An ambushed officer, shot in the head but still conscious noted:

> The minute the two officers pulled in. . . . I just told them which way the person ran, what he was wearing, and I got right into the patrol car and headed to the hospital. I knew an ambulance would not come in to a shooting scene without clearance if one was en route. I had to have the officer, the young officer, help me into the hospital.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Backup officers

- *Regardless of the number of law enforcement in the area, officers should not lower their guards after arriving to a scene where a report has been made of a person with a firearm and/or of shots fired.*

Even if multiple officers are on the scene, officers should take steps to safeguard themselves and mitigate risk. In several cases where a number of officers responded and were unable to identify a threat, officers began conducting law enforcement business and did not maintain situational awareness. For example, in a case previously discussed, officers arrived at the scene where a violent crime had been committed by a man with a firearm, but they did not locate the offender there. Three of the responding officers started hanging police tape to mark the crime scene. In another case, two officers started rendering first aid to a victim while two other officers were talking nearby. None of the officers were paying attention to their surroundings. In both of these cases, an offender concealed himself and then attacked while the officers were distracted.

Until a scene has been declared safe, at least one officer should remain on guard for a possible attack while other officers conduct police business. One officer recommended:

> Let everybody know . . . just [because] you're on a crime scene, doesn't mean there's not a threat there still, and you've got to be ready for it . . . Don't get in those little cliques at these scenes. Know when you're doing traffic detail or whatever the case may be . . . Don't make [yourself] an easy target . . . .

Note: Attacks on groups of multiple officers seems to be a more common occurrence in recent years, with media coverage of such events increasing, as well. The findings of this study and the perception that these incidents are more prevalent provide a rationale for researchers to conduct additional, in-depth studies of the motives of attackers who assault officers in groups.

- *Backup units should evaluate the scene and not drive into the line of fire or into the threat.*

In the situations described as well as some of the other cases, it was not a lack of backup during an attack that was an issue, but rather the responding officers' lack of situational awareness and their deployment once arriving on scene. Backup units should be cognizant that they are responding to a dynamic situation. As one of the officers in the study commented, " . . . everybody is rolling at that point, and we have officers showing up to the front . . . they are in direct line of fire so we're trying to yell, 'Hey you guys, get out . . . move off our line of sight right there.'"

- *Backup units must ensure they do not block access to EMS vehicles.*

An officer who received a gunshot wound discussed the difficulty his rescuers had getting him to medical care in the midst of a chaotic scene:

> I think they said about 110 [police vehicles] responded from all over the place before it was over with . . . They loaded me into an ambulance and a whole bunch of police cruisers pulled in, so we were stuck. [They] had to unload me and take me a block and a half out to the main street [and] put me in another ambulance . . .

- *Officers should continue to train and maintain proficiency on first aid and CPR.*

Time and again, backup officers were the first to initiate lifesaving measures to critically injured officers. One critically injured officer expressed his relief when a particular backup officer arrived on scene: "He's a paramedic and a registered nurse and has a lot of medical knowledge. He assessed the injuries at that point, and, due to our close proximity to the hospital, we got into his vehicle and went to the hospital on our own."

For a more in depth discussion on responding to injuries and first aid, please see the section on *Injuries and medical treatment* in this chapter.

COMMUNICATION

Some of the officers reported equipment issues led to a breakdown in communication when they were attempting to call for backup or medical assistance. Unfortunately, a number of their calls did not broadcast in a timely fashion, resulting in a loss of precious time. Delays were especially troublesome if the officer was gravely wounded. One officer, having been shot six times, spoke of her attempts to call for both medical assistance and to let backup officers know the description of her attacker:

> I'm . . . listening in the background, and I'm not hearing sirens. I'm not hearing radio traffic, which after making a call like that, those are things you will think you will hear. So, I'm wondering why . . . I decided to get on my hand-held radio and make another radio call just in case they didn't hear that one, which they hadn't. So, I again tell them I've been shot . . .

An officer who had been shot in the head and pinned down by gunfire away from his patrol vehicle had no way to call for backup. The battery for his portable radio died 30 minutes before the critical encounter, but he did not go to get a fresh battery at that time. Fortunately, a civilian called 911 and handed the seriously injured officer the cell phone so he could get help.

In some incidents, officers were unable to broadcast their calls for backup due to radio traffic, not knowing their radio functions, or forgetting they even had a portable device on them. One officer remarked, "I remember trying that a couple of times. Press the button and there's a distinct bonking noise that you're not getting through to anyone . . . I'm waiting for that chirp. . . So, that didn't work out."

Another critically injured officer explained, "One of the deputies on scene was running the license plate over the radio of a vehicle that he thought was involved in the call . . . it ended up being the perpetrator's vehicle. But, in that same instance while he was talking, and I keyed up, I didn't transmit. Only he did."

RECOMMENDATIONS: Communication

Officers would never think of starting a tour of duty without a properly functioning weapon. However, the radio, another life-saving device, either malfunctioned or was left behind during critical incidents. The recommendations seem obvious, but that is exactly why officers may become complacent about their communication tools.

- *Training scenarios should include the use of the radio to ensure officers understand its functions.*

Law enforcement officers routinely train to have automatic responses in defensive measures and weapons use, yet less emphasis is placed on training officers to quickly and efficiently use their communication technology during a critical incident. Trainers should develop realistic scenarios for officers to practice using radios under duress in order to form automatic responses.

In some cases during the ambushes and unprovoked attacks included in this study, a solution was readily available, but it did not automatically come to the officers'

minds. For instance, one officer was stabbed repeatedly and fighting for his life. He explained his predicament and how he eventually overcame the challenges he met in calling for backup:

> So I grabbed the mic, because it was next to me and we were fighting, but I couldn't get through to the radio. This side of the county is usually busy, so sometimes you [have] to wait for radio traffic until you get your opportunity to say something . . . I think I remember trying a couple of times . . . I need to hear somebody on this other end so I can scream for help . . .

The officer continued to struggle and fired his weapon in self-defense, causing the offender to flee. The officer tried again to radio for help.

> I wasn't successful with the radio, again. It probably took an extra second or so to really think, 'Ok, now what? So now what do I do?' I remember that we have an emergency button on our radios where…it kills all the feeds to everyone else's radio, so I was able to do that. I pressed my emergency button, and that gave me a direct line to our dispatcher.

Time was critical for this officer. Simply depressing the emergency button at his first opportunity would have expedited the crucial emergency response.

Another officer, who was shot multiple times and was unable to walk, forgot he was wearing a portable radio and dragged himself into his patrol car to radio for assistance. He explained his struggle that day.

> Well, nobody knows where I'm at. So, I tried to stand up and I couldn't. Well I'll crawl over, and I'll crawl up in the car and get a hold of the radio. I'll call for help. Tunnel vision. I'm wearing a portable radio. Never crossed my mind until I couldn't get in the car. I was so physically drained I couldn't get in the car.

- *Ensure officers have radios.*

As simple as this sounds, in several cases, officers did not have this life-saving piece of equipment with them to call for backup. An example was provided by an officer who described being in a house with his weapon drawn, standing over a fatally wounded police officer. He was facing nine highly-agitated individuals and had no idea who shot the officer lying beneath him. He depicted the scene:

> I stood over him, probably my way of trying to protect him . . . I described it as people acting like animals . . . just screaming and hollering, no control. They went to pretty much screaming at me over and over and over, saying that you shot your own man, over and over. They didn't seem fearful at all that I was standing there with a weapon.

To call for backup, the officer was forced to leave the fatally wounded officer alone with the individuals and run out to his car. He stated, "I didn't have a cell phone on me. I didn't have a radio on me. I had one issued to me, there was one in the car."

- *Ensure officers are on the proper channels for their patrol locations.*

Another problem that can easily be addressed is setting the radio to the proper channel to reach dispatchers. One officer working overtime in a different location than his normal patrol area was attacked in a parking lot while walking to his patrol car at the end of his tour of duty. After shooting the officer, the offender fled the area. The officer recalled, "So I got my radio, I changed it to the channel for the location that I was at. I mean, I worked on the other side of town so my radio was set for that location." The officer hadn't thought to change the channel at the beginning of his tour of duty. Fortunately for him, he had the time to find the appropriate channel and call for assistance. Officers may not always have the time to search for the correct channel during an attack.

INJURIES AND MEDICAL TREATMENT

Analysis of injuries sustained

Of the officers interviewed, 22 received serious to life-threatening injuries. Of those, 19 (86.4 percent) were injured by an offender using a firearm, and 3 (13.6 percent) were injured by a knife or other cutting instrument. Of the 86.4 percent of the officers injured by firearms, 7 (36.8 percent) of the weapons used were handguns,

5 (26.3 percent) were rifles, and 4 (21.0 percent) were shotguns. This information is supported by the annual data collected by the LEOKA Program, which shows 92.0 percent of officers were killed by firearms in the most recent 10-year period.

When asked to describe their degree of pain or how their injuries impacted their mobility, victim officers in this study provided varied responses. Previous LEOKA research studied the effects of pain and described the pain sensation as a complicated neurological and psychological experience that may vary from person to person. Persons with the same or similar injuries may experience pain differently (Pinizzotto, Davis & Miller, 2006). In this study, the pain described by some officers seemed to depend on the type of firearm with which they were shot. For example, some officers shot with a handgun or rifle described the pain as "hot" or "heat" as if they were stabbed with a hot steel rod or hot poker. As one officer, shot in the leg with a .22-caliber rifle, said, "I could see the blood bubbling up through my uniform pants, and it felt like you were on fire. Like you were being stabbed with a hot poker . . . just hot, extreme heat."

For some officers, the pain was not immediate or felt at all. Some reported not feeling pain until their adrenaline decreased. A delayed feeling of pain occurred for one officer who was shot three times with a .45-caliber handgun. The first round struck him in the stomach area but was stopped by his soft body armor. The second round entered between the vest panels into his rib cage and exited out his back. As the officer spun around, the third round struck him in the back, actually entering the exit wound caused from the second round. Here, the officer describes the experience and the onset of his pain.

> It wasn't until after I got to the hospital and the investigation that they found out that I had been shot three times. But at first it was just the wind was knocked out of me. I knew right away that I was shot but you know, the wind, I couldn't catch my breath. And then I knew I had to get out of there . . . When I got out of there and got picked up, then it kicked in. You know, I'm to safety and now I need to find out how bad I'm hit. Then that's when the pain started coming in. It wasn't so much like pain, but it was heat and the best way that I've been able to describe it, it was like someone took a hot steel rod iron and put it right through my entire chest area. It was so hot. The heat was unbelievable.

For some officers, the injuries rendered them somewhat immobile, unable to effectively use their legs, yet able to stay composed and remain in the fight. One officer experienced this when he located a vehicle that had eluded him minutes earlier. The vehicle was sitting in the middle of the roadway, and the officer recognized an immediate concern—the driver's side door was slightly open. Before the officer could get out of his vehicle, the offender had exited his own vehicle and fired several rounds as he advanced on the officer, striking him five times.

> When I bailed out of the car, [the] first round hit me just below the right knee. I knew I had been hit. It stung a little bit. It never knocked me down, [I] never missed a step. I was trying to get out past the door. Second one hit me just above the boot on the right leg. Third one hit me center mass, knocked me on my a--. I've never been hit so hard . . . Shot me through the bottom of the right foot, right in the center. Shot my big toe off on my left foot. Those are the ones that hurt.

In another incident, an officer exited his patrol vehicle and was hit three times with .308-caliber rounds fired from a semiautomatic rifle. One round hit the officer in the upper thigh area (just below the holster), striking him in the femur. Another round hit behind the holster, while the third round struck him in the calf. The officer described how being struck by the first round affected his mobility.

> That first round . . . it just felt like somebody hit me with a baseball bat and blasted me up against the car. That's how intense it was of a shock to my body and . . . I thought maybe my car door slammed on me, you know, that's my initial thought . . . I couldn't hold myself up anymore, and that's when I fell to the ground.

How the officers in the current study experienced traumatic injury to their bodies varied, but their experiences provide insight into how individuals may experience pain

differently. The descriptions of the impact and pain are helpful for officers who have not experienced gunshot wounds to understand the variations. Officers can anticipate the pain and mentally prepare to fight through it.

Medical treatment

Several officers in this study mentioned their concern about having life-saving medical treatment provided immediately after receiving a critical injury. Officers faced different degrees of injuries and had various factors to consider, such as severity of injury, medical personnel response time, and their proximity to an area where the threat was still imminent. The victim officer, if possible, or assisting officers evaluated the situation and determined the necessary steps to increase the chances of survival. Possible responses included waiting for an ambulance to arrive, transporting the injured officer by a police vehicle to a nearby ambulance or medical facility, self-administered first aid, or first aid administered by assisting officers.

Of officers interviewed for this study, more than half reported they received their first form of medical care from ambulance personnel. The second leading action regarding medical care was when assisting officers transported the injured officer by police vehicle either to remove them from the area where the threat was still imminent to meet an ambulance, or to transport them to the nearest medical facility. In three cases, injured officers used self-administered direct pressure to control their bleeding. In one of those three cases, the injured officer reported he was also treated with first aid by an assisting officer who instructed him to apply pressure to the wound on his arm.

Self-administered first aid proved crucial in situations where officers were injured in the line of duty and did not have immediate medical assistance available to them. One of the officers who self-administered first aid reported his injuries occurred while he and his partner were on a stakeout seeking a wanted fugitive. The officers were positioned in a wooded area surrounding the residence of the fugitive's wife. Near the end of their watch, the fugitive moved to a location behind the officers and began firing on them with a rifle. One officer was shot in the abdomen, while the other officer was shot in the leg. The officer with the abdominal wound was the team medic—he had a nursing degree and experience as an Army medic. His partner officer, who had no medical training, was unable to communicate the extent of his wound. The medic officer was able to self-administer first aid and said this of their ordeal:

> I was on my back and my partner, I could tell, was . . . having some difficulty breathing. So I thought maybe he took a round to the lungs. As it turns out, he had been shot through the leg [and] that separated his femoral artery, so he was losing a lot of blood. Due to the extent of our injuries, we, neither one of us, were really capable of providing first aid to the other. So at that point, I always carried an aid bag on my leg, so I just tried to administer what little first aid I could to myself . . . I knew from my past medical experience that most of my injuries were pretty much internal at the time.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Injuries and medical treatment

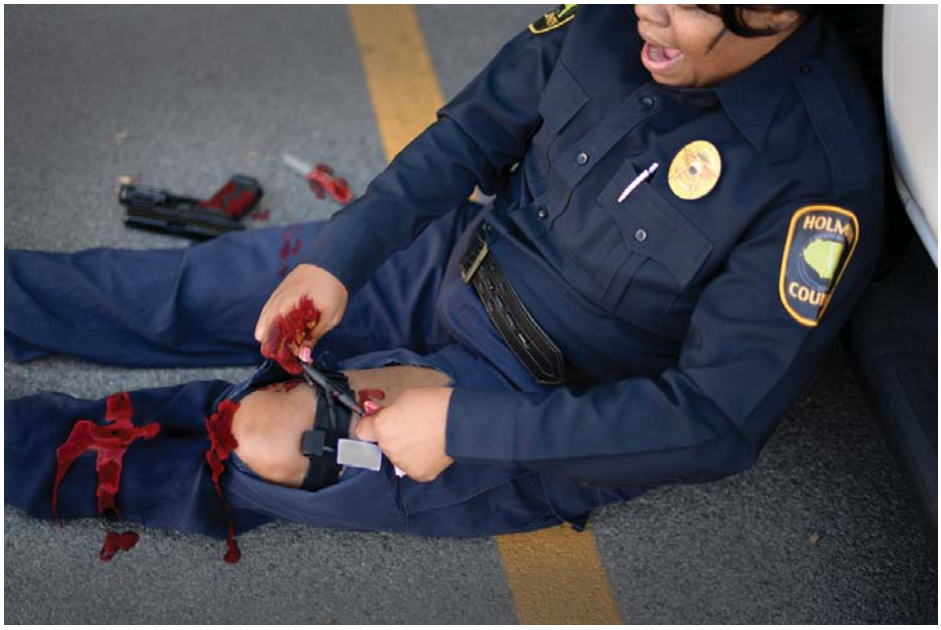
- *Law enforcement training staff must take a proactive approach by evaluating their training program and including comprehensive first aid training (including self-administered first aid) in their curriculum.*

Agencies and training academies should incorporate first aid training with new officers, civilian staff, and annual in-service training to veteran officers. Not only should officers know how to provide emergency medical care to an injured officer, but they should also be trained on self-administered first aid. Receiving immediate first aid could increase the changes of a gravely injured officer's survival. While first aid from emergency medical personnel is ideal, in cases where medically trained personnel are not available, officers themselves can provide treatment.

The medic officer who was on a stakeout and shot in the abdomen demonstrated the importance of medical training while discussing his attempt to prevent himself from going into shock. When officers are critically injured with a firearm or cutting instrument, the loss of blood could lead to a condition known as hypovolemic shock. If not recognized and treated quickly, hypovolemic shock could lead to death. The officer provided this advice for others who are critically injured and experiencing signs of shock:

You can loosen any restrictive clothing; elevate your legs, which I did. I actually bent my knees to relieve some of the pressure on my abdomen at the time. Try to control your breathing . . . controlling the bleeding too . . . keeping the patient warm . . . But first and foremost is controlling the bleeding, obviously.

- *Officer training should specifically include hemorrhage-control procedures.*



The American College of Surgeons recommends that tourniquets be available to every law enforcement officer.

Knowing how to properly control bleeding through the use of a tourniquet or direct pressure could potentially save a life. Physicians affiliated with the American College of Surgeons (ACS) led a committee that brought together trauma surgeons with law enforcement and other relevant first responders and health professionals. The committee, known as the Joint Committee to Create a National Policy to Enhance Survivability from Intentional Mass Casualty and Shooting Events, discussed strategies and made recommendations to address injuries involving life-threatening blood loss. While the overall discussion centered on injuries from mass-casualty shootings, the practices suggested by the committee are relevant to any attack resulting in such wounds.

The ACS committee used the acronym **THREAT** to describe necessary steps to respond to active shooters and the resulting trauma.

- **T**hreat suppression
- **H**emorrhage control
- **R**apid **E**xtrication to safety
- **A**ssessment by medical providers
- **T**ransport to definitive care (Jacobs, L.M. et. al., 2015).

In addition, the ACS committee made recommendations specifically for law enforcement to assist them in evaluating their attention to hemorrhage control interventions. These recommendations are:

- Identify appropriate external hemorrhage control training for law enforcement officers.
- Ensure appropriate equipment, such as tourniquets and hemostatic dressings, is available to every law enforcement officer.
- Ensure assessment and triage of victims with possible internal hemorrhage for immediate evacuation to a dedicated trauma hospital.
- Train all law enforcement officers to assist EMS/fire/rescue in the evacuation of the injured (Joint Committee to Create a National Policy to Enhance Survivability from Mass-Casualty Shooting Events, 2013).

The ACS committee and its findings are just one resource available to law enforcement agencies to address first aid for officers who are victims of shootings or stabbings and are hemorrhaging.

- *Training should reinforce that officers can receive a serious injury and still continue to fight.*

Several officers in this study received serious to life-threatening injuries, yet they were able to fight through the situation and survive. Understanding how these officers were impacted by their injuries yet able to fight through their ordeal could be beneficial to law enforcement training. A will-to-win mentality combined with proficient training increase an officer's chances of surviving an attack. As one officer asserted, "I believe training kicked in, and instinct, the will to survive, kicked in and helped me through it."

See the section on *Will to win* for further information.

- *Ensure officers have the appropriate first-aid equipment.*

As mentioned in the ACS committee's recommendations about hemorrhage control, officers should have proper medical equipment available to them. Equipment such as medical bags containing pressure bandages, safe and effective hemostatic dressings, effective tourniquets, and personal protective gloves should be issued to officers to carry with them at all times. Immediate access to a medical bag with the equipment needed for quick emergency medical care greatly improves the injured officer's chance of survival.

MENTAL PREPARATION

Twenty-one (63.6 percent) of the officers in this study specifically discussed the value of mentally preparing for ambushes or unprovoked attacks, both as a general practice, as well as in the moments before an incident appears imminent, when possible. Many of the thoughts and suggestions they covered on this topic overlap and complement information covered in other sections, such as *Ambush cognitions, Will to win*, and *Training*.

Prior planning

A plan can be anything an officer has in place to minimize risk and raise awareness. Examples include maintaining personal space or a safety zone, making one's weapon less accessible, looking for preassault indicators, recognizing environmental traps, and assessing who holds the tactical advantage. After having survived their encounters, most of the study officers expressed the value of having a plan and stressed the importance of proactively considering "what-ifs." Fifteen (45.5 percent) of the officers had formulated a plan of action prior to their attacks; 13 (39.4 percent) had no plan going into their encounter; and 5 (15.2 percent) reported their assaults occurred without any contact or warning, making formulation of a plan irrelevant. One of the officers reported he had previously considered the exact event that occurred to him—being attacked while in his patrol unit:

> I spend a lot of time when I'm on patrol running scenarios in my head . . . 'What would I do if this would happen? What would I do if that would happen?'—mentally preparing for things. I had mentally prepared myself for someone attacking me before I got out of my car a half a dozen times before it happened.

Pause button/slow down

Six (18.2 percent) officers reported that "hitting the pause button" or slowing down a response is another strategy to consider. Some training encourages officers to press a threat and take the fight to an offender when the safest option might actually be containment until additional resources arrive. One of the officers in this study commented, "Slow down when you're going to these things. Make sure you [have] a little bit of a plan together." It is important to mention not all cases fit this profile, most notably in the case of an active shooter. In such a scenario, time for strategy and planning may not be an option and immediate mitigation is necessary. However, when the situation permits, officers should take advantage of the time and pause to consider options, resources, and strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Mental Preparation

- *Agencies should consider adding to or continuing their training repertoire as it relates to mental preparation and preplanning.*

Any time an officer is readily identifiable as a member of law enforcement, the threat of an ambush or unpro-

voked attack exists. Whether an officer is in uniform or in casual clothes, wearing clothing with police logos, on-duty or off-duty, the threat exists. Research suggests there are nearly always actions officers can take to better protect themselves against an attack, and officers should expect the unexpected. Expect it and plan ahead to act, both proactively and reactively:

- Preplanning using what-if scenarios, maintaining situational awareness at all times by making observations and, when possible, recognizing indications that an assault is imminent, acting decisively to avoid injury, taking control, and possibly preventing an attack from occurring altogether.
- Reacting to quickly minimize the effects of an unforeseen attack, to the point of taking evasive actions and employing countermeasures to increase the chances of survival.

It is important to note several officers who were interviewed reported there was nothing they could have done to recognize an attack was imminent or prevent their encounter. These attacks occurred for the most part, without any contact or engagement with an offender, and at a time and place where the officers least expected it. In some cases, such conditions may have been the very reasons the offenders chose those particular times and places to launch attacks.

- *Develop training scenarios where officers recognize times in which pausing or slowing down would enhance officer safety when facing a life-threatening attack.*

Sometimes an immediate response or rushing into a situation is not the best course of action. Officers participating in the study suggested a delayed response provides an officer with more opportunities to consider additional options and strategies. One officer stated, ". . . maybe telling guys that if you're going to a gun call, slow it down a bit. Don't become one of the people that need to be saved by trying to go in there and save everybody. Just kind of hang on a second." Officers suggested backup as another strategy. See the *Backup officers* section in this chapter.

- *Officers should train for essential behaviors to become automatic.*

Time is of the essence in an assault, and the quicker officers can react to a surprise attack, the better their chances are of surviving the encounter. Practice and repetition help develop muscle memory or automaticity, thus making necessary actions into automatic patterns or habits. Automaticity enables an individual to perform tasks without occupying the mind with low-level details, which minimizes the delay between recognition and reaction (Nugent, 2013). More information about muscle memory/automaticity is included in the *Training* section later in this chapter.

Will to win and *Mental preparation* work hand-in-hand, and putting both in action at the same time considerably increases the chances of winning or surviving an attack. Both are discussed further in the *Will to survive* section of this chapter.

WILL TO SURVIVE

Most of the officers interviewed mentioned the will-to-survive mindset, which is touched on in several sections of this chapter. Officers who received some form of will-to-survive training considered it vitally important. Nineteen officers (57.6 percent) attributed their personal survival to the will-to-survive mentality— constant focus on positive thoughts during attacks. Prior to the attacks, most officers had participated in mindset training either from past military service or from police training. However, a few officers, with no prior formalized training, reported they also used a winning mindset to endure the ambush or unprovoked attack and to survive.

One of the officers who was shot twice during an ambush said his thought at the time was, "For the love of God, just fight!" This statement characterized many of the responses offered by officers who found themselves under attack and engaged in fighting for their lives. Officers in the current study who discussed the will-to-survive mindset provided descriptions of their thoughts during and after the ambushes and unprovoked attacks, as well as their preparation and mindset prior to the assaults.

During the assault

As indicated earlier, the key component of an ambush or an unprovoked attack is the element of surprise. Officers are suddenly forced to fight for their lives, requiring their thoughts and attitudes to instantly shift to their

survival. One officer said he had parked his patrol car in a convenience store parking lot and was taking care of administrative matters. He was suddenly attacked by an offender who repeatedly stabbed him through the car window. The officer was pinned against the console and was unable to draw his firearm. He described his thoughts during the attack:

> I was thinking definitely self-preservation was a big thing for me, survival. I recognized the disadvantage I was in. As I alluded to earlier, with him [the offender] having the advantage, it was just survival to me at that point. I wasn't really concerned about anything else other than 'I need to make it out of here alive.' That's pretty much what kept me going. 'I don't want to die right now. I don't want to die here.' My mindset was . . . 'Ok, I'm in a fight right now, and I'm going to win this fight.'

Defensive mindset. Thrust immediately into a fight, some officers described their first will-to-survive thoughts as defensive in nature. One officer collapsed to the ground after being shot in the protective vest and both legs while exiting his vehicle during a traffic stop. He was unable to stand, but he drew his weapon and started to defend himself. He stated, "The fight wasn't over. The fight was definitely not over. And I never thought it would be. It never crossed my mind that I wasn't going to win." Another officer, exiting his vehicle near a neighborhood party, was attacked from behind by an offender who had concealed himself behind the officer's patrol car. The offender used a mole trap to stab the officer. (A mole trap has numerous sharp blades meant to impale moles caught in the trap.) The officer noted there were many citizens in the surrounding area and did not attempt to use his service weapon for fear of harming a bystander. The officer explained how he immediately defended himself with a side-handle baton—the ensuing fight went through several neighborhood yards. The struggle ended when backup arrived to help subdue the offender. The officer shared his positive thought process, "I never quit fighting. I never let it enter my mind that I was hurt or I was done. I was going to win, and I never stopped moving forward. Just always move forward and attack. Don't give up."

Offensive mindset. Officers, after quickly recovering from the initial shock of being attacked, described switching from an immediate defensive mindset to an offensive mindset. One officer who was injured in the arm and face by birdshot from a shotgun, initially retreated to cover. He stated, "I realized that I had to do something offensive here, rather than just defensive." The officer who was stabbed through the window of his patrol car realized the offender was attempting to disarm him. After a struggle for his service weapon, the officer was able to gain control, draw the weapon, and fire several rounds while seated in the vehicle. The officer's shots missed, and the offender immediately retreated and fled on foot. As the offender was fleeing, the officer exited his patrol car and his mindset changed to taking the offensive, "It's like, you took the fight to me, and now I'm taking the fight to you." The officer, critically injured, wisely fought his instinct to engage in a foot pursuit alone and decided to call for backup. Other resources in the area arrived quickly. Even though he called backup and waited for assistance, the officer felt that had he followed his initial thought to pursue and catch up to the subject, he would have survived. He commented, ". . . no doubt in my mind I would have won. I know I would have won. Good guys always win, I believe in that. . ."

In another case, a deputy was fired upon when responding as backup to a call at an RV park. When the on-scene deputy called for backup, he advised incoming units that the offender was still in the RV. The backup deputy was working his way to the side of the RV to avoid a crossfire when he was shot twice by the offender, who had left the RV and was hidden behind some rocks. The deputy's ballistic vest stopped a round in the stomach area but another round penetrated the vest's panels and entered his left rib cage area. The deputy fell down a steep hill but mentally prepared for battle. "I was posted backup directly toward him. I immediately thought in my mind . . . my main thought was that he was going to come finish me. So I immediately discharged my service firearm firing three rounds back at him." The deputy articulated his offensive mindset, "I never once thought about giving up, and even when I was shot, my mind was to still bring the fight to him or else he's going to bring it to me."

Post assault/fighting through injuries

The study *Violent Encounters* (Pinizzotto, Davis & Miller, 2006) noted that many law enforcement participants who had received life-threatening injuries were determined not to succumb to their wounds. According to the study's findings, once the attacks were over and the immediate threat was gone, officers who received life-threatening injuries, either real or perceived at the time, said their will-to-survive mindset training allowed them to mentally contend with their wounds and survive. The research in this study supports those findings.

Among officers interviewed in this study, those who had either received or believed they had received a potentially life-threatening injury said their resolute determination to survive their injuries —whether imparted through training or developed through personal preparation—directly affected their ability to overcome their situations. The officer who was shot twice with buckshot by a shotgun-wielding subject offered this reflection:

> I remember a lot of instances went through my head during that time frame of videos I had watched of officers [who] succumbed to injuries that maybe they shouldn't have succumbed to . . . because of, I don't know if I want to say giving up, but . . . I did not want to be that person. So I told myself, 'You're not laying down. You're not going to your knees. You're not giving up.' I stayed on my feet until one of the sergeants that was working arrived on scene. At that point . . . I reluctantly gave up [my] weapon to him, but that's when essentially I collapsed . . . the point when he was there. But I wasn't willing to give up, and you can't be willing to give up because if you give up you'll die. And just because you're shot, you're not dead.

Another officer, shot in the leg stated, "I look down at my leg, and I mean it was like crimson. My boot filled up with blood so fast, and I'm like, 'God, I hope I didn't hit an artery, because it's filling up with blood fast.'" When asked how long it was before he knew he had been shot during the firefight, the officer stated, "Immediately." The officer shared why training in the will-to-survive mindset was a critical factor for him after being injured.

> That's where the training part kicked in, because I remembered both in the military and in training in law enforcement that if you get shot, you can't feed into that. You have to remember that you can fight through an injury, and just because you're shot doesn't mean you're going to die. If you believe you're going die, then guess what, you're going to die . . . once I checked and assessed, I was back in the fight.

A final example that epitomizes the determination to survive injuries involved a deputy responding to a call of domestic violence. A man under the influence of drugs demanded his family members give him the keys to the car so he could purchase crack cocaine. When the family declined, the man grabbed a firearm and started shooting the floor in the house. His mother called 911 and requested help.

The supervisory deputy responding to the call was unsure of the exact location of the residence because of some confusion concerning the address. As the deputy got closer to the proximity of the home, he came across a car stopped in the middle of the road for no apparent reason. The deputy pulled up next to the vehicle and asked the driver if everything was OK and why she stopped in the middle of the road. The driver stated that a girl who had just ran out of a residence and up over the hill appeared to be covered in blood. The deputy notified dispatch he had arrived on scene and exited his vehicle. As he was gathering further information from the driver, the offender appeared from the back exterior corner of the house and opened fire on the deputy.

The deputy immediately told the driver and her son to go. He took cover and was pinned down behind his patrol vehicle with no cover on either side and no way to retrieve his shotgun or rifle from the back of his vehicle without exposing himself to further fire. Concerned his vehicle could be disabled by additional shooting from the offender, the deputy decided to get back into his patrol vehicle and exit the immediate area for a safer location.

> So I went ahead and leaned back a little bit, and I opened my door and I laid my handgun on my seat, and I jumped in and I leaned over like this. I reached down, and I put [the

> patrol vehicle] in drive and I floored it . . . it just seemed like the whole side of my [vehicle] exploded. Glass flew in. I could hear him shooting, and then in my right eye, I saw a flash of red and black, and then I went blind in my right eye . . . at that point, I realized I'd been shot . . . I put my hand up to my eye socket and blood was pouring out, and I could feel everything. There was stuff hanging down and I'm like, 'Oh, man.' So I didn't know where I had taken the shot in the head, I just knew that I was shot in the head somewhere.

The deputy realized the quickest and closest emergency medical assistance was back in the direction of the offender's residence within 5 or 6 miles. If he continued going in his current direction away from the offender, medical assistance was 10 or 15 miles away. The deputy briefly considered staying where he was and waiting for EMS to get to him. He quickly realized the closest EMS would not be allowed to drive to him through an unsecure scene. Choking on his own blood, the deputy came to the conclusion that the most expedient way to get to emergency medical treatment was to drive back past the offender's residence again exposing himself to potential fire. The deputy stated:

> So I started spitting blood out. I went ahead and set the mic down there (in his lap), and I jammed the palm of my hand in my eye socket, and I had to shift with my other hand . . . I'm going to have to go back by that house. So if he lights me up again, I'm just going to have to deal with it. So I floored it—went flying back by the house and did not see him.

The deputy contacted dispatch and provided a description of the offender. He then orchestrated his own emergency response by informing dispatch which firehouse he was driving to and instructed the squad personnel to meet him there. "What I would do was occasionally while driving, I'd stop and take a deep breath, and I would blow the blood out of my mouth, pick the microphone up and talk, and say, 'Hey, this is what I'm doing . . . '" Although critically injured, the deputy was the supervisor that evening and he shifted his focus from his injuries to coordinating his backup units and setting up a perimeter. After completing this, the deputy wasn't sure if he would make it to the firehouse, so he decided to provide periodic location checks while en route. ". . . I'm telling dispatch where I'm at and what I'm doing . . . just in case I pass out. I don't know what's going to happen at that point. I don't know if I'm going to lose blood or pass out, whatever. I just kind of wanted them to know where to find me." The deputy made it to the firehouse where he was treated for his injuries. He stated his prior military mindset training helped him focus even though he was critically injured, "As long as you're breathing, you don't stop. You keep coming and coming and coming, and you don't stop." In spite of his injuries, the deputy refused to give up. ". . . I'm also thinking, 'Hey, I've got to survive'. . . Let me put it this way, I didn't think I was going to die, but if I did, my a-- was going out fighting trying to get to help or get out of there."

Officers' mindsets before the assault

As reported previously, 57.6 percent of the officers discussed the importance of having a positive mindset to push themselves through the assault itself and the time immediately following. Many officers reported they developed their proactive thinking and will-to-survive mindset during agency trainings and individual personal preparation, such as running through scenarios and tactics in their minds. Because of the officers' comments, which support ideas explored in other LEOKA studies, the following recommendations are some of the most important ones provided in this study.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Will to Survive

- *If they do not already provide it, agencies should offer a will-to-survive course in the context of surviving critical injuries.*

About will-to-win training, one officer said, "I remember seeing a video . . . during the academy. I believe it was [there], or one of the trainings we had. [During the incident] I saw [the video] flash through my head . . ." This statement exemplifies most of the officers' comments regarding their recall of survival mindset training during an attack. One officer, shot during an unprovoked attack, also credited his agency for the training he had received.

> That is something that was instilled in us in the police academy and, even more so, being on the department. I mean all the training we go through, whether it is arrest control or whether we fight the RedManTM [in training

> gear], or whatever it is, our training instructor is always, 'Don't give up. Whatever you do, do not give up. Get up and fight through it. Or, if it hurts, you know, mind over matter.'

When provided a list of various law enforcement training activities and asked which one benefitted him most, one officer responded, "Survival—the will to survive." The officer went on to explain how mindset training connected all the law enforcement training he had received. "Will to win, will to survive. Because when you take that, along with your muscle memory, you are doing anything you can, even if you are going to get out there and fight with a stick, you are just not going to lay down."

- *Officers should perform mental preparation exercises on their own.*

Officers can build a foundation for a survival mindset with mental exercises. One officer noted the importance of developing his personal mindset.

> I had been taught in an officer survival training class . . . to do the mental preparedness while you're driving around. You know, take the time to think about different scenarios and how you would react. I had taken that training to heart and had been doing it, and I think it really helped when this incident occurred.

Another example of this mental preparation process involved an officer who was unexpectedly shot several times from behind. The officer explained how he had previously mentally prepared to be shot and planned how he was going to survive.

> You always try to put yourself in that situation saying, you know, 'What if? What if I get shot at? What if I get hit? I mean, what am I going to do? What is it going to feel like? Am I going to be able to fight my way through it? Am I going to be able to get up and get cover if need be, or get up and take some type of action?' I have always told myself, 'OK, whenever I get shot, it is going to hurt like hell, but you are going to be able to handle it.'

Because personal mindset and will-to-survive techniques are such integral factors in surviving attacks, the LEOKA Program developed the *Take A.I.M.* (Awareness, Image, and Mindset) safety resource following the *Violent Encounters* study (Pinizzotto, Davis & Miller, 2006). *Take A.I.M.* is a guide for officers that includes short statements such as, "I will refuse to quit—no matter what." The flyer includes thoughts that can assist officers to mentally prepare to handle and survive a perilous encounter. The *Take A.I.M.* poster is included in Appendix B. Officers are encouraged to read and consider these safety reminders before their tour of duty, several times during a tour, or whenever time permits.

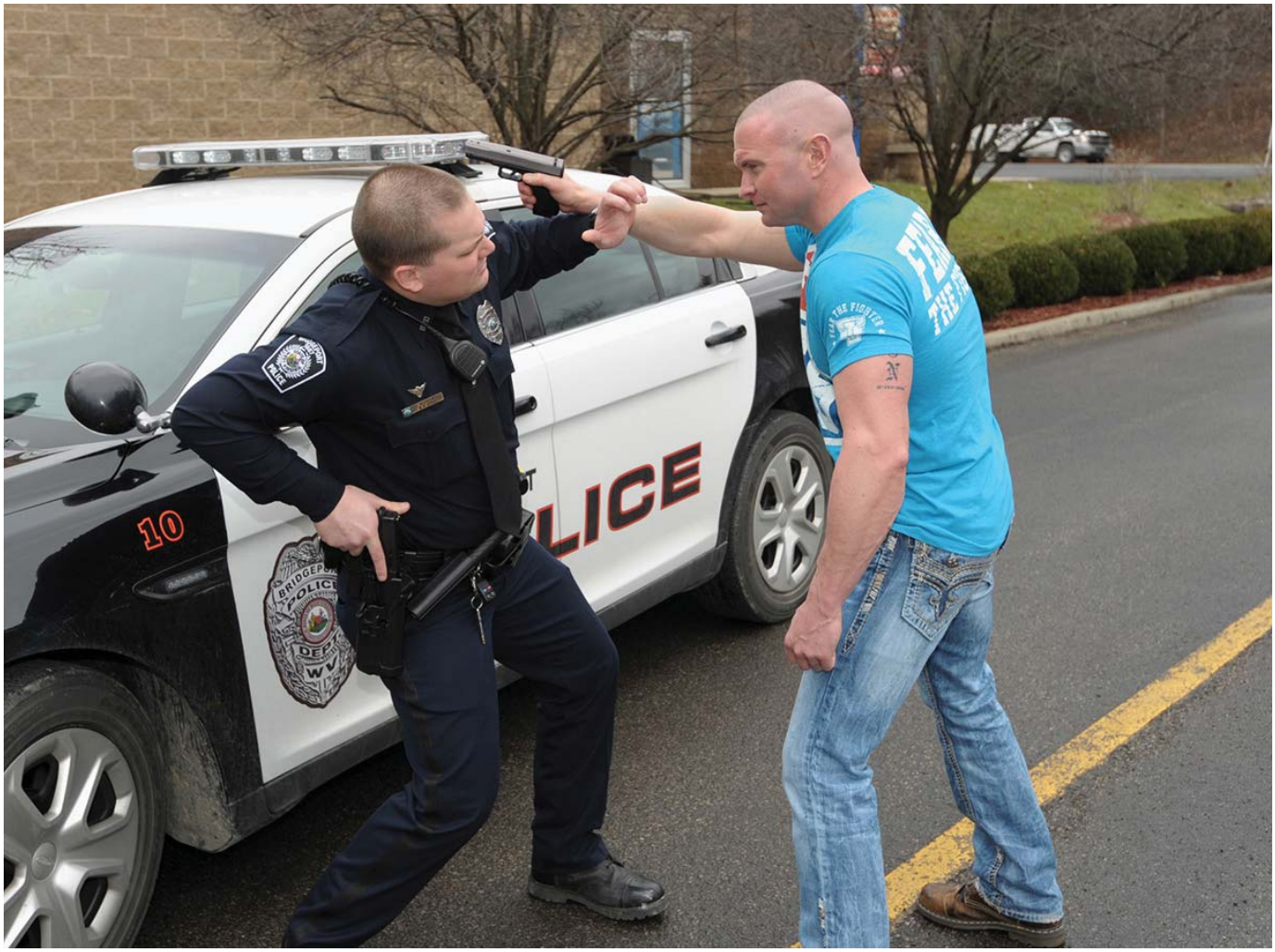
TRAINING

Officers train to be prepared for encounters like the ambushes and unprovoked attacks detailed in this study. *Violent Encounters* (Pinizzotto, Davis & Miller, 2006) presented a discussion on the importance of preparation. Its authors explained, "Training often determines which persons survive and which ones suffer injury or death." It was in this context that participants in the current study were asked the relevance of their training leading up to each incident. More than half of the officers interviewed (54.5 percent), stressed the importance of training. It is reasonable to suggest the remaining officers believed strongly in the concept of training as well. However, the study's statistics only reflect the officers who specifically mentioned its importance during their interviews.

Training Analysis

Most training involves studying incidents from the past, learning from mistakes or positive actions, and implementing best practices into current training curriculum. Sometimes a training course on a particular subject exists, but because a law enforcement organization has not faced the specific situation, the topic is not included in the agency's training plan. In other cases, a completely new scenario occurs that is worthy of addressing with training. One officer in the study discussed training concerns in this way:

> I've always enjoyed training, but, [the attack] opens up the floor to where maybe we need to expand training and think of . . . better ways to do things, or more things to think of while we're out there. At least so we have it



Self-Defense was cited as a key training for survival.

> on our mind that this could happen, [or] this could happen. And the only way you know that is by getting information from other agencies where it has happened. You know, you can't say 'that'll never happen.' Well, it has happened.

In the cases studied, some of the officers discussed the changes made to training and other practices following an ambush or unprovoked attack. An example is the incident in which two officers were ambushed from behind by a lone gunman as they walked toward their police station at the beginning of their shifts. The officers did not have their radios, which were in the station. One officer was killed, and the other officer suffered critical injuries. Before the shooting, the offender parked a stolen truck in a lot that was shared by the police department, other government service agencies, and several businesses. After shooting both officers, the offender ran into the lot where he had parked the truck. The offender was pursued by other officers who engaged him in a firefight. Although the offender was struck numerous times, he did not quit returning fire right away. According to the surviving officer, some of the gunfire was exchanged at a distance of 75 feet. The offender eventually collapsed and died.

After a critical analysis of the case by the agency involved, they concluded that their training standards should be enhanced. The agency changed their firearms training by increasing the distance from 50 feet to 75 feet. They also replaced their ammunition with a more robust round and purchased and issued all officers take-home radios. Eventually, the agency moved their police facility to a secure location several miles away where they could maintain complete control of access to the site.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Training

Although 5 (15.2 percent) of the law enforcement participants felt that no training could have prevented the outcome of their attacks, most participants cited specific training topics that directly contributed to the survival of their attacks. The officers were asked, "What course of training, if any, helped most in surviving this assault?" Specific training categories were provided to all study participants. Sixteen (48.5 percent) of the officers responded. The top responses included: *First aid training, Street survival training—will to survive, Self-defense, Firearms training, Communication, Preplanning (What ifs), Self-body drag,* and *Muscle memory.*

First aid training

Officers cited first aid as a critical factor for officer survival. See the *Injuries and medical treatment* section of this chapter for more information.

Street survival training/will to survive

Of the 16 officers who responded to the questions about training, 12 officers (75.0 percent) reported that street survival training, or will to survive, helped considerably in their encounters. Officers credited the training for giving them a mental advantage over their attackers. The ability to react quickly to a perceived threat, not giving up, fighting through pain, and taking the fight to the offender were all seen as valuable tools. In one of the cases under study, an officer who was shot and critically injured spoke of the need to quickly recognize and react to a situation.

> Having a strong mind, like I said, I told myself my brain was thinking and I had to make my body do it. I had to get out of there and get to an ambulance. 'I need to get home and see my kids. I'm not dying today, not like this. Now we need to make that happen.'

One officer credited his survival to a will-to-survive video he watched during training. In the video, an offender stalked and shot an officer who was sitting in a patrol vehicle. The officer's real-life experience was eerily similar to the training video. The officer observed the armed offender walk alongside a patrol vehicle toward an area where other officers had sought cover. At that moment, the video flashed through the officer's mind, and he quickly reacted by running toward the offender and firing rounds. This caused the offender to change course and flee into the woods.

Another officer, who suffered a shotgun blast to the leg, attributed his survival to his training as he talked about how quickly he realized he was injured:

> Immediately. But again, that's where the training part kicked in, because I remembered both in the military and in training and in law enforcement that if you get shot you can't feed into that. You have to remember that you can fight through an injury, and just because you're shot doesn't mean you're going to die.

Self-defense

Self-defense was also cited as a key training for survival. One officer believed self-defense training with a tactical baton was the reason he survived his encounter. The officer stopped in an area to monitor neighborhood activities. While he was seated in his patrol vehicle, an offender approached the officer from the rear and attacked him with a razor-edged mole trap. The officer was able to draw his tactical baton and use it as a blocking tool to keep from sustaining critical injuries.

Firearms training

Officers also noted that firearms training was critical for surviving assaults. One officer credited his agency for teaching officers to shoot on the move and from various positions and angles. He reported the practice had instilled confidence in his ability to neutralize a threat.

Another example of successful use of firearms occurred when an officer, along with a partner, responded to an apartment complex for a report of a shooting. The officers arrived on scene behind several other officers and assumed they were there to locate and protect a crime scene. As they exited their patrol vehicle, the officers were immediately fired upon, and one officer was struck several times and collapsed. The uninjured officer recalled how quickly his prior firearms training kicked in, "As soon as I saw the muzzle flash, it just went quiet for me. It just happened so quickly; rounds are fired, I hit the ground. The next thing I know I'm up, halfway on my knees, and I'm pulling the slack. Just like they teach you . . . acquire your target—nice and slow—and that's what I was doing." During the exchange of gunfire, the officer's

round struck a light pole just above the offender's head, resulting in the offender fleeing the scene. (The injured officer's actions are further addressed in the *Self-body drag* portion of this section.)

Communication

Officers also referenced previous communication training. The practice with communication tools prompted some officers to use any and all available resources. For instance, an officer was working a security post at a local grocery store when an offender, reportedly larger and stronger than the officer, sneaked up behind the officer and snatched the service weapon from the officer's holster. While struggling with the subject for control of his weapon, the officer remembered the orange emergency button on his police radio and activated it. Assistance arrived quickly, and he was able to survive and recover his service weapon. Although the officer's agency only briefly covered the use of the emergency call button, it was this resource that quickly brought the backup officers who saved his life.

Other/preplanning ("what-if" scenarios)

When officers were asked what other trainings helped them besides the categories provided, some mentioned trainings that taught them to think ahead, run through scenarios, and plan ahead for what might occur. Such actions can be key to changing, gaining, and maintaining a tactical advantage. For instance, when an officer arrives at a residence for a welfare check, the officer can assess the situation. Then, instead of walking up a dark sidewalk toward a house with all the lights out, the officer can direct the dispatcher to ask the complainant to walk out to the patrol unit. Such precautions could prevent an officer from walking into what could be a premeditated trap. It also affords an officer more time to consider strategies and options to better assess and address risk.

Two of the officers who participated in training that involved proactive preplanning and discussions of "what-if" scenarios reported these skills assisted them during their encounters. Prior to the attacks, both officers regularly engaged in "what-if" training by mentally envisioning possible scenarios, interjecting various probabilities, and determining a variety of options they could employ to safely mitigate a scenario. The first officer credited proactive thinking as the best plan of action when handling situations.

> You've got to be able to know what to do before it happens. So, yeah, do I ever sit around when I'm in my patrol car and think of things that could happen to me and how am I going to get out of them? Yeah, I think about things like that all the time. Just like the job I do now. If I have somebody that's a sex offender, [I'll ask myself] what if they get me? How am I going to get out of it? What am I going to do? Yeah, I'm always thinking ahead to try and out-think somebody.

The second officer stated that he regularly uses preplanning and "what if" scenarios prior to handling every operation and tactical assignment.

Ordinarily when I first set up, one of the things I do, you know, you always try to get an idea of your surroundings, what's around you. Escape points, things like that. If he is going to come out the window, you know, going to our left, going to our right, so I tend to play scenarios out in my head when I first get there. 'OK, if he comes from this way, this would be our approach.' And these things, you know, just kind of go through your mind.

Other–self body drag

The officer who was injured at the apartment complex in the incident previously described in the *Firearms training* section found his training on the self-body drag to be crucial to his survival. The officer and his partner arrived on the scene behind numerous other police vehicles and, as previously mentioned, assumed they were there to assist in locating and guarding a crime scene. As the officers exited their patrol vehicle, they immediately came under rifle fire, and one of the officers was struck several times by large-caliber rounds. The first round struck the officer in the leg and threw him up against his patrol car. The second round shattered his femur, and he collapsed. The wounded officer drew his service weapon but could not identify a target. At this point, the officer could hear the rounds striking the pavement near him and realized he needed to get to cover, so he began the self-body drag. He commented, "Yeah, I remember, I'm dragging myself backwards, and I'm getting to the back of the car, I can still hear the bullets bouncing off the pavement and I'm like, you know, d--- it, this guy's still shooting at me. He can see me still."

During that officer's self-body drag training, the trainees had been required to lay down, draw their service

weapon, and point it in the direction of a threat while using the other arm to drag themselves to cover. The officer described the training in this way, "[It lasted] for two hours, it seemed like, one day. It was butt-kicking . . . basically you were to get your gun out and drag yourself backwards all the way across the defensive tactics room."

Muscle memory (automaticity)

Of the respondents, 18.8 percent believed training to develop muscle memory was critically important to reacting and handling ambushes and unprovoked attacks. Muscle memory, also called automaticity, refers to behaviors that are carried out rapidly and without effort or intention. It is often the result of repeatedly practicing a behavior (Nugent, 2013). When handling an attack that comes with very little (if any) warning, the ability to quickly recognize, assess, and address a threat is key to survival. As one officer put it,

> You always need to practice what you've already learned to the point that you just react. You don't have to think about doing it. It's built in—it's memory. You automatically go to it. You automatically use it to defend that threat and defeat that threat.

Officers who were interviewed offered several accounts of muscle memory guiding their actions. One officer, shot in the head and dazed, reacted automatically when the offender returned to the scene to "finish him off." The officer had no recollection of circling a tow truck and taking cover behind it, although he believes this act saved his life.

Another officer credited his training as being so ingrained that he stated, "Whatever I did that night, I did on instinct." Another officer further articulated:

> When you're in a traumatic incident, what was going on during the shooting . . . the body takes over, and you're going to resort to your training. You might think you do, but you have no control over what you are doing. I mean, you know what you're doing, you just can't really control it. It's going to be muscle memory. Whatever you've learned, whatever you've trained your body to do, told your body to do, that's what it's going to do.

When handling an attack that comes with little (if any) warning, the ability to quickly recognize, assess, and address a threat is key to survival.

Of the respondents, 18.8 percent believed training to develop muscle memory was critically important to reacting and handling ambushes and unprovoked attacks.

Muscle memory, also called automaticity, refers to behaviors that are carried out rapidly and without effort or intention. It is often a result of repeatedly practicing a behavior.

Another officer was sitting behind the wheel of his patrol vehicle when an offender exited his truck and advanced toward the officer. The officer perceived if he did not get out of the vehicle, the offender would gain tactical advantage. The officer quickly exited and took cover behind the driver's door; the offender opened fire. The officer was able to return fire, and the offender fled the scene. Although the officer took rounds to his legs and feet, he survived the encounter.

AMBUSH COGNITIONS

Ambush cognitions refers to a law enforcement officer's thoughts during an ambush or unprovoked attack. This section does not include recommendations but describes the wide array of thoughts that raced through the officers' minds while they were actively involved in the life-threatening events. Thoughts ranged from initial shock and surprise to what actions to take at a precise moment to mitigate an attack, neutralize an offender, save their own lives and save the lives of others. Of the officers who participated in this study, 26 (78.8 percent) reported having multiple thoughts during their encounter. Officers were provided categories of specific thoughts they may have had, including the option of "other." They were asked to select the thoughts they considered to be most important to them at the time. The specific thoughts the officers reported they experienced during the attacks included: *self- preservation, safety of others, how to win, I will win, family, expletive, fear, oh no!, weapon retention,* and *other*. Not all the categories applied to all the officers' situations. For instance, the category *safety of others* was not a relevant factor in cases that did not involve a third party. Likewise, distance or circumstances may have rendered the *weapon retention* category irrelevant. The remaining categories cover more general thoughts and are considered relevant to all the incidents in the study. The following information covers the four categories of thoughts most reported by the officers.

Self-preservation

The most prevalent ambush cognition was *self-preservation*. Of the 33 study participants, 25 (75.8 percent) had thoughts of self-preservation. Of those, 11 (44.0 percent) considered it the most important of all the cognitions they experienced. Officers reported they specifically thought about how to mitigate an imminent threat: fight or flight, pressing the threat, covering down, and bringing the fight to the offender. One of the study participants said he recognized an indicator that gave him a few critical seconds to react defensively immediately before the shooting began. The driver's door of the suspect's vehicle was slightly ajar, and it was the puzzle piece the officer needed, combined with other factors, to alert him to the imminent attack. The officer relayed what went through his mind:

> Just as I approach where I can see the [vehicle's] tag, I reach down for the mic and I notice the driver's side door open about that much (*hand gesture indicating a couple of inches*) and I thought, 'Oh, s---,' It just came to me all at once, this is going to get ugly. I drop the mic, throw the car into park, slam my door open and, before I could get out of my vehicle, he's out shooting.

Safety of others

The second most commonly reported cognition category was *safety of others*. The data revealed 14 (42.4 percent) of study participants had thoughts involving protection of others, and of those, 18 percent rated this cognition as the most important one they experienced. These officers regarded thoughts about the *safety of others* as more important than their own self-preservation. In one example, officers responded at 2 a.m. to the scene of an accident and a shooting on a freeway. Upon arrival, one of the officers exited the police unit and ran to a victim who was lying in the roadway suffering from a gunshot wound to the stomach. The officer dragged the victim to the front of a vehicle for cover. At that point, several more shots rang out from an unknown direction. When the interviewer asked if the officer had his service weapon out, and he replied:

> It seemed to happen so quickly. I remember it racing through my mind; however, the reason I did not [have my service weapon out] was because I didn't know where the gunfire was coming from. Would I put these people in more jeopardy or would I help, be of more assistance, with my gun out? Because eventually, helping the victim, I was going to have to put my gun up anyway.

How to win/I will win

The next most prevalent categories, *How to win* and *I will win*, were captured as two separate categories, however both are usually covered in will-to-survive training.

In the category, *How to win*, 13 (39.4 percent) of the study participants recalled having thoughts about strategy and how to win their encounter. None of those officers rated it as the most important cognition they experienced. One of the study participants who was shot multiple times shared thoughts on winning and whether giving up ever came to mind:

> Oh, no. No! And I wasn't going to sit. . . I've seen so many times, so many films [of] police officers getting killed sitting behind the wheel. They don't get out of the car quick enough; they don't pay attention to what's going on. Why? I don't know. I knew what was going to go on.

In the *I will win* category, 11 (33.3 percent) of the study participants reported losing was not an option in their scenario. Six percent (6.1 percent) of the officers considered this thought, *I will win*, as most important. In one case studied, the victim officer recalled that, although he took a shotgun blast to the face, the fight was not over for him. Here's how he described those thoughts:

> I kind of think that was like a teetering moment where I probably could have panicked and you know, gone into shock, or who knows what would've happened. I just chose a different path; I chose to focus . . . My initial thought was to get back in the fight.

See the *Will to survive* section for additional discussion on these topics.

Final note on ambush cognitions

The topics *department rules* and *lawsuits* were both listed as categories of thoughts officers could choose to report, but none of the officers interviewed had any thoughts of department rules or lawsuits while involved in the life-threatening attacks. These thoughts more than likely came to mind, as in most cases, after the smoke cleared and the threat was neutralized. As shown in the previous paragraphs, most of the surviving officers experienced cognitions related to preserving their own lives and the lives of others.

CHAPTER FIVE

Case Analysis

Previous chapters examined the demographic data and personal accounts of victim officers and offenders involved in ambushes and unprovoked attacks. A key strength of this study is that in eight of the cases reviewed, researchers were able to interview both the victim and/or witness officers and the offenders who perpetrated the ambushes or attacks. This chapter presents detailed case studies of two such incidents: one, an ambush, the other, an unprovoked attack. These case studies present the context surrounding each incident and the viewpoints of both the officer and the offender. Each case concludes with an analysis of key similarities and differences in the perceptions of the victim and the attacker.

A third case study concludes the chapter with the analysis of an unprovoked attack that, according to friends and family members of the offender, was racially motivated. However, researchers could not fully analyze the offender's motives and perspective because he was killed in a shootout. The study authors included this case because it involves elements that seem related to some of the more recent ambushes that have been publicized in the United States since researchers originally collected the data for this study.

CASE STUDY #1 - AMBUSH OF POLICE OFFICERS

This case involved a fugitive who ambushed officers while they were conducting surveillance. The ambush occurred in a rural area near a residence where the fugitive's then-wife and granddaughter lived. The description of this case is based upon interviews with the surviving officer and the offender. As stated in Chapter 1, this study uses the LEOKA definition of an ambush:

Ambush (entrapment and premeditation): Situation where an unsuspecting officer was targeted or lured into danger as the result of conscious consideration and planning by the offender.

Summary of the Ambush Incident

One spring, a middle-aged male was serving a sentence for auto theft. With two weeks of his sentence remaining, the man escaped from jail. Later that summer, two police officers conducted a traffic stop. Unknown to the officers, the driver of the car was the escaped prisoner. As the first officer approached the stopped vehicle, the fugitive shot him in the torso with a handgun then sped off. After the gunman was identified as the escaped prisoner, officials issued a warrant for his arrest for attempted murder of a law enforcement officer. Law enforcement initiated an extensive manhunt throughout the state and region. Then, in late August, an unknown subject burglarized a gun store, stealing 35 firearms[5] (long rifles, assault rifles, shotguns, and handguns). The evidence in the case pointed to the fugitive as the primary suspect.

At some point during the search for the fugitive, extenuating circumstances led authorities to remove the fugitive's granddaughter from his then-wife's rural home. When the granddaughter was returned to the residence, two officers set up surveillance behind the home under the belief that the fugitive would return to visit his granddaughter.

Two months after the fugitive shot the officer during the traffic stop, the two officers began their surveillance at 8 a.m. in a slightly wooded area in a cow pasture behind the residence. About two hours from the end of the officers' 12-hour watch, the fugitive walked through the woods behind the house. He saw an officer's head moving within the cover of foliage, so he crept up on the pair and opened fire. One officer, struck in the leg, later died on the operating table. The other officer survived, even though he was shot in the torso through his body armor.

[5] *The officer who was interviewed regarding this case reported 35 firearms were stolen. The offender reported he stole 41 firearms.*

The offender's perspective

Subject Background (Who). At the time of the ambush, the fugitive, Barry,[6] was 44 years old, 5 feet 11 inches tall, weighed approximately 180 pounds, and described himself as lean. He self-identified as Native American. He was married at the time of the assault, although he has since divorced.

Barry was the eldest of his parents' four biological children; his siblings include two sisters and one brother. He grew up with both parents in the home. His father was 61 years old when Barry was born, and his mother was in her 20s. Barry had a good relationship with his mother, but in general, he tried to avoid his father. Barry described his father as being "old school," and said, "You did something wrong, you got knocked down . . ." His father was also psychologically abusive, often calling Barry stupid. Barry attributes his negativity toward the police to his father. "I had an attitude, you know, from dealing with my father so much, so when the cops came, of course they were the bad guy. I've been seeing it that way ever since." Barry ran away from home at least five times when he was young and was subjected to physical violence when he returned home.

Although he read a lot outside of school, Barry performed poorly academically and frequently missed school because his classmates viewed him as "the dumb a--, the dork, and [I was] always picked on." At the age of 12, he had had enough. "I got my shotgun, a bandoleer of 50 rounds, and I start walking to school. And had I made it to the school, I would have went off." He waited for the school bus, but when it arrived, the bus driver saw the shotgun, closed the door and drove off. Instead, Barry spent the day hunting and never returned to school. Barry did not attend high school; "I've never seen high school outside [prison]," he said. He has since earned a GED® certificate and has taken some college courses.

As a result of multiple imprisonments, Barry does not have a consistent work record. Prior to his most recent incarceration, he worked as a manual laborer in a warehouse. At the age of 7, Barry began his first job working on a farm. That job ended when, at the end of the year, the farmer did not pay him his wages, so Barry reported that he plowed over the farmer's crops with the tractor.

Barry reported a lifelong pattern of incarceration, beginning at age 12. He started stealing cars after he stopped going to school, so he was in-and-out of juvenile facilities. Frequently beaten up by older juveniles, he escaped often. Barry served his first jail sentence at age 16 for the burglary of a police officer's house and was incarcerated for 18 months. At the time of the burglary, he did not know the residence belonged to a police officer.

Barry had a long history of gun use and has owned hundreds of firearms over the years. When he was not in prison, Barry practiced shooting 5-6 days per week, firing at least 100 rounds per session. He is a gun enthusiast mainly because he uses them to hunt. "I like to kill to eat. That's it. I don't think about how big a rack is on a buck. I'll shoot a doe faster than I will [a buck] because they're all over the place, you know. I like to eat meat. I like wild meat. That's what I do," he said.

During the interview, Barry seemed to be trying to provoke the interviewer. More than once, he referred to embarrassing police officers. It was clear during the interview that Barry was not completely forthright with the interviewers, and he did not accept responsibility for his actions. When asked about his regrets, Barry stated, "I should have been the person they wanted me to be, the bad guy. There would be a lot more dead people, though. They turned something into a mess. It didn't have to be a mess, but that's what they do." Barry believes he should not be in prison because he did not kill the officer he ambushed. He explained why he believed it wasn't his fault.

> The one that got shot in the leg died. And that's something else I need to point out to you about that. They're saying that I killed him. I didn't kill him; he died. You don't bleed to death in 3 days, you know what I mean. When you get shot in your femoral artery in your leg, you die in minutes, not 3 days. He died on the operating table through a procedure–they were trying to do something with his leg. He bled to death on the operating table. I didn't kill that man.

[6] *Names presented in this research have been changed to protect the identities of the individuals involved.*

Throughout the interview, Barry blamed the police for everything that transpired, never accepting responsibility for his own actions before, during, or after the incident.

The Ambush (What). As previously described, Barry ambushed two police officers who were staking out his wife's residence. The officers were in a cow pasture among some bushes. As the officers suspected, Barry intended to visit the residence to see his granddaughter before leaving the area. He was well-versed in using firearms and, having recently burglarized a gun store, was heavily armed. Barry anticipated that the police had the house under surveillance. As he crept through the woods, he came upon a wrapper from a protein bar, so he knew someone was close by. As he made his way to the cow pasture, which was between the tree line and the house, he saw one of the officers momentarily raise his head. Barry stated, "Them two dudes, they were full camouflage. If they hadn't have moved, I would have walked right by them, and I wouldn't be here today."

Next, Barry described the shooting in his own words.

> They should have never moved. That was their mistake. They were kneeling down next to each other, talking. I snuck up on them. I got about from here to that wall [about 50 feet] and one guy turned around and I said, 'Oh s---.' I had an idea of what I was going to do, and he didn't give me a chance to do it. He just opened fire, and I said, 'F--- this.' I let him have it. Nine rounds from the hip. I heard somebody yell, 'Get down!' I stopped shooting.

Barry thought the two men were bounty hunters because they were dressed in full camouflage without any police identification showing, and they started shooting first. "I didn't know who it was, though. But when they started shooting, cops don't do that. Cops say, 'Freeze, drop your weapon.' These guys didn't say none of that, they just started shooting. So, I did what I do." Note: The officer's description of what happened at this moment in the incident is different.

Once the shooting stopped, Barry ran back into the woods because he could hear sirens. He buried his weapon, a Cetme .308-caliber rifle with a 30-round magazine and a sniper scope; several other guns; and a backpack filled with ammunition. He kept two handguns and four magazines, then took off deeper into the woods. The manhunt concluded with Barry's arrest 8 days later.

Motive (Why). The research team classified the overall motive for this ambush as **Personal**. As explained in Chapter 3, this study defines the **Personal** motive as "personal reasons (to accomplish a personal objective, e.g., avoiding arrest)." Barry had been avoiding arrest for 3 months, living mostly in the woods. He was also angry at "the system" for arresting his wife, his daughter, and his daughter's boyfriend for harboring a fugitive. As a result, the authorities removed his granddaughter from the home. He believed law enforcement arrested his family members in order to lure him out, thus escalating the situation. "When they first got arrested, the charges were harboring a fugitive, right, which is bull s---. But this is why the cops did it, to pull me out, to make me flip," he said.

Barry decided the situation was out of control, so he decided to visit his family to say goodbye. "I was done. I said, 'I done made jacka--es out of the whole state police force and a bunch of other people too,' and that's all I wanted to do was say goodbye, and they were waiting for me." Barry did not articulate where he intended to go after saying farewell to his family.

Barry blames the officers for what happened because they fired first and failed to identify themselves as police officers. He asserts he was responding to them when he returned fire. He did not intend to kill anyone; he wanted to embarrass the officers.

> I'm a jokester when it comes to doing a lot of things, you know, and I had a roll of duct tape in my backpack . . . and I figured, you know what, I'm going to catch these two idiots. . . I wanted to be right on top of them when I told them to drop their weapons, you know, presuming they had them, and I planned on stripping them both, butt naked, duct tape them up, take my cell phone out and call the cops. I said, 'What better way?' By then, of course I would have known they were troopers, and that would have been all the better. What better way to have two troopers here hog-tied for their boys to come and find? Most embarrassing thing you can do.

Despite his claim that he intended to embarrass the officers, Barry was clearly motivated to avoid arrest at any cost in the 4 months leading up to the ambush. He knew that a large number of law enforcement officers and bounty hunters were searching for him, and he had prepared for a shootout. When he burglarized the gun store, instead of just a few weapons, he stole 35 firearms and numerous rounds of ammunition. He had already demonstrated his readiness to shoot a police officer by firing on the officer during the traffic stop. At the time of the second shooting behind his then-wife's residence, Barry was carrying a significant number of firearms, including rifles, assault-style semiautomatic rifles, handguns, and many rounds of ammunition.

The victim officer's perspective

Officer Background (Who). The surviving officer in this case, Roger,[7] was 5 feet 8 inches tall, weighed 162 pounds at the time of the interview, and self-identified as White. He grew up in a household with both parents present and is the second of four children. Roger has an older sister, a younger brother, and a younger sister. At the time of the ambush, he had 8 years of law enforcement experience and was 38 years old. He was married but did not have any children at the time. Roger is currently in his second marriage.

Roger holds a bachelor's degree in nursing and a master's degree in public administration. In addition, he served four years in the U.S. Army as a medic. After an honorable discharge from the Army at the age of 30, he became a police officer "mostly to help people" and to serve the community. Roger attended 26 weeks of training at the state police academy and graduated in the top third of his class.

Roger's academy experiences included several hundred hours of sidearm training; 200 hours of combat firearm training; 100 hours of baton training; 100 hours of Simunitions®; 20 to 30 hours of shotgun training; and more than 200 hours of rifle training, including sniper training with a .223 caliber rifle. Roger also received training in crisis negotiation, physical/mental conditioning, and general driving skills. He stays up-to-date with in-service training and qualifications, and his performance evaluations prior to the ambush were consistently satisfactory. Roger is currently a defensive tactics instructor.

Seven to eight months prior to the ambush, Roger had been a member of a mobile response team (MRT). On assignment with the MRT, he was involved in a home entry/warrant service incident in which two fellow officers were shot. Roger did not discharge his service weapon during that incident because there were other officers between him and the offender.

The Ambush (What). Roger and another officer were on special assignment and had worked a 12-hour shift (3 p.m. to 3 a.m.) as part of the larger manhunt for Barry. After 3 hours of sleep, he and his partner were called in to work another 12-hour shift, starting at 8 a.m. on the day of the ambush. Their assignment that day was surveillance of the residence of Barry's wife. The ambush occurred at approximately the 10th hour of their assignment, around 6 p.m.

Roger and his partner dressed in camouflage fatigues that day. It took approximately 1 hour for them to get into position because they were moving in daylight and were staying in as much cover as possible. They set up a surveillance post in a slightly wooded area in the middle of a cow pasture, positioned approximately 10 feet apart. One officer watched the house while the other was on the lookout in the other directions. Their main focus was on the residence because they did not know if the fugitive was inside. Roger expressed his understanding that the situation was potentially volatile.

> We had known. . . prior to that. . . I think it was 4 days prior to this, it was confirmed that he had broken into a gun store and stole approximately 35 guns—both handguns and long guns; high-power automatic weapons as well. So we knew now that he was potentially, you know, had access to a much higher level of weapons than he had prior to this. So we knew that it was, it could [be], potentially dangerous entering that day.

Approximately 2 hours before the ambush, the officers heard gunshots approximately a mile away, occurring about every 30 seconds. Roger thought he was hearing

[7] *Names presented in this research have been changed to protect the identities of the individuals involved.*

somebody sighting in a weapon. He said, "It wasn't enough to say 'Yeah, that's him,' but it was enough to pique interest [and] to have somebody to check it out." Other officers were not able to locate the offender at that time. The offender admitted in his interview that he had, indeed, been sighting in the rifle that was later used for the assault.

The officers' surveillance site was so remote that their radios were ineffective. At 4:30 p.m., the unit leader called via cell phone and informed them their replacement would be coming around 6:30 p.m. Roger and his partner decided they would start toward the extraction point around 6:10 p.m.

The ambush occurred less than 2 hours after the phone call, about the time Roger and his partner had planned to leave their positions. Roger described the incident in detail.

> I wanted to make sure we had solid eyes on [the area] because we were getting into that time frame where he had been known to move around. So I moved up to the tree, and I was looking through the binoculars at the house, and then just out of the blue, my partner just screamed, 'Get down!' And I'm going to talk about it—it's going to sound long, but we're talking fractions of a second here. As he yells 'Get down,' I start to turn, and as I start to turn, I hear the first shot go off. And then out of the corner of my eye, I can see my partner diving to the ground because his rifle was sitting on the ground. He's diving to the ground as I'm turning, the second shot goes off, which hits me, and I felt it hit me, and it stood me up for a second. And then again, we're only about 1 maybe 2 seconds into this thing. He just starts throwing a rain of bullets down on us. My partner was able to get behind his gun and start returning fire in his direction. And all this time, I know my partner can see him, but I couldn't see him . . . he was able to get behind his weapon, and I believe he got off nine rounds before he was struck. This probably all lasted maybe 12 to 15 seconds. At a certain point I could still see, with like the rounds flicking in the leaves as they're coming through the trees. So I dropped to the ground on my back for fear I was going to get hit again. And then the firing stopped. I said to him, 'Are you hit?' And he shook his head yeah, and I could tell by the look on his face that he was probably ineffective at that time because, you know, my fear was that this guy realized he just shot us and was pretty much going to come over and finish us off.

When Roger realized the offender was not coming back, he called via cell phone to report he and his partner had both been hit. He knew it would be a while before backup would arrive because the command center was about 7 miles away. Neither officer could move because of their injuries, so they were incapable of providing first aid to each other. Roger's partner had been shot in the leg and was losing a lot of blood through the femoral artery. Roger did the best he could to administer first aid to himself, even though he could feel himself going into shock. His priority switched to trying to remain conscious until the backup arrived. He also attempted to talk continually with his partner to keep them both conscious. Eventually four backup officers arrived, and two of them administered first aid to the victim officers until a medical helicopter landed and took them to the hospital. Roger underwent several life-saving surgeries while in a 30-day drug-induced coma. He eventually recovered from his injuries. His partner died 3 days after the ambush.

Motive (Why). Roger's understanding of why the attack occurred comes from a combination of his knowledge of the situation before the ambush, information he received after the attack, and speculation. Simply, Roger believes Barry attacked them to avoid arrest, the **Personal** motive previously described. Roger summarized the fugitive's motive, "He was a runner, basically. He tried to avoid conflict at all costs. He just wanted to keep running and not go back to jail." Moreover, the following exchange further clarifies Roger's theory.

> *Interviewer:* In your perception, why do you think the assaulter attacked you?
>
> *Officer:* I think that . . . it was growing frustration and desperation on his part. I think that we were just basically a symbol of what he hated. He didn't like the police. He

always had bad encounters with the police, and we were the people who were trying to put him back in jail. And . . . that's it.

Additional analysis

Reflecting on the ambush, Roger described a few administrative decisions that may have complicated the situation. One of these was the lack of area coordination, which Roger felt resulted in a lack of intelligence about their assignment. Roger described it in this way:

> The one thing that was almost a red flag moment—and I think it was when we arrived at the station—I was expecting there to be this briefing and a lot of people. And it was kind of like, to me, it was very odd that we're being told, 'Hey, you need to get into the woods ASAP.' But then you show up and there is nobody there. And even to the point where you have to bum a ride from investigators just to get out there.

Roger also mentioned that if there had been another person covering the rest of the terrain surrounding the house, one of them would have seen the offender approaching. Here's how he described it:

> We obviously needed more than just two people. I think three people would have been minimum. They've changed their policy since then. But I think if we would have had three people, we could have split our 360 into thirds. And then that way, when one person was looking at the house, you don't have one other person to cover the remainder of your 360.

Roger also addressed the inadequate amount of sleep he and his partner had gotten prior to their tour of duty on the day of the ambush:

> I think at a certain point fatigue sets in. When you first initially get in the woods, all your sensors are working really well. And then after time goes by, they all start to diminish a little bit. And then you throw a little sleep deprivation on top of that and [it] gets, you know, it gets tough.

Because the actual ambush was brief, the descriptions of the experiences provided by those involved had little overlap. The most significant discrepancy between the officer and offender accounts of how the event unfolded related to who fired rounds first. Specifically, Barry stated the officers shot at him first. However, Roger reported he heard shots and saw his partner trying to reach for his weapon. Several shots had already been fired before his partner could return fire.

CASE STUDY #2 - UNPROVOKED ATTACK OF POLICE OFFICER

This case involves a young man who shot a backup police officer as the officer was leaving the scene of the DUI arrest of the young man's father. Researchers interviewed the surviving officer and the offender and determined the shooting was an unprovoked attack. As previously included in Chapter 1, an unprovoked attack is defined by the LEOKA program as:

Unprovoked attack: An attack on an officer that, at the time of the incident, was not prompted by official contact between the officer and the offender.

Summary of the unprovoked attack

An officer attempted to conduct a traffic stop late one evening, but the driver did not pull over immediately. Instead, the man kept driving until he reached his own home, finally pulling over in front of his residence. Because the man did not stop immediately, the officer approached the man's vehicle with his weapon drawn. Dispatch had radioed for backup, and an officer who was about a mile away responded to assist. The backup officer arrived just as the driver's wife and two sons came out of the house. The first officer had his service weapon in his hand and was giving the driver commands to exit the vehicle. The backup officer drew her weapon as well. She noticed the family members and began interacting with them while the other officer conducted business with the driver.

The driver was driving under the influence and was in the country illegally, so the first officer placed him under arrest. Afterward, the backup officer returned to her patrol vehicle to drive to a nearby parking lot where she could complete her paperwork. As she neared the parking lot, she observed a subject standing with his back to her. The subject realized the officer was there

and jumped as though startled by her presence. The darkness prevented the officer from seeing what the subject was doing. She angled her patrol vehicle as if she were going to pull into the parking lot but stopped short so she would not be head on with the subject. She intended to exit the vehicle and make contact with the subject, but before she had a chance to open her door, the subject advanced on her and opened fire. The offender fired rounds from a .223 caliber semiautomatic rifle. Six rounds struck the officer, and 23 rounds hit her car. She sustained multiple injuries, but she managed to return fire from inside her vehicle, discharging 11 rounds before the offender fled. The officer exited her vehicle to pursue the offender on foot but was unable to do so as a result of her injuries. She used her shoulder radio to call for assistance.

Upon hearing the shots, a neighbor called the police. The offender was arrested a short time later and is currently serving a life sentence.

The offender's perspective

Subject Background (Who). The offender, Juan,[8] a Hispanic male, was 18 years old at the time of the attack and 24 years old at the time of the interview. He was of average height (5 feet 9 inches) and weight (160 pounds). Juan is the eldest of four children and has one brother and two sisters, all from the same parents. Although both parents were present while he was growing up, Juan indicated his father was usually drunk. His father worked seasonal construction, and his mother often worked in positions such as cleaning and laundry. His father was deported once during his childhood, but he returned to the United States sometime later. Juan described his family's socioeconomic level as marginal, given the unstable employment of both parents.

As a child, Juan had some interpersonal difficulties in school. Around the age of 8 or 9, he struggled with anger management. Because of this, the school referred him to an alternative school he described as a "mental health hospital." During high school, Juan was involved in a fight at school in which he stabbed another student. He was held at a detention facility for 2 weeks before his father posted bond. Juan neither completed school nor earned a GED®.

After leaving school at age 14, Juan entered the workforce and joined his father as a seasonal roofer, working primarily during the summer months. Juan had his own apartment at the time of the assault and lived alone. He was not married and had no children.

Juan spoke of two attempted suicides. When he was incarcerated at age 14 for the stabbing at school, he was feeling depressed and tried to hang himself. He was also feeling depressed at the time of the unprovoked attack and did not care whether he lived or died. Although he did not state it explicitly, Juan did not contradict the interviewer when the phrase "suicide by cop" was mentioned to him.

Although Juan grew up with a father who he said was frequently drunk, Juan reported he has never consumed alcohol. He also denied any illicit drug use, except for smoking marijuana once. Juan's criminal history includes two incidents: his arrest for stabbing another student at age 14 and the attack on the backup officer.

Juan admitted having thoughts or fantasies about assaulting police officers twice in his life. The first time was when he was about 6 or 7 years old during an incident similar to the one that was analyzed for this study. Juan was in the car with his father, and an officer attempted to pull his father over. Instead of stopping, his father tried to flee from the police, finally stopping in front of their residence. Juan said the police "threw a K-9 on him, and they abused him." He remembered wanting to hurt the officers at that time. This incident resulted in the deportation of his father. The second time he had thoughts of assaulting an officer was when he was 14 years old. He and his girlfriend skipped class, and a police officer subsequently took his girlfriend to the principal's office. Juan wanted to beat up the officer for turning her in. He denied ever having any thoughts or fantasies about killing a police officer.

The Unprovoked Attack (What). As previously described, Juan's father did not stop when an officer first attempted to pull him over for a traffic stop, but he kept driving and led the officer to his residence before coming to a stop. When Juan's father arrived at his residence, his family saw the flashing lights, so Juan, his mother, and brother

[8] *Names presented in this research have been changed to protect the identities of the individuals involved.*

exited the house. Juan was worried his father would be deported again, so he and his family attempted to talk to the officers in hopes they would only give his father a warning. However, because Juan's father had not immediately pulled over, and he was not a legal resident of the United States, the officers did not issue a warning.

Juan became very frustrated and distraught when his father was arrested. He said, "The only way I knew how was to pick up a gun or fight, that's the only way. So, I ran into the house and grabbed my rifle, and loaded it up for a 30-round clip, and I set to ambush 'em. I went out through the backdoor, and through a back alley." He further stated:

> As I was walking out through the alley, I met up with a cop car, and I was like well, you know, this is it. This is where it all ends, you know? This is where I prove, you know, whatever I thought of I'm going to fulfill it, you know? Try to help my dad. Try to do everything I can to save the little that I have.

Juan opened fire on the police officer's vehicle. He thought if he were a martyr, his family would learn to treat each other better. He explained, "Even though it was going to cost my life, but you know, I thought I was going to help them. I was like, 'I really don't care if I get killed,' so I started shooting at the cop, the cop car. Shot at it 30 times." Of those shots, six hit the officer.

Once the clip was empty, Juan ran back into the house to reload. Note: The officer's description of what happened at this moment in the incident is different. Juan's intent was to find the other officer and kill him. However, when he got back into the house, his younger brother stopped him and took the gun. Juan was arrested shortly thereafter.

Motive (Why). The researchers assigned two overall motives for this unprovoked attack, **Expressive** and **Personal**.

The **Expressive** motive was chosen because Juan revealed he was in a state of mental crisis when he saw his father getting arrested. Juan believed the officers were harassing his father. "That's when I snapped. I couldn't take it anymore. It was just too much stress, too much depression, anger, all that, you know. Every single downfall in my life came at that moment, you know? The whole weight of it came down on me," he said.

When Juan first exited the house, he saw that the arresting officer had pulled out his gun. This, too, served as a flashpoint for his emotional crisis. He has since learned that drawing a weapon is standard procedure for officers when they are apprehending somebody who has attempted to flee from the police. Juan talked about that moment.

> The police officer was right behind him with his gun pulled out, you know? I thought that was too much, you know? It was excessive . . . but at that time I didn't know that that was one of their procedures or whatever, to pull the gun out on a person that's been evading them . . . it just triggered me, so you know, to act out in my depression and my anger and everything. It was like a bomb. I was just a ticking time bomb, and that just set me off.

Before turning to violence, Juan said he attempted to talk with the officers. Juan perceived the officers' response as further mistreatment and described it this way:

> They gave me a bad attitude, you know. They're telling me that they will figure it out when we get back to county, but the way they were saying it was just harassment. Like, you know, like you're nothing, a piece of scum, you know? They treat you like you're an animal or like when the dog pound grabs a dog. They just tie him around the neck and drag you in.

Although his father had been arrested for DUI and deported only once before, Juan seemed to view it as a frequent occurrence. He described how the incident distressed him.

> I knew he was going to get deported, but I thought, you know, if they do that . . . they basically [are] just killing him. So, you know, that's when they didn't want to work with me. That's just it, I had had enough. *I got tired of seeing that scene too many times*. I mean, like I told you before, I was just 6 or 7 years old when the same scene happened, and my dad got arrested, you know? It was just too many reoccurring scenes, you know? *It just*

> *happened too many times.* [Italics added to represent the offender's emphasis.]

Not only was the incident emotionally difficult for Juan, but he also felt responsible for his father's arrest. Earlier that evening, he had refused to drive his father to a strip club because he felt it would be disloyal to his mother. He stated, "I caused this whole thing. If I would have just taken my dad to the strip club, you know, drove him everywhere, like I used to, I don't feel like this would have happened."

Researchers assigned the **Personal** motive to this case because Juan intended to free his father. He believed that if he could eliminate the officers, his father could escape without going to jail and being deported, as the following excerpt from the interview demonstrates.

> *Interviewer:* So, obviously your intention was to kill the officer?
>
> *Offender:* Yeah. Stop 'em, yeah. Shoot 'em, you know? Anything that will stop the cop from going anywhere else, calling backup, or anything like that, to where it helped me. You know, trying to do what I was trying to do. Trying to . . . save my family.

Juan's statements reflect the frequently illogical thinking of a person in crisis. A behavior that seems incomprehensible to most people (attempting to shoot and kill the police officers) made perfect sense to him at the time. During his emotional crisis, Juan reasoned that his family would be better off if he killed the officers.

> What I was thinking is some people learn from tragedies, you know, they don't make the same mistake twice. That's what I thought this was going to be. I knew this would be a tragedy, you know? I was probably going to be dead. Even now, I still hope they [his family] learn from this, you know?

The victim officer's perspective

Officer Background (Who). The victim officer in this case, Karen,[9] is a White female and was 27 years old at the time of the unprovoked attack. She was 5 feet, 5 inches tall and weighed 120 pounds. Her parents divorced when she was 3 years old. Karen is the second of two children, and she has a younger half-sibling. At the time of the interview, she had never been married, had no children, and was not in a significant relationship.

Karen holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and decided to become a police officer after college at the age of 23. She chose a law enforcement career to serve her community. Her police academy training lasted 6 months, and she graduated in the top third of her class. She exercised 5-6 times per week. Before the unprovoked attack, Karen's annual performance evaluations were all above satisfactory.

At the time of the attack, Karen had been on the police force for 4 years, and she had been involved in several previous violent encounters. In one, she witnessed another officer get shot in the head.

The Unprovoked Attack (What). Karen was alone in her patrol car 1 mile away from the scene when she responded to dispatch's request for assistance for another agency's officer who was making a DUI arrest. As previously described, the driver had failed to pull over and had finally stopped in front of his house. Karen had been on duty for 1 hour of her 10-hour shift scheduled for 9:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. She was dressed in a uniform and driving a marked patrol vehicle. Upon arrival, she saw the other officer giving commands to the driver. The officer had his service weapon in his hand. Karen described the scene.

> I'd been on the passenger side of the deputy's vehicle as he's giving the driver commands to exit the vehicle. I had my gun drawn, also pointed at the vehicle. As he's giving the driver commands, I noticed him [Juan] and his younger brother and mother come out of the house, which is where the traffic stop was . . . I noticed them walk out of the house and walk about half way into the yard. . . I stopped them and asked them to stay where they were.

While at the scene of the traffic stop, Karen said the family readily followed her requests. Neither she nor the other officer could later recall any signs of potential

[9] *Names presented in this research have been changed to protect the identities of the individuals involved.*

danger in the behaviors of Juan or the other family members. Karen described how the would-be offender assisted the officers during his father's arrest.

> [He was] cooperative, compliant, nonthreatening, polite, and helpful. He was actually translating. The father that was being pulled over, the driver, did not speak English, so he actually started translating in the yard and telling his father everything we were saying to get out of the vehicle at that point. The father started complying and getting out of the vehicle. So he was helping us by translating on the scene.

After 10-15 minutes, the driver was in custody, and the other officer said he no longer needed Karen's assistance. She returned to her patrol car at approximately 10:30 p.m. At that point, Juan had gone back into the house.

Karen pulled around the corner, intending to find a place to park her car and fill out her paperwork. That was when she noticed an individual at the far end of the parking lot.

> As I drive and I make that view where I can see into the parking lot, I notice the subject and his back was toward me, and he kind of jumped as if I'd startled him—a shocked reaction in seeing me. So my first thought was, 'This guy's up to no good. I'm going to get out and see what he's doing.'

Unknown to her, the individual in the parking lot was the driver's eldest son who had retrieved an assault rifle and a full clip with 30 rounds in it from inside the house. As soon as she put the car in park, he lifted his rifle and opened fire on Karen. Her initial reaction was disbelief.

> I felt like I just froze, kind of in that startled, like, *Is this really happening?* reaction. Then, I immediately went into thinking *I need to get my gun out.* I was also at the time, I didn't know what type of gun he was firing, so I didn't realize the rounds were coming through my car. So my thought was, *I need to get my head out of the window so one of the rounds doesn't take my head off.*

"The fight was definitely not over."

Karen prepared to return fire, "As I'm going to get my gun out, I realize he's advancing on me, still continuing to shoot continuously." She returned fire with her service weapon, a .45-caliber Glock 21 SF. As soon as she started shooting, Juan turned and ran into his backyard. Karen was able to fire 11 shots before Juan ran away, none of which hit him. In all, Juan fired 26 rounds. Of the 23 rounds that struck the car, 6 hit Karen. She was conscious and realized she was injured.

> I was aware that I was hit at least once, because I remember the left side of my leg; it started tingling. So I knew I had at least been hit there. I also remember blood on my forehead, and I didn't know if I had been hit in my head or if that was just fragments or glass or whatever that had hit me. So I didn't know if a full round; I knew that I had been shot in my left side somewhere, and I remember the blood on my face, but I didn't know why.

Once the offender disappeared, Karen called for backup.

> *Interviewer:* You were able to get on the radio afterward and call for assistance?
>
> *Officer*: Yes, I got on twice. One of my radio traffic, it didn't make it out. Because I did it from the car, and something had happened to the radio inside the car during the shooting, and so that one never made it out, and I was able to get on my handheld radio outside the car and make another radio traffic.

In addition, a neighbor heard the shooting and called 911. Backup and medical assistance arrived quickly. Karen was off work for 4 months while recovering from her injuries.

Motive (Why). In retrospect, Karen speculated that Juan's motive was to free his father. She stated:

> It almost seemed like he came out there, out back initially, and planned on coming around the front to maybe to get his dad out of the patrol car, because he knew he was an illegal immigrant, and if he went to jail he would be deported. So my thoughts were maybe he was planning to come around and try to help his dad escape from the car. Didn't intend on me already leaving the scene, and so when I saw him, he was shocked that I was there, maybe, and that was maybe the shock factor, and he just turned and started firing on me.

Karen's assessment of the offender's motive concurs with the **Personal** motive identified by the research team.

Additional analysis

Perhaps the most informative lesson from this case is how different the officer's perceptions of what happened were from the offender's perception. For instance, during his interview, Juan explicitly described hostility between the officers and his family: ". . . they gave me a bad attitude, you know, they're telling me that they will figure it out when we get back to county, but the way they were saying it was just harassment. Like, you know, like you're nothing, a piece of scum, you know?"

On the other hand, Karen reported the interactions with the driver's family were very positive and the offender was translating between the officers and his father. Again, in her words, the family was "cooperative, compliant, nonthreatening, polite, and helpful."

In addition, Juan stated he had been pleading with the officers to let his father off with a warning, but they would not listen to him. When asked about this, Karen remembered something different.

> *Interviewer:* Did this young man sound like he was asking you for a break? Was he asking you to "Let my dad go?" Do you remember anything that he was saying?
>
> *Officer:* No. I don't remember him ever asking to "Let my dad go."

Karen speculated that Juan knew his dad would be deported and came back outside to get his dad out of the patrol car. On this issue, her thoughts were very much in alignment with Juan's, except that Juan said he intended to kill the officers as a means of freeing him and expected to die himself.

Differing perspectives are also evident between the officer's and offender's perceptions of Juan's leaving the scene. Karen reported that as soon as she started to return fire, Juan exited the area. Juan said that he left the area to go into his residence to reload his weapon, not necessarily because the officer was returning fire. These accounts are not in conflict with each other, just different experiences based on their perspectives. Either way, Juan reported his brother intervened when Juan was inside and stopped the incident by taking his firearm.

CASE STUDY #3—UNPROVOKED ATTACK OF POLICE OFFICER WITH POSSIBLE RACIAL MOTIVATION AND MENTAL ILLNESS OF OFFENDER

In the time since researchers collected the data for this study, media accounts of police use-of-force and ambushes of officers due to racial tensions have become more prevalent. Oftentimes, these incidents are retaliation for unrelated events. For example, in 2014, an individual shot and killed two New York City police officers as they sat in their patrol car. The perpetrator was reportedly motivated by the deaths of two Black men in incidents with police that occurred in other parts of the United States (Mueller & Baker, 2014). In 2016, 12 police officers in Dallas, Texas, were ambushed by a lone gunman; 5 of them died as a result of the attack. The Dallas police chief reported that the suspect "wanted to kill White people, especially White officers." The suspect told a hostage negotiator that he "was upset about the Black Lives Matter Movement and the recent police shootings of Black men elsewhere in the U.S." (Bruton, Smith, Chuck & Helsel, 2016).

One incident included in this study may involve racial motivation as well as another important issue to consider—mental illness. This case involved a man who shot two police officers in an unprovoked attack as they walked from a parking lot toward the back of their police station minutes prior to a shift change. One of the victim officers and the offender died in the shootout. Researchers interviewed the surviving victim officer and analyzed police reports and media sources.

Summary of the unprovoked attack

Two officers arrived outside their police station just before a 3:30 p.m. shift change on a summer day. At 3:15 p.m., the officers parked their cars in a lot across the street from the police station about 50 or 60 yards away. The officers approached a smaller parking lot behind the building, where a delivery truck was parked in the loading zone. As the officers were opening the rear door of the police station, the subject moved in behind them and opened fire, striking both officers.

Neither officer could call for backup because they did not have radios. (At the time, the agency's policy was that radios and batteries must remain at the station unless an officer was on patrol. This ambush led to a policy change—officers are now permitted to take radios home with them.)

While one of the officers attempted to draw his weapon, the offender shot the other officer in the back of the head, fatally wounding him. The offender then ran toward the delivery truck. The surviving victim officer opened fire on the offender, as did two other officers who came out of the building to respond. Moments later, the offender died from multiple gunshot wounds. The surviving officer underwent reconstructive facial surgery and was hospitalized for approximately 6 days.

About the offender

Because the offender was ultimately killed in a shootout with the police, this analysis is drawn from information provided by police reports and news reports (Associated Press, 1996) following the incident, as well as the interview conducted for this study with the surviving victim officer.

Subject Background (Who). The offender, a 24-year-old Black male, was reportedly struggling with emotional problems in the weeks prior to the shooting. His family said he was troubled by race relations. His mother stated to news reporters, "The last couple of days he said there wasn't any hope, and White people were going to keep Black people in slavery." The local newspaper covered the 20th anniversary of the incident and reported that authorities commented, "During the hours and days before the shooting, [the offender] had been preoccupied with whether he had been given opportunities in life and whether he had been receiving the appropriate respect by people of his race and other races (*Dayton Daily News* staff writer, 2016)."

From these accounts, the subject appeared to have experienced psychological deterioration in the weeks leading up to the shooting. There were no known reports of negative encounters with police, other authority figures, or White people in general, so researchers cannot know for certain if there was a particular precipitating event that led to the offender's state of mind.

The Unprovoked Attack (What). The events leading up to the ambush help establish a complete picture of the incident. At approximately 3 p.m., the offender was

working at his parents' convenience store while a vendor was making a delivery of potato chips. Reportedly, the vendor gave a free bag of chips to a girl who was in the store. Some accounts indicate this action set the following chain of events into motion. When the vendor reentered the store, the offender put a gun to the vendor's head, then shot and killed him. He then took the vendor's delivery truck and drove to the police station. Police officers who responded to the convenience store to investigate the murder of the delivery driver did not realize that the offender had driven to the police station.

Motive (Why). Because the only information available about this case is from the victim officer, police reports, and newspaper accounts, the subject's motives for this shooting cannot be unequivocally explained. It appears the case involves elements of both **Personal** and the **Political** motives. Analysis of this incident suggests the offender may have had a personal objective he hoped to accomplish with the unprovoked attack, thus the **Personal** motive. Although there is no concrete evidence of specific incidents of racism or discrimination that prompted the offender's actions, there may have been a precipitating event or circumstances. Researchers can only speculate that the offender was psychologically unstable, but it seems probable a mental health issue may have contributed to his anger and possible paranoia. Anecdotal reports implied the offender appeared to have been deteriorating psychologically and was in a state of personal crisis. The offender's previous focus on race was indicative that he had a **Political** motive for the ambush and may have been making a statement about the condition of race relations in the United States. These are just two conceivable motives based upon the available information. Because there are no statements or manifestos from the offender, it is impossible to speculate beyond the accounts of others.

The Victim Officer's Perspective

Officer Background (Who). The surviving officer in this case, Michael,[10] was 5 feet 10 inches tall, and weighed 215 pounds at the time of the interview. He self-identified as White.

The Unprovoked Attack (What). As Michael and another officer approached a small parking lot behind the police station, they noticed a delivery truck in the loading zone. Deliveries were frequently made to the office and to the recreation center sharing their parking lot, so the officers paid little attention to the truck. They did note the driver was not in the truck. Michael stated, "It just looked like a truck there, that I assumed, and I think anyone else would have assumed, was delivering stuff, supplies or whatever, to us or to the rec center, to make the building run."

Near the rear door of the police station, just as they were opening it to step inside, the officers encountered the subject. Michael provided his account.

> The assailant came up behind us, and he said something that was not out of the ordinary, rather friendly. He just said, 'Hey guys, how are you doing?' I didn't think anything of it. I kept looking forward heading into the door, and I just waved, because I thought it was someone being polite behind us. And just in that instant, the next thing I know, three very, very quick gunshots were fired within about 10 or 15 seconds.

Michael's partner was hit in the hand, and he dropped his gun belt that had been slung over his shoulder. Michael said he got shot in the chin. "It went in and out, busted my jaw and deflected out underneath . . . luckily . . . my tongue and everything, [the round] missed all of that."

While Michael was trying to get his gun out, his partner was on his hands and knees on the ground also trying to get to his gun. Michael described what happened next, "The assailant came right to the back of his [partner's] head, put the gun on the back of his head and pulled the trigger." His partner died. The offender then ran back to the truck. The surviving officer reported, "As he was getting in the truck, that's when I returned fire and opened fire on him. He made it into the truck. I could see that I had hit at least a time or two. . . ."

[10] *Names presented in this research have been changed to protect the identities of the individuals involved.*

Because the incident happened at the police station as officers were arriving and leaving for shift changes, many officers converged on the scene quickly. Michael recalled it this way:

> It was our shift change, and we had people coming and going. There were guys coming across the lot. There were guys coming out of the building. A couple of other officers, actually two of our sergeants, came out and returned fire, and there were several shots fired . . . there were 70 shots fired overall, total.

Motive (Why). The victim officer recalled that the offender was concerned about race relations and said the offender's friends had reported that he had been increasingly troubled:

> He had told all of his family and all of his friends that he was tired of being pushed down and tired of being oppressed by . . . basically, White people, and he said before the holiday he was going to make something happen, and that everybody needed to just hold on and watch.

Additional analysis

Investigation showed the subject had become increasingly antagonistic toward authority figures in general, and White people specifically, in the weeks leading up to the unprovoked attack. On the surface, this case seems racially motivated. However, further analysis indicated that elements of the offender's pre-ambush behavior could also be explained by mental illness. For instance, the subject was at a common age for the onset of schizophrenia and could have been experiencing a psychotic break with reality. Unfortunately, the contributing factors will never be known for certain.

CHAPTER SIX

Summaries of Selected Incidents

This chapter includes brief narratives of the events from 28 of the 40 cases examined in this study. The majority of these incidents involved offenders who have been tried and convicted of engaging in an ambush or an unprovoked attack on one or more law enforcement officers in the United States. In a few cases, the incidents involved offenders who either died by their own hand or were justifiably killed by officers at the scene.

Case 1

Approximately 3:30 on a warm spring afternoon in the Midwest, two uniformed officers, each with 1 year of law enforcement experience, arrived at the parking lot of their precinct to begin their tours of duty. The officers walked together through the parking lot and passed a white box-type delivery truck parked near their building. Unknown to the officers, a 24-year-old offender had just shot and killed the driver of the delivery truck at a nearby store, stole the vehicle, and drove it to the police precinct with the intent to shoot and kill ¬police officers. Both officers were at the precinct's rear entrance when the offender approached them from behind and said, "Hey guys, how are you doing?" He immediately began firing at the officers with a 9 mm semiautomatic handgun. The first officer was struck in the hand, causing him to fall to the ground. The offender then turned to the second officer and shot him in the face. The offender turned his attention back to the first officer and shot him in the head, killing him. As the offender retreated to the delivery truck, the second officer retrieved his service weapon and began firing at the offender. A round struck the offender, but he made it to the delivery truck and attempted to drive away. The incident occurred during a shift change, so several officers quickly responded. A shootout ensued, and the offender was justifiably killed. The injured officer later recovered from his injuries and returned to full duty.

Case 2

Around 6 o'clock on a rainy, summer evening in the South, a 27-year-old offender ambushed his next-door neighbor, a law enforcement officer. The off-duty officer, who had 8 years of law enforcement experience, accompanied by his wife, was getting into his personal vehicle to take his ill child to see a doctor. The wife and child were already seated in the vehicle when the offender shot and killed the officer. Then the offender shot and killed the officer's wife with the same .270-caliber rifle. The offender spared the life of the child. The offender, who lived with his parents, was related to the officer.

A few days before this incident, the officer had assisted another law enforcement agency in serving a mental health warrant on the offender. The offender had been held for 72 hours for observation and then released. Later, during the investigation, officers discovered the offender had murdered his parents before attacking the officer. The offender was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

Case 3

Approximately 3 o'clock on a winter afternoon in the South, an officer, who had 6 years of law enforcement experience, accompanied the owner of a mobile home to serve a dispossessory warrant for non-payment of rent. The 55-year-old tenant answered the door and quickly shut it upon learning of the warrant. The officer pursued the tenant inside the residence; however, the tenant exited through the back door and ran toward a wooded area behind the residence. Unbeknownst to the officer, the tenant had dug a foxhole in the woods and stored firearms and ammunition inside. With the officer in pursuit, the man produced a firearm and they exchanged gunfire; one round grazed the offender's clothes. After reaching the foxhole, the offender used a .30-.30-caliber rifle to shoot and kill the officer. A nearby officer, who had 9 years of experience, was alerted to the incident and responded to

assist. Upon her arrival, the assisting officer learned that the downed officer was located in an overgrown field just before the wooded area. The assisting officer crawled to the downed officer to check his status. Meanwhile, another backup officer responded and positioned himself near the residence. However, the offender also shot and killed him with a .30-.30-caliber rifle. Once she determined the downed officer had been killed, the assisting officer crawled back to the residence and found the backup officer had also been killed. The assisting officer waited for specialized forces, ground support, and air support to arrive. Officers eventually located the offender, who surrendered without further incident. The offender was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

Case 4

On a warm spring afternoon in the Midwest, an officer, who had 2 years of law enforcement experience, was working at the reception desk of a correctional facility. Unknown to the officer, an inmate,[11] his 27-year-old girlfriend, and his 19-year-old former cellmate had planned the inmate's escape. Around 12:30 p.m., the inmate's girlfriend and former cellmate entered the facility and approached the officer at the desk. The former cellmate engaged the officer in a brief conversation before pulling a .22-caliber revolver from his waistband and fatally shooting the officer. He turned toward the jail supervisor and shot him in the head and face, then attempted to locate the keys to the cell block to free the inmate. While looking for the proper keys, the offender shot the jail supervisor two more times in the head, killing him. When they were unable to locate the cell block key, both offenders fled. They were arrested in another state later the same day. The inmate and his girlfriend both received life sentences; the former cellmate who killed the officers was sentenced to death.

Case 5

Approximately 3:30 on a summer afternoon in the Northeast, an officer, who had 13 years of law enforcement experience, faced an unprovoked attack while checking a local park during his routine patrol. Unknown to the officer, three offenders broke into a business earlier that day, stole several firearms, and loaded them into a stolen truck. Before the break-in, the offenders had left their personal vehicle at the park with plans to exchange the stolen firearms from the stolen truck to their personal vehicle. During this exchange, the officer pulled into the park's parking lot. The three offenders saw the approaching officer and ran to hide. Two of the offenders hid just inside the nearby wood line while the third offender attempted to hide under the truck. The officer exited his patrol vehicle and approached the front of the truck where he saw the 22-year-old offender, who was partially hidden under the truck. The offender fired 13 rounds from a .40-caliber semiautomatic firearm, striking the officer several times, causing him to fall. The offender then got into his vehicle and backed over the officer. One of the other offenders, also 22 years of age, left the wood line, approached the downed officer, and used the officer's .40-caliber semiautomatic firearm to shoot him three times in the head, killing him. The offenders then rummaged through the officer's vehicle and stole some items before fleeing the area. A couple of days later, the offenders were arrested. Two of the offenders were sentenced to life in prison.

Case 6

Around 4:30 on a clear, summer afternoon in the Midwest, two law enforcement officers, one with 32 years of experience, the other with 3 years of experience, were going over paperwork while sitting in a marked patrol vehicle along the roadway. A 27-year-old man approached the officers' vehicle in a full-size pickup truck. The man accelerated to approximately 70 mph and, using his truck as a weapon, intentionally crashed broadside into the patrol vehicle, killing both officers. The offender was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

---

[11] *The inmate's age was not available.*

Case 7

Approximately 9:20 on a winter morning in the South, three uniformed officers, who had 3, 8, and 20 years of law enforcement experience, respectively, received a domestic violence/sexual assault complaint from a woman concerning her boyfriend. Additional details indicated the boyfriend had threatened to shoot any law enforcement officer who showed up at his residence. The officers met with the complainant at a location near the residence and, after gathering information, drove to the property to search for the suspect. After a fruitless search, one officer remained at the patrol vehicle to obtain a statement from the complainant while the other two officers cordoned off the area with crime scene tape. While the officers were otherwise occupied, the suspect appeared from the nearby woods with a 12-gauge shotgun and fired at them, striking one officer in the face and arm and another in the head and chest. Both officers sought cover. One entered the wooded area while the other retreated to the patrol vehicles where the third officer was located, with the offender in pursuit. A shootout ensued; the pursued officer died from a fatal shot to the head, and the officer at the patrol vehicle was shot in the leg. During the shootout, the officer in the wooded area made his way back to the patrol vehicle to assist the injured officer and was also struck in the leg. One round fired by the officers struck the offender in the buttocks, prompting him to flee the area. After an in-depth search, officers eventually located the offender in a wooded area, where they shot and apprehended him. The 29-year-old offender was convicted and sentenced to prison. Both surviving officers recovered from their injuries and returned to full duty.

Case 8

Around 10 o'clock on a winter night in the South, an officer, who had 16 years of law enforcement experience, left his office for the night. While driving, he came upon an officer who was conducting a traffic stop, so he slowed down to assist. Just as the officer approached the stopped vehicle, the driver accelerated in an attempt to flee. Both officers began pursuing the vehicle. A number of officers from different law enforcement agencies joined the chase, which lasted several minutes. The officers knew the identity of the 16-year-old driver and deduced from the direction in which he was traveling that he was driving to his residence. As suspected, the driver stopped at his house, where he and three companions exited the vehicle and ran inside. The officers pursued the suspects into the residence, where they encountered several family members. One officer detained two combative females in the laundry area as the other officer, who had 7 years of law enforcement experience, began questioning relatives in another section of the home. Unknown to the officers, the offender had obtained a single-shot, 16-gauge shotgun from his bedroom. The offender approached from behind the officer who was questioning relatives and shot him in the head, killing him. The offender dropped the firearm and ran back into his bedroom. He was eventually arrested, convicted, and sentenced to life in prison.

Case 9

Approximately 6 o'clock on a summer evening in the Northeast, two law enforcement officers were assigned to a task force working to locate a fugitive who was wanted for shooting an officer during a traffic stop. Both officers, each with 8 years of experience, were outside a residence where the fugitive was believed to be hiding. The offender, who was on foot, quietly approached the officers from behind. One of the officers saw the offender's movement and yelled out just as the offender began firing multiple rounds from his .308-caliber semiautomatic rifle. One officer immediately returned fire, shooting nine rounds, none of which hit the offender. One round from the offender's rifle severed one of the officer's femoral arteries. Another round penetrated the other officer's protective vest, injuring his abdomen. The offender fled on foot. One of the officers notified the command center of their situation, and a rescue team was deployed, along with flight support. Both officers were airlifted to nearby hospitals. The officer who was shot in the leg died from complications due to his injury. After a long rehabilitation period, the officer who was shot in the abdomen recovered from his wounds and returned to full duty. The offender was later located in a wooded area and arrested. He was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

Case 10

Around 6:30 on a clear winter evening in the West, an officer, who had 2 years of law enforcement experience, was assisting another officer with a traffic stop in a neighborhood known for gang activity. The officer was issuing a traffic citation when a gang member shot several rounds at both officers with a .22-caliber semiautomatic rifle from about 385 feet away. One of the rounds struck the assisting officer in the area under his arm, penetrating his heart. The victim officer took cover as the other officer fired a round at the offender but missed. In the dark, the officers did not see the offender and other gang members flee into nearby residences to elude capture. The uninjured officer maintained cover until backup officers arrived. The victim officer was transported to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced dead. During the subsequent investigation, officers discovered that a group of gang members had observed the officers on the traffic stop and decided to shoot at them to increase their status with the gang. The investigators also found a 9 mm casing around the same area that the .22-caliber casings were found. Two offenders, ages 17- and 16-years-old, were convicted as adults and sentenced to life in prison.

Case 11

Approximately 6 o'clock on a warm spring evening in the South, eight law enforcement officers, who were working on a specialized task force, were attempting to serve a felony warrant on a known suspect. The task force had gathered intelligence that indicated the suspect was located at a specific apartment. The group of officers developed a plan of action and converged upon the apartment complex, positioning themselves at the front entrance of the suspect's apartment and around the perimeter. The officers at the front entrance knocked on the door but did not announce themselves. When the offender opened the door and saw the officers, he attempted to close the door quickly. One of the officers tried to prevent the door from shutting, but the offender fired three shots at him from a .38-caliber revolver. One of the rounds struck the officer in the face, instantly killing him. When another officer attempted to retrieve the fallen officer, the offender opened the door and fired a round at him but missed. Officers gave loud verbal commands for the offender to exit the apartment. The offender, along with two other occupants, exited the apartment without further incident. The offender claimed that, as the officers did not identify themselves when they knocked on the door, he did not know they were police officers when he fired his weapon. The 26-year-old offender was later convicted and sentenced to a lengthy prison term.

Case 12

On a cloudy winter day around noon in the Midwest, two uniformed law enforcement officers were investigating a complaint of shots fired at an RV park. Based on their initial observations, the officers concluded that the suspect had left the area, and they began processing the scene. As one of the officers advanced toward the door of the suspect's RV, a man shot her from inside with 12-gauge shotgun. The victim officer fell wounded just a few feet from the RV's front door. The assisting officer, who was processing the scene nearby, called for additional units when he heard the shot. He sought out the source of the gunshot and found the victim officer near the RV door. The officer saw the offender holding a shotgun inside the RV and alerted dispatch. Assisting officers arrived on scene and surrounded the RV. The offender had barricaded himself inside and would not respond to communication efforts. Due to their uncertainty regarding the victim officer's medical condition and their inability to remove her from the scene safely, officers decided to shoot the offender. Officers and the offender exchanged gunfire for several seconds, and then a cease-fire was called. Shortly after, the offender fired at an officer positioned next to a neighboring RV, striking the officer with multiple rounds in his left arm, side, and back. Eventually, assisting officers removed the wounded officers from the area without further incident. A specialized unit gained entry to the RV, where the 57-year-old offender was found deceased. The first victim officer died from her wounds. The second officer recovered from his injuries and returned to full duty.

Case 13

Around 1 a.m. on an autumn night in the Midwest, an officer, who had 24 years of law enforcement experience, was working an overtime detail when he observed a vehicle being driven in a reckless manner. The officer followed the vehicle to a residential area, but the driver eluded him. While attempting to locate the vehicle, the officer received a radio assignment to assist another officer with a person suspected of driving under the influence. As the officer was turning around, he saw the vehicle he had been pursuing now parked in the middle of the street. The officer activated his emergency lights, pulled behind the suspect vehicle, and noticed the driver's side door was slightly ajar. The officer did not have time to notify dispatch of his location before the offender left his vehicle and advanced on the officer while firing multiple rounds from his 9 mm semiautomatic firearm. Five rounds struck the officer as he was exiting his patrol vehicle. Two of the rounds struck him in the legs, and one round hit him in the center of his body but was stopped by his protective vest; the last two rounds hit him in the feet. The officer drew his service weapon and returned fire, causing the offender to retreat to his vehicle. None of the officer's rounds struck the offender. Accompanied by four other people, the offender fled in his vehicle. He drove to another state and turned himself in the same day. The 25-year-old offender was subsequently convicted and sentenced to 20 years in prison. The officer recovered from his injuries and returned to full duty.

Case 14

At approximately noon on a warm winter day in the West, a uniformed officer, who had 31 years of law enforcement experience, was sitting in a booth at a restaurant eating lunch with two plain-clothed officers. A man entered the restaurant and made his way over to the officers. As the man approached the officers, he removed a machete from behind his back and raised it to strike the uniformed officer in the head. One of the plain-clothed officers alerted the uniformed officer of the man's actions just in time for the uniformed officer to raise his hand to defend himself. The machete struck the officer's hand, causing serious injuries. The offender was raising the machete to strike the officer again when one of the plain-clothed officers pulled out his 9 mm semiautomatic firearm and shot the offender once in the shoulder, causing him to fall to the ground. The 30-year-old offender was taken into custody without further incident. He was convicted of the attack and sentenced to several years in prison. The officer suffered a career-ending impairment to his hand.

Case 15

Around 3:30 a.m. on a cool autumn morning in the West, two uniformed officers, who each had 2 years of law enforcement experience, received a radio assignment to check on the welfare of a complainant's suicidal roommate. The officers arrived at the complainant's townhouse and saw him standing on a balcony. The complainant stated that his suicidal roommate was inside the unit. The officers asked the complainant to walk downstairs and open the door, but he said he was scared. The officers asked the man for the door key, so he tossed his keys from the balcony to the officers below. The officers positioned themselves on each side of the door. As the officers put the key into the lock, the man fired several rounds from a .45-caliber semiautomatic handgun from the balcony. Rounds struck the wall, door, and both officers. One of the officers was hit with two rounds in his leg, one round to his groin, and a round in the back, which was stopped by his body armor. He also suffered graze wounds on his wrist and lower back. The other officer was struck in the leg. Both officers retreated and found cover behind a block wall where they waited for backup units and emergency medical services. The 25-year-old offender died at the scene from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. The investigation later revealed the offender had lured the officers to the apartment with the intent to kill them. Both officers recovered from their injuries and returned to full duty.

Case 16

Approximately 5 o'clock on a clear summer evening in the West, two law enforcement officers—one a field-training officer with 4 years of experience and the other an officer-in-training with 1 year of experience—responded to a call involving an active shooter. The suspect's wife notified authorities that she had received a message from her husband on her cellphone that indicated he had possibly shot her mother and set fire to her mother's home. The message included photographs of the fire.

The officers learned the suspect's estranged wife had recently filed for divorce. The suspect had been granted visitation rights for their 14-month-old daughter and had picked her up a few days before but did not return the child on the specified day. On the day of the incident, the man drove his daughter to his mother-in-law's residence, parked his truck on the street in front, and shot his daughter twice in the head, killing her. Witnesses saw the man walk into the residence carrying a firearm. While inside, the offender shot and killed his mother-in-law and set fire to her residence.

When the officers arrived at the scene, they observed smoke coming from the residence. The field-training officer took a tactical position of cover behind the offender's truck where the 14-month-old-victim was located, still seated in her car seat. The officer-in-training approached the residence from the side. The offender, who was on the front porch, fired several rounds from his .45-caliber semiautomatic firearm at the field-training officer, who was still located behind the truck. One of the rounds struck the field-training officer in the head, causing a nonfatal wound; the round traveled down his skull and exited his neck. The injured field-training officer fired three rounds from his .45-caliber semiautomatic handgun, but none of the rounds hit the offender. The officer-in-training, who had taken cover behind the patrol vehicle, was within sight of the victim officer. The victim officer attempted to run to the officer-in-training, but due to his diminished motor skills, fell onto the roadway. The officer-in-training ran to the aid of the fallen officer and dragged him to safety. Additional officers arrived and transported the victim officer to a nearby ambulance, which took him to a local hospital. The fire department, with assistance from law enforcement, extinguished the house fire. Inside, emergency personnel found the bodies of the offender and his mother-in-law. The 32-year-old offender died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound to his head.

Case 17

On a warm summer night around midnight in the South, an officer, who had 4 years of law enforcement experience, was sitting in his marked patrol vehicle at a local convenience store. A man approached the officer on foot and began talking to him at the driver side door. When the offender displayed odd behavior, the officer decided to exit the vehicle to speak further with him. As the officer started to open the door, the offender lunged through the open window and began stabbing the officer with a screwdriver. The officer could not reach his firearm because of the way the offender had positioned himself. The offender grabbed the officer's firearm but could not pull it from the holster due to the holster's retention-level safety features. After being stabbed several times in the hand and neck, the officer was able to shove the offender away slightly and pull his firearm out of the holster. The struggle continued as the offender again tried to grab the officer's firearm. The officer managed to fire six rounds from his .45-caliber semiautomatic firearm; however, none of the rounds hit the offender, and he fled. The officer alerted dispatch, and additional police units responded and located the offender a short time later. The officer fully recovered from his injuries and returned to duty. The 18-year-old offender was convicted and sentenced to 25 years in prison.

Case 18

Approximately 5 o'clock on a spring evening in the Midwest, a law enforcement officer, who had 4 years of experience, was slowly driving past a group of people gathered in a private parking lot. Without warning, a 42-year-old man threw a large knife, striking the hood of the patrol unit. The officer recognized the offender as he fled. The officer stopped his vehicle and equipped himself with a side handle baton, preparing himself for a foot pursuit. When the officer opened his driver's side door, the offender came from behind the patrol car and stabbed

the officer in the forearm with the sharp prongs of a mole trap. The officer used his baton to force the offender backward so he could exit his vehicle and continued using his baton to prevent the offender from stabbing him again. Eventually the officer gained enough space to remove his service weapon. As the officer was preparing to use his firearm, he realized that several children and innocent bystanders were close enough to be in his line of fire. The offender threw the mole trap at the officer, striking his shoulder and neck area and causing serious lacerations. The officer pursued the offender, tackling him a short distance later. The offender was able to free himself from the officer's hold, and another foot pursuit ensued. The officer caught up to the offender and tackled him once again. The offender grabbed a nearby can of gasoline and began swinging it at the officer, spraying him with gasoline. The officer used his baton to keep the offender at a distance. The offender threw the gas can at the officer and attempted to flee again, only to be tackled a third time. A backup officer arrived to assist; however, the offender managed to break free from both officers. He positioned himself on the other side of a fence, then pulled a lighter from his pocket and threatened to ignite the officer. Both officers drew their service weapons and ordered the offender to drop the lighter. The offender complied and fled the area.

The injured officer had cuts on his arm, neck, and shoulder, and he had gasoline in his eyes. He was transported to a medical facility where he was treated for his injuries. The offender was arrested 3 days later without further incident. He was convicted and sentenced to 8 years in prison. The officer recovered from his injuries and returned to full duty.

Case 19

Around 2:45 on a dark autumn morning in the West, law enforcement officers were dispatched to an area near a casino and RV park where shots had been fired. When the first officers arrived, a subject shot at them from his RV. Backup was coordinated, and an officer, who had 5 years of law enforcement experience, entered the park from the rear to avoid potential crossfire. At that time, the officer believed the offender was still inside his RV.

The RV park was circular and surrounded by a dirt mound approximately 15 feet tall. Moonlight provided the only light, so visibility was poor. The officer was making his way across the mound when he heard a noise that was quickly followed by muzzle flashes and gunshots. The officer received three gunshot wounds: one round hit his stomach but was stopped by his protective vest, the second round hit his rib cage area entering between the vest's panels and exiting the officer's back, and the third round struck him in the back. The wounded officer lost his balance and fell down the hill but was able to get back up and shoot at the offender. The officer began working his way back to his patrol vehicle and came upon another officer in a patrol vehicle. The assisting officer transported the wounded officer away from the area and sought medical treatment.

Shortly thereafter, three officers surrounded the offender. The officers and the offender exchanged gunfire until a round struck the offender in his leg and he surrendered. The 46-year-old military combat veteran was convicted and sentenced to several years in prison. The injured officer later recovered from his wounds and returned to full duty.

Case 20

On a warm night around 10 o'clock in the Midwest, an officer, who had 15 years of experience, was dispatched to a domestic dispute involving a 33-year-old man and his mother, with whom he lived. That night, the man had become angry and had fired rounds into the floor of the residence. Due to the nature of the call, backup units also responded.

The officer arrived in the area and attempted to locate the residence when he encountered a vehicle sitting in the middle of the road. The driver of the vehicle informed the officer that a female covered in blood had crossed the road and ran into the darkness. The officer was still speaking with the driver when he saw a man standing approximately 40 to 50 yards away at the rear corner of a residence. The man disappeared around the corner of the house. When the officer began questioning the driver again, the man reappeared at the same corner of the residence armed with a .22-caliber semiautomatic rifle. The officer drew his .40-caliber semiautomatic handgun and ordered the man to drop the weapon. The man fired a round at the officer, who then ordered the driver to

leave the area to avoid being shot. The officer took cover behind his patrol vehicle as the offender continued to shoot at him. The officer, realizing he could not access his shotgun or rifle without being in harm's way, decided to drive away from the line of fire and wait for the backup units to arrive. The officer got into his patrol vehicle and accelerated as the offender continued shooting multiple rounds at him. One of the rounds struck the officer in the inner part of the right eye and nasal cavity, causing blindness in his right eye. While still driving, the officer applied direct pressure to his face to control the bleeding while simultaneously requesting medical assistance and providing information about the offender to dispatch. The officer drove to meet medical personnel and was transported to the hospital.

Following the shooting, the offender barricaded himself in the residence. Tactical teams arrived and the offender was taken into custody several hours later. He was sentenced to 35 years in prison. The officer returned to duty approximately 10 days following the shooting.

Case 21

Around 10:30 on a warm summer night in the Midwest, an officer, who had 5 years of law enforcement experience, assisted with a traffic stop that ended at the intoxicated driver's residence. Some of the driver's family members gathered outside to see what was happening. The driver, an immigrant, did not speak English well, so his young adult son translated for him. After the driver was arrested, the assisting officer drove away from the residence and drove to an adjacent street so she could park and complete paperwork. As she pulled into a parking lot, she observed a figure standing in the alley behind the offender's residence. As the officer stopped the vehicle, the subject raised a .223-caliber semiautomatic rifle, advanced toward the officer, and fired 26 rounds at her while she was still seated in the vehicle. The officer was struck by six rounds that hit her face, ear, back, buttocks, and legs. She also sustained several wounds from shrapnel. The officer drew her .45-caliber semiautomatic handgun and fired 11 rounds, but none hit the offender. The offender then fled into the darkness. The offender, the driver's young adult son, retreated to his residence to reload, but a younger brother convinced him not to. Investigators later learned that the offender loaded the rifle after the arrest of his father. The offender intended to walk from the alley to the front of the house to kill both officers. He was interrupted when the officer stopped her patrol vehicle at the entrance of the alley. The offender was convicted and sentenced to life in prison. The officer recovered from her injuries and returned to full duty.

Case 22

On a warm spring night around 9:35 in the Northeast, a law enforcement officer, who had 8 years of experience, was working a department-approved overtime detail at a grocery store when an offender tackled him from behind. During the struggle, the offender attempted to remove the officer's 9 mm semiautomatic handgun from his holster. Although the officer struck the offender multiple times with his elbows to prevent the offender from getting his firearm, the offender ultimately succeeded. The officer turned his body to face the offender, held tightly to the offender, and used his left hand to grab the offender's right hand, which was holding the weapon. The offender broke free from the officer's grip and struck the officer in the head with the gun, causing the officer to become dizzy. The officer grabbed the offender's hand again and continued the fight. During the confrontation, the offender fired one round, grazing the officer's shoulder and causing powder burns to his ear and damage to his eardrum. The offender dropped the weapon and attempted to run out of the store, but the officer maintained his grip on the offender as the struggle continued outside the store. The officer managed to take the offender to the ground, and backup units arrived to assist. The officer received treatment for his injuries and returned to duty. The 20-year-old offender pled guilty to offenses related to this incident and was sentenced to 5 to 10 years in prison.

Case 23

Around 11:30 on a summer night in the South, a law enforcement officer, who had 10 years of experience, was working a department-approved overtime detail at a grocery store. At closing time, the manager locked the store and the officer escorted her to her vehicle. As the officer was walking to his vehicle, he heard gunfire. The officer turned to see someone shooting at him. No immediate cover was available, so the officer ran to avoid being shot while attempting to flank the offender. The offender fired five rounds at the officer using a .38 caliber revolver; one round struck the officer in his lower leg. The officer fired 14 rounds at the offender using his service weapon, but no rounds struck the offender. The offender fled the scene and, in the process, discarded his gun behind a business. The officer immediately contacted dispatch and provided the offender's description and direction of travel. Assisting officers apprehended the 24-year-old offender within minutes. The offender was distraught over a previous relationship and was suicidal. He was convicted and sentenced to 50 years in prison. The officer returned to duty after being treated for his injuries.

Case 24

Approximately 2:30 a.m. in the darkness of a summer morning in the South, two law enforcement officers, who had 17 and 19 years of experience, respectively, responded to assist with the investigation of shots fired at the scene of a vehicle accident. Upon arriving at the scene, the officers saw four vehicles on the side of the roadway. An individual was lying on the roadway with a gunshot wound to the stomach, and two more gunshot victims were nearby. One officer stayed with the first victim, and the other officer approached a vehicle with darkly tinted windows. From inside the vehicle, a 20-year-old offender shot the officer in the upper body with a 12-gauge shotgun, knocking the officer down. As the officer got up and turned to retreat, the offender shot him in the back of the leg. The officer fell to the ground again. The offender then turned his weapon on himself and died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound at the scene. The officer recovered from his injuries and returned to full duty.

Case 25

Around 9:30 p.m. on a cool autumn night in the South, two officers, who had 15 and 7 years of law enforcement experience, respectively, responded to a call concerning an active shooter at an apartment complex. When the officers arrived at the complex, the driver positioned the vehicle to help secure the area. As the officers exited their patrol unit, the offender fired several rounds from a .308 SKS rifle, striking one of the officers with two rounds in the pelvic area and one round in the leg, shattering the officer's femur bone and causing him to fall. The officer used his arms to drag himself behind the patrol unit and maintained cover with his weapon at the ready. The second officer saw the offender positioned between two vehicles approximately 60 feet away. The second officer shot one round, which missed the offender but caused him to flee. The injured officer was loaded into the back of the patrol unit and transported to a nearby ambulance. The 31-year-old offender was found dead from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. The officer recovered from his injuries and returned to duty.

Case 26

Approximately 7 o'clock on a cold winter evening in the West, a law enforcement officer, who had 3 years of experience, stopped to investigate a pickup truck that appeared to be broken down. The officer exited his patrol vehicle and made contact with the truck's two occupants. The officer was familiar with the driver from past encounters, but he did not recognize the passenger. The officer smelled alcohol and suspected the passenger was providing false information to him. During this time, someone driving another vehicle arrived to assist the driver with his disabled truck. The driver of the truck asked the officer if he could go speak to the occupants of the other vehicle. The officer allowed the driver to walk to and from the second vehicle while he attempted to learn the true identity of the truck's passenger. Unbeknownst to the officer, the driver obtained a 12-gauge shotgun from the other vehicle. The man rounded the vehicle and raised the shotgun to shoot the officer. The officer simultaneously raised his .40-caliber semiautomatic weapon but was shot in the upper right chest with several rounds from the

offender's weapon. The officer retreated for cover behind his patrol unit, but the offender pursued him and shot him a second time in the left arm and side. The officer wove back and forth as he crossed the road to seek cover to avoid being shot again. However, the offender shot the officer a third time in the side of the head and stopped his pursuit. As the officer found cover behind a parked vehicle, he relayed the incident information to dispatch, including his location and the name of the offender. An assisting officer arrived and transported the victim officer to a nearby hospital for treatment. The 30-year-old offender fled the area and was arrested the following morning. The officer's body armor stopped several rounds from causing more serious injuries. He returned to duty approximately 7 weeks later. The offender was later convicted and sentenced to several years in prison.

Case 27

Around midnight on a winter night in the West, a law enforcement officer, who had 27 years of experience, assisted another officer with a traffic stop. The second officer arrested the driver of the vehicle for DUI and transported him in a police unit for processing. The assisting officer stayed on scene to oversee the impounding of the subject's vehicle. A tow truck arrived, and the operator began prepping the offender's vehicle for towing. About this time, the officer observed a male subject walking down the sidewalk in their direction. The subject approached the tow truck driver and began questioning him about the vehicle being towed. When the officer heard the subject's heated questions, he exited his patrol vehicle, approached the man, and asked him if he could help with anything. The man replied in a loud, aggressive tone as he walked out of sight. The officer began filling out an impound form, which included an inventory of the vehicle's contents. The tow truck driver acted as a witness for the contents. As the officer and tow truck driver were involved in the inventory process, the man returned, approached them from behind, and shot the officer in the back of the head with a .22-caliber semiautomatic handgun. The officer took cover around the other side of the tow truck as the offender attempted to flee. The unarmed tow truck driver began chasing the offender down the street. The offender shot at the driver, so the driver stopped and hurried back to the officer to tell him that the offender was returning. The officer maintained a position of cover and fired two rounds at the offender with his .40 caliber semiautomatic handgun. Although the rounds did not strike the offender, they caused him to flee. An assisting officer arrived on scene and transported the victim officer in a patrol car to the hospital. The officer was treated and released from the hospital after 4 days with additional medical care to follow. Two days later, an extensive investigation and search for the 49-year-old offender ended successfully. The offender was convicted and sentenced to 50 years in prison.

Case 28

Approximately 6 o'clock on a warm spring evening in the South, multiple officers were serving a warrant at the residence of a suspect who was wanted for the attempted murder of law enforcement officers. The warrant stemmed from a shootout that had occurred during a vehicle pursuit the previous day and had involved several officers. When serving the warrant, officers approached the front door of the residence and announced their presence. The offender fired several rounds from an SKS semiautomatic rifle through the door and wall, striking two officers. A 13-hour standoff ensued when several officers surrounded the residence, and the offender barricaded himself inside. During the standoff, hundreds of rounds were exchanged, and one officer received a nonfatal injury. Finally, a specialized entry team gained access to the residence and arrested the 29-year-old offender without further incident. The offender was convicted and sentenced to several years in prison.

APPENDIX A

Methodology

The results of any research project are only as good as the methods used to collect and analyze the data. Researchers must clearly describe their methodology so others may be able to judge the veracity of the study and its results. In addition, every research study has inherent strengths and limitations. Some limitations are a function of the design the researcher chooses, and some are a result of the scope of the net that has been cast to try to capture a given social or behavioral problem. The methodology employed for this study is described in this section.

Research Design

For the data collection phase, this study used the Perpetrator-Motive Research Design (PMRD; Vecchi, Van Hasselt & Angleman, 2013). Prior research on criminal motives has suffered from a lack of standardization, which renders comparisons across studies problematic (Daniels, Angleman & Grinnan, 2015). PMRD offers a standardized method of collecting data via semistructured interviews. Through a 12-step process, interview questions are developed and vetted, interview teams are trained, and data are collected. The 12 steps are:

(1) Define the need for research.
(2) Define the stakeholders.
(3) Identify the offender population.
(4) Obtain authorities and access.
(5) Develop and refine protocols.
(6) Employ protocol training.
(7) Develop subject dossiers.
(8) Conduct a pilot test.
(9) Retool the protocols and process.
(10) Collect data for the larger study.
(11) Analyze the data.
(12) Develop and deploy deliverables (Daniels, Angleman & Grinnan, 2015).

Daniels, Angleman & Grinnan (2015) identified two primary phases of the PMRD method. In phase 1, which encompasses steps 1 through 6, the project is in research study preparation. The input of subject matter experts is critical during this phase of the study so the final product is pertinent and useful to the identified stakeholders. Phase 2, composed of steps 7-12, is the data collection and analysis phase. During phase 2, the study is piloted, alterations to the interview protocol are made, the data are collected and analyzed, and deliverables are developed and deployed. Relevant deliverables may include training materials, such as this document, and professional research publications.

Interview Team

Staff members from the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division made up the interview teams for this study and mainly included trainers from the FBI's LEOKA Program. The interview team consisted of a primary interviewer who was responsible for developing rapport with the interviewee and asking most of the questions. The secondary interviewer wrote responses to the questions in an interview protocol booklet and confirmed that every question was asked and adequately answered. In addition, a videographer was present at every interview. The videographer recorded the interviews and assured that the equipment was working properly. The interview teams traveled to locations within the United States for each interview. These locations included the communities where law enforcement officers lived and the prisons where offenders were being held.

Research Team

The first author of this study, Jeffrey A. Daniels, Ph.D., led the research team that analyzed the data for the study. Dr. Daniels is the chair of the Department of Counseling, Rehabilitation Counseling and Counseling Psychology at WVU. His research has focused on various aspects of violence, including school shootings that were averted, school-barricaded captive-taking events, and global hostage-taking. Previously, Dr. Daniels collaborated with the FBI on the Global Hostage-taking Research and Analysis Project. The methods for both the hostage-taking project and the current study are based upon the PMRD and

consensual qualitative research (Daniels, Angleman & Grinnan, 2015).

Under the leadership of Dr. Daniels, the research team included 15 doctoral students in the Counseling Psychology program at West Virginia University. The team was broken into subgroups of 3-4 members and included these students: Sarah Berkey, Chelsey Bohr, Brittany Catania, Steven Craig, Ben Darling, Craig Foster, Melissa Foster, Rachel Gingles, Chelsea Latorre, Audrey Molder, Olivia Scott, Jeneice Shaw, Tim Swiger, Erin Teaff, and Brandon Webb.

Bracketing

In qualitative research, it is customary for the researchers to communicate their biases, expectations, and experiences pertaining to the topic before the study begins. This process, known as bracketing (Fischer, 2009), demonstrates the researcher's efforts to "shelve" his or her assumptions as much as possible for the data analysis. Before starting this study, each member of the research team submitted a written narrative of their experiences with law enforcement officers and offenders and their biases (both positive and negative). The bracketing process enables researchers to continuously view the results they are uncovering in light of their own experiences and perceptions. It also offers the opportunity for the reader to attempt to view the data and results from the perspectives of the researchers.[12]

Sampling

All cases were selected from the FBI's LEOKA Program databases. Cases that were categorized as ambushes or unprovoked attacks from a 10-year period starting in 2001 and ending in 2011 were chosen. Because a small number of offenders were available for participation, the FBI's Institutional Review Board approved the research team's request to select additional cases from a 5-year period starting in 1995 and ending in 2000. These cases were selected based upon the same criteria as the cases chosen from 2001 to 2011.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants in this study were drawn from two populations. One group of participants consisted of law enforcement officers who survived an ambush or an unprovoked attack. These officers were the victims of the attacks or, if the victim officer did not survive, one or more witness officers were interviewed. In some cases, a surviving victim officer was interviewed, along with one or more witness officers. The other group participating in the study was comprised of offenders who had been tried and convicted of engaging in an ambush or an unprovoked attack on one or more law enforcement officers. At the times of the interviews, these individuals were serving their sentences in prisons throughout the United States with no ongoing appeals or other legal issues pending.

Table A - 1

Ambushes and unprovoked attacks case summaries

Who was interviewed	Number of cases
Single offender	14
Victim officer + offender	9
Victim officer only	5
Victim officer + witness officer(s)	4
Witness officer only	4
Multiple victim officers	2
Multiple offenders	2

In total, 40 cases were reviewed and included interviews of 33 law enforcement officers and 27 offenders. Among these cases, 14 involved interviews with single offenders, 9 entailed interviews of individual victim officers as well as their respective individual offenders, 5 involved interviews of only individual victim officers, and 4 included interviews with the victim officers and at

[12] *Bracketing information is available and may be requested from the LEOKA Program.*

least 1 witness officer for each incident. In addition, four cases involved interviews with only individual witness officers, two cases included interviews with two or more victim officers, and two cases with multiple offenders included two interviews with two offenders each. Table A-1 summarizes these cases.

Procedures and protocol

The LEOKA research team applied two sets of standard procedures and interview protocols, one for law enforcement officers and one for offenders. Those protocols were developed by the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit, now known as the Behavioral Analysis Unit 5: Research and Program Management.

Interview procedures for law enforcement officers

The LEOKA research team contacted potential law enforcement participants by telephone. The caller described the purpose and methods of the study and explained that an officer's participation was entirely voluntary. If the officer agreed, an interview date was scheduled. As previously mentioned, the interview team consisted of three members: the principal interviewer, a member to complete the protocol book, and a videographer. Before beginning each interview, the LEOKA research team reiterated the purpose and methods of the study and explained that participation was strictly voluntary. If the participants agreed to continue, they were asked to sign two forms: a research consent form indicating that they were volunteering to participate in the study, and a training form which allowed the research team to use recordings for the purpose of law enforcement training. Transcripts for analysis were created from the recorded interviews.

Interview Protocol for Law Enforcement Officers

The law enforcement officer interview protocol consisted of seven sections: Background Material, Family Structure, Law Enforcement Training, Before Assault, Assault under Study, Characteristics of Scene, and Post-Assault Activity.

Section A: Background material. In this segment of the interview, researchers obtained the officer's background information, such as his or her current demographic information, occupational and educational history, family structure, and reasons for becoming a police officer. The researchers asked additional questions about the officer's history of physical confrontations, including how old the officer was at the time of his or her first fight, and if he or she had been involved in any altercations as an adult (including as a law enforcement officer).

Section B: Family structure. In this section of the interview, researchers focused on the officer's family of origin while growing up. For example, one question asked the officer to indicate the number of siblings, step siblings, and/or half siblings in his or her family. Additional questions focused on the officer's relationship status during the assault, and his or her relationship status at the time of the interview. Questions included whether or not the officer had any children at the time of the ambush or unprovoked attack, and if he or she had children at the time of the interview.

Section C: Law enforcement training. Section C focused on the officer's prior training. Researcher's questions probed for specific topics of training and the amount of time spent on that training during the officer's professional development. This included courses, such as weapons training, that the officer was enrolled in during an academy and during any post-academy training (in-service, recertification, etc.).

Section D: Before assault. In this section of the interview, each officer was asked about recent performance evaluations, physical examinations/condition, and the extent to which life events created distraction. Questions examined drug, alcohol, and tobacco use, and prescription drugs that may have been taken in a timeframe before the assault. The law enforcement officer was also asked about any previous line-of-duty assaults, use of a service firearm, and any use-of-force encounters.

Section E: Assault under study. This section and the remaining portions of the interview centered on the ambush/unprovoked attack and what happened during and after the incident. In this fifth section of the interview, the officer was asked to talk specifically about the ambush/unprovoked attack that was chosen to be included in this research. Ideally, the officer's narrative provided enough detail to complete the specified questions, but in most cases, additional questions were required to complete these sections.

Section F: Characteristics of scene. Researchers asked officers to describe the scene of the assault and questioned each officer about his or her physical and mental status immediately before the assault. This information included the tour of duty (morning, afternoon, night), characteristics of the assault scene such as lighting and other environmental conditions, the officer's attire, and previous encounters at the location for similar calls. Detailed information was also solicited about the offender—what he or she was doing when the officer first observed him or her and any preassault behaviors that the officer may have noticed. In addition, the officer was asked to describe the actual assault, the resolution of the incident, what he or she learned from the assault, and recommendations for other officers who may encounter a similar situation.

Section G: Post-assault activity. In this section, officers were asked about their lives after the ambush or unprovoked attack. They were asked about the process of their recovery and any lingering physical or psychological difficulties. Questions also focused on who supported the officer following the attack, such as the officer's department, family, friend(s), or community. Researchers asked the officer if he or she performs their police work differently as a result of the attack, such as wearing a protective vest or making changes to training. The officer was also asked about counseling or other professional services he or she may have received to help cope with the trauma. Finally, each officer was provided an opportunity to share any advice he or she would offer to other law enforcement officers that could help them survive or prevent similar attacks.

Interview procedures for offenders

Researchers used a different method to secure interviews with study participants who were offenders. Because of an offender's criminal activities, the LEOKA research team had to ensure that potential participants did not have a current appeal or pending charges for other unrelated criminal acts. To verify that no pending appeals or charges existed, the research team contacted correctional officials as well as staff at the offices of the attorneys general for the states where the offenders were being housed. If no legal constraints were identified, the LEOKA research team coordinated access to an offender with the prison in which the offender was housed. The purpose and methods of the study, as well as the voluntary nature of the offender's participation, were explained to prison officials. Upon approval from the correctional institution, an interview date was established with prison personnel.

Offenders were not notified of the pending interview in advance. The first reason for this was that there was concern if offenders had extended time to consider the interview they could possibly invent responses concerning their incidents. Second, without time to prepare, immediate responses to the interviewer's questions were considered to be more authentic.

Upon arrival, a member of the research team explained the purpose and methods of the study, as well as the voluntary nature of participation to the offender. If the offender agreed to continue he or she was asked to sign both a research consent form confirming the offender's voluntary participation in the study and a training form which allowed the research team to use recordings for the purpose of law enforcement training. As was done for the interviews with officers, the interview team consisted of the principal interviewer, a member to complete the protocol book, and a videographer. Transcripts for analysis were created from the recorded interviews.

Interview protocol for offenders

The interview protocol for offenders contained nine sections: Selected resources, Background information, Family structure and environment, Entertainment, Attitudes toward authority, Criminal history, Weapons training and use, Characteristics of scene and encounter, and Self-reported offense data.

Section A: Selected resources. The interview team completed Section A by compiling information from data sources concerning the offender. Examples of these sources include police, medical, psychiatric, or criminal records; the offender's level of intelligence (and the instrument used to assess this); chronic behavior patterns noted in the records; and medical history.

Section B: Background information. In this section of the interview, researchers asked the offender about his or her background at the time of the ambush and at the time of the interview. Questions pertained to an offender's family constellation, race and ethnicity, and other demographic details.

Section C: Family structure and environment. These questions solicited additional details about the offender's family of origin, childhood/adolescence, and prior institutionalization. Some of the questions centered on the offender's parents and their parenting methods, including their parents' involvement with drugs, alcohol, and criminal endeavors.

Section D: Entertainment. During this portion of the interview, researchers asked about the offender's interest in and involvement with various forms of entertainment, such as sports, reading, music, movies, video games, and the Internet. The questions included topics concerning involvement with drugs, alcohol, and activities with friends.

Section E: Attitudes toward authority. The questions in this section pertained to the offender's attitudes toward authority figures. This included an offender's views on different authority figures throughout his or her life. Types of authority figures discussed included police officers, teachers, parents, and military superiors (if the offender was in the military). Questions also assessed any thoughts or fantasies an offender may have had about harming or killing a police officer prior to the ambush.

Section F: Criminal history. If the offender had a prior criminal history, researchers asked about the offenses for which he or she had been prosecuted. The interviewee was warned that if he or she provided details about offenses for which the offender had not been prosecuted, then the information would be turned over to the authorities for investigation and a possible prosecution. Researchers asked at which ages these prior crimes occurred; the individual's thoughts, feelings and behaviors surrounding the event; and the legal outcome of the case. The offender was also asked to describe the circumstances surrounding each crime he or she had committed.

Section G: Weapons training and use. In earlier studies of felonious assaults against law enforcement officers, a common finding among offenders was that they were likely to practice with the type of weapon used in the attack much more frequently than the police practice with their weapons. Therefore, in this section, questions were asked about prior formal and informal training and practice with the type of weapon the offender used. Researchers started with questions about weapons used during the offender's childhood and moved to questions about the weapon(s) used in the ambush or unprovoked assault. Participants were also queried about when they first began to carry a weapon, the location(s) where it was kept, and the reasons for carrying it. Researchers also asked about the access and disposal of weapons, again with the warning that information about any crimes for which the offender was not prosecuted would be turned over to the authorities.

Section H: Characteristics of scene and encounter. This section of the interview protocol examined the ambush or unprovoked attack under study. The interviewee was first asked to give a narrative of the event, including the circumstances that led up to the attack, the attack itself, and its conclusion (arrest). Most of the qualitative data was collected during this section of the interview as the researchers sought to understand what happened and why the offender chose to ambush/attack a law enforcement officer.

Section I: Self-reported offense data. In this section the researchers asked the offender about his or her mindset immediately prior to the assault/ambush; any precipitating crises; thoughts, feelings, and behaviors during the attack; and thoughts, feelings, and behaviors after the attack. Other questions assessed whether any substances had been consumed prior to the assault, whether or not the offender was acting alone, and the extent of planning that may have gone into the assault/ambush.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected during this study from the semistructured interviews were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative information that was gathered contained measureable event characteristics, such as officer and offender demographics. Qualitative information collected from the interviews was data that was not easily measured but provided insight into the incidents studied. The qualitative information included notable concepts and recurring details from the narratives of the officers and the offenders. Most of the analyses conducted for this study involved these qualitative details.

Quantitative Analyses

For the quantitative analyses, two databases were created—one for the officer interviews and one for the offender interviews. All questions that could be quantifiable were included in each database and were then entered for every interview. Many of the items consisted of categorical data. For example, all the offenders were asked about the types of weapons they had practiced with, and their answers were grouped into categories by specific types of weapons. For all such questions, nonparametric statistical analyses were conducted to examine possible significant differences across the categories. Other items included continuous variables, or variables that can be measured, such as the offender's age of first arrest. For all such questions, researchers analyzed data with descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, medians, etc.). Note: Because of rounding, groups of percentages in this study may not add to 100.0.

Finally, the researchers ran a series of predictive equations (e.g., log-linear analyses and multiple regression analyses) to predict various outcomes. For example, using an equation that evaluates several variables related to the event characteristics to predict officer survival would be helpful information. However, none of these analyses resulted in statistically significant results due partially to small sample size. Therefore, none of these results were reported in the officer or offender chapters.

Qualitative Analyses

Qualitative data analysis involves sifting through large volumes of data, and identifying themes, patterns, and relationships among them. For the qualitative component of this study, the researchers analyzed the data using CQR. CQR was developed by Clara Hill and her associates to qualitatively analyze psychotherapy sessions (Hill, Thompson & Williams, 1997) and has since been used to study multiple social and behavioral science phenomena (Hill, 2012; Hill et al., 2005). The lead researcher on this study, Jeffrey A. Daniels, Ph.D., has used CQR for more than 10 years to study other violent offenders, such as individuals convicted of kidnapping or hostage-taking (Daniels, Angleman & Grinnan, 2015; Daniels, Angleman, Vecchi, et al., 2015). He has also used CQR to study averted school shootings (Daniels et al., 2010).

CQR

The hallmark of CQR is that members of a research team independently analyze the data and then come together for frequent meetings to discuss their results. The aim of the discussions is to come to consensus on the meaning of each piece of data. Thus, initial inter-rater agreement is not of high concern in CQR because it is the final consensus that is most important. There are three stages of analysis with CQR: blocking, rating, and auditing. In this study, the researchers included three additional steps: initial read through, two-phase rating (initial and master), and cross analysis. These steps, which ultimately led to the development of codebooks that defined the behaviors and characteristics identified from the qualitative data, are detailed below.

Initial read through. When a transcript was delivered from the LEOKA coordinator of the FBI's CJIS Division to the lead researcher, it was prepared by adding a title page and numbering all lines of the text. The lead researcher then sent the transcript to members of the team, who were instructed to read it in its entirety before analyzing it. The purpose of this initial read through was two-fold. First, the reader gained an overall understanding of the ambush from the interviewee's perspective. This global knowledge was later used to aid in the understanding and analysis of specific statements. Second, during the initial read through, the reader was asked to pay attention to the interviewee's verbal style, idiosyncrasies, and note any changes in his or her use of paralinguistic utterances. The latter may include an increase in the use of utterances such as "um," "ah," false starts, or stutters, and may indicate heightened anxiety.

Blocking. After the initial read through, each member of the research team independently reread the transcript and highlighted segments of text that addressed the three main areas of emphasis for the analysis: Who? What? Why? These highlighted segments of text represented blocks of data that were later analyzed. Blocks may be a single phrase, a sentence, or a paragraph and should represent a single thought or idea. Each member of the research team then sent his or her blocks to the lead researcher. The lead researcher collated the blocks into a table that included the line numbers from the text

where the block was located. One column of the table was reserved for individual researcher's rating of each block of text. These ratings are described in the next section.

Initial ratings. The lead researcher sent the collated table of blocks to each member of the research team, who then independently rated each block of text, using initial codebooks developed from previous LEOKA studies (i.e., the first three LEOKA studies: Pinizzotto & Davis, 1992; Pinizzotto, Davis & Miller, 1997; Pinizzotto, Davis & Miller, 2006). These codebooks include lists of overall topics. One codebook was used for the offenders and included topics such as *mental state* and *attitudes toward authority.* A separate codebook was used for the law enforcement officers with topics including *awareness of surroundings* and *seeking cover*. (More information about codebooks may be found later in this CQR section.) Because all the blocks identified by the researchers were inserted into the table, some blocks were deemed unrelated to any of the three areas of emphasis (who, what, why) or offered insufficient detail. Thus, in the initial rating stage, members of the research team could choose to drop a particular block. In addition, if a block of data did not readily fit into the existing codes, a team member could rate that block with "new code" and then identify the new code. Every member of the research team then sent their ratings to the lead researcher for collation into one table of ratings.

Master ratings. Next, the research team met to discuss discrepancies among the collated ratings. If most team members identified a given block with a specific code, then that block was considered rated. Therefore, if three or more of the five team members rated a block the same, then that block was given that code as the master rating. For example, if three team members rated a given block of a law enforcement officer's text as 17.1, *Bystander safety*, then 17.1 was the master code for that block, and no discussion occurred. However, if a given block was not rated the same by at least three of the five team members, then the entire team discussed that block until full consensus was attained for that master code.[13]

Auditing. Upon completion of the master ratings, a member of the research team who had not been involved in the analysis of that interview served as an auditor and reviewed a spreadsheet of the ratings (Schlosser, Dewey & Hill, 2012). (An ideal auditor is familiar with CQR as a methodology and the research topic being studied, but is not involved in the data analysis.) The auditor's roles included providing an independent, fresh perspective of the data, checking for the trustworthiness of the team's analysis, and assuring that any blocks that had been rated with an earlier version of the codebooks were updated with the final codes.

The auditor looked at the master rating of each block of data and, using the appropriate codebook, decided if a block's code was appropriate. If the auditor believed a block was miscoded, he or she indicated what she or he believed the correct code should be and wrote a justification. This spreadsheet was sent back to the lead researcher. Then, the team met and reviewed any discrepancies between their master code and the auditor's rating and considered the auditor's justification. At this time, they could either disregard the auditor's rating and maintain their original code, or change their original code to the code offered by the auditor.

Cross-analysis. After all of the data have been finalized, the last step in CQR is to compare and contrast the cases. The cross-analysis is conducted to determine similarities and differences across all cases (Ladany, Thompson & Hill, 2012). This is most commonly accomplished by semiquantifying the results by assigning labels to codes based on their frequency. The following labels were applied to each code, followed by the number of participants who addressed each.

General	All or all but one participant addressed a code
Typical	More than half, up to General
Variant	Less than half, but at least two
Unique	Only one, but it was deemed to be important

[13] *Given the length of transcripts and the sheer amount of data to be analyzed, the research team decided to not discuss every discrepancy until 100 percent agreement was attained. Transcripts, from initial read through until completion, averaged 1 month to analyze–discussing every block in which 100 percent agreement was not initially attained could easily have added 3 or 4 weeks to the process.*

This iterative process of discussing blocks of data and their meaning led to the development of two new codebooks, an officer codebook and an offender codebook, which defined the results of this study. The development of both codebooks is described in the following paragraphs.

Law enforcement officer codebook development. The development of the officer codebook took place over a period of approximately 2 years. In the first iteration, initial codes were extracted from previous studies of officer assaults (i.e., the first three LEOKA studies: Pinizzotto & Davis, 1992; Pinizzotto et al., 1997; Pinizzotto, et al., 2006). As the team began reading transcripts for this study, they deleted some of these initial codes because the codes did not pertain to ambushes or unprovoked attacks. The team developed more codes as they attempted to make sense of each new transcript. In some cases, new codes were developed, or definitions of existing codes were altered to account for new data that emerged.

In the end, the law enforcement officer codebook experienced seven major updates, with many other minor updates occurring until the team reached data saturation. In qualitative research, saturation occurs when no new themes or codes emerge from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In the current study, no new substantive codes emerged after roughly 25 transcripts were rated. The team began looking at transcripts in September 2013 and finalized the codes on September 30, 2015. A total of 30 major themes were developed, with 87 subcodes also being established.

Offender codebook development. The offender codebook went through a similar process as that of the officer codebook. Initial codes were also developed from the results of the three previous LEOKA studies. Likewise, these codes transformed over time, with some being discarded, some definitions being altered, and many new codes being developed. Data saturation occurred after approximately 20 transcripts, with no new codes emerging. Between September 2013 and October 1, 2015, the offender codebook went through six major revisions and multiple minor revisions. A total of 31 major codes were developed, with an additional 62 subcodes being established.[14]

Strengths and Limitations

Previous studies of police officer ambushes have relied heavily on quantitative analyses of national data or data from focus groups. To date, perhaps the most comprehensive study was conducted by the IACP in 1974. That study included comprehensive records reviews and interviews with victim officers when possible.

A primary strength of the current study is that the data includes records reviews, interviews with victim and witness officers, and interviews with offenders. No other ambush study has included the offender perspectives. A second strength of this study is the systematic methodology that was used to collect and analyze the data as detailed above. A third, and related strength, is that the qualitative analyses were conducted with techniques to mitigate individual bias or expectation. If most of the researchers did not initially agree on a specific code for a block of data from the transcript, that rating was discussed until a majority consensus was attained for each disputed block. In addition, an auditor with a fresh perspective evaluated the codes assigned to each block of data and provided feedback for discussion if the auditor deemed it necessary.

Every study has limitations. Perhaps the greatest limitation of this study is that the sample is not random but is a convenience sample of individuals involved in an ambush or unprovoked attack who were willing to be interviewed. Our ability to generalize to any and all ambushes or unprovoked attacks is therefore questionable. Perhaps others who did not choose to participate and be interviewed hold different perspectives from those who did choose to participate.

[14] ***1.0 Overall Motive**, and the six primary motives, are not included in these numbers as they qualitatively different data.*

APPENDIX B

LEOKA Studies and Officer

PREVIOUS LEOKA STUDIES

The LEOKA Program conducted three previous studies regarding attacks against law enforcement officers. These three studies offer unique perspectives on violence against police that is based on the analysis of structured interviews of both victim officers and offenders.

The first study, *Killed in the Line of Duty: A Study of Felonious Killings of Law Enforcement Officers* (Pinizzotto & Davis, 1992), examined 51 events in which 54 law enforcement officers were killed. In this study, only offenders were interviewed. The authors focused on the circumstances surrounding the attacks, characteristics of the victim officers, characteristics of the offenders, and the psychological makeup of the offenders. The study details the motives reported by the offenders as well. The authors also studied strategies for interrogating offenders with antisocial and dependent personality disorders and offered training recommendations for law enforcement officers. In addition, the study documented several variables that were involved in the deaths of law enforcement officers such as interactions between an officer and an offender, their life experiences and perceptions, and the situations that brought them together.

The second LEOKA study, *In the Line of Fire: Violence against Law Enforcement* (Pinizzotto, Davis & Miller, 1997), concentrated on felonious, nonlethal assaults. It included data from 40 incidents in which 52 law enforcement officers were assaulted by 42 offenders. In this publication the authors provided greater detail about the methodology and the interview protocols, and again focused on the circumstances surrounding the assault, the victim officers, and the offenders. Adding new perspective, this study included interviews with the officers as well as the offenders. Therefore, post-assault consequences for officers, such as traumatic responses, were considered.

The third LEOKA study was *Violent Encounters: A Study of Felonious Assaults on our Nation's Law Enforcement Officers* (Pinizzotto, Davis & Miller, 2006). In this study, researchers examined felonious assaults and lethal encounters, and the concept of the "deadly mix" was offered as the lens through which to view these attacks. The deadly mix is a description for the factors that contribute to an assault becoming deadly for an officer. These factors include an officer's perceptions, actions, and assumptions; the offender's perceptions, actions, and assumptions; and the circumstances of the incident. Researchers reviewed 40 cases that included 50 law enforcement officers and 43 offenders.

ABOUT LEOKA'S OFFICER SAFETY AWARENESS PRESENTATIONS

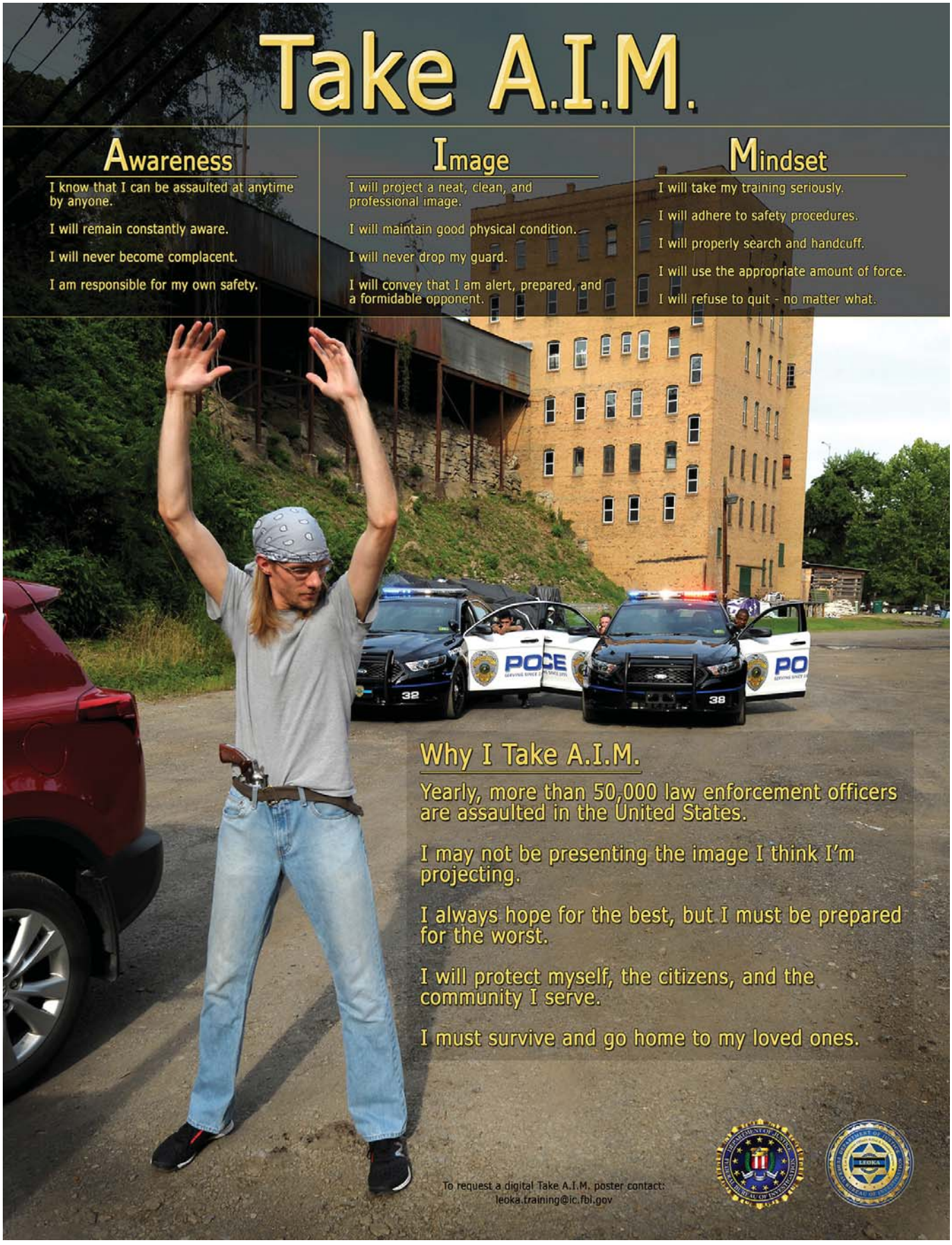
Perhaps the most notable outcome of the research conducted for LEOKA studies is the informational presentations that the LEOKA Program has developed based on the findings. The LEOKA Program's on-site presentations are designed to assist law enforcement managers, trainers, and personnel in the identification of training points for the purpose of preventing the deaths and/or serious injuries of law enforcement officers. The presentations consist of in-depth analyses of the research conducted in *Killed in the Line of Duty, In the Line of Fire*, and *Violent Encounters*, as well as explanations of the scientific findings of the research in operational terms. The *TAKE A.I.M.* poster, included at the end of this appendix, is one example of the practical information presented from the research.

In addition to LEOKA's statistical data, the FBI shares the information collected through interviews with surviving officers and convicted offenders during their OSAT. Excerpts from videos of the research-based interviews are a vital part of the experience. A common theme during the presentations is the sobering effect these videos

have on law enforcement officers as they observe firsthand accounts from victim officers who were critically injured and from the offenders who assaulted them. This unique ability to share both perspectives of a critical encounter is the hallmark of a LEOKA presentation.

The LEOKA Program's presentations enhance officer safety through research, resource allocation, the development of follow-up training, improved policies and procedures, and, perhaps most importantly, an increase in an individual officer's personal situational awareness. Officers who complete evaluations of the course consistently indicate the value of the training with high approval ratings. As of this study, more than 82,396 law enforcement officers representing 26,924 law enforcement agencies have received the information on safety and strategies to prevent or mitigate attacks.

Law enforcement agencies interested in having a LEOKA presenter to their agencies can request one by e-mailing the liaison staff at leoka.training@fbi.gov.


Take A.I.M.
Awareness
I know that I can be assaulted at anytime by anyone.
I will remain constantly aware.
I will never become complacent.
I am responsible for my own safety.
Image
I will project a neat, clean, and professional image.
I will maintain good physical condition.
I will never drop my guard.
I will convey that I am alert, prepared, and a formidable opponent.
Mindset
I will take my training seriously.
I will adhere to safety procedures.
I will properly search and handcuff.
I will use the appropriate amount of force.
I will refuse to quit - no matter what.
Why I Take A.I.M.
Yearly, more than 50,000 law enforcement officers are assaulted in the United States.
I may not be presenting the image I think I'm projecting.
I always hope for the best, but I must be prepared for the worst.
I will protect myself, the citizens, and the community I serve.
I must survive and go home to my loved ones.
To request a digital Take A.I.M. poster contact:
leoka.training@ic.fbi.gov

APPENDIX C

Human Reactions to Trauma

Internally, people respond differently to overwhelming stimuli. For instance, during a traumatic event, actors may experience tunnel vision (the tendency to focus on only one aspect of the event); they may be overcome by emotions or anxiety; or they may be unable to focus on anything but their injuries. The victim must quickly take in a tremendous amount of information and may easily experience cognitive overload, especially if the attack was initiated without warning. The human brain can consciously process only a certain amount of input, and once that threshold has been reached, no new information can be processed. A victim may cease to respond on a rational level once this occurs.

While reactions to a crisis are not the same for each person, trauma researchers, Levers and Buck (2012, pp. 323-324), have reported that people respond to crisis on four primary levels: physical/physiological, psychological, behavioral, and spiritual/existential.

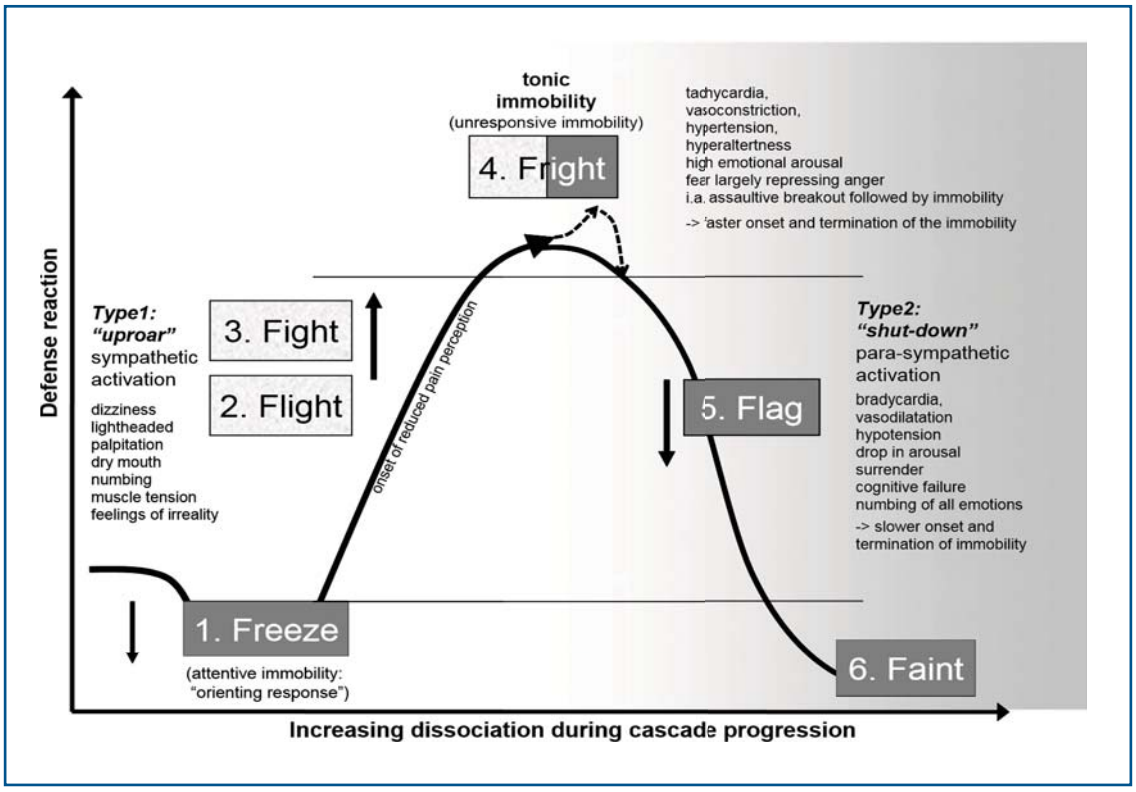


Figure 2.1 Schematic illustration of the defense cascade as it progresses along the 6-F course of action. The ''uproar'' sympathetic arousal reaches a maximum at the fright stage, eventually superseded by the onset of dissociative "shut down" (gray area).

Physical/physiological reactions to trauma

As an individual encounters a threatening situation, a number of physiological or biological responses may occur. In their research on traumatic stress, Schauer and Elbert (2010) detailed a six-stage model of physical reactions to traumatic events, composed of six Fs. These include *freeze, flight, fight, fright, flag,* and *faint*, as shown in Figure 2.1. *Freeze, flight*, and *fight* are characterized by the body's preparations to run away or to fight back. *Fright, flag*, and *faint* are characterized by the body's shutting down as a way to minimize injury or death.

Not all people experience all six of the stages described. When a threat is first encountered, the initial reaction is the *freeze* response, also known as attentive immobility. The person momentarily ceases movement and gathers information about the threat. He or she focuses attention on the source of the threat (in humans this is mostly focused visual attention). This focus is often referred to as hypervigilance. At the same time, several physiological/bodily systems are activated, including a decrease in heart rate and inhibition of movement. Within seconds, the body has a reverse in physiological reaction, which includes increased heart rate and an increase in the startle response. This is the body's way of preparing for the next stage of the stress reaction. In the second and third stages, the body is prepared for *flight* or *fight*. According to the model proposed by Schauer and Elbert (2010), the person will first attempt to flee if the threat is perceived to be serious. If flight is not possible, then the body prepares to fight off the threat. In this stage, the body's sympathetic nervous system is activated, meaning that the body reaches its peak level of arousal via the release of adrenaline. Physiological reactions at these stages include increased heart rate, increased blood pressure and blood flow to the large exoskeletal muscles, and restriction of blood flow to the skin in order to decrease blood loss should an injury occur. As this bodily process peaks, the person begins to experience fear, which is represented by "dizziness, nausea, palpitation, drowsiness, light-headedness, tension, blurred vision, feelings of irreality, numbing, and tingling" (Schauer & Elbert, 2010, p. 112).

Stage four of Schauer and Elbert's (2010) model is termed *fright*, and is characterized by immobility. Up until now, the body has been in what Schauer and Elbert termed an "uproar" phase, which has been accompanied by the body's escalation for action. It is at this fourth stage that the body makes its turn to the "shut down" phase (see Figure 2.1). In the previous stages, the sympathetic nervous system was activated and pumped the body full of adrenaline. In the *fright* stage, the sympathetic nervous system is still activated, but this is also when the parasympathetic nervous system is triggered. The result of the body's dual system activation may be an increased risk of cardiac arrest in these moments. While the person is involuntarily immobile at this stage, he or she is still very much alert and cognitively processing information. Thus, the victim will retain memories of details of the attack. Consequently, survivors of attacks who entered this stage may experience guilt or anger because they do not understand why they didn't fight back. Physiologically, though, they were unable to do so.

Stage five, *flag*, occurs when the body, which still cannot move, transitions from immobility due to muscle tension (stage 4) to flaccid immobility (Schauer & Elbert, 2010). That is, the muscles now relax to the point of losing any form of rigidity and become loose or soft. It is not uncommon for a person at this stage to lose control of his or her bladder and/or bowels. It is also at this time that mental functions shut down, the person becomes cognitively and emotionally numb, and she or he surrenders to the threat/attack. This is the precursor to the sixth and final stage, *fainting*, or loss of consciousness.

As previously mentioned, not all victims of trauma experience all six stages of the bodily responses to a threat. Indeed, many soldiers and first responders, such as police officers, may only experience the first three stages in dangerous situations, with fewer experiencing the immobility described in the later stages.

Psychological reactions to trauma

In conjunction with the physical reactions to a traumatic event, a victim's psychological reactions are also important to consider. For this study, psychological reactions were reviewed for both the immediate timeframe and for long-term efforts to process the event and cope with the possible effects of the trauma.

Immediate psychological responses

During a crisis, several immediate psychological reactions are possible. For instance, some people immediately experience the cognitive overload mentioned previously.

Other people may find their attention sharpens, taking in minute details that can be clearly recalled later. This sharpening of attention may lead to tunnel vision—losing the ability to focus on anything except one stimulus. Some experiencing trauma may develop symptoms that meet the criteria for acute stress disorder (ASD), which can be a precursor to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Because of the varying responses that can occur in the moment and the time period soon after a traumatic event, persons involved may recall the situation differently. The most common conceptualization of human memory is called the dual-store theory (Terry, 2009). In this theory, there are two components of memory: short-term and long-term. Each component affects how a person remembers an incident.

Short-term memory (STM), also called working memory, is limited in both duration and capacity. Under most conditions, unless a person works to keep something in the STM longer, information remains in the STM between 15 and 30 seconds. The capacity of the STM is generally between five and nine items of information. During cognitive overload, the capacity of the STM, also known as the executive function of the brain, becomes overwhelmed and stops processing new information (Jaeggi et al., 2007). This is parallel to what was described previously when the body experiences the *flag* response (a cognitive shutdown). A person in this state may not be able to respond appropriately to the environment because of confusion and disorientation that may accompany cognitive overload.

To recall information from the STM at a later time, a person must also process it in their long term memory (LTM). One widely held theory is that once human beings learn something they will always retain it in the LTM (Terry, 2009). With regard to capacity, the LTM is thought to be unlimited in capacity (to date, no one has ever learned so much that he or she was unable to learn anything more). The problem with the LTM is humans often fail to remember items in their LTM. However, if given the right cues, they should be able to remember. The LTM is divided into episodic and semantic memory. Episodic memories are personal and relate to a person's experiences. People tend to remember episodic memories as if they were a movie. Semantic memories are the facts and information that have been retained throughout a person's lifetime (Terry, 2009). Most of the memories accessed for the current study are episodic, which may be altered as one attempts to make sense of an event.

Longer-term psychological responses

Following a traumatic experience, such as an ambush or unprovoked attack, people spend time attempting to "come to grips" with what happened to them. They often rely on existing thought patterns and belief systems to process their experience. Statistics demonstrate most people (80 percent) who endure trauma do not develop PTSD and return to a psychologically healthy level of functioning (PTSD Alliance, 2017). Others, however, develop symptoms of psychological disorders, such as ASD, PTSD, depression, or other problematic reactions.

ASD is characterized by an intense emotional reaction to a trauma from 2 days to 4 weeks following the trauma exposure. The criteria for diagnosing ASD as described in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM-5) is:

> …the individual has at least three of the following: (a) a subjective sense of numbing or detachment, (b) reduced awareness of one's surroundings, (c) derealization, (d) depersonalization, or (e) dissociative amnesia (Bryant, Friedman, Spiegel, Ursano & Strain, 2010, p. 2).

Additional symptoms of ASD include: the traumatic experience is persistently reexperienced, the individual avoids stimuli that reminds him or her of the experience, and the person may feel elevated levels of anxiety and increased arousal. These symptoms must cause the person significant distress or impairment in social or occupational functioning and cannot be due to substance use or other medical conditions.

Often ASD is a precursor to PTSD (Bryant et al., 2010). The symptoms are comparable, but whereas ASD may be diagnosed within 2 days and up to 4 weeks post-trauma, PTSD cannot be diagnosed until after 4 weeks have elapsed. Thus, the main difference is duration of the symptoms.

It is important to note that although most people experience stress reactions to trauma, the majority do not experience the level of distress associated with a diagnosis of ASD or PTSD. Some protective factors that safeguard an individual from the development of a psychological disorder like ASD or PTSD after a traumatic

experience include previous exposure to trauma, good social supports, and psychological hardiness (Fyhn, Fjell & Johnsen, 2015). Hardiness has been defined as "a personality style that influences the individual to cope with challenges in a constructive and proactive way" (Fyhn et al., 2015, p. 2).

Behavioral reactions to trauma

Exposure to traumatic events can result in changes in a person's behaviors. Sometimes the resulting behaviors are positive coping strategies, and sometimes the behaviors lead to further problems. Among the positive coping behaviors are seeking out support from friends, family, and other officers and participating in professional counseling. Among many law enforcement officers, there is a stigma attached to seeing a "shrink," but one of the consistent findings of the current study on ambushes and unprovoked attacks is that counseling can be very helpful following such assaults. Another positive coping strategy several officers in this study described was going back to work as soon as possible. These officers reported that it was therapeutic to get back into a routine.

On the negative side, some people emotionally withdraw from friends and family after a traumatic event. This behavior may lead to relationship problems and possibly an increased risk of divorce for those who are married. Increased alcohol consumption and illicit drug use by victims of trauma are commonly used coping mechanisms. Although these behaviors may work in the short-term by numbing the emotional pain, in the long run, they are ineffective strategies to deal with the effects of trauma.

Spiritual/existential reactions to trauma

Over the past several years, there has been a growing interest in the law enforcement community to study and address the spiritual needs of officers. For instance, a course offered at the FBI's National Academy is *Spirituality, Wellness, and Vitality Issues in Law Enforcement Practices* (Willis, 2010). Many police officers are immersed in the darkest levels of humanity on a daily basis. Such experiences can take a toll on their emotional well-being and on their spirituality. As a result, burnout, depression, and other negative outcomes may develop.

Spirituality has many definitions, but in one study, spirituality referred to finding meaning in life, hope, idealism, and connectedness with others (Tovar, 2011). Another study of policing defined spirituality as "related to meaning, purpose, and connectedness to what one considers sacred and how one aligns with that sacredness" (Charles, Travis & Smith, 2014, p. 231).

In response to trauma, some people may question their core values, such as their religious or spiritual beliefs, and their beliefs in the goodness of people. They may begin to question the meaning or purpose of life, and find themselves on a slippery slope that leads toward self-destructive behaviors. In one study of Chicago-area police officers who worked juvenile sex abuse cases, Tovar (2011) found that some officers reported "relationship problems . . . change in worldviews, and a loss of sense of meaning."

Charles, Travis, and Smith (2014) also studied the spirituality of police officers and found that many officers relied on their spiritual beliefs and practices to help them cope with the difficulties they faced every day. One officer in their study described his depression and alcoholism following a school shooting but also recounted his recovery that followed an enhanced commitment to his spiritual practices. For an officer who has been traumatized by an attack and holds spiritual beliefs, it is important to consider the officer's history and how spirituality and spiritual practices can assist in recovery.

Summary

In the aftermath of a traumatic event, such as being ambushed or involved in an unprovoked attack, humans respond on four primary levels: physiologically, psychologically, behaviorally, and spiritually. All of these aspects are interrelated, so a negative response in one area may have a negative impact in another area. Despite receiving injuries and being psychologically and spiritually traumatized, people can develop effective coping strategies by relying on the resources in their environment. Such resources may include family, friends, coworkers, the community, one's religious/spiritual community and beliefs, and professional counselors and psychologists.

APPENDIX D

References

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist*, 32, 513-531.

Broomé, R. E. (2011). An empathetic psychological perspective of police deadly force training. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 42, 137-156. DOI: 10.1163/156916211X599735

Bruton, F.B., Smith, A., Chuck, E., Helsel, P. (2016, July 7). Dallas Police 'Ambush': 12 Officers Shot, 5 Killed During Protest. Retrieved from https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/dallas-police-ambush/protests-spawn-cities-across-u-s-over-police-shootings-black-n605686

Bryant, R. A., Friedman, M. J., Spiegel, D., Ursano, R. & Strain, J. (2010). A review of acute stress disorder in DSM-5. *Depression and Anxiety*, 0, 1-16.

Charles, G. L., Travis, F. & Smith, J. (2014). Policing and spirituality: Their impact on brain integration and consciousness. *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion,* 11, 230-244. DOI: 10.1080/14766086.2014.887479

Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

Daniels, J. A., Angleman, A. J. & Grinnan, E. (2015). Standardizing research methods on violent offenders: Perpetrator-motive research design and consensual qualitative research. *Aggression & Violent Behavior*, 21, 125-132. DOI:10.1016/j.avb.2015.02.001

Daniels, J. A., Angleman, A. J., Vecchi, G. M., Bilsky, K. D. P., Leonard, J., Grinnan, E., . . . Ramirez, B. (2015). A pilot study of criminal captive-takers' modus operandi. *Journal of Police & Criminal Psychology*.

Daniels, J. A., Angleman, A. J., Vecchi, G. M., Bilsky, K. D. P., Leonard, J., Page, J.,. . . Ramirez, B. (2016). Motives of criminal kidnappers: An exploratory study. *Journal of Police & Criminal Psychology*. DOI 10.1007/s11896-015-9188-z

Daniels, J. A., Volungis, A., Pshenishny, E., Gandhi, P., Winkler, A., Bradley, M. C. & Cramer, D. P. (2010). A qualitative investigation of averted school rampages. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 38, 69-95.

Fachner, G. & Thorkildsen, Z. (2015). *Ambushes of police: Environment, incident dynamics, and the aftermath of surprise attacks against law enforcement*. Washington, D.C.: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

Fischer, C. T. (2009). Bracketing in qualitative research: Conceptual and practical matters. *Psychotherapy Research*, 19, 583-590. DOI: Traumatic events10.1080/10503300902779837 5

Fyhn, T., Fjell, K. K. & Johnsen, B. H. (2015). Resilience factors among police investigators: Hardiness-commitment a unique contributor. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*. Online edition. DOI: 10.1007/s11896-015-9181-6

Hill, C. E. (Ed.). (2012). *Consensual qualitative research: A practical resource for investigating social science phenomena.* Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Hill, C. E., Knox, S., Thompson, B. J., Williams, E. N., Hess, S. A. & Ladany, N. (2005). Consensual qualitative research: An update. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52, 196-205.

Hill, C. E., Thompson, B. J. & Williams, E. N. (1997). A guide to conducting consensual qualitative research. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 25, 517-572.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (2011). *Ambush fact sheet*. 12 pp. Retrieved from http://www.theiacp.org/Portals/0/documents/pdfs/Ambush_Project/IACP_Ambush_Fact_Sheet.pdf

Jacobs, Lenworth M., & Joint Committee to Create a National Policy to Enhance Survivability from Intentional Mass-Casualty Shooting Events (2015, July 1). The Hartford Consensus III: Implementation of bleeding control. *Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons*. http://bulletin.facs.org/2015/07/the-hartford-consensus-iii-implementation-of-bleeding-control/

Jaeggi, S. M., Buschkuehl, M., Etienne, A., Ozdoba, C., Perrig, W. J. & Nirkko, A. C. (2007). On how high performers keep cool brains in situations of cognitive overload. *Cognitive, Affective & Behavioral Neuroscience*, 7, 75-89.

Joint Committee to Create a National Policy to Enhance Survivability from Mass-Casualty Shooting Events. Improving Survival from Active Shooter Events: The Hartford Consensus. Bull Am Coll Surg. 2013;98(6):14-16.

Ladany, N., Thompson, B. J. & Hill, C. E. (2012). Cross-analysis. In C. E. Hill (Ed.), *Consensual Qualitative Research: A Practical Resource for Investigating Social Science Phenomena*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Levers, L. L. & Buck, R. P. (2012). Contextual issues of community-based violence, violence-specific crisis and disaster, and institutional response. In L. L. Levers (Ed.), *Trauma Counseling: Theories and Interventions*, pp. 317-334. New York: Springer.

Mueller, B. & Baker, A. (2014, December 20). Two N.Y.P.D. Officers Killed in Brooklyn Ambush; Suspect Commits Suicide. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/21/nyregion/two-police-officers-shot-in-their-patrol-car-in-brooklyn.html

Nugent, Pam M.S., "Automaticity," in *PsychologyDictionary.org*, April 7, 2013, https://psychologydictionary.org/automaticity/ (accessed November 7, 2017).

Pinizzotto, A. J. & Davis, E. F. (1992). *Killed In The Line Of Duty: A Study of Selected Felonious Killings of Law Enforcement Officers*. FBI Publication #0189.

Pinizzotto, A. J., Davis, E. F. & Miller, C. E. (1997). *In The Line of Fire: Violence against Law Enforcement: A Study of Felonious Assaults on Law Enforcement Officers*. FBI Publication #0163.

Pinizzotto, A. J., Davis, E. F. & Miller, C. E. (2006). *Violent Encounters: A Study of Felonious Assaults on Our Nation's Law Enforcement Officers*. FBI Publication #0383.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Alliance (2017). *PTSD Statistics*. Retrieved from http://www.ptsdalliance.org/about-ptsd/

Schauer, M. & Elbert, T. (2010). Dissociation following traumatic stress: Etiology and treatment. *Journal of Psychology*, 218, 109-127. DOI: 10.1027/0044-3409/a000018

Schlosser, L. Z., Dewey, J. J. H. & Hill, C. E. (2012). Auditing. In C. E. Hill (Ed.), *Consensual qualitative research: A practical resource for investigating social science phenomena* (pp. 135-144). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Terry, W. S. (2009). *Learning and memory: Basic principles, processes, and procedures* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Tovar, L. A. (2011, July). Vicarious traumatization and spirituality in law enforcement. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*.

Vecchi, G. M., Van Hasselt, V. B. & Angleman. A. J. (2013). The Perpetrator-Motive Research Design: A strategy for understanding motivations, values, and tactics of criminal offenders. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 18, 11-18. DOI:10.1016/j.avb.2012.06.001

Willis, D. S. (2010, December). The practice of spirituality and emotional wellness in law enforcement. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin.*

APPENDIX E

Author Biographies

Jeffrey A. Daniels

Dr. Jeffrey A. Daniels earned a B.A. in Psychology at Metropolitan State University—Denver, an M.S. in Counseling Psychology from Central Washington University, and a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Since earning his Ph.D., he has served in academic appointments at Central Washington University and Indiana University. He is currently the Chair of the Department of Counseling, Rehabilitation Counseling and Counseling Psychology at West Virginia University.

Dr. Daniels has been engaged in research pertaining to violence and violence prevention for more than 16 years. Specifically, he has studied averted school shootings and school captive-takings. Dr. Daniels has also been conducting collaborative research with the FBI for more than 12 years using Perpetrator-Motive Research Design. He has conducted research on hostage-takers' motives and *modus operandi*, and participated in the current study of police officer ambushes. Dr. Daniels' research is published in peer-reviewed journals and presented at national and international conferences. He has also authored two books.

James J. Sheets

Dr. James J. Sheets is a liaison specialist with the Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) Program at the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division. He is the lead researcher for officer safety studies, an FBI-certified instructor, and conducts officer safety presentations nationally.

A 30-year-veteran of the FBI, Dr. Sheets started his career at the J. Edgar Hoover building in Washington, D.C. He joined the FBI Police and graduated from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in 1990. Dr. Sheets later transferred to the CJIS Division in Clarksburg, WV. He was promoted to sergeant in 2003 and lieutenant in 2008. He remained with the FBI Police until joining the LEOKA Program in 2012.

During his time with the FBI Police, Dr. Sheets was a patrol commander, supervised various operational programs, and completed FBI SWAT training. Dr. Sheets served as the FBI's agency representative to the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center at Glynco, GA, and graduated from the FBI National Academy's 226th Session. He commanded uniformed officers deployed to major national events and incidents such as the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta and Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Dr. Sheets holds a Ph.D. in Business Administration, with a specialization in Homeland Security: Leadership and Policy from Northcentral University, a Master of Criminal Justice from Boston University, and a B.S. in Criminal Justice from Fairmont State University.

Philip D. Wright

Mr. Philip D. Wright is a liaison specialist with the FBI's LEOKA Program. He is an FBI-certified training instructor and has lectured and trained law enforcement officers throughout the country. Since Mr. Wright joined the FBI's CJIS Division in 2012, he has researched felonious assaults and deaths of law enforcement officers and authored several articles relating to law enforcement safety. He has also consulted and advised local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies regarding law enforcement safety issues.

Mr. Wright began his law enforcement career in 1994 as a patrol officer with the Clarksburg (WV) Police Department, where he worked undercover in a multijurisdictional drug task force and was also a member of the Special Response Team. In addition, he was a certified instructor of RADAR and LIDAR enforcement.

In 2000, Mr. Wright joined the West Virginia State Police and spent the majority of his career working criminal investigations. He was a member of a specialized unit that investigates physical abuse and sexual assaults against children. He also taught officer survivability to cadets at the West Virginia State Police Academy.

Mr. Wright has a degree in Applied Science--Police Science from Marshall University.

Brian R. McAllister

Mr. Brian R. McAllister joined the FBI in 2011 and serves as a liaison specialist assigned to the LEOKA Program of the FBI's CJIS Division. He is an FBI-certified training instructor and a graduate of the 208th session of the FBI National Academy. Mr. McAllister has lectured and trained law enforcement personnel both nationally and internationally, and he has authored officer safety articles based on best practices learned from researching critical injury assaults, line of duty deaths, and the study of LEOKA data. He has also consulted and advised numerous federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies regarding safety issues.

Mr. McAllister retired as a lieutenant from the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D.C., after 28 years of service. During his tenure, Mr. McAllister commanded uniformed patrol and oversaw many of the department's high profile units, including the Homicide Major Case Team, FBI Safe Streets Task Force, Force Investigations Team, Forensic Science Services Division, Violent Criminal Apprehension Program—Female Murder Project, and the Arson Homicide Task Force. He also oversaw the creation and supervision of the Special Victims Unit and the Bait Vehicle Program. Mr. McAllister has extensive experience in conducting investigations, analyzing case data, studying crime analysis, identifying trends and addressing patterns, overseeing high profile investigations, and managing resources and personnel.