
DAMAGE CONTROL: MEDIA REPRESENTATION AND RESPONSES TO POLICE DEVIANCE

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the processes and outcomes of the negotiation of public discourse between the police and the media when police organisations are called to account in public scandals. Using the 1992 television documentary *Cop It Sweet* as a case study, the paper describes the problems of police/Aborigines relations exposed in the film, the reaction within the police hierarchy, the attempt at damage control and the subsequent repair work carried out in terms of improving police/minority relations. The role of the media as an agent of criminal justice reform and a mechanism for demanding police accountability is discussed in this context. It will be argued that scandals force police organisations to provide a credible account that deviance is under control. The consequences of scandals depend on the nature of the police organisation and its commitment to reform. Public discourse in relation to police deviance may provide an opportunity for police reformers to further their reform agenda, but in an organisation less committed to change, there is a danger that scapegoating, band-aid repair work and cosmetic changes may substitute for meaningful reform. The irony of police reform is that commitment to openness and accountability does not necessarily lead to a positive police image, but continual damage-control work by upper management in relation to scandals may lead to further cynicism and a hardening of the 'street cop' culture.

INTRODUCTION: MEDIA AND POLICING

The criminological literature has long documented the role of the media as a generator or amplifier of 'moral panics' regarding crime and deviance (e.g. Cohen 1972; Hall et al 1978). This literature highlights the processes engaged in by the media in the social construction of deviance. In general, research in this tradition has focused on what is conventionally known as 'street crimes' or violent crimes (see, for example, Fishman 1978;

Voumvakis and Ericson 1984). More recently, researchers have argued that, in fact, 'deviance is *the* defining characteristic of what journalists regard as newsworthy and, as such, becomes inextricably linked with journalists' method' (Ericson et al 1987:4). Media workers do not simply concentrate on street crimes and violence, they are engaged in the policing of all forms organisational life (Reiss 1983), especially that of public institutions. Organisational deviance in the form of corruption, procedural irregularities, or unfair practices is as much a preoccupation of the media as individual deviance, especially among the 'quality' media outlets which take seriously their 'fourth estate' function (see Ericson et al 1989). The important role of the media as an active agent of criminal justice reform is an area that has not been adequately explored and analysed in criminological research (see also Fisse and Braithwaite 1983).

The significance of the media's role as an agent of reform lies in the power of the public discourse of deviance and control they help in generating. By painting a picture of deviance, corruption or injustice, media stories contribute to the sense of urgency regarding the need for action to combat such corrupt or unjust practices. But the media are not alone in this enterprise of moral crusading - the public discourse is a product of negotiation between media workers and information sources (Ericson et al 1989). Organisations whose deviance is being exposed are capable of, and are routinely engaged in, shaping and developing this public discourse to minimise damage to the organisational image, as well as to project a sense of order and control by reporting on remedial actions being undertaken to rectify the problem. However, not all media workers are concerned with moral crusades, and not all members of the organisation being reported on are concerned with damage control.

The focus of this study is the interaction between the police and the media. Police researchers have suggested that there is a fundamental division between the 'street cop culture' and the 'management cop culture' within the police organisation (Reuss-Ianni and Ianni, 1983):

The cop culture is oriented to the policeman's lot, providing recipe knowledge about how to recognise problems and take decisions without getting into trouble. The management culture is oriented to the public culture, dealing in indicators of police performance, especially efficiency in crime control (Ericson et al 1989:111).

In their ethnographic research into the news media, Ericson et al (1989) find that there is a similar split between the two cultures of police reporters: the 'inner circle' reporters who typically work for popular media outlets and who are trusted by the police to carry stories which are more likely to enhance the popular image of the police, and the 'outer circle' reporters who

typically work for quality media outlets and who are prepared to engage in 'investigative reporting' and present stories which expose deviant police practices. Ericson et al (1989) argue that while inner circle reporters orient their work to both the street cop and the management cop culture, outer circle reporters are primarily oriented to the management cop culture:

It is arguable that [outer circle reporters'] emphasis on police propriety and efficiency through the portrayal of deviance served in the long run to enhance police management. The typical response to police malfeasance is to demand more resources in the form of more laws or rules, more equipment, and more personnel. ... In the long run and in the aggregate, outer-circle reporters contribute to this reform politics on behalf of police-management. They actually join with the police management culture in the policing of efficiency and propriety ... (Ericson et al 1989:113-114).

Typically, police forces seek to enhance their organisational image by having specialised media units in charge of providing information to the media. In large police forces, however, there is a recognition that authorised police officers in other units should be able to give factual information to the media in matters of public interest. The areas of 'enclosure' and 'disclosure' are carefully guarded, so that 'confidence', 'secrecy', 'publicity' and 'censorship' are judiciously employed (Ericson et al 1989:9). Nevertheless, large police organisations are porous, with numerous sources of information available to journalists, so that it is not always possible to 'patrol the facts' nor to avoid negative publicity. Ironically, when police deviance becomes a major public issue through media coverage, police organisations must seek access to the media to effect damage control.

Public scandals also require substantial repair work within police organisations. Since scandals threaten to expose organisational weaknesses and reveal systemic abuses, organisational representatives must 'energetically seek to restore and bolster up the myth system' (Punch 1985:7). They do so by 'attempting to minimise the issue, by claiming that it is an aberration caused by a few individuals, and [by seeking] scapegoats', while critics may insist that it was not a matter of a few 'rotten apples', but a 'rotten basket' (Punch 1985:15; Sherman 1978). Police organisations are more likely to be successful in this negotiation of public image if they can demonstrate their ability to control themselves. The adoption of immediate and visible reforms is essential:

To be successful reform may require that heads will roll, that chiefs and senior personnel be removed and replaced,

that a new style of control be implemented, that opportunity structures and enforcement patterns be altered, and that new norms and values be broadcast internally and externally as a reassurance that police behaviour will be changed (Punch 1985:16).

Scandals can also precipitate further fractions and divisions within the organisation. Management may attempt to locate the problems at a lower level, while rank-and-file officers may resist this scapegoating by pushing the blame upwards (Ibid:7). The traditional solidarity and secrecy of police culture break down under the strain of external scrutiny and official investigations (Ibid:121-122).

In spite of the significance of public scandals in generating demands for police reform, few studies of media representation and responses to police deviance are found in the literature. In this paper, the broadcasting of a television documentary on police/Aborigines relations in Sydney is used as a case study of the negotiation of public discourse by the police and the media in relation to police racism. The documentary, a graphic illustration of racist police behaviour in a patrol with a heavy concentration of Aboriginal people, sparked strong reactions both within and outside of the police force and led to a number of reforms being undertaken as a corrective measure. The paper will attempt to answer the following questions:

- In what way does the media engage in the processes of criminal justice reforms?
- How do police organisations negotiate the public discourse to control damage to their image?
- What are the consequences of these negotiations?

I will first describe the problems of police/Aborigines relations exposed in the film, the reaction within the police hierarchy, the attempt at damage control and the subsequent repair work carried out to improve police/minority relations. The role of the media as an agent of criminal justice reform and a mechanism for demanding police accountability is examined in this context. It will be argued that scandals force police organisations to provide a credible account that deviance is under control. The consequences of media scandals depend on the nature of the police organisation and its commitment to reform. Public discourse in relation to police deviance may provide an opportunity for police reformers to further their reform agenda, but in an organisation less committed to change, there is a danger that scapegoating, band-aid repair work and cosmetic changes may substitute for meaningful reform.

COP IT SWEET: POLICE/ABORIGINES RELATIONS IN REDFERN

In 1992, the ABC screened a controversial television documentary *Cop It Sweet*, a film about the reality of policing in the Sydney inner city area of Redfern. The film depicted police work in one of the most socially disadvantaged areas of Sydney which has a high concentration of Aborigines. The documentary was filmed over a six-week period in Redfern by freelance journalist Jenny Brockie with police permission at a 'senior command level' (NSW Police Board 1992:17). The content of the documentary was based on a collage of police work in this inner city area which has been well known in recent years as a site of tension between the police and the Aboriginal community. One account of the documentary neatly summarises the images presented:

Cop It Sweet ... was a shocking account of six weeks in the life of the Redfern police ... [T]hese real-life coppers artlessly revealed the bovine obstinacy and banal prejudice that sustains hostilities with the Aboriginal community ... They spoke automatically of 'coons' and 'gooks' and pubs 'full of lesbians'. Asked to explain what he meant by a 'suss' car, one policeman suggested a red Laser with an Aborigine driving it. ... These ludicrously young officers, who were sharp enough to sense that what they learned at the police academy was 'bull——', knew nothing about the people they were policing and were unable or unwilling to find out. As one officer remarked: 'I really don't stop and talk to them that much, to tell you the truth.' ... Towards the end of the program the police found a young Aboriginal man swearing on a street corner. [The man was subsequently arrested.] ... Back at the station, the man demanded to know what he had done. 'You swore,' said the policeman. 'You're kidding,' said the man incredulously. In the preceding hour, most of the obscene language had come from the police. In other circumstances it might have been comic. Here, it was almost harrowing. The Aboriginal man ... seethed with frustration and disbelief. ... (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 'Phoenix rises, but in Redfern police credibility lies in ashes', 7 March 1992).

Even though it lacked the sensational and emotive quality of the video footage showing the beating of Rodney King by Los Angeles Police, *Cop It Sweet* sent shock waves through the New South Wales police bureaucracy and the Australian community, confronting police officers with an aspect of their occupation and ordinary citizens with a view of their justice system that both groups would rather forget. The message was crude and uncompromising: the officers depicted were racist, sexist, ignorant,

insensitive and hypocritical, even though it was clear to the viewers that they were inexperienced officers working under extremely difficult conditions. But the film also raised a number of disturbing questions about the goals of policing, the quality of police training and supervision, the justice of the criminal law, and the culture of racism in Australian society.

Most significant of all, the film revealed a disturbing side of what has often been referred to in the academic literature as the police occupational culture (Skolnick 1966; Manning 1977). Police culture is situated in the 'back region' of police organisation, rarely disclosed to the outside world (Ericson et al 1989). Most of the academic accounts of police culture were based on observational studies of street-level police work. What the producers of *Cop It Sweet* managed to do was to make aspects of this culture visible to the public in a way that called police executives to account. The film maker's own description of what she discovered echoed many of the research findings:

My experience of general duties police is that they feel misunderstood, undervalued and constantly under siege from politicians, the media, welfare groups and their own bureaucracy. All this as they daily ricochet from the boring to the volatile, the trivial to the life-threatening. ... The police I met did feel separate from, rather than part of, the broader community. It had driven many of them to a siege mentality - the 'us and them' syndrome ... Racist language, was, at the very least, tolerated among police, though there was an awareness there'd be trouble if it was revealed to the world outside. But that was a question of tactics. Keeping it in house was what mattered. Keeping the lid on things. Always keeping the lid on things (Brockie 1994:177-178).

Instead of worrying about the racist language they used, police officers were more concerned about whether or not they were wearing their hats when the cameras were rolling. This was because 'they knew what was important to their bosses' — a knowledge subsequently validated by a senior police official's remark on the 'standard of the officers' dress' shown in the documentary (Brockie 1994:178; cf Van Maanen 1983).

For practitioners and analysts of the criminal justice system, the documentary offered nothing new or shocking. Relations between Aborigines and police at Redfern have been a problem for at least twenty years (Cunneen 1990). Among the problems documented in the late 1960s and early 1970s were the complaints that Aborigines were regularly arrested without cause and were subjected to a police-imposed curfew. Aborigines/police relations did not improve in the 1970s and 1980s. Constant complaints were made regarding police harassment and bashing of

Aborigines, plus numerous 'large-scale police incursions' into Redfern involving the use of riot police on several occasions (Cunneen 1990; Landa Report 1991). Indeed, the treatment of Aborigines by the criminal justice system throughout Australia has been the subject of numerous research studies, all of which highlighted policing as the most problematic stage of the criminal justice process (e.g. Luke and Cunneen 1992; Cunneen and Robb 1987; Gale et al 1990). In a way, Australia is no different from other Western countries such as Britain, Canada and the United States, where similar problems and conflict exist between the police and visible racial minorities. In Britain and the United States, racial tension and hostility have led to the eruption of major urban riots (Scarman Report 1981; Skolnick and Fyfe 1993). Minorities have complained of police prejudice, discriminatory law enforcement practices, violation of civil rights and even racially motivated violence. Police blame minorities for uncooperative attitudes, disproportionate involvement in criminal conduct, and ignorance or disrespect for the legal system. Some of the problems, such as those between the police and the indigenous people, are the results of centuries of colonisation and social deprivation. Others, such as those between the police and immigrants from non-English speaking countries, are ostensibly related to language and cultural differences.

What the documentary uncovered, therefore, could not have been all that surprising to members of the police force. Yet it was a picture of police work at great variance with the organisation's rhetoric of community policing, non-discriminatory practices and professionalism. It was this gap that required explanation. It was the damage done to the credibility of the organisation that required control. Even though none of the activities portrayed in the documentary would have been classified as illegal, the need for damage control was no less urgent. In this way, the media was more effective than the law in demanding accountability from the police.

The significance of *Cop it Sweet*, then, was not so much that it said anything new about police race relations, but that it raised serious questions about the effectiveness of police reforms. Even though many New South Wales police officers publicly expressed abhorrence and disgust at the behaviours of their colleagues, and vehemently dissociated themselves from the image conveyed by the documentary, critics of the police saw the film as a scathing indictment of police racism and a vindication of their long-standing criticisms of police practices in Aboriginal communities. Some blame the wider Australian culture as the basis for racist attitudes among police officers. Others were impatient with the lack of progress in police reforms, advocating immediate actions and more drastic measures to be taken. The irony of this public indictment of the New South Wales Police is that it came at a time when the Police Service had been undergoing some

major organisational and cultural reforms over several years. In 1984, a new Commissioner was appointed to the NSW Police Force. John Avery's mission was to rid the force of its corrupt image and open the door to a new police culture in which service to the community — including Aboriginal and other visible racial minority communities — is a major motivation for police work. Many sweeping administrative changes were introduced by the Avery administration, including a complete reorganisation of the command structure, and the introduction of a merit-based promotion policy. Some of these changes dealt a heavy blow on the corrupt elements of the force and paved the way for more lasting reforms of the police organisation. Other changes such as the implementation of new recruitment and training policies were to consolidate the reform process by producing a new generation of police officers more responsive to the needs of the community. Some initiatives were specifically aimed at improving police/visible minority relations; others were simply blanket reforms for building a more professional, accountable and open police force (see Chan 1992). In terms of improving police/Aborigines relations, there have been an impressive list of positive achievements, including the appointment of an Aboriginal Client Consultant and Aboriginal community liaison officers, the establishment of Aboriginal community consultative committees, the introduction of a bridging course for Aboriginal people to increase their educational level to qualify for entry into the police force, the development of training programmes for Aboriginal community liaison officers and cultural awareness programmes for patrols, and the development of Aboriginal Studies curriculum for training of recruits (Crawford 1992:10). *Cop It Sweet* was not only embarrassing to the police administration, it revealed devastating evidence that eight years of police reform has changed little on the streets of Redfern.

NEGOTIATING THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE

In spite of the predictability of its content to police researchers, when the highest ranking executives of the Police Service viewed *Cop It Sweet* for the first time, it was reported that they 'nearly fell off their chairs' in amazement (Chan 1992). Media and public reaction to the documentary were also unusually strong. Part of the explanation for this reaction may be that television images are powerful and convincing:

The visual capacity of television allows it to bind its messages to the context in which they were produced ... The greater the capacity to bind messages to context, the greater the validation powers of the medium. Television appears most valid because statements made by its sources can be contextualized in the real places in which they were

made. ... Television's capacity to bind messages to context and thereby validate its messages accounts for the fact that survey research in Canada, Britain and the United States consistently show that readers find television news more believable, fair, and influential than radio or newspapers ... (Ericson et al 1991:23-24).

Viewers may have read or heard about the problems of police/Aborigines relations in Redfern, but television allows them to see the problems as if they were there. Police managers do not directly supervise or control the work of line officers; they rely on written and verbal accounts provided by these officers to inform them of what goes on in the streets. The television images are thus particularly revealing, and where there are clear breaches of rules or regulations, extremely embarrassing for the organisation. Another reason for the public outrage has to do with what is not shown. As one analyst of the film medium points out,

Cinema is an art and a medium of extensions and indexes. Much of its meaning comes not from what we see (or hear) but from what we don't see or, more accurately, from an ongoing process of comparison of what we see with what we don't see (Monaco 1981:136-7).

Viewers of *Cop It Sweet* could well imagine the likely behaviour of these police officers if the television camera had not been present. As a letter writer to the *Sydney Morning Herald* states, 'What is most frightening about the actions of the officers shown in the program is that they are those of the police on their best behaviour for the cameras' (*SMH Letters* 7 March 1992).

Of course, not all reactions to the documentary were hostile to the police. One letter writer complained of 'journalistic manipulation of the issues' and 'public blind spot to Aboriginal lawlessness' (*SMH Letters* 7 March 1992). Another supported the police who 'work day to day with racial tension, drunkenness and violence' and defended the officers' swearing and racist comments as 'ways of coping' with their work (*SMH Letters* 7 March 1992).

As Ericson et al (1989) point out, police organisations have in recent years recognised the importance of co-operating with the media as a way of sustaining the organisation's image of being open and accountable:

The police have become relatively more open. Unlike the courts, they often have full-time public-relations specialists and news-media officers who are proactive in disseminating knowledge and arranging for 'media events.' While this aspect of openness may be taken as a sign that efforts are being made to exert more control over the news media, it is also a sign that the police recognize the need to

be more open and accommodative to perpetual demands for news-media coverage ... In the face of being used at the forefront of public debates about the relation between the individual and the state, and as a sign of governmental accountability, the police recognize the importance of allowing reasonable access to the news media and the account ability allowed by its discourse (Brogden, 1982; Jefferson and Grimshaw, 1984; Reiner, 1985). ... (Ericson et al 1989:11).

Proactive media strategies can, in the long term, protect the organisation from its environment and enhance the organisation's legitimacy. When the organisation is under attack, as in this case, a proactive approach is important for containing the damage done to its image. According to senior police officers, the State Executive Group had an opportunity to watch *Cop It Sweet* one week before it was broadcast. A 'damage control' meeting was called and senior representatives of operational, policy, and disciplinary branches got together to discuss ways of responding. The damage control operation was well orchestrated and professionally executed:

I think firstly that there was genuine concern of what had happened from the Commissioner down and that certainly wasn't affected or put on. The issue was that, as there always is in these situations, you need to do something and you need to be seen to be doing something. ... I think another standard approach in damage control is to stress the positive. ... The critical part of the strategy was in fact to get on the front foot. So by the time the program went to air we'd already had the written stuff prepared. Tony [Lauer, the Police Commissioner] knew what he was going to say. We had approached the media channels before the program even went to air, so that at 7 a.m. the next morning he's on Alan Jones, and then he's on John Laws and then he's on Andrew Olle, etc.[radio talk shows]. In other words, get out there first, don't sit back and wait for the questions. And then he did Jana Wendt and whatever [television interviews]. You don't take them all on, you pick the ones that you think will have the maximum exposure. You make sure you're well briefed about the issues and generally you're open about it. In other words, if there's criticism there, you accept it if it's right - not everything ... So part of that is about stressing the positive but accepting that there are things to do and trying to identify what those issues are. (*A senior administrative officer*).

A proactive approach meant that instead of being on the defensive, the police organisation was seen to be already doing something about the problem. The front-page headline of the *Sydney Morning Herald* read, for example, 'Police shake-up over TV racism' (*SMH* 6 March 1992). The message was unequivocal that the racist behaviour was unacceptable, and something was being done. Deviance was portrayed as 'individual and incidental' and located at the lower ranks of the organisation (cf Punch 1985:152), while senior management was presented as being clearly in control:

- An internal investigation had been ordered by the Commissioner into the conduct of 140 officers stationed at Redfern
- The Commissioner was 'dismayed' by the behaviour of some of the officers, but was 'confident their attitudes did not reflect those of the overwhelming majority in the force'
- The transfer or dismissal of some officers was one of the options being considered

The Assistant Commissioner in charge of Training and Recruitment supplied the positive news of the Police Service's achievements in recent years in terms of improved training and standards (*SMH* 'No excuses: police training chief', 6 March 1992):

- New recruits were better educated (13 per cent were university graduates; average HSC mark of 343), older (average age 25 compared with 21 or 22 a few years ago); with 31 per cent of the class being women
- New instruction methods were introduced last year to train recruits to handle different situations
- Future graduates would be stationed at 'demonstration' patrols which emphasise teaching
- There were 161 Aborigines in the police service; 32 were Aboriginal liaison officers
- Bridging programmes were set up in conjunction with the TAFE college for Aborigines to improve their educational standards to qualify for recruitment into the police service
- Members of other ethnic minority groups were also being recruited

There was, of course, still a lot of bad news on the same pages. Police/Aborigines relations were still tense, with a spokesman for the Aboriginal Legal Service and a local activist both claiming that 'nothing had changed' because 'police still regarded Aborigines as the enemy' (*SMH* 'Harassment increasing, say Aborigines', 6 March 1992).

Critics of the police were not impressed by the slickness of the media campaign, although the thoughtful ones did appreciate the enormity of the problem and the fact that the organisation was genuinely trying:

[Police Commissioner] Tony Lauer talks about how we've made great strides in this and great strides in that - and he's a terrific publicist ... he articulates very well, but it's all fairy tale. I mean, he believes what he's saying and he's got procedures in place but it takes a long time and you know you go forward two steps and something happens and they go back five sometimes. And I mean his responses to *Cop It Sweet* were very clear and not bad press but I don't think it convinced anybody. ... I watched *Cop It Sweet* for instance ... I mean, it was exactly what I expected, you know, what's new? It was only revealing to people that don't know the area. And so to say it's isolated - he's just fooling himself and he believes it. And, you know, the changes just aren't any great leaps in these things. I mean, if they work on it and work on it and work on it - no, they just don't really consult enough. They don't really go for resources to help them outside their own, which is crazy ... But in fairness there are some areas where [community liaison] is working very well ... For instance they've increased the input in college for liaison officers and Aboriginal police. I think they really are sincerely trying to do it.

The media coverage which followed in the next few days focused on various issues such as the injustices of the offensive language provisions of the *Summary Offences Act* (NSW) which 'gave police an open ticket to arrest Aboriginal people' (*SMH*, 'Language law may be a joke - but not for blacks', 7 March 1992); the futility of scape-goating the inexperienced police officers portrayed in the film (*SMH* Letter 10 March 1992); the increased rate of detention of Aborigines in prisons and the lack of progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody (*Sun-Herald*, 'Black deaths inquiry a waste of time, money', 8 March 1992).

What the NSW Police was not prepared for, however, was a second bombshell in a week: the screening on ABC television news clips from an amateur video, showing two NSW police officers with their skin painted black and nooses around their necks, mocking two Aborigines whose death had been the subject of investigation by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. The tape was made in 1989 at a police fund-raising party in Eromanga, a town in Queensland. This time the outcry was led by the Prime Minister Paul Keating, who called the video 'sickening' and said that the officers' behaviour 'brings disgrace on themselves, on their police force and on Australia' (*SMH* 'National disgrace: the ugly faces of

Australian racism', 13 March 1992). Again the Police Commissioner ordered an inquiry. The two officers were placed on restricted duties and the Commissioner offered an 'unreserved apology' to the family and friends of the dead Aborigines, Lloyd Boney and David Gundy. The Commissioner's Office issued a statement to the media which, apart from offering apologies and expressing disappointment, attempted to broaden the focus of the debate from the police to the wider Australian society:

'... We readily acknowledge there are problems between the police and the Koori community.'

'But when one considers that the NSW Police, in line with Government policies of the day, were forcibly removing Koori children from their mothers as late as the 1960s, one can start to fathom the extent of the historical friction between both camps ...'

'I remain firm in my belief that the problems confronting the Koori people go well past the police and into areas of health, unemployment, alcohol abuse, housing and education.'

'Of course, the ABC footage reflects badly on police, but it also shows up the depth of a wider community malaise.'

'The actions of these few officers mirror a broader social problem and this episode is a shocking and stark indictment on the attitudinal ambivalence many of us feel.' (*Police Service Weekly* 23 March 1992:3).

This broader view was also taken by both the Prime Minister who put the onus on white Australians to change their attitudes towards Aborigines, and the Aboriginal Deaths in Custody royal commissioner Hal Wootten, who saw it as a reflection of the deep-seated racism in Australian society (*SMH* 'National disgrace: the ugly faces of Australian racism' 13 March 1992).

ORGANISATIONAL REACTION AND REPAIR

Reaction

Within the police organisation, there were mixed reactions to the incidents and opinions as to where the blame should be laid. After the initial shock and disbelief, members of the organisation began to distance themselves from the negative picture that was painted. Distancing consists of condemnation, denial and criticising the messenger. Many rank-and-file police officers openly condemned the racist language and unprofessional practices of those portrayed in the documentary. An executive of the Police Association explained:

The interesting statewide response was that the police at Redfern were subjected to a level of abuse and, I guess, rejection that I have never experienced in my twenty odd years of policing. And that the general view was that the behaviour of the Redfern police was not only seen as being unacceptable but it caused great discomfort to police generally throughout New South Wales ... It was interesting in talking with some 80 police at Redfern that the thing that they objected to most of all was the fact that they had been rejected by their own peers. Some would suggest that that was significant in terms of the police culture – that is that for the first time we've seen what I call the great body of police publicly rejecting the behaviour of a group at Redfern ... There was a whole range of responses ... [The Police Association] received a lot of telephone calls which were in the main very offensive ... Redfern itself received a tremendous number [of calls] from police throughout the State. Again many of them from irate police officers very upset, very offensive. Then there were a range of responses in the press, letters to the editor where police identified themselves and were attempting to distance themselves from ... what they call the 'Redfern element'.

The culture of secrecy and solidarity among police officers may have been partly broken at a time of crisis, but several letters to the Police Association's 'official journal' regarding *Cop It Sweet* presented some dissenting views. One letter condemned those who criticised the Redfern police as acting out of 'mindless self-interest' which threatened to destroy camaraderie among police officers:

This letter is ... about and directed to all those persons, police or otherwise who have had the gall to ring Redfern Station to register their self righteous indignation about the police and their behaviour in that programme. Who the hell do they think they are? I've even seen letters to the editor in a Sydney newspaper from police officers in which their holier than thou drivel is espoused. Stand and be counted - how many of you have submitted your green form to relocate to Redfern and to volunteer to work a night shift on Redfern One. ... let's think twice before jumping on a bandwagon; camaraderie amongst police does not mean conspiracy - it means comradeship and good fellowship; qualities, I fear we are in danger of losing to that of

mindless self-interest. ... (A police sergeant, *NSW Police News* April 1992:35).

Another letter reinforced stereotypes of Aborigines and attempted to justify police practices by laying the blame on Aborigines themselves:

To our branch this show depicted that it is the Aborigines who are racist when it comes to police. The Aborigine arrested for indecent language showed this openly when he swore at the sergeant declaring by what right he had to dare to enter an Aborigine area and to get out immediately - hence the language ... If police are inclined to be racist, and I am not suggesting that they are, then the Aborigines have given them plenty of cause to take this view. As well as committing plenty of offences against the law, they often show open animosity against police especially when drinking - which is often. In my own experience, for many years I had a lot to do with Aborigines. In those days the Aborigine Protection Act was in force, which in part prohibited them from drinking intoxicating liquor. I can assure you that the Aborigine of the 50's was a much happier and peaceful person than he is today - there being a few exceptions of course. The day the Government accepts the fact that intoxicating liquor is one of the main problems of Aborigines the sooner relations between Aborigines and whites, especially Police, will improve ... (Secretary of an organisation of retired police officers, *NSW Police News*, June 1992:45-46).

Many within the police organisation saw *Cop It Sweet* as unbalanced and unrepresentative, thus denying that there was a systemic problem. Some of the comments from senior police were concerned with the lack of balance and questioned the professional judgment of the documentary producer:

I was concerned. I don't believe that it was a balanced presentation. For example, I had two of the Aboriginal Liaison Officers from Redfern here yesterday and I asked them were they interviewed by the ABC journalists and they said - and they nodded and I said I didn't see you in the programme and they said, well, they didn't like what we said ... I think they were out to tell the story they wanted to tell. I really think they went in there with a preconceived idea of what police and Aboriginal relations was all about and that's how they presented eventually. It doesn't justify what I saw recorded, I'm not seeking to do that. (A senior

police executive)

The programme *Cop It Sweet* ... was I think far from a balanced programme. It was in my view quite boring television, an attempt to copy the American *Cops* type programme, but we don't have the same kind of activity here that keeps it interesting ... That crew spent six weeks at Redfern Police Station, the first three weeks they spent insinuating themselves with the people so that they became just part of the furniture and the second three weeks filming. Now if you spent three weeks filming consistently you would expect to have something more exciting. My own suspicion is that they got a bit desperate - there wasn't much dramatic happening and they put together what they could. That doesn't detract from the fact that some of our young officers were behaving in a manner that we, of which we disapprove as an organisation, but I think it is a reflection of community attitudes rather than specifically police attitudes. (A senior administrative officer)

There are some police that I suppose are cowboys. That's how I would refer to them and they would express their views which would certainly not be reflective of all the police within that Patrol. I know some police that are down there that have done a lot of good work with Aboriginal youth which wasn't portrayed - in relation to training, education, even had some funding granted to them with Cleveland High School where there was a school based project running for \$1,500 to get a scheme up and running. It portrayed a lot of the negativity. I don't think it was reflective of the whole Patrol. (A senior police officer).

In fact, the organisation was in the middle of another 'repair' job when *Cop It Sweet* went to air. During the previous year, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC)'s National Inquiry into Racist Violence had come out in strong condemnation of Australian police forces as the main perpetrators of racist violence against Aborigines (HREOC 1991). In spite of the fact that the National Inquiry made use of a variety of information sources, one consistent reaction to the *Report on Racist Violence* within the New South Wales Police Service was that the research was methodologically flawed. One officer remarked about the Inquiry's study of police treatment of Aboriginal juveniles:

... you realise that all the people they interviewed were offenders, don't you? I'm not saying it's not possible; it

could have happened, but bear in mind that they're allegations. Bear in mind they are the criminals. They've all got an axe to grind if you like ... I think the general consensus is that the report is exaggerated and not a true picture. Because I think police are extremely careful about what they do with Aborigines because of all the flak they've received. There's also a high degree of provocation that goes on ... How do you cope with it? And we have young police who go to, some of them go to Walgett wanting to do the right thing. They've been educated and taught to be sensitive and they go there and they confront 50% of the population that is abusive and violent and aggressive. I mean, what is that going to do to anybody? (A civilian officer)

This also echoed the general criticism by the police of an earlier Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission report on the Redfern raid in 1990 (Cunneen 1990). As a newspaper editorial pointed out in that case:

Instead of answering the most telling of the specific criticisms of the raid, [Police Commissioner] Mr Avery has attacked the report for its lack of balance. In particular, he says, it failed to take proper account of 'the operational constraints and responsibilities placed on police in the [Redfern] area' and 'the positive initiatives undertaken by police to seek to improve the quality of life in Redfern.' ... Mr Avery's response will not do. A strong criticism emerging from the Human Rights Commission report is that positive policies, however imaginative and sincerely applied, can be thoroughly undermined by one single misguided policy such as the resort to the heavy-handed methods characteristic of the Tactical Response Group. (SMH Editorial 'the police role in Redfern', 24 May 1990)

The *Racist Violence* report took the police organisation by surprise. They did not think that the police would be singled out as the prime perpetrators of racist violence. Even though the Inquiry did not place the blame on any one police force in Australia, one member of the NSW Police objected to the scapegoating of the police by the Inquiry:

The major concern was that by having what was seen as a heavy police focus, that there's wider systematic problems that clearly impacted on or influenced the relationship between the police and minority groupings. It was argued the report did a disservice in failing to recognise that many

other government agencies had failed to accept their responsibility and that ultimately the problems, which should have been shared not only within the agencies and bureaucracies but within communities, were in fact being sheeted home to police. (*A police officer*).

The frustration felt by those who have been the 'reformers' within the police force was evident in the following account by a member of the police organisation who attempted to establish a dialogue with the critics regarding the issue of overpolicing:

Overpolicing was one of the major criticisms of the report ... I got up at [a conference run by the Institute of Criminology] - there was a good roll up at the conference, great roll up. All the converted - there was no one there who had a different point of view to the mass point of view. I sat there and listened to speaker after speaker dump on the coppers and I thought, no, it's a bit more serious than that, there's more going on than just dumping on the police and so I got up and tried to take them to task on the issue of overpolicing by suggesting that the police patrols they had nominated as being heavily overpoliced were in fact overpoliced - on a simple system of ratio of police to population, they were way overpoliced, but if that was the only criteria they were going to use to judge whether they're overpoliced or not, they missed the point, because the way the government responds - and by that I mean the electorate at large and individual government agencies - is to depend upon the police agency to keep the lid on these communities ... and the way we staff towns like that is on a workload basis. So that the more reports of crimes you get the more police you get. It's a sort of vicious cycle and in lieu of any other agency doing anything constructive, what you do is you find you get more and more police because the communities - the downward spiral of disintegration that takes place in these communities because of poverty, unemployment, alcoholism, and consequentially, domestic violence, child abuse, bad health and hygiene, all those issues manifest themselves in crime and none of the other agencies pick the tab up. And what the government does is ask the coppers to pick the tab up. That issue of overpolicing I was trying to say to this conference is a very complex issue ... and the response I got from the audience was one of derision.

The organisational response to the *Racist Violence* report was, according to one officer, to not take it seriously. The official response was that 'Staffing levels will be increased in patrols with high Aboriginal and non-English-speaking populations and police officers will be warned that racist violence will not be tolerated' (*SMH* 'Police act on racist violence inquiry', 27/5/91). It took the commitment of a few members to make sure that the organisation did not simply sweep everything under the carpet:

I suppose at the end of the day there are some individuals in here who are serious about improving the quality of service to minority communities, but the organisation as a whole doesn't give a shit about it. This gets me back to our typical bureaucratic response to this report. We didn't take it seriously when it was happening, then there was the media circus with the likes of [name of journalist] talking about individual allegations of racist behaviours and that, we then thought we'd better do something so we responded again with some releases ... then it stopped there - stopped dead. And that's where the whole show would have stopped, right, and I'm sure in any other organisation that's where it has stopped. It's gone absolutely no further. What happened here was a few people, [names of people] ... decided that we needed to pick up the ball and run with it. So, in any organisation you're dependent on some ratbags doing something about it, so we picked it up and said, well, we need to set up a mechanism internally that's going to take it seriously, and is going to respond to it and that's where we set up our Working Party on the report ... What we tried to do was to involve operational police ... in working up our response to the recommendations.

The Working Party met over twelve months and came up with additional recommendations to deal with structural obstacles to combatting racism. A status report was made to the Commissioner and an implementation schedule was developed. The final recommendations went to the different commands for comments. Meanwhile, *Cop It Sweet* came along and the Commissioner established another working group to advise him on what action might be taken by the organisation in response.

Repair

Opinions varied within the police organisation regarding what went wrong with Redfern and one of the most frequently raised criticism was the quality of supervision:

If you're looking at Redfern, ... the reality is that -

notwithstanding the Redfern film was a one-hour clip of six or eight weeks — the behavioural characteristics must have been known — in my view ... to the patrol command. I can't see how that could have been avoided. If you were to come in here and tell me certain things occurred last night and they occurred to certain people, I might say we might have expected it, we thought we had it under control, we'd missed, but I just don't see how it could not have been known and that poses some questions. At the same time, bearing in mind the experience of Operation Sue nine or twelve months earlier, you must query the role of the District Commander I would have thought ... The reality is that the behaviour was so open that it's very hard to say that people didn't know it was going on and it's very hard to say that, whilst you may not have fully agreed with it, there was obviously no one totally opposed to it .

Another diagnosis was the gap between training and practice — Redfern was a difficult patrol to work in and police training did not adequately prepare officers for the type of work they had to engage in. One constable explained:

I found that Redfern is a place that's extremely difficult to police. It's extremely hard. The incidence of crime is not petty ... The huge housing commission complexes and the high density of population in a small area creates a lot of difficulty. Alcohol's a really visible problem in the area, maybe more so with Aboriginal people than white people ... Why it's difficult to police is because you're making important decisions quickly and often Redfern police have a high workload so they're constantly going from one job to another — at whatever age level they are or whatever amount of experience of policing that they have — flying by the seat of their pants ... Redfern police are dealing with difficult situations maybe three or four or five times a day ... What that woman says on the film when she says the Academy is 'bullshit' ... she's saying that we have to make split decisions, we had to make them quickly and the Academy doesn't teach us this.

As a result of the scandal, a review of the quality and effectiveness of cross-cultural training was undertaken. *Cop It Sweet* was to be incorporated into a video for police training and a senior lecturer in multicultural studies was appointed to the Police Academy.

Some officers attempted to broaden the organisational response to the documentary away from simply improving supervisory practices and police training, towards assisting local police to develop meaningful strategies and consultation with the Aboriginal communities. One officer proposed that a proper debriefing session should be conducted with all the police officers working at Redfern to allow officers to reflect on the problems and collectively come up with some plan of action to improve the situation. Another proposed a comprehensive programme of consultation with the Aboriginal community in Redfern. These ideas were not immediately adopted by the police executives. One officer tried to establish a consultation mechanism through the Police Association (*SMH*, 'New force to tackle Aboriginal friction' 17 March 1992), but his effort was met with scepticism from the community and obstruction from the association.

A frustrated officer thought that once again the police organisation gave up an opportunity to do something substantial about the problem:

We've had the window open up before, you know, Operation Sue gave us an opportunity to do something. The National Inquiry report gave us an opportunity to do something. There've been lots of individual instances where we could have taken opportunities to improve our game. This one absolutely shattered the window and we've got this huge opportunity to do something. What do we do? Bring in the repair people and whack up a bit of four by two so no one can get in. Basically that's where we are; we're hoping it will go away ... Nothing's changed, absolutely nothing has changed. We'll wait for the next disaster in Redfern and we'll go into this cycle again ... So, you know, we're really back to the situation ... [where] we're not taking it seriously. I'm not even sure if it's we're not taking it seriously, or we don't understand the issues. That's where up at the senior executive level, we must hope it'll go away again and we'll weather the next storm. And I don't think it's really conscious on people's part. I think they want people to do the right thing. They hope that we give a good service to Aboriginal people or people from ethnic minorities, but you're dealing with the general population in the Police Service with all the prejudice and nothing happens easily. It's all a lot of work, a lot of commitment. It takes a lot of commitment and a good understanding of all the underlying issues and it's not really there at present.

One example of senior police not understanding the underlying issue was given in relation to what was said at a meeting:

One guy said to me in our ... meeting ... he said there's so many recommendations going, you don't change these people - talking about the Aboriginal people - 200 years they've been like this, you're not going to change them, and I said to him, we're not trying to change them, it's *us* we're trying to change - he sort of missed the point.

The organisation's public show of openness and emphasis on the positive did not prevent an internal 'witch hunt' from being conducted. Questions were asked about who had allowed the filming to take place, what procedures had or had not been followed, and how the organisation could ensure that it never happened again (Brockie 1994:179). An officer who took an active part in pushing for change had mixed feelings about the initial outcomes:

What *Cop It Sweet* did do, it raised the level of debate within communities within this nation to the point where there was, as I saw it, a collective responsibility coming to the fore, where for the first time the issue in debate didn't centre exclusively on policing. I also believe *Cop It Sweet* has been instrumental in forcing a government response to the Commission on Black Deaths in Custody. Unfortunately, it appears that from a Police Service viewpoint, their only understanding of *Cop It Sweet* was to see it strictly in terms of unacceptable behaviour of a few - the perception that there was a clear lack of supervision and I've seen no evidence to suggest that anything meaningful will in fact come from the Police Service to address what I see are the wider issues. In fact what I saw from the Police Service response was to justify police education and training, was to reject the behaviour and basically to call on our Internal Affairs people to conduct a fairly close investigation to identify those constables and sergeants who were either directly seen in the film as behaving unacceptably or were ultimately found to have some level of responsibility in terms of supervision.

It was not until a year later that some of the consequences of the organisational responses to *Cop It Sweet* and the 'bad taste' video became apparent. In April 1992, the Commissioner announced that 13 officers whose behaviours were broadcast in *Cop It Sweet* and the amateur video were to be subject to disciplinary action. The two former Bourke police officers featured in the amateur video were to be transferred and closely supervised for two years. They were also to be paraded and counselled by the State

Commander and required to attend 'an educational course designed to encourage empathy and understanding with ethnic and minority groups'. One constable at Redfern received a disciplinary transfer and would be directly supervised. Other police ranging from Probationary Constables to an Inspector were to be paraded and/or counselled. The Commissioner justified the disciplinary action as reflecting a 'problem-solving' approach meant to 'impact positively on long-term attitudinal and cultural change', since little benefit could be gained by 'banishing' these officers, who 'have already been widely criticised and ridiculed in the public arena and within the ranks of their own profession' (*Police Service Weekly* 11 May 1992:13). The NSW Aboriginal Legal Service and the widow of David Gundy were reported to be outraged at the leniency of the punishment (*SMH*, 'Anger over transfer of racist police', 25 April 1992).

Subsequent developments prompted a previously sceptical member of the organisation to comment on the positive effect of *Cop It Sweet*, 'We need a *Cop It Sweet* every week'. The positive developments include an 'historic' meeting between a group of Aboriginal elders and senior police, including the Commissioner, in May 1992. The meeting was 'part of a consultation process the Commissioner is undertaking to improve the relationship between Police and the Aborigines' (*Police Service Weekly*, 15 June 1992: 31). The State Commander also visited various centres in the North West area and met with both the police and the local Aboriginal communities. In October 1992, a two-day forum attended by senior police and Aboriginal leaders from around the State considered a draft Police Aboriginal Policy Statement and the formation of a Police Aboriginal Council. The Policy Statement was subsequently launched in December - a significant event in the history of police/Aborigines relations in New South Wales, since such a policy statement had not existed until then, although an Ethnic Affairs Policy Statement relating to people of non-English speaking background had been developed since 1988. What was more significant, however, was the fact that the statement was developed through extensive consultation with the Aboriginal community. In this statement, the NSW Police Service 'is committed to providing a service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, which is appropriate to their needs and free from racism and other forms of discrimination'. Furthermore,

Appropriateness will be determined through a comprehensive and ongoing process of consultation. This consultation will involve the general Aboriginal community, including Aboriginal people who have come under police notice.

A Strategic Plan was to be developed and monitored by the Police Aboriginal Council and the Policy Statement was to be evaluated every

twelve months by the Council, and 'changes considered necessary by Aboriginal people will be considered by the Council'.

In a 1993 speech on police accountability, the Commissioner expressed his belief that police organisations should not give in to the 'natural desire to retreat when under attack or scrutiny':

Some have made the analogy of a police organisation being much like a turtle. If it is bashed about, the turtle simply sucks its head, arms and legs into its shell ... and it doesn't matter how hard or ferociously you bang on top, it remains tucked away from public glare. The turtle-like temptation must be resisted (Lauer 1994:65).

Ironically, being more accountable meant being more open and accessible to outside scrutiny. This in turn could lead to more damage to the organisation.

Some senior officers within the police organisation thought that the succession of adverse media coverage in recent years was not the result of any deterioration of the quality of police work; rather, it reflected a more mature, more open and a more accountable police organisation:

The impression often held by politicians and the community is the police stuff up more now than they used to. My view is completely the opposite. I think that in the old days we covered them up ... And I think that, if you like, the price of being a more accountable organisation is more visibility and I think that it's desirable ... I think we stuff up less but we hear a lot more about it ... In the old days we basically said nothing, said 'no comment' and did no preparation, put our heads down and copped it. Now ... it's certainly more sophisticated in terms of being more open-minded for a start, recognising we make mistakes or continue to make mistakes, and that's particularly more so now when you're trying to change things. You always make more mistakes when you introduce some of these substantial changes as we have in the past 5 or 6 years.

The lesson of *Cop It Sweet* appeared to be that openness was to be a virtue of the higher rather than the lower levels of the organisation.

While the Commissioner allowed the ABC programme *The 7:30 Report* to follow him around from morning till night for a week, Jenny Brockie was allowed only limited filming of the police 'under the tightest supervision' for her subsequent documentary on the Campbelltown Local Court (Brockie 1994:179).

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE MEDIA

The accountability of police has been an issue much debated by both practitioners and academics in recent years. In general, accountability refers to the 'institutional arrangements made to ensure that police do the job required of them', but there is considerable disagreement regarding which should be regarded as the appropriate institutions to which police are accountable (Brogden et al 1988:151). Certainly, police are supposed to be accountable to the law: illegal activities are punishable by criminal law, while other failures to perform their duties properly may be dealt with by civil remedies or disciplinary procedures. Police regulations or codes of practice, criminal and civil courts, administrative review tribunals and citizen complaints procedures are instruments of accountability available to the general public. More recently, however, there is increasing recognition that police should also be subject to democratic political control, since law enforcement policy is more than a neutral legal decision but a political choice (Brogden et al 1988:161; Lustgarten 1986). Goldring and Blazey (1994) have argued that police in Australia should be subject to the same mechanisms of accountability as other public sector employees:

Public officials who have discretionary powers ... are in general, accountable for the way they exercise those powers. They are accountable to their departmental superiors, in hierarchical systems. They are accountable financially, through the audit systems. They are accountable to the Ombudsman and to the courts for their administration. They are accountable in many ways under the managerial techniques which have now become part of public sector administration ... It should be assumed that in a democratic society police services and individual police officers are subject to the democratic control of the Parliament (Goldring and Blazey 1994:27-28).

The role of the media as one of the mechanisms of accountability is seldom discussed in the literature (Skolnick 1994), although the participation of the news media in exposing police corruption is well known (Sherman 1978). It may be argued that in the case of *Cop It Sweet*, the media had succeeded in securing accountability where the hierarchical structure, the audit systems, the Ombudsman, the courts, the managerial techniques and the democratic process had failed. The documentary and subsequent media coverage had revealed, publicised and helped dramatise the problem of police race relations, so that police executives were forced to defend the

organisation (cf Sherman 1978). Just as police bureaucracies demand routine giving and taking of accounts between subordinates and supervisors, media scandals require police executives to provide credible accounts to demonstrate that they are in control of their organisation and that appropriate actions are being taken to rectify the problems.

The power of the media should not, however, be overstated. Police organisations have two choices when confronted with adverse publicity. They could retreat into their shell as Commissioner Lauer mentioned, or they could try to control the damage by proactively engaging in the negotiation of the public discourse. Increasingly, the latter strategy is found to be more effective in protecting organisations from further adverse publicity and allowing them to steer public debates in a less damaging direction. The ultimate success of a scandal in effecting change depends critically on the extent to which the organisation is willing and able to take seriously its responsibility to be publicly accountable. As Braithwaite and Fisse (1987) find in their research on the control of corporate crime:

... companies with little will to comply sometimes draw lines of accountability with a view to creating a picture of diffused responsibility so that no one can be called to account should a court look into the affairs of the company. Everyone is given a credible alibi for blaming someone else ... (Braithwaite and Fisse 1987: 227).

The willingness of the New South Wales Police Service to take accountability seriously was demonstrated by the actions and policies which emerged from the aftermath of *Cop It Sweet*. Its ability to take accountability seriously was the result of years of reform which have begun to change the police culture at least at the upper management level. Although senior management did try to portray the problems as individual and incidental, as well as being located at the lower levels, and there was a tendency for scapegoating and conducting 'witch hunts', these were accompanied by a serious attempt to consult with Aboriginal communities and improve police training. In fact, many of the initiatives announced as corrective measures had been planned and developed before the scandal. *Cop It Sweet* provided reformers within the organisation with powerful ammunition to push for further changes - it was a catalyst for implementing the necessary reforms. Instead of activating inter-rank hostilities and unleashing a war of resistance by the lower ranks against

managerial control (see Punch 1975: Chapter 6), the scandal led to a fairly widespread condemnation of racism among police officers, a recognition of the deficiencies in training and supervision, and a renewed commitment by the police organisation to further reforms. There was also increasing awareness in the community that police racism could not be successfully dealt with until racism in the wider society had been confronted.

The positive outcomes of the *Cop It Sweet* scandal, however, should not obscure the possibility that deviant police practices may well persist in spite of the reforms. Sherman (1978: 263) has suggested that scandal is not sufficient for reforming a deviant police organisation; ultimately police organisations must be able to control themselves. Given that some senior officers still resorted to witch hunts and scapegoating as methods of exerting control, and that media access to the police organisation had since been curtailed in spite of the Commissioner's pledge for the organisation to be more open and accountable, the temptation to carry out piecemeal and cosmetic repair work rather than meaningful change would remain strong. In spite of years of apparently radical reforms, the public image of the NSW Police Service has been marred in recent years by some high-profile cases of blundering, incompetence and unprofessional activities (Wootten Report 1991; Lee Report 1990; Landa Report 1991; Staunton Report 1991). Opponents of reform saw these as evidence that many of the initiatives were ill-conceived and that the pace of change was too rapid. The irony of police reform is that a commitment to openness and accountability does not necessarily lead to a positive police image, but continual damage-control work by upper management in relation to scandals may lead to further cynicism and a hardening of the 'street cop' culture.

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