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Role Conflict and Nonsexual Boundary Violations Among Correctional Officers

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Despite the growing presence of prisons in American society, little is known about challenges experienced by correctional officers (COs); specifically, no research has investigated how their intermediary status between inmates and prison management can result in rile conflict. This descriptive case study explored role conflict among 10 retired COs and the presence of inmates who enter prison with a high public profile. It also examined of nonsexual boundary violations are prompted by COs' role conflict. Role conflict theory provided the framework for the study. Open-ended interview questions were generated to address the study's research questions, which concerned the effects of role conflict on CO's perceptions of prison operations, safety, and employee morale. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, than analyzed for recurring themes using open and axial coding. Three themes emerged from the analysis: high-profile inmates were described as more popular, more intelligent, and more manipulative than regular inmates and CO's which contributed to perceptions of role conflict among the COs assigned to guard high-profile inmates. This study contributes to social change by providing insight into the challenges of COs' job roles that may influence the training and development for prison staff and management of high profile inmates.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The American prison system is a growth industry. According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2013), 1,570,400 adults were incarcerated in the United States at the end of 2012, by far the largest number of any country in the world. According to the Pew Charitable Trust (2010), the percentage of the population behind bars is also higher in the United States than anywhere else. About one in a hundred American adults are currently incarcerated. Between 2005 and 2006, the U.S. prison population increased by 3.1%, which was followed by a 1.6% increase from 2006 to 2007. In 2007, total spending on corrections (local, state, and federal) was over $49 billion. Annual per-prisoner operating costs range from $13,000 in Louisiana to $45,000 in Rhode Island, with a national average of almost $24,000. Capital expenses average about $65,000 a bed for a typical medium-security prison. From 1987 to 2007, total state spending on corrections increased by 315% (Pew Charitable Trust, 2010).

By any accounting, the prison system makes up a sizeable portion of the U.S. economy. As of 2007, correctional agencies accounted for about 7% of state spending, and increases were greater than for many other areas of the economy, including education and Medicaid. Although total spending on corrections trails health, education, and transportation, almost all money spent on corrections comes from state funds, unlike other areas, which draw more heavily on federal dollars (Pew Charitable Trust, 2010). The growth of the U.S. prison system has been fueled by a political climate that has emphasized getting tough on crime. Although observers can point to demographic trends and crime rates, in the final analysis, incarceration rates, argued Roberts (2008), are a

reflection of public policy. Ironically, public concern about crime has dropped. A 2006 Gallup poll found that 2% of people cited crime as the country's most important problem, compared to 15% in 1977 (Roberts, 2008).

Although crime may not rate as high on a list of the country's problems as it once did, news about crime still dominates the major media (Roberts, 2008). Also, the popularity of television shows such as "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," now in its 14th season, is testimony to Americans' enduring fascination with criminality. Popularized depictions of prison life perpetuate a number of distortions and misconceptions. Chief among these is the stereotyped portrayal of prison guards, who almost always are represented as brutal and corrupt.

As Walters and Caywood (2006) noted, although they are the least visible and least glamorous component of the criminal justice system, those employed in corrections have more or longer contact with an inmate than does any other component of the criminal justice system. Given the stresses and dangers of prison work, one might wonder why people become correctional officers. According to Josi and Sechrest (1998), traditionally corrections has been viewed as an occupational field, not a profession, and many corrections officer recruits enter the field strictly for the paycheck and benefits.

For much of the history of corrections, officers' training has been haphazard. In the absence of formal training academies, most training was on the job. Many of the officers Lombardo (1989) interviewed, who entered prison service prior to 1972, reported that they were simply issued a badge, a club, and a hat; shown the yard; and told to go to work (p. 89). As one officer at Auburn's correctional facility reported, "An inmate broke

me in. . . . Really! He told me to stand back and he showed me how and where to frisk" (as cited in Lombardo, 1989, p. 40).

Training became much more regularized in the 1970s. New York State instituted a formal training academy in 1973 as a result of the Attica riot. Now, training starts in an academy and continues after officers graduate. Many states, including New York, provide orientation training at each correctional facility. For example, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), part of the Bureau of Prisons within the U.S. Department of Justice, provides training, technical assistance, information services, and policy development for federal, state, and local corrections agencies (Camp & Gaes, 2005).

There is no typical correctional officer (CO). According to Herivel and Wright (2003), unlike the stereotypical Hollywood guard, real-life officers do not lend themselves to a capsule portrait. "The inability to generalize about the contemporary correctional officer even is apparent inside a single facility. Attitudes, behavior, enforcement of regulations and rules differ markedly from shift to shift" (Herivel & Wright, 2003, p. 21). Differences exist throughout the country as well as within an individual system. The average CO could be male or female; Black, White, or Hispanic; married, single, divorced, or separated; a high school graduate or holder of a bachelor's or even a graduate degree (Camp & Gaes, 2005). Officers might come from a rural or urban area, might live close by or drive many miles to work. They may have chosen to become COs for the pay, or for job security, or because of a desire to help others. No one group holds a monopoly on the title of CO, and officers are as varied as employees in any other U.S. occupation (Day, 1998).

The interaction between COs and inmates typically has been characterized by the media as fraught with violence, abuse, and exploitation by sadistic guards victimizing defenseless, noble inmates (Epstein, 1994). Yet this stereotypical characterization has little justification. The reality of prison operation is complex, and the legal and professional constraints guards operate with make the media's representation of prison life inaccurate at best (Arlington County Sheriff's Office, 1999).

Some misconceptions may have been encouraged by misguided social science research. For example, one well-known study used college students to play the roles of both prison guards and inmates in a setting designed to simulate the correctional environment (Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973). Many of the students assigned to the role of guard became abusive and appeared to enjoy the power and control they wielded over the inmate group. The interaction between the two groups—characterized as negative, hostile, confrontational, and dehumanizing—led to the researchers' decision to release some participants from the experiment early because they were beginning to display signs of serious psychological distress. Regardless of how similar this scenario might appear to prison life, there were important differences. The students assigned to the role of guard received no training. No rules defined which behaviors were appropriate or inappropriate. In short, little in the study approximated actual prison life.

One of the first scholarly works to examine the daily interplay between COs and inmates was Sykes's *The Society of Captives*. Sykes (1958) noted that the social system of the prison complicates the relationship between COs and their inmate charges. Although that relationship is sometimes characterized by abuse, ridicule, and disdain, living together intimately in a closed prison society can also cause officers to see inmates

as real people, which can complicate the ideal relationship of separateness between the two groups. Added to these pressures is an administration that desires a smoothly operating institution and does not want problems with the inmate population. Officers might bend the rules or make deals with inmates to gain their compliance and avoid conflict. Rule-breaking might be tolerated in some areas if it enables officers to enforce the rules in other areas. Rule-breaking, even if it is strategic, can leave an officer open to blackmail by inmates. New COs are especially dependent on inmates' assistance and are thus more likely to be leveraged for preferential treatment.

Despite get-tough-on-crime rhetoric, relying totally on coercion to control inmates is ineffective. Gaseau (1999) found that how COs went about gaining compliance from inmates reflected their position in the officer hierarchy. Newer officers tended to cope with inmates by trying to be personable. Direct use of coercive power was uncommon, probably because both inmates and COs knew that lower-ranking officers wielded little actual power or authority.

To reduce uncertainty among COs, prisons have specific policies governing relationships with inmates. The language is there, but the words are subjective and open to individual interpretation (Hemmens & Stohr, 1999). For example, in New York, Departmental Rule 3400 addresses familiarity: "Employees must not engage in undue familiarity with inmates. Whenever there is reason for an employee to have personal contact or discussions with an inmate, the employee must maintain a helpful but professional attitude and demeanor." But as Kennedy (1996) observed, "It's hard to draw a line between fraternization and being friendly" (p. 58).

> Uncertainty over where that line is can create friction among officers. Steven Ray, a CO at Attica since 1983, says he was criticized for being too friendly with inmates. "That kind of bugged me. It was just because I stopped and took time to listen to a guy. I didn't see that as being overly friendly. At first, I was concerned about what they were saying about me. But as time went on I knew I was doing the right job. I wasn't breaking any facility rules, and I felt I was right. I have to live with myself and not these people. I'm not going to change myself so they'll say 'Ray's a good guy.' I won't do that for staff or inmates or anybody." (Kennedy, 1996, p. 124)

Attitudes and behavior have changed over the years. MacKenzie (1989) quoted a 20-year veteran of Sing Sing: "In the old days, we watched them, we locked 'em in and we counted 'em. That's all there was to it" (p. 144). Before major prison reform in the early 1970s, guards mostly turned keys and had little meaningful contact with prisoners. With reform, *convicts* became *inmates* and *guards* became *corrections officers*. Now the job description called for an ability to communicate with people and not simply beat them up.

The new prison culture bred feelings of powerlessness among COs. Martin (1999) defined powerlessness as "the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his/her own behavior cannot determine the occurrence of outcomes, or reinforcements, he/she seeks" (p. 149). Powerlessness can result from a lack of input into decision making, a lack of opportunity to affect overall institutional goals, or failure to bring about meaningful change in the lives of offenders. Powerlessness, argued Martin, is endemic in

jobs where a classical organizational pyramid and paramilitary organization result in employees being seen as people to be controlled rather than worthwhile resources.

Faced with unrealistic or difficult-to-interpret regulations, COs develop informal rules in order to do their jobs (McCampbell & Layman, 2001). Many COs believe that the rule-makers (administrators and judges) are unqualified to determine appropriate policies and procedures because they lack direct experience in the prison setting. But working in an environment where the prescribed norms seem ill-conceived is a recipe for meaninglessness (Miller, 1999).

According to Miller (1999), many COs believe that inmates are treated better than officers are by the prison administration. COs feel caught between administrators, who look on them as incapable of autonomy, and inmates, who view them as powerless pawns that lack the backing of their supervisors. As McCampbell and Layman (2001) summed things up, the minimal sense of duty among those who are held captive, the obvious fallacies of coercion, the inadequate collection of rewards and punishments to induce inmate compliance, the strong pressures toward corruption of COs in the form of friendship, the unstated dictates of reciprocity, and the transfer of duties into the hands of trusted inmates—all are structural defects in the prison's system of power rather than individual inadequacies.

What most civilians know about guards is what they learn from the movies. *Cool Hand Luke, Brubaker, Shawshank Redemption*, and others paint melodramatic versions of prison life that have some common denominators. Among their lessons are the following: Although a few inmates are very bad, many are actually reasonable people, wrongfully imprisoned middle-class White men facing a high likelihood of rape.

Wardens are often corrupt, and guards are uniformly brutal. This stereotyping of guards could reflect the fact that the job tends to attract tough guys predisposed to violence. Or perhaps guards are normal men who become violent once enmeshed in the system. In this study I draw on a literature review in which I trace the history of incarceration in the United States, explore the growth of prisons as profit centers, discuss the influence of the media on public attitudes toward criminality, recount the development of the correctional officer as an occupation, explain the phenomenon of role conflict, and consider the particular challenges and consequences for correctional officers.

Problem Statement

Although much is known about criminal behavior and the sociology of prisons, the daily lives of the people who work there remain largely hidden. The most common publications about prison guards are first-person accounts by former correctional officers. Typical of these is Gregory's (2002) story about his life as a guard at Alcatraz and Conover's (2000) book about being a guard at Sing Sing. There is also a modest (and dated) literature on how to recruit and train correctional officers (Galvin & Karacki, 1969). Role theory (Kahn & Katz, 1966) has been influential in sociological and psychological studies. In brief, role theorists posit that people's behavior is heavily influenced by particular roles they assume in different social and occupational settings. These roles are constellations of social and cultural expectations and as such are subject to behavioral norms.

An inherent feature of roles is conflict, and sociologists have distinguished several types of role conflict. One influential description of role conflict is that of Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964). They enumerated four types of role conflict: intra-

sender, inter-sender, inter-role, and person-role. These result when the expectations for a particular role prove incompatible. Prison guards are prime candidates for role conflict, yet that feature of their job has not been studied. Role conflict that results in officers becoming too close to inmates can compromise security and discipline, putting both officers and prisoners at risk.

Given the growing prison population in the United States and the burgeoning effects of prisons on the U.S. economy, understanding how the prison system works and to what ends is of increasing importance. Given the important role that COs play in the prison system, understanding how they fulfill the complex demands of their job is also important. This qualitative case study used interviews with COs to address the dynamics of role conflict on the job.

Nature of the Study

Case study research has been a staple in the social sciences (Creswell, 2003). According to Yin (2003), the case study is useful for understanding complex contemporary social phenomena and lends itself especially well to the study of real-life events. Yin defined the case study as an empirical inquiry that "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). Stake (1995) distinguished among three types of case study: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. The first of these, intrinsic, refers to a study in which the researcher has a personal interest.

Case study researchers can consider a variety of evidence, including observation, interviews, and documents (Yin, 2003). Yin argued that in case study research, interviews should be flexible. Open-ended interviews attempt to solicit opinions rather than simple

facts. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) emphasized the importance of rapport between interviewer and interviewee.

The current research was an intrinsic, descriptive case study. As Yin (2003) noted, such a study is particularly appropriate when a researcher has access to something that was hitherto inaccessible. The study was based on open-ended interviews with 10 retired COs who have worked in a New York State maximum-security correctional facility. The study grew out of my experience as a 28-year correctional officer in the New York State Department of Corrections.

Research Questions

The phenomenology and consequences of role conflict among correctional officers have been inadequately studied. The purpose of this study was to explore how the CO role has evolved; what forms of role conflict COs experience; how role conflict is affected by the presence of high-profile inmates; and the consequences of role conflict for prison operations, safety, and morale. The study was guided by five research questions:

1. How has the role of correctional officer (CO) evolved since the 1970s?
2. What expectations are currently attached to the CO role?
3. What forms of role conflict do COs experience?
4. How does the presence of high-profile inmates affect the dynamics of role conflict among line officers?
5. What are consequences of role conflict for prison safety and morale?

Purpose of the Study

Incarceration has been a fact of life of societies for much of human history. In the United States, the growth of the prison-industrial complex has been much commented on

(Herzing, 2005). But despite the growing presence of prisons in American society, little is known about the job performed by perhaps the most important employee in the prison system: the guard, or correctional officer. That job, like any other, consists of roles: sets of behavioral expectations or norms. What happens when those expectations conflict? What gives rise to role conflict among COs, and how do they cope with it?

Staff sexual misconduct violates both federal and state law, including the Eighth and Fourth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution and the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003. Numerous state criminal statutes prohibit sexual contact between corrections staff and offenders. The corrections literature is replete with research on inmate-officer sexual boundary violations, but studies about nonsexual violations are virtually nonexistent (Kennedy, 1996). The purpose of this study was to explore how role conflict affects the relationship between COs and inmates, specifically nonsexual officer-inmate boundary violations.

Theoretical Basis

One long-standing concern of occupational sociologists is how people's work lives are influenced by social and cultural expectations (Kahn et al., 1964, p. 18). These expectations become codified in what sociologists refer to as *roles*: sets of behaviors that people display on the job that are predictable and consistent and reflect shared social expectations. Role theory, then, has been an important tool in understanding the world of work.

A person simultaneously occupies a number of roles. A female manager, for instance, has one role with respect to the people she supervises and another one in relation to her supervisor(s). Her role as a woman will inevitably affect how she relates to

other employees, both male and female. Her role as a wife or mother might affect her job performance on any given day. The fact that people have numerous roles creates the potential for what occupational sociologists call *role conflict*, the inevitable clash among competing or perhaps incompatible role expectations. What continues to be an influential typology was described by Kahn et al. (1964), who distinguished among four types of role conflict: intra-sender, inter-sender, inter-role, and person-role.

Intra-sender conflict occurs when different expectations from a single member of the role set are incompatible. *Inter-sender* conflict occurs when "pressures from one role sender oppose pressures from one or more other senders" (Kahn et al., 1964, p. 20). *Inter-role* conflict is the result of expectations attached to an individual in one role clashing or interfering with those of the same person in another role.

Kahn et al. (1964) described the foregoing three types as *sent role* conflict, that is, the pressures originate from the outside, from expectations generated among other members of the role set. Other types of conflict develop when sent or outside pressures combine with internal forces. In *person-role* conflict, role expectations violate particular values or needs of an individual, or the individual's needs and aspirations result in actions that antagonize other members of the role set (p. 20).

Most discussions of role conflict have focused on employees in the middle of an occupational hierarchy (e.g., managers) rather than on those at the top (e.g., CEOs) or bottom (e.g., assembly line workers). As Ritzer (1977) observed,

> Because they are in relatively high positions in an organization, managers and officials are particularly subject to conflicting expectations from significant others within the organization. Professionals are far less likely to suffer from role

> conflict, because by definition fellow professionals are their major significant others. (p. 205)

Furthermore, most professionals assume fairly well defined roles that are well known by their clients, who usually approach them with expectations consistent with the services they offer. Based on Ritzer's observation, in the prison setting one would expect wardens and prisoners to experience little role conflict, whereas guards might be expected to experience a great deal.

Definitions of Terms

High-profile inmates: Offenders who enter prison with a reputation based on the nature of their crime(s). These offenders have received extensive media attention prior to incarceration. In prison, they may be subject to protective custody.

Role: A sociological construct that specifies behaviors people display that reflect shared social expectations.

Role conflict: Clash among competing or perhaps incompatible role expectations.

Training module: A 1-week unit of instruction at an officers training academy operated by the New York Department of Correctional Services.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Scope

I assumed that participants would answer all questions honestly. A potential advantage of this study is that because participation was limited to retired COs, they should have been unconcerned about whether expressing candid opinions would jeopardize their employment status. I have been a New York correctional officer since 1986. Although that experience served me well in undertaking the current study, it could

also have made me subject to biases that other investigators might not face. I took several steps to minimize bias; these are detailed in Chapter 3.

This case study was not based on a particular correctional facility but rather on experiences of recently retired COs who may have worked at one or more of New York's several maximum-security facilities. A variety of officers were interviewed to determine if they experienced role conflict and, if so, what types of conflict predominated. Emphasis was placed on high-profile inmates, those who enter prison with an established reputation based on the sensational nature of their crimes, and on how role conflict might exacerbate nonsexual boundary violations. Although it would have been interesting to interview officers at other state and federal facilities around the country, time and monetary limitations made that impossible.

Significance of Study

Prisons in America are big business. The United States has the highest incarceration rates in the world (Pew Charitable Trust, 2010; U.S. Department of Justice, 2013). The prison is an example par excellence of the modern institutional system; it is designed to be efficient and replicable. Given the histories of its primary occupants, the potential for chaos in a prison is greater than perhaps in any other kind of institution. Prison administrators and staff counter this potential by relying on rigorously enforced rules of behavior.

As classic middle managers, prison guards are at the forefront of efforts to control and rehabilitate convicted criminals. However, the context in which they work renders them particularly susceptible to role conflict. This descriptive case study of a particular prison and the COs who work there will shed light on a hitherto darkened corner of the

U.S. criminal justice system by assessing the utility of role conflict theory in illuminating the lives of COs. It has the potential to change attitudes about prisons, prisoners, and the cultural consensus that created and sustains them.

Questions about the people who work in prisons are especially relevant today because of growing budgets for prison construction and maintenance. The prison guard is on the front lines of America's war on crime. Yet in spite of the important role that COs play in what has been called the prison-industrial complex, too little is known about this occupation. This study will add to the limited literature on COs by considering how they respond to role conflict.

Given the growing percentage of resources being devoted to incarceration and the increasing significance of the prison-industrial complex, prisons are an appropriate topic of study. And in light of the important role COs play in the dynamics of imprisonment, they are worth of special attention. Although COs have been the object of some academic study, few researchers have focused on the phenomenon of nonsexual role conflict within their ranks. This qualitative study addresses that gap in the literature. Results from this study should be useful to any student of the U.S. correctional system, and especially useful to administrators, uniformed supervisors, and line officers.

Summary

The U.S. prison system, and especially its growth in recent decades, has been the subject of considerable academic study, as well as intense media attention. One neglected area of inquiry has been the important role that COs play in the prison system. Although prison guards are prime subjects for what occupational sociologists have called role conflict, that phenomenon has been little studied. This study was based on the dynamics

of CO role conflict, with an emphasis on high-profile inmates. The study was grounded in role theory, and I used personal interviews as the primary means of data collection. Investigating the role conflict of COs could do much to illuminate the U.S. criminal justice system, the most extensive in the world, and particularly the dynamics of incarceration. In the next chapter, I review the relevant literature for the study. Chapter 3 consists of a description of the study's methods. In Chapter 4, I present the study's results, and in Chapter 5, I offer conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The U.S. prison-industrial complex has received considerable attention, both from academic researchers and the popular media. The United States incarcerates more people per capita than any other country in the world (U.S. Department of Justice, 2013), and prisons are a growth industry. Much is known about the U.S. criminal justice system. Much is also known about high-profile criminals, especially serial murders, who regularly garner media attention. However, comparatively little is known about the interactions between those criminals and the COs with whom they come in contact in prison.

In this chapter, I review the relevant literature for a case study concerning interaction between COs and high-profile inmates in the New York State prison system. The review begins with a brief history of incarceration. I then summarize popular perceptions of criminality and document the rise of prisons as a for-profit enterprise in the United States. Next, I describe the challenges posed to correction facilities by housing high-profile inmates. I highlight some characteristics of such criminals and provide a brief overview of policies and procedures concerning role conflict in the New York State Department of Corrections. I conclude with a summary of research on qualitative design and case studies.

A Brief History of Incarceration

What has been called the first American penitentiary, if not the first one in the world, was established in Philadelphia in 1790 in the Walnut Street Jail, a building formerly operated as a city jail. The cellblocks constructed in this jail introduced the

structural pattern of outside cells with a central corridor, the chief architectural feature of what came to be known as the Pennsylvania system of prison construction. Prior to this period, each area was an island unto itself, and policies and procedures were fashioned to the taste of the locality. In Philadelphia, the use of imprisonment through solitary confinement as the usual method of combating crime was permanently established. The basic principles of the new system were an effort to reform those in prison and to segregate them according to age, sex, and type of offense (Elsner, 2004).

Stark punishment, as cruel and intimidating as it could possibly be made, exerted a strong influence on the original design of prison architecture. Prisons were built to look more foreboding, in both their external and internal architecture, than security needs could have dictated. Attitudes toward incarceration, then, reflected larger social forces. Prisons mirrored the mood and cultural makeup of the populace, including religious beliefs. Also, the culture was mostly rural, and people had little tolerance for what they took to be risqué urban lifestyles that were contrary to the pervasive piety of rural and small-town life (Elsner, 2004).

According to Elsner (2004), the way a society deals with offending behavior depends on how that behavior is defined, a value that evolves over time and across cultures. For example, in the United States, alcohol production was prohibited in the 1930s, when thousands were sent to prison, but the country's experiment with Prohibition was short-lived. Even among more serious offenses, however, both cultural and situational relevance determine societal responses. Killing a person, for example, is clearly outlawed by societal norms but is permitted by all nations in times of war. State-sanctioned killings in the form of the death penalty are permitted in such nations as the

United States, China, and Iran, but prohibited in most industrialized nations and many developing nations (Elsner, 2004).

Prisons and the entire apparatus of a criminal justice system represent a response to offending behaviors. The system is viewed as a means of retribution and problem-solving—responding to persons and behaviors society finds unacceptable. The U.S. criminal justice system is both a *reactive* and a *punitive system;* that is, the system comes into play only after a crime has been committed. At that point, a crime is reported, the police investigate, the prosecutor brings charges, and a judge imposes a sentence if there is a conviction (Elsner, 2004).

The reactive nature of the criminal justice model has been of concern to many, both in responding to the problem of crime and in establishing a two-tiered system of community problem-solving. Throughout the history of imprisonment in the United States, there have been organized efforts at reform and challenges to the prevailing wisdom, as early as the previously mentioned Pennsylvania system. But despite such concerns, the prison as an institution has changed surprisingly little over 2 centuries, although its functions in society, as perceived by both practitioners and the public, have undergone a series of philosophical shifts (Elsner, 2004).

The notion of deterrence was the cornerstone of early prison models, which began just after the colonial period; these evolved into a system throughout much of the 20th century. The approach is based on sociological, psychological, or moral beliefs and on the assumption that an offender is someone who has erred but is capable of change, and that incarceration is an intervention that might bring about more law-abiding behavior. The first decades after World War II represented a peak in the influence of the

rehabilitative ideal on the corrections system. The country was emerging from war, and the baby boom that followed brought on an era of hopefulness and optimism about the future (Elsner, 2004).

This emerging economic might and sense of rebirth influenced public attitudes on social policy in a variety of ways. An expanding economic sector potentially meant greater goods and services, and allowed for more compassionate and generous public policy responses to social problems. In regard to crime and criminality, this development laid the groundwork for growing support for a broader acceptance of the goal of rehabilitation. This support can be seen clearly in public attitudes concerning the death penalty. The death penalty had been used consistently since the colonial period and reached its peak during the Depression (1929-1941). Some 200 persons were being executed yearly by 1938. By the 1950s, though, executions had slowed to less than half that rate, and by 1963 there were just 23 executions (Elsner, 2004).

The 1960s led a growing number of sociologists and liberal politicians to see crime and criminality as essentially learned behavior that was a rational, if illegal, response to a set of social conditions. Efforts to reduce crime, they believed, should focus on alleviating the social, economic, and political marginality of the poor. In policy terms, these efforts led to such efforts as the Model Cities program and the welfare rights movement of the 1960s. For many, prisons and the entire criminal justice system came to be perceived as unjust institutions that served to reinforce the status quo. Given this belief system, there was little reason to support rehabilitation, even if it were possible, since its accomplishments would only reinforce the existing social structure (Elsner, 2004).

Such attitudes laid the groundwork for an indeterminate sentence structure that was tied to the prospect of rehabilitation in the prison setting. It was believed that to encourage inmates to take advantage of rehabilitation options in prison, a reward system should be in place, and that there could be no better reward than early release from prison. So, inmates would have incentives to take part in educational or vocational programming and to conduct themselves responsibly in order to earn their early release. This system also gave superintendents and correctional officers powerful tools to enforce prison discipline. With a decision by a parole board contingent in part on an inmate's behavior, prison officials wielded a tempting carrot to accompany the stick of prison disciplinary measures (Elsner, 2004).

Coinciding with this liberal challenge to sentencing was an attack from the political right. Frustrated by rising crime rates in the 1960s, what were perceived as pro-defendant decisions of the Warren Supreme Court, and growing liberal opposition to the Vietnam War and other governmental policies, conservatives took on the issue of crime as the centerpiece of a political program. Barry Goldwater and Richard Nixon in the 1960s heralded the theme of law and order for the first time in a national political context. Although the order they were calling for was a broad response to urban unrest and antiwar protest, it also projected a not very subtle message to Whites concerned with the supposed rise in Black criminality (Elsner, 2004).

Conservatives also objected to the rehabilitative underpinnings of the criminal justice system because they lacked confidence in the feasibility of rehabilitation, as opposed to definite and punitive sentencing. Conservatives also argued for fixed terms and generally favored lengthier sentences. Because, in their view, rehabilitation had been

discredited, the prison system could get on with its objective of incapacitating criminals. Their view can be stated simply: An offender who is locked up is not able to commit additional crimes. The obvious simplicity of this approach led to its successful adoption in public and political rhetoric, and it continues to find an enthusiastic audience (Elsner, 2004).

Despite such rhetoric, the United States apparently saw an increase in crime and violence during the 1960s. The term *apparently* is necessary because it is difficult to say how much crime rates actually increased; one of the ironies of the period is that the growing politicization of crime contributed to higher reporting rates. The primary way this came about was through the creation of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) as part of the Safe Streets Act passed by Congress in 1967 (Elsner, 2004).

LEAA provided a new and dramatically enlarged federal role in crime fighting, primarily by making funding available to state and local governments. In the first several years of its existence, LEAA grants skyrocketed from $300 million in 1968 to $1.25 billion in 1974. Much of this early funding went to local police departments to purchase hardware and upgrade technology. This new technology, along with training from federal officials, led to considerably higher rates of crime reporting from police agencies to the FBI. The conservative portrait lacked historical perspective, but it did not fail to capitalize on the real and sobering increase in criminality. However, there should have been many indicators that such a rise was likely in the 1960s. The coming of age of the baby boom generation brought with it an unprecedented number of young males in the high crime ages of 15-24. Although most of them never committed any serious offense,

their sheer numbers were likely to contribute to at least a partial surge in criminality (Elsner, 2004).

A key factor behind the rise in crime rates was the rapid urbanization of the U.S. population. For a set of complex reasons, urbanization is generally equated with higher rates of crime and criminality. The relative stress and strains of urban life, the increased significance of neighborhood and peer group influences at the expense of the immediate family, the breakdown of cultural and organizational structures brought from the old world, and, perhaps, the lure of more consumer goods—all of these generally result in higher-than-average crime rates in urban environments. Thus were the seeds sown for the movement that would ultimately get so tough on crime that it would result in world-record rates of incarceration (Camp & Gaes, 2005).

One constant throughout the history of incarceration in the United States has been the attention given to perpetrators of high-profile crimes. From serial killer H. H. Holmes, who was hanged in Philadelphia in 1896 after confessing to 27 murders, to the Unabomber (Theodore Kaczynski), who over 17 years sent 16 bombs to a variety of targets, killing three people and injuring 23, the public has always been fascinated by crimes that seem especially heinous. Such criminals, if they are caught, convicted, and imprisoned, pose particular challenges for correctional institutions and officers (Camp & Gaes, 2005).

Profile of a Correction Officer

Conover (2000) described the typical experience of a new CO as follows:

> When the recruit arrives he is plunged into an alien environment and is enveloped in the situation 24 hours a day without relief. He is stunned, dazed, and

> frightened. The severity of shock is reflected in 17-hydroxycorticosteroid levels comparable to those in schizophrenic patients in incipient psychosis, which exceed levels in other stressful situations. The recruit receives little, or erroneous, information about what to expect, which tends to maintain his anxiety. (p. 13)

According to Conover, a CO might be a former Burger King manager from Syracuse, a floor buffer working in an apartment building in Manhattan, a body shop worker in Rochester, or a plumber near the Canadian border. What COs have in common is the hope for a better life and a good job. What they learn early on, Conover emphasized, is not to stand out:

> The line of male recruits in suits (and a handful of women in dresses) stretched way down a long hallway and around the corner, out of sight. All stood at rigid attention. The training officers were like sharks, sniffing for blood. This first lesson of the Academy was immediately clear: Don't stand out. (p. 25)

The state of New York has made some attempts to improve its training program for would-be COs. An officer must attend a compressive 10-week training academy that has a 36% dropout rate. Because a passing grade of only 70% is required for the program's various modules, the academy is perhaps not as rigorous as state officials would like to believe. Furthermore, recruits who fail a module are offered remediation, and the 36% failure rate represents those who simply quit or who fail the drug screening process (Conover, 2000).

As summarized by Conover (2000), the training academy program has three components:

1. *Academic*. A passing grade of 70% is required for each of 10 modules (e.g., report writing, knowledge of disciplinary procedures, etc.). Remediation for candidates who fail a single module of the program is required. Failing a second module results in termination from the program.

2. *Weapons*. Candidates must demonstrate proficiency with a handgun, shotgun, and AR-15 by scoring at least 175 of a possible 250 points.

3. *Physical performance*. Candidates must complete seven job-related tasks: lift 150 pounds to knee level, climb and descend a 20-foot ladder, drag a 200-pound weight 25 feet, do 30 pushups, do 44 sit-ups, operate a department fire extinguisher, and run a half mile in 15 minutes or less.

Procedures in effect at all training academies operated by the Department of Correctional Services entitle a CO in training to remediate a single module failure. Modules are 1-week units of instruction that conclude with an examination. Failing two such examinations results in vocational termination. No recruit can complete the preservice training program with a module failure on his or her record, so any single failure must be corrected through remediation within the required time frame (Conover, 2000).

Academy graduates are given assignments based on staffing needs. New officers have little if any choice about where they are assigned. An officer assigned to Sing Sing faces a forbidding and foreboding sight, according to Conover (2000):

> A-block and B-block are the most impressive buildings in Sing Sing, and in a totally negative sense. A large cathedral will inspire awe; a large cellblock will mainly horrify. The size of the buildings catches the first-time visitor by surprise,

> and that's largely because there's no preamble. Instead of approaching them from a wide staircase or through an arched gate, you pass from an enclosed corridor through a pair of solid metal doors, neither one much bigger than your front door at home, and enter into a stupefying vastness. A-block, probably the largest freestanding cellblock in the world, is 588 feet long, 12 feet shy of the length of two football fields. It houses 684 inmates, more than the population of many prisons. You can hear them—an encompassing, overwhelming cacophony of radios, of heavy gates slamming, of shouts and whistles and running footsteps—but, oddly, at first you can't see a single incarcerated soul. (37)

According to Conover (2000), many COs choose prison work because of economic necessity, and they are unaware of what the prison setting is like. Writing specifically about the state of New York, Conover observed that when the rural northern part of the state lost its dairy and mining industries, local governments turned to prisons as an economic cure. He noted that such towns as Dannemora, which houses the Clinton Correction Facility, have become totally dependent on prison business for their survival. That facility adds $2 million in payroll each week to the local economy. Northern New York went from having two prisons in the 1970s to 18 in 2000, and these new prisons accounted for a $1.5 billion construction boom and $425 million a year in salaries and operating expenses for a previously economically depressed area.

According to Conover (2000), the demise of the Cold War meant the decline of defense jobs. He cited figures from the National Commission for Economic Conversion and Disarmament documenting a decline of over 750,000 defense-related jobs from 1999 to 2003, about 122,000 of which were in New York. With the decline of the military-

industrial complex in New York has come the growth of what Conover called the prison-industrial complex. Between 1994 and 2002, New York added 25,900 prison employees, more than were added to all other state departments combined (16,000), and hiring for prisons accounted for 45% of the growth in all New York jobs during that period (Reed, as cited in Conover, 2000).

Conover (2000) noted that the traditional anchors of New York's upstate economy—mining, logging, dairy farms, and manufacturing—have declined notably. According to Ram Chugh, director of the Rural Services Institute at the State University of New York at Potsdam, the region's per capita income has long been about 40% lower than the state's average (as cited in Conover, 2000). According to Morris (1995), the growth of prisons resulted in of the largest direct investments the state has ever made in that economically depressed region. That economic development, Morris argued, has slowed the exodus from small towns by allowing young people to remain in the area. The starting salary for a CO in New York is $37,579, increasing to $42,550 after 1 year of service (New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association [NYSCOPBA], 2009), which is considerably higher than the typical salary in the northern part of the state. As Morris observed, working as a correctional officer is one of a diminishing few ways that people without college degrees can achieve a middle-class life in upstate New York.

Prisons as Profit Centers

According to Dyer (2000), profit is the primary motivation behind the 10-fold increase in the prison population that occurred from 1970 to 2000. Dyer observed that the business of making crime and inmates profitable has become one of the fastest-growing

industries in the nation, with billions of dollars at stake. Corrections is now the fastest-growing category in most state budgets, and each year more of this taxpayer money finds its way into the private sector.

As of February 1999, according to federal government reports on criminal justice expenditures, the combined bill for law enforcement; corrections; and courts at the federal, state, and local level was $94 billion (Dyer, 2000). If these expenditures continued to rise at these same rates, Dyer predicted, the total would reach $250 billion by 2008. In comparison, the entire U.S. defense budget for 2008 was $296 billion. As late as September of 2008, New York state's total correctional budget had increased by 2.3% (adjusted for inflation) over fiscal year 2007 (U.S. Department of Justice Statistics, 2008).

According to Dyer (2000), in 1999, when state and federal corrections budgets were $6.8 billion, only a handful of private corporations benefited financially from the prison population. They did so by providing goods and services to various departments of corrections under contracts secured through bidding. But that state of affairs was prior to the full emergence of an organized prison-industrial complex whose arrival spelled the end of the days when prison industry needs were primarily met internally.

Supplying goods and services to inmates and correctional officers has become a huge market. According to Day (1998), some estimates were that this supply costs more than $100 billion annually. Day also noted that at the beginning of the recent prison expansion, the size of the entire prison population was roughly equivalent to the population of Lexington, Kentucky. In early 2000, the number of those incarcerated in the United States was equal to the combined populations of these midsized cities: Albany,

Anchorage, Austin, Bakersfield, Birmingham, Boise, Fort Lauderdale, Toledo, and Spokane.

This number does not include COs, who represent another 1.5 million members of the prison industrial complex. At the rate the system is growing, argued Dyer (2000), enough new cells to house an inmate population equal to the size of a city such as Boulder, Colorado, are being constructed every year. Since 1990, the United States has been constructing enough prison facilities to hold an average of 92,640 new beds per year, and as of early 2000, the average cost for creating a new maximum-security bed was $70,909, for medium security $49,853, and for minimum security $29,311 (Dyer, 2000).

The Media and Criminality

Often, the perception of reality is more important than reality itself. In the United States, perceptions of crime are increasingly shaped by corporate-based media: network television, the news weeklies and daily newspapers, and the Internet. Heath and Gilbert (1996) documented increases in crime news reported by the mass media. The result, they concluded, is that criminality is the top concern of a majority of Americans, even though the rates of most major crimes have been declining steadily since 1991.

Burton-Rose (1989) observed that in most articles about prisons, prison officials are the only sources interviewed. Line officers' knowledge and experience are rarely taken into account. As a result, Burton-Rose charged, the American public has an inaccurate picture of prison reality. Numerous prison-related issues that should concern the public—the reasons behind prison litigation, free-world jobs moving behind prison

walls, the existence of political prisoners in the United States, and the enforcement of basic human rights inside U.S. borders—are not sufficiently covered.

Inmate-Officer Boundary Violations

McDonald (1997) noted that correctional institutions are separated from society by walls or fences, which represent both a literal and symbolic separation from the free world. Walls protect members of society from prison inmates, but they do not protect those who work within their confines from being exploited and manipulated by inmates. That manipulation is exacerbated by the fact that prisons depend on inmates to perform a variety of institutional functions. Because the completion of those tasks reflects on COs' job performance, officers end up relying heavily on inmates' cooperation. And because COs are not allowed to physically coerce inmates into submission, they must bargain with their charges. According to Sykes (1958), officers will often overlook infractions in one area to gain conformity in others, an arrangement he called the *norm of reciprocity*, in which employees gain power over inmates by giving them freedoms in return for good behavior. For a variety of reasons, then, the boundary between staff members and inmates can become fuzzy.

Marquart, Barnhill, and Balshaw-Biddle (2001) found that working in close proximity with inmates fosters personal bonds encouraging favoritism and selective rule enforcement. They defined these boundary violations as "actions that blur, minimize, or disrupt the professional distance between correctional staff members and prisoners" (p. 878). They concluded that friendships between staff members and inmates constitute a major breech of work values and ethics.

Although prisons rules and regulations differ between systems, prison personnel share what Marquart (1986a) called a common "keeper" (p. 21) philosophy. Prison employees are trained and expected to be firm but fair. They are not to abuse their power but rather be impersonal and dispassionate, and avoid confrontations. Marquart et al. (2001) described these rules as a "custodial frame" (p. 25) that is necessary to maintain boundaries between the keepers and the kept. Employees are forbidden from engaging in personal contact with inmates, and a variety of physical and behavioral impositions (grooming standards, uniforms, perimeter towers and catwalks, etc.) reinforce the guard-inmate separation. On a social level, formal modes of address (ma'am, sir, Miss, Mr.) establish and maintain boundaries between employees and inmates (Marquart, 1986b). The custodial frame is not absolute, and Marquart et al. found that staff members often denigrate inmates, physically abuse them, ignore requests for assistance, and supply contraband such as drugs or weapons to prisoners. Their findings confirmed Sykes's (1958) conclusion that staff members frequently bend the rules to gain limited control of inmates.

In their work on employee boundary violations in prisons, Marquart et al. (2001) applied Stromm-Gottfried's (1999) continuum to the correctional environment. At one end of that continuum are "unserious" (p. 441) violations, in which inmates and employees exchange such things as soft drinks, food, or craft items. Farther along the continuum is behavior such as prison employees writing letters to inmates they knew before incarceration. A serious boundary violation might involve a romantic relationship. Marquart et al. listed specific behaviors that characterize such relationships:

1. Discussed one's personal life in detail with a prisoner (including sexual life, social life, marital status, spouse and/or children, experiences with domestic abuse).
2. Exchanged letters and/or personal photographs (including nude photos) with a prisoner.
3. Exchanged erotica (pornographic poems and letters) with an inmate.
4. Placed money in an inmate's trust fund.
5. Used aliases and post office boxes in nearby towns or cities to hide the relationship.
6. Contacted an inmate's family to relay information about the prisoner.
7. Established a relationship with an inmate in prison and then lived with the inmate upon his or her release from prison.
8. Moved in with an inmate's family member.
9. Provided a cellular phone to a prisoner, or took collect calls to facilitate off-duty conversations with an inmate.
10. Engaged in on-the-job subterfuge to hide the relationship. (p. 883)

Allen and Bosta (1981) enumerated five roles that inmates play in manipulating COs: observers, contacts, runners, turners, and point men. Observers watch and listen to the potential victim, providing information to other inmates about whether a staff member is susceptible to manipulation. They pay close attention to body language and mannerisms. Contacts supply personal details about a staff member's life. They may initiate conversations for the sole purpose of learning information that later can be used as leverage to influence a CO's behavior. Runners attempt to gauge how an officer will

respond to an ambiguous situation. They might risk punishment by asking an employee for some harmless contraband to judge that person's potential willingness to grant more substantial requests. Turners "befriend employees and use that friendship to ultimately coerce them into engaging in infractions of the rules" (Allen & Bosta, 1981, p. 31). Turners are likely to mimic the personality of the staff members they are trying to manipulate. Once inmates have established a bond with the employee, they will then use a *lever* to maintain a hold over that person. Levers are minor employee indiscretions that are used as a form of blackmail to maintain an inappropriate relationship. Pointmen stand guard while turners try to obtain illegal favors. They are often used to distract other officers from passing contraband or from romantic and sexual situations.

Worley, Marquart, and Mullings (2003) expanded on Allen and Bosta's (1981) work by distinguishing among three types of turners: heart-breakers, exploiters, and hell-raisers. Heart-breakers try to form emotional bonds with staff members and ultimately establish long-term romantic relationships. They usually attempt to keep relationships private, and they usually act alone. Exploiters use employees to obtain contraband and for excitement and fun. They typically use pointman to conceal their behavior from other staff members. Hell-raisers are primarily interested in creating chaos. They thrive on placing employees in a position that might compromise their job. They enjoy the notoriety that their inappropriate relationships afford them and take pleasure in embarrassing prison administrators.

As researchers have discovered, prisoners are capable of working together as a team to create boundary violations and coerce staff members. Dilulio (1990) found, though, that inmates are generally distrustful—of each other as well as of prison

employees. Their coordinated behavior is largely self-serving and often reflects a rigid hierarchy of status and roles.

Identifying and Managing High-Profile Inmates

High-profile inmates are those who arrive at a correctional facility with an established public reputation, usually because of the spectacular nature of their crimes. Offenders whose crimes and criminal trials have received extensive media attention pose a particular challenge for correctional authorities. Despite authorities' best efforts, high-profile inmates can bring negative publicity and a distorted image to a correctional facility (Postorino, 2001). Postorino identified problems that could occur if a facility does not have appropriate policies and procedures, and made several suggestions for handling high-profile inmates:

1. To forestall charges of inmate and staff abuse of a celebrated inmate, identification should not be made widely available to inmates and staff. It is preferable to downplay the notoriety of high-profile inmates.
2. High-profile inmates should have the option of protective custody if documented threats can be verified by correctional staff.
3. High-profile inmates should only be allowed no-contact visits, and transportation outside the facility should be given the highest security level.

Although high-profile inmates cannot be treated differently from other inmates regarding housing and privileges, a correctional facility is obligated to consider all information when making any decision that could affect public safety. Terault (2002), addressing the demands of housing high-security inmates, recommended that before

making assignments to less-secure facilities or work assignments, staff should consider the public perception of a given inmate and the potential consequences of such a placement. A well-known example of the risks a high-profile prisoner faces is the case of Jack Ruby and Lee Harvey Oswald, the alleged slayer of President John F. Kennedy. Another is the celebrated inmate Jeffery Dahmer, who was murdered at the Clarksville Wisconsin State Prison by a career criminal (Countz, 2001).

Terry Nichols, who helped Timothy McVeigh plan the bombing that destroyed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, was housed under special conditions and overseen by the U.S. Marshals Service at the Sedgwick Kansas Adult Detention Facility in Wichita, Kansas, from April 22 to May 19, 1995. Hinshaw (2006) noted that Nichols was housed in a single cell away from the rest of the inmate population. Deputies monitored him 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and were ordered not to speak with anyone about their interaction with Nichols. Conversation between Nichols and the deputies assigned to watch him was severely restricted, and anything Nichols said was noted in a log. Any time Nichols was moved, three extra deputies were assigned to escort him. Also, Nichols was placed in leg irons for all movement, and he was given all meals in his cell.

With many high-profile inmates, the danger level depends both on what they did and who they are. In Texas, decisions about housing high-profile offenders are a collaborative effort among the Texas Department of Corrections, the classification office, and the prison warden. In the state of New York there is a similar level of coordination regarding where to place high-profile offenders.

Classification is the process of determining which inmates should be subject to special housing or security measures, different from other inmates. Usually, inmates all have the same access to facility programming and recreational activities (Terault, 2002), but under certain circumstances particular inmates may be put in protective custody if they presents a threat to others, or if others present a threat to them. Elliott (2006) noted that protective custody is often ordered if an inmate will be testifying against someone or is known to have enemies. Protective custody is a segregated area where an inmate is housed with 23 hours of lockdown and 1 hour of supervised recreation. All meals are given in the inmate's cell, and all medical services are highly supervised and administered only within the segregation area.

In Florida, newly sentenced inmates are sent to one of five reception centers before they are placed in the facility where they will serve time. During the reception process, classification officers review the inmate's presentence investigation and any other pertinent information to determine if a case has received significant publicity. Policies are consistent throughout all facilities to ensure that staff members are uniform in dealing with all inmate categories and classification types (Postorino, 2001).

One important component of the classification process is an inmate's medical history and needs. Facilities vary widely in the extent to which they can handle medical needs internally. The Marcy Correctional Facility, located in central New York, is classified as a medium-security medical facility. It has one level, an infirmary for up to 10 inmates, two full-time doctors, and 11 full-time nursing staff. When high-profile inmates need medical or dental treatment, they must be individually escorted to either the facility infirmary or an outside hospital.

Behavior of Serial Murders

Serial murders are the most obvious example of high-profile criminals and perhaps the most challenging inmates for corrections officials to accommodate. Beasley (2004) interviewed seven high-profile serial killers to determine similarities and differences among them. He asked about their backgrounds as well as how they viewed themselves and the world around them. Beasley compared his findings with broader epidemiological studies, and discussed the strengths and limitations of various research methods.

Myers, Husted, Safarik, and O'Toole (2006) noted that the literature is not consistent regarding what motivates serial sexual offenders to commit their crimes. Various reasons have been suggested: sexual gratification, power and control, and anger. Myers et al. (2006) provided theoretical, empirical, evolutionary, and physiological support for the argument that most serial murderers are motivated by sadistic pleasure. Exercising power and control over victims often heightens sexual arousal. Sexual motivation can be expressed either overtly or symbolically. The authors concluded that anger is not a key motivation due to its inhibitory physiological effect on sexual functioning. They found that many serial sexual offenders appear to have disorders along the spectrum of sexual sadism, and they concluded that a sexual sadism homicidal type is a diagnostic subtype of sexual sadism applicable to many of these offenders, suggesting a modification of DSM criteria to reflect that fact.

Serial sexual homicide has attracted much attention, but little empirical scientific study has compared single and serial prostitute killers. Kraemer, Lord, and Heilbrun (2004) studied 157 serial homicide offenders and 608 victims, comparing a subsample of

serial sexual homicide offences with a control group of single homicide offences. Results showed that serial sexual homicide offenders target more women than men and kill more strangers than family or friends. Single homicide offenders kill men and women with equal frequency but kill family and friends more often than strangers. The authors found that serial homicide offenders kill for apparent sexual motivation more often than for any other reason, whereas single homicide offenders kill most often out of anger.

Lavezzi and Wolf (2007) described two cases in which five and eight murders were committed in the state of New York. The lives and crimes of these offenders illustrated very different backgrounds, motivations, and methods, reflecting the limitations and dangers of profiling. Still, the media have done much to popularize the idea of profiling noted offenders.

More effective than profiling is what has been called the criminal events perspective (CEP). Pino (2005) argued that CEP could help advance the relatively limited literature on serial offending. Whereas much of that literature concerns on the motivations of offenders, CEP views crime as an event that involves precursors to the act, the act itself, and the aftermath of the event, all of which occur in a social context. CEP and the life course history method were used in a case study of a serial offender incarcerated in southeastern United States. Data for the study included semistructured interviews and police reports and interrogations. Theoretical and methodological implications of this example for future serial offending were examined (Pino, 2005).

Research Methods

According to Janesick (2004), qualitative research describes participants' lived experiences. Merriam (1998) stated that such research emphasizes the search for

"meaning in context" (p. 1). Qualitative research privileges the researcher's role (Creswell, 2005). As Hatch (2002) noted, such research collapses the distinction between the known and the knower (p. 10). For Goodall (2000), the qualitative researcher is freed to reflect on "lived experiences in ways that reveal deep connections between the writer and his or her subject" (p. 137). Moustakas (1994) observed that qualitative research differs from its quantitative counterpart in opening up the field of study to subjects that do not lend themselves to numerical analysis, in treating experience as unitary rather than a compilation of discrete parts, in privileging meaning over measurement, and in regarding human experience as an appropriate object of scientific investigation.

Several strands of qualitative research have evolved in the last 50 years. *Ethnographic* research typically involves studying individuals and groups in their social context (Creswell, 2005; Moustakas, 1994). *Grounded theory* research is an attempt to derive a general explanation for some phenomenon based on observing and synthesizing details of human experience. The goal is to generate a theory that explains a phenomenon and that could be used to inform subsequent research (Creswell, 2005; Hatch, 2002; Moustakas, 1994). *Phenomenology* emphasizes people's lived experience by posing both how and what questions (Moustakas, 1994).

Summary

Although the United States incarcerates more people per capita than any country in the world, and although criminality has attracted both scholarly and popular attention, little is known about the daily lives of high-profile criminals once they are sent to prison and about the COs who guard them. In the United States, incarceration was formalized in the late 18th century with the establishment of the Walnut Street Jail in Philadelphia. The

number of prisons increased slowly until the 1960s, then accelerated through the end of the 20th century, and today prisons constitute a growth industry in the U.S. economy.

Media attention to crime has sensationalized the celebrated offender. High-profile inmates pose a variety of security and public relations challenges for prisons, including protecting these inmates from other inmates. Although high-profile offenders display some common tendencies with so called normal inmates, it is difficult to generalize about their motives. Through open-ended interviews, in the current study I explored the dynamics of prison life by examining the role conflict and boundary violations experienced by COs in their dealings with high-profile offenders. The following chapter consists of a description of the study's methods.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The literature on prisons and prisoners is extensive, but little scholarly attention has been paid to the role of COs and their interaction with prisoners, particularly high-profile inmates. In this qualitative study, based on role-conflict theory, I used open-ended interviews of retired COs who have worked at one or more of New York State's maximum-security correctional facilities. The purpose of the study was to explore the dynamics of nonsexual boundary violations between COs and high-profile inmates.

Despite get-tough-on-crime rhetoric, relying totally on coercion to control inmates is ineffective. Gaseau (1999) found that how COs went about gaining compliance from inmates reflected their position in the officer hierarchy. Newer officers tended to cope with inmates by trying to be personable. Direct use of coercive power was uncommon, probably because both inmates and COs knew lower-ranking officers wielded little actual power or authority.

The power relations of prison life are complicated by the presence of high-profile inmates. In this study I examined those relations through interviews with COs. In this chapter I will describe the case study as a research tool and will delineate the methods used in the study. After a description of the research design, I will explain the criteria for participant selection, the researcher's role, the interview process, and data analysis procedures.

Research Design

As Creswell (2003) noted, case study research is well-established in the social sciences. Researchers have found the case study useful for understanding complex social

phenomena, especially the study of real-life events (Yin, 2003). Yin defined the case study as an empirical inquiry that "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). Yin noted that case studies consider a variety of evidence, including observation, interviews, and documents.

Case studies often rely heavily on interviews. Yin (2003) recommended that case study researchers see the interview as a flexible tool. Open-ended interviews are useful when the investigator wants to gather opinions in addition to facts. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) noted that such interviews are enhanced when there is rapport between interviewer and interviewee.

Stake (1995) distinguished among three types of case study: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. The first of these, intrinsic, refers to a study in which the researcher has a personal interest. The current study can be considered intrinsic since it grew out of my personal experience as a CO and my exposure to many types of officers and prison inmates.

This qualitative research was a descriptive case study based primarily on open-ended interviews. Because I am a CO myself, I have insights on the CO role that other researchers would not have, and therefore it was easy for me to establish rapport with participants. On the other hand, my shared role with interviewees might have made it more difficult for me to maintain objectivity. I did not select participants whom I know personally, and I interacted with participants as a researcher rather than as a fellow CO.

Role of the Researcher

I began my CO career in 1986, when I was hired by the New York Department of Corrections and assigned to the Sing Sing prison in Ossining. In 1992, I moved to a medium-security prison, the Marcy Correctional Facility, located in central New York. In my capacity as a CO, I have observed a rare class of inmate, the high-profile prisoner, and have reflected on the distinctive role that type of inmate occupies in the prison setting.

I requested permission from the New York State's Correctional Officers Union (N.Y.S.C.O.P.B.A.) to send an invitation letter to COs who have retired since 2007 from working at one or more of the state's maximum-security facilities. The letter outlined a study on officer role conflict and boundary violations. Conditional approval was granted, subject to acceptance of the dissertation proposal by Walden University, for me to conduct interviews with COs who have interacted with high-profile inmates over an extended period of time (see Appendix A). Interviews took place at locations that were comfortable and easily accessible for interviewees, and were documented via audio recording and traditional note-taking. Interviews took place outside the correctional facility. No compensation was given. Participants were assured of complete confidentiality. Because of my experience as a CO, it was necessary for me to bracket any preconceptions about the CO role, the dynamics of prison life, and the nature of inmates. I undertook this process using strategies recommended by Moustakas (1994).

Population

The population for this study was the 928 COs who have worked at one or more of New York State's maximum-security facilities and have retired in the last 5 years. The

gender and racial breakdown of these officers is as follows: 97% male (89% White, 11% Black/Hispanic) and 3% female (97% White, 3% Black/Hispanic). The age breakdown of officers is as follows: 21-35, 46%; 36-45, 49%; 46-65, 2.9%; and other, 3.1% (NYS COPBA, 2011).

Sample

I used purposive sampling to select 10 participants for this study. Inmates entering the New York Department of Corrections undergo a series of tests and interviews to determine their placement, which is affected by an individual's medical and security needs. An inmate judged to be a danger to himself or others is placed in one-on-one-security by being housed in an individual cell in the prison's special housing unit, with 24-hour observation by an officer who records all the inmate's activities and interactions. Inmates judged to be a security risk or vulnerable to assault by other inmates are placed in involuntary protective custody, a secure housing area with 23-hour lockdown and 1 hour per day of supervised recreation. When it is determined by medical and security staff that an inmate has improved, he or she (re)joins the general population.

Among prisoners who are likely candidates for involuntary protective custody are those who enter prison with a reputation based on the nature of their crime(s). Serial rapists or murders, as well as individuals convicted of crimes against the government, are likely to have high-profile status. New York houses a high volume of high-profile inmates. Although some high-profile inmates move freely among other prisoners throughout the day, staff are aware of their notoriety, and in-service training is provided to reinforce state and facility procedures regarding interaction with inmates.

Because inmates in maximum-security prisons usually have long sentences, COs are obliged to interact with them over an extended period of time. Such conditions are ripe for role conflict, especially if some inmates are perceived to have higher status than others. COs can experience pressure to bend the rules for some prisoners.

Participants in this study were officers who have primarily worked with high-profile inmates, typically within a cellblock or housing unit setting. High-profile inmates whose status makes them likely candidates for possible special treatment, and the COs who regularly interact with such inmates, were the focus of this study. Participant selection was based on my knowledge of the NYS DOCS inmate classification system. I reviewed inmate records to determine which prisoners could be considered high-profile inmates, a judgment that was informed by my 28 years of experience as a CO in the New York correctional system.

Recruitment of participants began with a letter sent to all COs who had worked at one or more of New York State's maximum-security facilities and retired in the last 5 years (see Appendix B). The letter explained the purpose and scope of the study, as well as steps to assure the confidentiality of all participants and their responses. From the list of COs who indicated an interest in participating in the study, I used purposive sampling to select 10 COs to interview. The selection criterion was experience working with high-profile inmates. Beyond that, I tried to create a sample reflecting diversity of race, age, and experience.

Participants were not monetarily compensated for their participation. All interviews were conducted at locations that were convenient and comfortable for

participants, such as coffee shops, diners, restaurants, homes, or parks. No interviews were conducted at any New York State facility.

I made no judgments about the legality of behavior described in interviews. No identifying information about participants (name, gender, location) will be published or released. Interview responses were coded with a number known only to me.

Purposive sampling was used to select 10 participants from those retired correctional officers who indicated an interest in participating in the study. Sampling began by evaluating responses to the invitation letter. Potential participants must have had substantial experience working with high-profile inmates. Once potential participants were identified, I selected a sample of 10 reflecting the demographic characteristics of the population noted above. Selection criteria were as follows:

1. Willingness to participate in the study.
2. Substantial experience working with high-profile inmates.
3. Demographic characteristics that reflect the facility's population.
4. Retired since 2007.

The only exclusion criterion was lack of experience working with high-profile inmates. I also maintained a list of backup participants to draw upon in the event of withdrawals.

Data Collection

Before being interviewed, all participants signed an informed consent form (see Appendix C). Data were collected via open-ended interviews based on the study's five main research questions (see Appendix D). In an open-ended interview, a researcher begins with predetermined questions and follows these up with additional questions to elicit more information, based on interviewees' responses. The direction of an open-

ended interview, therefore, cannot be entirely predicted in advance. The focus of this inquiry was how prison policies and procedures affect officer role conflict and nonsexual boundary violations with high-profile inmates. Interviews were conducted off-site at locations participants chose. Interviews were audio recorded, a process in which I was assisted by Kenneth Reed, who has experience with recording and transcription. I used member checking, whereby participants had an opportunity to review interview transcripts to check them for accuracy.

As noted above, individual case studies frequently rely on interviews. I considered other means of data collection, including document research and a survey, but the logistics of undertaking survey research with a high-security population spread over many institutions were formidable. Also, relying exclusively on document research would not produce the kind of immediacy afforded by individual interviews. Finally, in light of my role as a CO, it seemed wise to take advantage of my knowledge, experience, and contacts by conducting personal interviews.

A totally scripted interview format is unlikely to produce the honest, free-flowing revelation that an open-ended interview process can achieve. One danger of scripted interviews is that participants feel limited in how they can respond. Another is that they might feel pressured to answer as they think the interviewer would like and thus not be as forthcoming as they would be in a less-structured situation.

It was important for me to bracket any preconceived notions about the subject under study, including any opinions about particular inmates. It was also important for me to present myself as to interviewees as a researcher and to distance myself from my

role as CO. I did this be adhering to the interview questions and by steering the conversation away from small talk.

Data Analysis

Interviews were audio recorded and the results transcribed. To analyze interview results, I undertook content analysis of the transcripts with ethnographic content analysis software (Ethnograph). The software enabled me to detect themes and categories that emerged from the interviews. Ethnographic content analysis is contrasted with conventional modes of quantitative content analysis to illustrate its usefulness for discovering emergent patterns, themes, and emphases using both inductive and deductive methods of inquiry. I also examined New York State (DOCCS) policies and procedures to contextualize the problems of CO role conflict and nonsexual boundary violations between COs and inmates.

In analyzing the interviews, I followed the general procedures outlined by Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin (1993), who suggested six questions to ask oneself:

1. What common themes emerge in responses about specific topics? How do any patterns illuminate the research questions or hypotheses?
2. What might explain any deviations from the patterns that have been noted?
3. How might participants' environment or previous experience affect their behavior or attitudes?
4. How do respondents' stories illuminate the research questions?
5. Do particular responses suggest the need for additional data?

6. How do the patterns observed compare to the results of other studies on similar topics.

Ethical Protections

All participants signed an informed consent form (see Appendix C) before being interviewed. The form made it clear that participation in the study is voluntary and could be terminated at any time without consequence. The form all assured participants that all interview transcripts would be confidential and would not include names. All data collected during this study, both electronic and hard copies, will be kept in a secure location for 5 years and then destroyed.

Summary

The research described in this chapter consisted of a descriptive case study of retired New York State COs who have had interaction with high-profile inmates. The case study was based primarily on open-ended interviews with COs. Interview data were supplemented by analysis of state and facility policies and procedures to contextualize the problems of CO role conflict and nonsexual boundary violations between COs and inmates. Interview results were coded and analyzed by use of ethnographic content-analysis software. The study is intended to address a gap in the literature regarding the daily interactions between line officers and high-profile inmates and the role conflict and nonsexual boundary violations that often occur. In the following chapter, I will summarize the study's results.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

In this chapter, I will summarize the results of a descriptive case study designed to illuminate the phenomenon of role conflict and nonsexual boundary violations between New York State COs and high-profile inmates. The sample consisted of 10 retired COs who participated in individual, semistructured interviews with me. Interviews took place in person and by telephone.

Data Collection

Data collection began with an invitation letter (Appendix B) sent by N.Y.S.C.O.P.B.A. to 928 recently (within 5 years) retired New York State COs. I received responses from 63 individuals who indicated an interest in participating in the study. I contacted these potential participants by phone and questioned them concerning their work experience with high-profile inmates. That screening process yielded 23 candidates I believed would be best suited for the study. From the group of 23 potential participants, I selected 10 candidates to interview and five backup candidates to draw upon in the event that any of the 10 were to withdraw from the study. In selecting these participants, I considered length of tenure working with high-profile inmates, demonstrated interest and enthusiasm about participating, and demographic characteristics. That process yielded a 10-person cohort with the following demographic characteristics: one female African American, age 49; one female European American, age 61; one male African American, age 62; and seven male European Americans, ages 49, 55, 57, 61, 63, and 64.

All 10 participants completed individual interviews; no members of the backup cohort were interviewed. Interviews were conducted between May 29, 2012, and October 15, 2012, by phone or at locations of participants' choosing. Interviews lasted from 1 to 2 hours. All participants signed an informed consent form (see Appendix C). Interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Interview transcriptions were analyzed for themes. Themes emerged both from my repeated reading of transcripts and from use of Ethnograph software. Themes were linked with representative quotations from participants.

Interviews

Interview 1

The first interview was conducted at a public library with a 49-year-old African American woman. She was prompted to become a CO because she had a cousin who worked at Rikers Island and who described the job's generous benefits program. She was hired in 1983 and retired in 2008, having worked her entire career at Bedford Hills, a maximum-security women's prison.

Interviewee 1 described her training as depicting a one-sided view of inmates, who "were always viewed as bad and evil, and the instructors were always telling us that we had to be tough in our dealings with convicts." On the contrary, she discovered that "some are pretty decent people." The prisoners she oversaw were housed in a dormitory, where they were subject to various restrictions regarding the possession of personal effects. Interviewee 1 said she started out operating "by the book" but later exercised discretion in deciding whether to issue a misbehavior report for a given prisoner: "If the inmate was decent and I'd never had a problem in the past, I let things go." She described

this loosening as in part resulting from advice by more experienced COs, who told her "not to sweat the small things and to ease up, or I would die of a heart attack or stroke."

Interviewee 1 worked with many high-profile prisoners, whom she described as "more interesting than the average inmate." She was in charge of one such prisoner for 5 years and engaged in long talks with her, exchanging news articles and other mutually interesting information, sometimes giving her extra food or candy. On one occasion the CO gave the inmate an over-the-counter medication that was not allowed in the facility, in order to help with the latter's migraine headaches. The CO freely admitted that these actions could be seen as boundary violations. She explained her behavior by saying that "[the inmate] made me feel very special. She wasn't like the others; she was educated, smart, famous. We became friends, and I know she cared for me." Other high-profile inmates were housed in the unit Interviewee 1 supervised for shorter periods, and she described her relationship with them as more "professional."

Interview 2

The second interview was conducted in the home of a 61-year-old European American woman who worked as a CO for 25 years. She said her career choice seemed natural because other members of her family also worked in corrections, and she envisioned herself in that role from the time she was a young girl. She started at Taconic, a medium-security women's prison in the Hudson Valley, and then moved to Attica, where other family members worked.

Interviewee 2 characterized the high-profile inmates with whom she came in contact as "pampered" and "arrogant." She said that COs did favors for these inmates that they did not do for others. She described one situation where a high-profile inmate

engaged in a sexual affair with a male CO. The prisoner informed on him, sued the state, and "made a hell of a lot of money." Despite having observed numerous boundary violations between COs and high-profile inmates, Interviewee 2 said she never engaged in such behavior. She said that to minimize boundary violations, administrators should keep COs on rotation schedules so they do not have opportunities to develop long-term relationships with particular inmates.

Interview 3

The third interview was conducted by phone with a 62-year-old, male, African American, retired CO now living in suburban Atlanta, Georgia. He described corrections as appealing because of the pay and benefits. He spent his entire 25-year career at Sing-Sing, New York's second-oldest facility.

Interview 3 described the inmates he supervised as varied, asserting that "there are some inmates that I would take any day of the week over some officers and supervisors that I have worked with over the years." He added, "If a decent inmate needed something I would bend over backwards to help that guy, but if he were an asshole I would do nothing but the bare minimum, and this is also true for officers and supervisors."

Interview 3 had extensive contact with high-profile inmates, whom he described as "very popular." Some of them, he said, received hundreds of letters a week, including marriage proposals, gifts of money, and requests for interviews and visits. He asserted that "compared to the average inmate, they were treated far, far better." He claimed that a fellow CO smuggled marijuana and cocaine into the prison for a particular prisoner, who would in turn sell it to other inmates. When the authorities found out about this

arrangement and asked the CO to explain his behavior, "the guy apparently said that the reason why he did this was because he felt honored to be a friend of this high-profile inmate."

Interviewee 3 said that high-profile prisoners were routinely transferred to the "honor block" (an area with better facilities and more privileges) more quickly than were average inmates, a circumstance he attributed to COs receiving cash payments from high-profile inmates. He said such inmates received a variety of other favors: "newspapers, cookies, cakes, candy, home-cooked meals." He also claimed that some COs supplied high-profile inmates with weapons: knives, brass knuckles, even guns. They did so because they were paid "a hell of a lot of money," but also because "they wanted to make sure their 'friend' was safe and would not be hurt." He speculated that some COs were "caught up with celebrity worship of these guys."

Interviewee 3 said that boundary violations could be minimized by rotating both staff and inmates. "You spend hours and hours, and sometimes years, with the same guys. It can get tough to stay straight and focused. There's a lot of temptations when dealing with these guys. They're smart, they're manipulative, and they're famous."

Interview 4

My fourth interview was via telephone with a 49-year-old European American man living in rural North Carolina. He spent almost all of his 25-year career at Watertown, a medium-security prison located in the Adirondack Mountains.

Interviewee 4 described high-profile inmates as "far more intelligent than the regular type inmate. They've got a great gift for drawing people in." He said that most of these inmates were popular with both COs and fellow prisoners, and that they were

"extremely manipulative and cunning." He described one situation where COs let a high-profile inmate come and go from the visiting area without frisking him. Eventually it was determined that the prisoner had been receiving drugs, jewelry, and money from people on the outside and had been paying off the COs. The officers were fired and "the inmate was transferred to another facility, where I'm sure his bullshit is still going on."

Asked why experienced COs fall prey to manipulative behavior by high-profile inmates, Interviewee 4 mentioned boredom, familiarity, and lack of an appropriate work ethic. "It's not easy to stay focused," he said. "We all get lax." He repeated his observation that celebrity inmates "know how to manipulate; they're master con artists, and they use their notoriety."

Interviewee 4 noted that high-profile prisoners can be transferred from a high-security prison to a medium-security facility, such as the one where he worked, after 8 years if they receive a favorable review by a parole board. By then, he said, they may be smarter "because they have had 8 years to practice their con games." He added that prison officials feel pressure to move prisoners to lower-security facilities because it fosters the illusion that inmates are being rehabilitated. "Man, it's all a game," he said, "and we all have our parts to play."

Interviewee 4 described an experience when a high-profile inmate lured him into a discussion about personal matters, a clear boundary violation. The inmate then demanded that the CO bring him 10 cartons of cigarettes, threatening to inform the authorities about the personal conversation if the CO did not comply. He did comply, but several weeks later the inmate demanded more cigarettes. At that point the CO went to a supervisor and admitted his behavior. Union authorities were brought in and a deal was

struck. The CO would have a letter placed in his personnel file for 1 year. At the end of that period, if he had no further violations, the letter would be removed. In exchange, the CO set up the inmate by bringing the requested cigarettes. His cell was immediately searched, the contraband was discovered, and the prisoner was transferred to a maximum-security facility. When asked whether this incident could have happened with a "regular" inmate, the interviewee was adamant: "These high-profile guys are smart, manipulative, can talk with the best of them, and they're very popular, well-known. With me, this could never have happened with the run-of-the-mill type inmates."

Interview 5

The fifth interview was conducted face-to-face with a 55-year-old, European American man who spent almost all of his 25-year career at Groveland, a medium-security prison in western New York. For most of that time he worked as a housing unit officer, where his duties were "care, custody, and control. You must meet the physical needs of the inmate, you must make sure you know where your inmates are at all times, and you must keep the atmosphere within the dorm calm and orderly."

Interviewee 5 said he had contact with about 15 high-profile inmates during his career. He described them as more manipulative than regular inmates, able to get favors from both COs and fellow prisoners: "These guys are good, they know how to use and manipulate, and they use their notoriety to their benefit."

Interviewee 5 maintained that he never fell victim to manipulation by a high-profile inmate, a fact he attributed to having moved among different housing units. He suggested that such movement be mandatory. Otherwise, "you spend day in and day out with these guys, and I believe they take advantage of that and manipulate people."

Interview 6

The sixth interviewee was a 57-year-old, male European American who worked as a CO for 25 years at Midstate, a medium-security prison in Marcy, New York. He said that unlike other facilities, where high-profile and regular prisoners are usually housed together, at Midstate the former have their own housing unit, where he worked for 5 years. Inmates in that unit have private rooms, which the CO explained by saying, "I guess being a high-profile scumbag has its perks."

Interviewee 6 described high-profile inmates as more intelligent than other prisoners, perhaps because many were successful and wealthy before their incarceration. He also found them arrogant and manipulative: "They knew how to work people real good," both staff and fellow prisoners. He described a situation where a prisoner who had been a successful hedge fund manager convinced a CO to open an investment account in the officer's name so the prisoner could funnel money into it. In return, the CO received a percentage of the profits.

Interview 7

The fifth interview was conducted by telephone with a 59-year-old European American man living in Tampa Bay, Florida. He worked for 28 years at Green Haven, a maximum-security prison in Beekman, New York, moving among housing blocks, the yard, wall towers, and recreation areas. For the last 12 years of his career, he worked in the gymnasium.

Interviewee 7 characterized high-profile inmates as intelligent and manipulative. He described a situation where a female CO became friendly with a high-profile inmate

and began giving him 9 mm bullets, which the prisoner exchanged for cigarettes with other inmates. When she was discovered, she lost her job and pension.

Interviewee 7 had several suggestions for reducing the potential of high-profile inmates to manipulate COs:

- Keep high-profile inmates on the move by transferring them every few months to other facilities.
- Transfer COs from one job or area to another every 6 months.
- House high-profile inmates separately from other prisoners and have them supervised by COs with at least 15 years of experience.

Interview 8

The eighth interview was conducted by telephone with a 61-year-old European American man living in Richmond, Virginia. He retired after 37 years on the job, all at the Auburn maximum-security correctional facility. Interviewee 8 characterized himself as an "old-timer" because he started his career before the advent of required CO academy training. He lamented the loss of authority that COs had during the early years of his career:

> We had the ultimate power. We could hold back their mail and meals, we could lock them in their cells for a week, and if need be we could beat them down. Everything changed for the worse in this department with the Attica riots and starting of the training Academy. The convicts are now called inmates, they have rights, and they can also file lawsuits against the department and the officers—and sometimes win.

Interviewee 8 described one high-profile inmate, a convicted mass murderer, who used his notoriety to persuade other inmates to do favors for him: "cleaning his cell, cooking for him, doing his laundry." This prisoner was also popular with many of the COs. Interviewee 8 claimed to have seen other officers succumb to the manipulations of high-profile prisoners, but he maintained that "with me they're all just convicts." He recommended more training for new officers that would involve experienced staff "teaching the new guys the ropes."

Interview 9

The ninth interview was with a 63-year-old, European American man who worked at the Hale Creek prison, a medium-security facility, for 25 years. He characterized "regular" prisoners as "kind of unseen and unheard," whereas high-profile inmates "seem to be more flamboyant, generally more savvy and intelligent." They "know how to talk a good game."

Interviewee 9 recounted one situation with a professional football player who was in prison on a drug charge. The CO described the prisoner as friendly and personable and said that his status as an NFL player sometimes made it hard to separate the person from the prisoner. The CO said he sometimes gave this prisoner newspapers, candy, special food items, and cigarettes. This behavior went on for months, until the prisoner left. The CO concluded, "I was extremely lucky because nothing ever became of this, and I could've gotten in serious trouble. Thank God he left."

Interview 10

The tenth interview was conducted by phone with a 64-year-old, male European American living in Sarasota, Florida. He spent his entire 27-year career at Sing-Sing,

much of it in the package room, where he often encountered high-profile prisoners. He described them as generally "very arrogant and cocky men who knew how to manipulate not only other inmates but staff and officers."

Interviewee 10 distinguished between two types of high-profile inmate. One is respected by other prisoners because of the type of crime he committed (e.g., being a hit man for a crime syndicate). The other is not respected because his crime is not respected (e.g., killing women or children). This difference means that high-profile status can be either an advantage or a detriment. A prisoner who is perceived as weak will be preyed upon by more powerful inmates.

Interviewee 10 said he observed other COs who acted inappropriately with high-profile inmates, which he attributed to their notoriety: "This country is crazy over anyone with celebrity status. I think it is just part of our culture. We go off the deep end when it comes to celebrities, and high-profile type inmates are celebrities."

Interviewees

The 10 retired COs who were interviewed for this study were selected because of their experience working with high-profile inmates. With one exception, participants described a similar orientation experience:

- Graduation from the CO academy.
- Four weeks of on-the-job training.
- Assignment to a specific facility.
- Rotation among different assignments until attaining seniority.

The exception to this pattern was a participant who began his corrections career in 1971, before academy training was required.

COs in the New York State Correctional System are eligible for retirement after 25 years of full-time employment, and most participants did so. With two exceptions, participants spent their entire career at a single facility. Job experience is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Job Experience

Participant	Sex	Race	Years	Facility
1	F	AA	25	Bedford Hills
2	F	EA	25	Taconic, Attica
3	M	AA	25	Sing-Sing
4	M	EA	25	Green Haven, Watertown
5	M	EA	25.5	Groveland
6	M	EA	25	Midstate
7	M	EA	28.5	Greenhaven
8	M	EA	37	Auburn
9	M	EA	25	Hale Creek
10	M	EA	27	Sing-Sing

Themes

The focus of interviews was on participants' experience working with high-profile inmates. Interviewees were consistent in describing such inmates as different from regular prisoners. Generally, high-profile inmates were characterized as more popular, intelligent, and manipulative than their less-famous counterparts.

Popularity

High-profile inmates were described as popular with COs. "For the most part, I have found them to be extremely popular with both inmate/officer/supervisor alike" (#4). "The guy was popular with a lot of the officers—you know that was true" (#8). "Let me tell you—they're popular, and they know how to use it to their advantage" (#8).

They are popular with other prisoners: “They were also very popular with the other inmates. There was jealousy with some of the inmates, but we see that in general population, also” (#3).

They are popular with outsiders: “They were very popular. I remember passing out hundreds, and this is no bullshit, hundreds of letters to these guys every week. They would get marriage proposals, money sent to them, requests for interviews and visits from all type of people” (#3). “Well, they’re very popular, I can tell you that. Some . . . get stacks and stacks of mail weekly” (#5).

Popularity was tied to notoriety and to personality: “We had a couple of rappers that were pretty famous. . . . These guys were real popular as the other inmates told me. We also had a famous football player, a couple of hedge fund guys, and some guy who stuffed his wife in the trunk of his car cut up in little pieces” (#6).

Intelligence

Interviewee 1 described a particular inmate with whom she developed a close relationship: “She wasn’t like the others, and was educated, smart, was famous.” Interviewee 4 recounted an incident when he was lured into inappropriate conversation with a prisoner: “He was smart, and I was a fucking idiot.” Other participants characterized high-profile inmates in general as intelligent: “There’s a lot of temptations when dealing with these guys. They’re smart, they’re manipulative, and they’re famous” (#3). “In general, the ones that I have encountered are far more intelligent than the regular type inmate. They’ve got a great gift for drawing people in” (#4). “I would say in general they’re smarter, more intelligent. Maybe that is why they’re high-profile, because many were extremely successful and wealthy” (#6). “In general the high-profile type

inmate seems to be quite intelligent, very manipulative, kind of commands the room" (#7). "The high-profile inmates I have worked with seem to be more flamboyant, generally more savvy and intelligent. . . . For the most part the high-profile type inmate is very, very smart" (#9). "Most of them sure knew how to talk a good game and get over on people, so most were definitely intelligent" (#10).

The intelligence that participants attributed to high-profile inmates was often linked with their ability to influence others and work the system. Intelligence might derive from education (#1). It might have led to the success an inmate achieved before being sent to prison (#6). What was most important in participants' eyes, though, is that intelligence enables high-profile inmates to manipulate others.

Manipulation

Most participants, in describing high-profile inmates, used some form of the word *manipulate*: "They knew how to manipulate people" (#3). "I have found them to be extremely manipulative and cunning" (#4). "They know how to manipulate, they're master con artists, and they use their notoriety" (#4). "These high-profile guys are smart, manipulative, can talk with the best of them, and they're very popular" (#4). "I would also say that most of these guys are very manipulative; they know how to get what they want" (#5). "These guys are good, they know how to use and manipulate, and they use their notoriety to their benefit" (#5). "I would also say you have to add very arrogant and manipulative; they knew how to work people real good" (#6). "These guys are intelligent, manipulative, and sometimes they come from money and status" (#7). "The majority were very arrogant and cocky men who knew how to manipulate not only other inmates but staff and officers" (#10).

Summary

In this chapter, I summarized the results of a qualitative study designed to explore role conflict and nonsexual boundary violations between New York State COs and high-profile inmates. The sample consisted of 10 retired COs who participated in individual, semistructured interviews with me, either in person or by telephone. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for themes. Three main themes emerged: popularity, intelligence, and manipulation. In the following chapter, I will interpret the findings, draw conclusions, and make recommendations for further study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the results of a descriptive case study that explored nonsexual boundary violations between New York State COs and high-profile inmates. Data collection involved semistructured interviews with 10 former COs, either in person or by phone. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for themes. Three themes emerged from the data: Participants described high-profile inmates as more popular, intelligent, and manipulative than regular prisoners.

Interpretation of Findings

This study was based on five research questions, and in this section the discussion will be organized according to those questions.

Research Question 1

How has the role of CO evolved since the 1970s?

In New York, as in the United States as a whole, prison populations began rising rapidly in the 1970s and 80s. Before that, prison populations generally grew at a rate that reflected overall population growth. Starting in the early 1970s, however, imprisonment rates spiked, a result of stiffer sentences, many of them for drug crimes. Between 1925 and 1972, the population of state prisons increased by 105%. From 1972 to 2010, the number of inmates grew by 705% (Pew Center on the States, 2010). In New York, 1,085 people were in prison for drug-related offenses in 1970. That number grew to 4,631 in 1985 and 22,266 in 2000 (Prison Policy Initiative, 2012).

Coinciding with this increase in prisoners was a boom in prison construction. In New York, from 1982 to 2002, 38 prisons were opened, most of them in rural counties

(King, Mauer, & Huling, 2003). That period coincided with the careers of participants in this study, most of whom started in the early 1980s and retired after 25 years. One exception was Interviewee 8, who worked for 37 years, and he provides the best example of changes in the CO role.

Interviewee 8 started working in the New York prison system before COs were required to undergo academy training. He described COs in those years as operating with more latitude than they currently do, characterizing himself and his colleagues as enjoying "ultimate power." He was disdainful of the current state of affairs, which he traced to changes instituted after the Attica prison riot. He lamented that "the convicts are now called inmates" and that they can "file lawsuits against the department and the officers." For this ex-CO, then, the pre-1970s were the good old days, when officers operated with untrammeled authority and prisoners had few rights.

Research Question 2

What expectations are currently attached to the CO role?

The CO role was succinctly summarized by Interviewee 5 as "care, custody, and control." He elaborated by saying, "You must meet the physical needs of the inmate, you must make sure you know where your inmates are at all times, and you must keep the atmosphere within the dorm calm and orderly." This caretaking role was perhaps more acutely perceived because of the setting for his job—a dormitory—than it would have been in another prison location.

Interviewee 1 distinguished between operating "by the book" versus employing what might be called situational ethics: considering each inmate's individual situation and personality. She also said that learning not to sweat the small stuff was necessary in

order to avoid becoming overly stressed by the job's demands. She paid implicit tribute to a difference that exists in many occupations: one's formal job description versus the way one actually operates on the job.

Research Question 3

What forms of role conflict do COs experience?

In discussing role conflict, I have adopted terminology proposed by Kahn et al. (1964). They described "inter-sender conflict" as that which results when "pressures from one role sender oppose pressures from one or more other senders" (p. 20). Interviewee 1 provided an example of inter-sender conflict when she described her early behavior on the job being challenged by more experienced COs. She was trying to operate according to her academy training, which meant enforcing prison regulations to the letter. Her coworkers, on the other hand, told her "not to sweat the small things," lest she experience unmanageable stress.

Interviewee 8 provided another example of inter-sender role conflict when he talked about the norms operating when he started working as a CO compared to those in force later in his career. In the pre-Academy days, COs operated with tacit permission to do whatever they thought necessary to keep prisoners in line. Later, COs were taught that prisoners have rights and that misbehaving officers are subject not only to internal discipline but also to lawsuits.

Research Question 4

How does the presence of high-profile inmates affect the dynamics of role conflict among line officers?

COs are taught to treat all the inmates the same, and several participants paid lip service to this dictum. Interviewee 8, for example, claimed that "with me they're all just convicts." Other participants, however, admitted that they experienced role conflict with high-profile prisoners.

Interviewee 1 described a relationship that she developed with a particular prisoner as resulting from the fact that the inmate "made me feel very special. She wasn't like the others; she was educated, smart, famous. We became friends, and I know she cared for me." This CO admitted that her treatment of this inmate constituted a boundary violation, but she seemed unconcerned about her departure from standard operating procedure: "I was thinking, 'How many people could say they had a relationship with this famous person?' It made me feel great."

Interviewee 3 described a similar situation involving a fellow CO who smuggled drugs into prison for a high-profile inmate. Eventually the CO was caught and asked to explain his behavior. According to Interviewee 3, "The guy apparently said that the reason why he did this was because he felt honored to be a friend of this high-profile inmate."

Although Interviewee 1 did not feel guilty about according a high-profile prisoner special treatment, other participants expressed considerable discomfort about similar behavior they engaged in. For example, Interviewee 9 recounted a situation where he gave one inmate candy, newspapers, cigarettes, and special food items. Eventually, the prisoner was transferred to another facility, which left the CO feeling great relief: "I was extremely lucky because nothing ever became of this, and I could've gotten in serious trouble. Thank God he left."

Interviewee 4 was lured into a relationship with a high-profile prisoner that found him bringing the inmate cartons of cigarettes. When the prisoner demanded more cigarettes, the CO realized he would have to come clean with his superiors. He confessed to the misbehavior and received a reduced punishment in exchange for setting up the inmate.

Even if COs did not themselves accord high-profile inmates special treatment, the fact that they observed such behavior from other prison personnel created some pressure for them. Interviewee 3, for example, claimed of high-profile inmates that "compared to the average inmate, they were treated far, far better."

Participants were consistent in describing high-profile inmates as different from regular convicts, and those differences created role conflict. Asked whether an indiscretion he committed with a high-profile prisoner could have happened with a regular inmate, Interviewee 4 maintained, "These high-profile guys are smart, manipulative, can talk with the best of them. . . . With me, this could never have happened with the run-of-the-mill type inmates." Similarly, Interviewee 1 explained a boundary violation with a high-profile inmate by saying, "She wasn't like the others. [She] was educated, smart, famous." Interviewee 9 said that a high-profile inmate's notoriety sometimes made it difficult to separate the person from the prisoner, a situation ripe for role conflict. For Interviewee 10, a CO's reaction to high-profile inmates is influenced by a larger cultural atmosphere: "This country is crazy over anyone with celebrity status. I think it is just part of our culture. We go off the deep end when it comes to celebrities, and high-profile type inmates are celebrities."

Research Question 5

What are consequences of role conflict for prison safety and morale?

Inconsistencies in how COs treat high-profile inmates have some consequences that are benign. Having a group of prisoners who receive special privileges does not threaten prison safety, but it could affect morale by creating resentment among COs and other inmates. Interviewee 2, for example, sounded resentful in characterizing high-profile inmates as pampered, and Interviewee 6 said disdainfully, "I guess being a high-profile scumbag has its perks."

But although some role transgressions affect only morale, others have a direct bearing on safety. Participants described situations where COs supplied prisoners with drugs, bullets, knives, brass knuckles, and guns. Although none of the participants recounted any events where CO misbehavior led to a violent outcome, certainly the potential for violence is greatly increased when role conflicts lead to supplying inmates with the tools for violent activity.

Implications for Social Change

Although the U.S. prison system, the largest in the world, is highly dependent on COs, that occupation has received little systematic study. This research was an attempt to address that gap in the literature. Its results have the potential to effect social change by enlarging an understanding of the CO role, especially with respect to how prison guards relate to high-profile prisoners.

In many prisons, high-profile prisoners are housed with regular inmates. Although that practice can be defended on democratic grounds, results of this study reveal that such

an arrangement increases the potential for role conflict among COs. Prison officials can use these results to reconsider their policies in this area.

Results of this study can also be used to inform CO training. Preparing officers for the possibility of role conflict and boundary violations could help minimize their instances and effects. Role-playing scenarios, a component of employee training programs in other industries, could be profitably used in New York's CO academy training.

The purpose of imprisonment has evolved to reflect broader social and cultural attitudes. For much of their history, prisons in the United States were seen primarily as instruments of punishment and deterrence. More recently, they have been expected to perform a rehabilitative function (Elsner, 2004; Parks, 2000). One finding from the present study is the suggestion that prison officials, feeling pressure to demonstrate rehabilitative success, sometimes move prisoners—especially high-profile inmates—from high-security to medium-security facilities even if that action might not be justified. Such a move follows a favorable review by a parole board, but it may be that those boards feel pressure to move prisoners through the system in order to prove that the rehabilitative mission of the system is being fulfilled. In the words of one participant, "Man, it's all a game, and we all have our parts to play." Paying more attention to the wisdom of COs could help reduce pro forma "evidence" of rehabilitative success.

Recommendations for Action

Based on the results of this study, officials would do well to institute several changes in prison operations:

- *House high-profile inmates separately.* Based on responses from participants in this study, some of the role conflict they experience results from differences in how high-profile inmates are treated by both prisoners and COs, compared to regular inmates. Housing the two groups separately would make those differences less apparent.
- *Move prisoners and guards more frequently.* According to interviewees, some of the inappropriate behavior engaged in by COs results from long-term relationships between guards and inmates. As one put it, "You spend hours and hours, and sometimes years, with the same guys. It can get tough to stay straight and focused" (# 3). Another CO echoed that sentiment: "You spend day in and day out with these guys, and I believe they take advantage of that and manipulate people" (#5). Rotating COs within a particular prison and moving inmates among cell blocks or prisons would help guards avoid role conflict. This issue is most acute for high-profile prisoners. I recommend that they be moved every 6 months, when possible.
- *Stop basing CO placement solely on seniority.* In New York, new officers are first placed wherever there is a vacancy. Thereafter, COs can usually choose their assignments based on seniority. Too often, this system results in a failure to achieve an effective mix of newer and seasoned officers in a given area. Also, as they acquire seniority, COs usually choose placements with low ratios of inmates to officers, leaving areas with higher ratios to be staffed by officers with less experience.

- *In New York prisons, modify visitation policies.* Currently, in New York prisons up to seven people are allowed to visit an inmate at any one time. To reduce security risks, visits should be limited to four or fewer people at once. Also, high-profile inmates' contact with news media should be heavily restricted, and they should be allowed to receive mail only from family members.
- *Improve CO training.* The academy training that all prospective COs undergo should address the special challenges posed by high-profile prisoners. Participants in this study were consistent in describing those prisoners as different: smarter and more manipulative than other convicts. Helping COs anticipate those differences and the task of dealing with them could reduce the role conflict that guards experience and the boundary violations they sometimes fall prey to.

Recommendations for Further Study

This qualitative study was an attempt to address a gap in the literature regarding the important role of COs in prison operations—specifically, how role conflict can lead to nonsexual boundary violations with high-profile prisoners. Although this study represents an important addition to the literature, other research is needed. For example, although the current study's reliance on individual interviews resulted in a rich trove of data, it was limited to 10 participants. A quantitative study of CO's experiences with high-profile inmates would accommodate a much larger sample.

This study was limited to interviews with prison guards. It would be interesting to talk with wardens, supervisors, members of parole boards, and other prison officials.

Expanding the range of interviewees in a qualitative study could shed additional light on the complexities of prison culture and how that culture is affected by high-profile inmates.

Participants in this study had been retired for less than 5 years at the time of interviews. Most of them retired after the minimum 25 years, which means they started at approximately the same time. An exception was one CO who started earlier and worked for 37 years. He provided an interesting contrast with the other nine interviewees because he began his career before the advent of required academy training. It would be interesting to conduct a qualitative study with other guards from that era to get a better idea of how the CO role has changed.

Finally, future researchers could address an unanticipated distinction that arose in the current study. Interviewee 10 distinguished between two kinds of high-profile inmate: those whose crimes earn them respect in prison, and those whose crimes are not respected. He compared two prisoners: "Mad Dog" Sullivan, who had been an assassin for the Colombo crime family, and Arthur Shawcross, who was imprisoned for the murder of a 10-year-old boy and the rape and killing of an 8-year-old girl. After being paroled for those crimes, he was convicted for the serial murders of 11 women. According to Interviewee 10, "The types of crimes [Sullivan] committed were respected within the prison environment," but Shawcross's crimes were not respected, "and because his high-profile status magnified him and his crimes, being high-profile did not help him but at times it hurt him." I operated with the implicit assumption that all high-profile inmates present similar challenges for COs, but that is not necessarily the case.

Other researchers could explore the differing status that their crimes afford high-profile prisoners and the implications of those difference for the COs assigned to guard them.

Researcher's Experience

As I have noted elsewhere in this dissertation, I have been a CO since 1986, and in that capacity I have observed and worked with several high-profile inmates. In conducting the interviews that formed the basis for this study, I interacted with individuals whose experience was familiar to me. Despite that familiarity, however, I learned a great deal about what it is like to be a CO. My interviewees worked in facilities in different parts of New York State and brought different frames of reference to the interviews. In spite of those differences, they shared one commonality: extreme pride and satisfaction with their careers as COs. I felt privileged and honored to talk with them.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented conclusions and recommendations for a descriptive case study of nonsexual boundary violations between New York State COs and high-profile inmates. The study addressed a gap in the literature regarding role conflict among COs. A better understanding of the CO role will help inform CO training, as well as specific practices regarding how high-profile prisoners are housed and supervised. Prisons are a growing industry in the United States. Improving the way they operate will contribute to public safety and to the general public good.

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Appendix A: Permission to Conduct Study

New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association, Inc.
102 Hackett Blvd., Albany, NY 12209
(518) 427-1551 www.nyscopba.org nyscopba@nyscopba.org

March 8, 2012

Walden University
ATTN: IRB Committee/ Research Partner
155 Fifth Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Re: Ron Ruggiero Doctoral Research

Dear Committee Members:

Please accept this correspondence as affirmation that the New York State Correctional Officers PBA (NYSCOPBA) has agreed to assist Officer Ruggiero in his Doctoral research.

If you should have any questions regarding this affirmation, please feel free to contact me at the above number or at chickey@nyscopba.org.

Sincerely,

Chris Hickey
Executive Vice President

Appendix B: Invitation Letter to Potential Participants

Dear Officer:

My name is Ronald Ruggiero. I am a correctional officer at the Marcy Correctional Facility. I am also working on my Ph.D. dissertation: Role Conflict and Nonsexual Boundary Violations Among Correctional Officers. The purpose of this study is to gather information that will improve interactions between officers and inmates, contributing to an improved work environment. I am especially interested in relationships between officers and high-profile inmates, those individuals who arrive at a prison with a reputation that preceded them.

I plan to conduct interviews with recently retired correctional officers who have extensive experience interacting with high-profile inmates. Participation in this study will be on a voluntary basis. No monetary compensation will be given to any participants. All interviews will take place at locations that are convenient for participants, but no interviews will take place at any New York State facility.

When I meet with potential participants, I will give a more complete description of the study and answer any questions. If you are selected to participate, you will be contacted to arrange a research interview. I thank you in advance for your consideration of this project.

Sincerely,

Ronald Ruggiero

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

Thank you for your interest in a study of relationships between correctional officers and high-profile inmates. This study will be based on individual interviews with recently retired (within 5 years) correctional officers who have worked and experienced role conflict at one or more of New York's maximum-security facilities.. You were selected to participate because you meet these criteria.

Interviews will be conducted by me, Ronald Ruggiero. I am a CO with over 20 years experience in the New York Corrections System. This research is being conducted as part of my doctoral dissertation at Walden University. Interviews will be transcribed audio recorded.

The purpose of this study is to explore an area that has been neglected in previous research: how the presence of high-profile inmates in maximum-security prisons can create role conflicts for prison employees. I will conduct individual, face-to-face interviews at a location that is convenient and comfortable for you, and Interviews are expected to last 60-90 minutes.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. You will receive no direct benefits or rewards for participating. Participation carries no known risks. You are free to decline to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable, and you are free to withdraw from the interview and the study at any time without penalty.

Your responses to interview questions will be completely confidential. I will not use your name when transcribing or reporting interviews. Your interview responses will be coded with a number known only to me.

This research will be beneficial to prison administrators, elected officials, and others involved in prison operation. Administrators will benefit by having additional information on which to base staffing and job assignments. Results of this study could also aid in revising prison operations, policies, and procedures. If the study shows that extended exposure to high-profile inmates results in increased boundary violations, steps could be taken to minimize that outcome, including rotating inmates and guard assignments, and providing additional employee training.

Participants in the study will receive no financial remuneration or other tangible benefits from participating.

You will have an opportunity to review the transcript of your interview and check it for accuracy. Upon request, you will be provided with a summary of the study's results. You may keep a copy of this consent form.

If you have any questions about this research you may contact me at 315-794-9201. You may also contact Dr. Leilani Endicott (800-925-3368, ext. 1210) with any questions about your rights as a participant.

Name (print name) _____ Date_____

Signature _____

Researcher (Ron Ruggiero) _____ Date_____

Appendix D: Sample Interview Questions

1. How long were you a correctional officer? How long have you worked with maximum, high-profile inmates?

2. How did your job change over the course of your career?

3. I'm especially interested in your experience with what I've called high-profile inmates—those who entered prison with a reputation that you were already aware of. How often did your duties bring you in contact with such inmates?

4. What are some differences between high-profile inmates and "regular" inmates?

5. How would you compare the time you spent with high-profile inmates compared to regular inmates?

5. How likely were high-profile inmates to emphasize their infamy in dealings with you?

6. How do regular and high-profile inmates compare in their propensity to ask questions or make requests that are not work-related?

7. Did your interaction with a high-profile inmate ever place you in a compromising situation? If so, explain.

8. How did your experience with high-profile inmates affect your relationships with other COs?

9. How did the presence of a high-profile inmate(s) affect your overall work atmosphere?

10. How were the issues we've been discussing addressed in your training?