

CHAPTER NINE

OFFENDER INTERVIEW FINDINGS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Interviews conducted with police offenders reflect the qualitative nature of this study where the objective is to obtain first-hand information on police criminality by conducting personal interviews. These offender interviews were extensive and reflect the subjects' points of view pertinently.

This chapter illustrates the findings from interviews held with eight police offenders, incarcerated in four different prisons at the time of their interview. Anonymity was guaranteed by the researcher so not even their names are mentioned in this study. The researcher concluded her research after eight offender interviews as saturation had been achieved. The crimes for which these ex-police members were convicted include murder, theft, corruption, fraud, illegal possession of abalone and robbery. For at least four of these offenders these were the only crimes they were convicted for, but certainly not the only crimes they were involved in throughout their policing careers. Some of these offenders were literally career criminals as well as career policemen.

Input by the subjects was very informative. Their confidence was gained by explaining to them that the researcher was there to learn from them and that they were not going to be judged for their actions. Additional questions were put to them in the biographical section of the interview in order to get them to talk about themselves and to put them at ease. The researcher felt after the interviews that the subjects did not withhold information, they were all co-operative and keen to share their experiences, including the multitude of crimes some of them were involved in that were never addressed by the legal system or police managers. It was evident that some of these subjects were feeling vulnerable and actually relished the opportunity to talk to a stranger, resulting in sincere and honest information. Some subjects were prone to embellishment, particularly relating to their policing performance.

It was pertinent to note that very few subjects blamed the policing system for their behaviour. One subject did accept responsibility for his actions but stressed that the police should also accept some of the blame because of the way they treat their members. Another subject reluctantly admitted that he had a choice to become corrupt or not, but blamed the police station where he worked and the corrupt members working in that environment for his participation.

These findings are presented according to the **themes** set out in the offender's interview guide. There are three distinct sections that deal with biographical details of the offenders such as their motivation for joining the police, aspects of the job they enjoyed the most and the least and the training they received. The second section deals with questions that arose during the literature which apply to these interviews, such as the extent of police corruption/crime, types of crimes committed by members, the ranks and units most susceptible to crime/corruption, the reasons police members cross the line and become criminals, policies and procedures and interventions. The final section deals with highlighting the crimes for which these eight subjects were convicted and some of their descent into crime, which includes definite patterns and other motivators which contributed to the situation that they find themselves in today.

*The researcher wishes to reiterate that the findings of the offender interviews **reflect only the subject's opinions, thoughts and experiences**. Only the conclusion of this chapter will feature any input from the researcher (and in highlighting motives). Direct quotations by subjects are presented within quotation marks or quotation marks and italics. **If the input is pertinent, such as a good illustration or explanation of a specific theme, it will be presented within a shaded box or in italics.***

*Also, if the presentation appears to lack the necessary scientific requirements, this is as a result of the researcher adopting the **communicative tone of the subjects**. In this chapter (as well as the previous chapter), most of the offender's first language is Afrikaans, which is an expressive language and as such, the researcher does not wish to lose any of its nuances.*

9.2 OFFENDER INTERVIEW FINDINGS

9.2.1 PART ONE: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

The ages of the offenders interviewed ranged from 31 to 42 years of age. Their length of incarceration at the time of their interview ranged from three months to 11 years. Most of the subjects had fairly lengthy years of service in the South African Police Force/Service. These ranged from four years to 21 years service. All the subjects interviewed were males. Their ranks at the time of their arrests varied from constable, detective sergeant, warrant officer (inspector in the new Service), inspector and captain.

It is important to note that the majority of subjects joined the police prior to 1994, which was still during the apartheid years when the police were a Force and not a Service. They changed to a Service after South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994. The principles of policing in the South African Police Force (known then as the South African Police) were akin to principles of police organisations all over the world except for the fact that their time was spent predominantly policing apartheid's racial laws. This meant that many of these subjects did stints in South Africa's cross-border wars and in the various townships that were torn apart by political unrest and riots. It will become evident in this chapter how these aspects, and other aspects of "apartheid policing" profoundly affected and contributed to the eventual outcome of some subjects' lives.

9.2.2 REASONS FOR JOINING THE POLICE

Most of the subjects provided altruistic reasons for joining the police, such as a desire to help others and to serve the community. A few subjects started off by saying that at the time they joined, they were looking for a job and they found a job relatively easily in the South African Police. For some it was a lifelong dream to be a policeman, a subject being fascinated by the uniform. One subject mentioned that as a little boy he was a dreamer, he read copious books about Boer Generals and he wanted to emulate them. Another subject mentioned that his parents encouraged him to work for the state.

9.2.2.1 Aspects of Police Work Most/Least Enjoyed.

The subjects were asked which aspects of policing they enjoyed the most and which aspects they enjoyed the least. The elements of policing **most enjoyed** by the subjects include the camaraderie amongst police members and the pride in being a policeman. More than one subject mentioned that they enjoyed helping people (with medical problems as well) and communicating with members of their community in order to assist them with their problems and encourage them to be positive. These elements were significant motivating factors for the subjects when joining the police. One subject mentioned that he enjoyed doing foot patrols in dangerous places and confiscating illegal firearms. He added that while patrolling he was not fearful, this only set in once the patrols were over. Another subject mentioned that he simply loved his work, he only took sick leave for one day and he did not take his annual leave.

The aspects of policing **least enjoyed** by the subjects included working on public holidays such as New Year's Eve and working night shifts, which all uniform members have to do. Some subjects stressed that they hated the violence and interrogation practices which were used by the police pre-1994, as well as the lack of respect for human rights and another subject added that he disliked dealing with the rape, child molestation and domestic violence cases as "these were a daily occurrence in black and coloured townships." One subject mentioned that: "in 1994, when all the changes happened, things started going wrong, for example, they took whites out of posts and put coloureds and blacks in and they don't care. Everybody does what they want in the police service. Discipline has 'gone out by the door' as a result of getting rid of military style training and there is no saluting anymore."

One subject mentioned that he did not enjoy the large-scale police raids that took place in different communities where the community did not know the police members, and he disliked the way "the cops beat up people who became a bit agitated by the police action." He added that also "in those days, if you put a criminal away, it was good for the state prosecutor, but if you spoke in favour of them, then it was not a good thing." A subject disliked the "I'll only look after myself and not look after other members" attitude in the police today.

One subject remarked that: "people think the police are just 'skiet, skop en donder,' (shoot, kick and assault) it's not only about this, you also get to help people, to uplift them. It taught me to look deeper at a person, not just the outside."

Subjects were asked whether they had any **family members in the police**, in order to ascertain if these individuals influenced the subjects to join the police. Some had no familial connections to policing, one subject had a girlfriend in the police and another had a cousin and an uncle in the police. One subject had two brothers and a nephew in the police, of which he and his two brothers are serving prison terms and his nephew is still in the Service. None of the subjects said that they were in any way encouraged by these individuals to join the police.

9.2.2.2 Training

Most of the subjects mentioned that they underwent *paramilitary style training*, as this was the method of police training before 1994. Some subjects mentioned that they enjoyed their training even though it was tough, for example recruits had to run everywhere, even while

eating a pie. The training was intensive with strict discipline. After attending a police training college for six months, recruits attended various courses including a “boskurses” (bush course) where they learned how to protect the country’s borders and they learned how to handle riots. Police members could study courses such as Police Administration, which the police sponsored. Some subjects felt that the training they received then was “100%,” they knew what their purpose was. They knew their job when they left college.

One subject mentioned that the **legal training** was good, for example, in the first month of his being in a police station as a new member, he had to investigate some big cases and he knew exactly what he was doing. At college, recruits had to pass criminal law and criminal procedure with 60% or 80% before they could graduate. Another subject felt that the legal training was good, but academic. “The real teaching was done by the older officers in the police stations.” This was referred to as the “buddy system,” known today as the Field Training Officer system. The weaponry training was also very good. Generally “they can teach you theory, but this doesn’t prepare you properly for reality.”

One subject mentioned that the training was lacking on a psychological and humanitarian level and as a result of the apartheid system, recruits were constantly warned about the “swart gevaar,” (black danger) “they were indoctrinated into hating and ‘taking-out’ the black guy.” Another subject felt that police training did not teach recruits how to communicate correctly with the community, for example, when a member of the public came into the police station to complain, the recruit did not know how to listen to the problem or how to address it correctly.

“Because of the way the training was structured in those days, when you had finished college you felt like a lion who had been set free, you were very confident. Recruits also wanted to get rid of the frustrations built up during training and you wanted to find peace. The frustration was a result of the humiliation, which accompanies military training, such as being forced to ‘kiss the ground.’ We were spoiling for a fight, we just wanted to beat everybody up.”

A few subjects felt that **discipline in the police today had deteriorated**, largely due to the changing of the curriculum from paramilitary style training to a more human rights and community focused style of training. One subject added that as a result of the latter, there was no more respect in the police anymore, particularly for authority/ranks.

Another subject added that there had been too many changes throughout his lengthy career in the SAPS. The last three years of his career being very different. The first five years of the subject's career he would not have had so many problems with people than the last five years. The subject said this was because of the training police members were receiving today. "When my training was done I was a cop, I knew what was expected of us. We were focused and we had discipline then. They have weakened on this." The focus now is on training recruits in the police station. The emphasis on discipline has gone, "recruits even sleep under duvets in college! In the old days we did not even sleep in our beds because we were too scared to crease them. They have got 'slap,' (slack) they even have television sets in their quarters."

"The training we had made us more 'paraat,' we had proper task-force training with better discipline, we were prepared for any eventuality. Today more cops are getting killed because they are not properly prepared."

When asked whether they received **ethics and integrity training**, a few subjects said they could not remember as it was too long ago. One subject mentioned that they were warned during training about temptations, but that this was not part of an official course. "We did receive training in this and the managers would speak about it a lot at the station, they are not doing this anymore, it's not the same training, the guys don't even know how to write out a docket." Another subject mentioned that there was definitely no ethics or integrity training, "there was no training to prepare you for what might come your way." Other subjects mentioned that they were too afraid of being "pecked," to misbehave. This included paying fines and forfeiting promotion for stepping out of line or failing to do their work. *"In those days there was still pride in being a policeman, we still had honour."*

9.3 PART TWO: LITERATURE/EMPIRICAL THEMES

9.3.1 EXTENT OF POLICE CORRUPTION/CRIMINALITY

When the subjects were asked about the extent of corruption/criminality in the South African Police Service, perceived or otherwise, the adjectives used were as follows:

- ***pretty bad,***
- ***very bad,***
- ***big,***
- ***very big,***
- ***widespread,***
- ***huge, and***
- ***more arrests today.***

Some subjects mentioned that they could not speak for the entire police service, but could comment on specific police stations, such as Station X, which serves a community with a significant gang problem. Corruption in this police station is widespread and it involves constables, sergeants, inspectors and a few captains (mainly non-commissioned officers). One subject mentioned that at one stage “all the guys were transferred from this station to Manenberg and Grassy Park due to corruption. The guys used to go to Hanover Park (used to work mainly in Hanover Park) where the gangsters are, we would befriend the gangsters.” Another subject reiterated that the problem was very bad at Station X, “generally very bad all over, some get away with it and some don’t.” *One subject estimated that between 3% and 4% of members of the South African Police Service are corrupt.*

9.3.2 TYPES OF CRIME

*When offering information about the types of crimes committed by police members, many subjects mentioned that these were things they were aware of and not necessarily a part of. There were some subjects who admitted that they were very much **a part of the criminality happening around them.***

9.3.2.1 Substance-related Criminality

One subject stated that police are aware that people are running illegal shebeens selling alcohol but they turn a blind eye because the owner of the shebeen gives the policeman a bottle of brandy every week. “We would go to a shebeen and demand five crates of beer. If we were not given these crates of beer, we would confiscate all the liquor. Cops regularly confiscate liquor and drugs and sell them. They also steal drugs from one dealer and sell them to another dealer.”

Concerning drugs, some of the subjects mentioned that members are known to steal drugs from exhibits and they act as couriers by using police vehicles to transport drugs for drug lords. Drugs also disappear before they even get to the police station. Members resell confiscated drugs, often outside their area for example, they take drugs out of Hanover Park and sell them to merchants in Grassy Park. *“I was with these cops when they did this – it was common. There was a big drug dealer in Hanover Park who had police connections at Station X, and when people had bought a lot of drugs from him, he phones these members and tells them what cars these people are driving and that they have just bought such and such. The police officers stop the cars, take the drugs and sell them back to the merchant who alerted them.”*

Another subject said that smuggling drugs (mainly dagga) into police holding cells and court cells is also a common practice by police. The subject was aware of a colleague who used to offer his brother - who was a drug dealer, protection from arrest. The dealer sold drugs from his vehicle and the brother would constantly patrol around him to make sure he was “safe.”

“A gangster tells us there is a shipment of drugs coming in for a rival gang and he doesn’t like it. We go to collect this shipment in two police vans, sell the whole shipment to the gangster who gave us the information, for R10 000. Also, tell the gangster that we don’t have a car, he lends us a car to use for an entire week-end.”

One subject illustrated the case of a colleague who was involved in **drugs**. This policeman bought a smart car with a R14 000 CD system in the cubby hole and he also had a wad of R50 notes in there. When asked where he got the cash, car and CD player, he told colleagues that his parents had a wine farm and he was selling wine for them. Years later a colleague of the subject told him he was about to arrest this guy. The corrupt policeman thought he was untouchable and by this stage he was driving a Porche motor vehicle. This policeman had been smuggling cocaine for years (this is how he was making his money) and he was eventually found out when he hired a “runner” who was also a police informer. Officers pulled him off the road and found drugs in his car. This policeman never went to jail because he had paid everybody off.

The subjects also mentioned that **“tipping-off”** was extremely common. Two subjects agreed that members never used charge-office phones with which to phone gangsters to tell them that a raid was imminent, they mentioned that they either used the public phone booth

outside Station X or they used cellular phones. Another subject added that before raids on gangster's homes were carried out, someone from the police station would always phone and tip them off, so when the police arrived, they found nothing. "Cannot plan an operation far in advance – only two hours ahead, this works better most of the time because then there is not so much time to tip-off the criminals."

- Substance Abuse

The subjects confirmed that alcoholism is a big problem in the police, mentioning that many members go to work everyday with a hangover. "Abuse of sick leave and domestic violence are all related to alcoholism." One subject was aware of a colleague with seven cases of domestic violence against him and he had received no help. The SAPS do send members to an alcohol rehabilitation centre in Bellville. One subject mentioned that police complain about low salaries because they can't afford liquor. "I would spend R200 to R300 every night on beer – this on a salary of R2000 a month." Members could buy alcohol "on the book" at police clubs. The subject added that older members drink and younger members use drugs, particularly Mandrax. Members do not tend to declare that they have a problem because "no-one wants an admin job for 20 years, so you don't tell anyone you have a problem."

One subject mentioned that he also drank a lot while in the police, both off and on duty. The latter referring to when he was on night shift. The subject added that if they got a call out at night, there were two scenarios: *if it was a serious call, the least drunk members attended to it. If it was not serious – nobody responded. "This happened all the time and is still happening."* Drunk driving in police vehicles happens a lot everywhere. It often happens that members have accidents in police vehicles while drunk, they run away and leave the vehicle standing there. The next day they will "come with a lot of stories because they weren't caught on the scene – I can guarantee that this is still happening."

Another subject remarked that: "there is a lot of **stress** in the Service but it is not a problem if you take a drink " and another added that: "drinking is big in the police – it is a way of dealing with problems."

9.3.2.2 Vehicle-related Criminality

The subjects provided numerous examples of vehicle-related criminality perpetrated by the police such as: issuing false clearance certificates, passing vehicles as roadworthy when

they are not, changing chassis numbers of stolen vehicles and issuing fictitious accident reports for insurance claims.

One subject mentioned that radio control (10111) would phone members on duty to say that a car had been stolen - they knew its location and they must go to the scene. "We get to the scene and steal the car ourselves – drive around in the car. We phone radio control from our cell-phones (not the police radio), to tell them that when we arrived at the scene the car was not there anymore. We leave the police vans and drive around in the car. We complete our shift, then strip the car completely and leave it in the bushes.

When the new shift takes over we tell them that we found this 'car' in the bushes. We make sure that there are no fingerprints on the car. There is no case."

If there is a "clean" member on patrol with the corrupt ones, the vehicle would get towed to the SAP13 at the police station and it would be stripped there. Another subject mentioned that he knew of at least two stolen cars that were found and members stripped the cars at the spot where the cars were found. They would take the stuff away then go back to the car, phone radio control to send a tow-truck to fetch what is left of the car and take it to the police station (to the SAP13 evidence store).

In one incident, a subject and his colleague were outside parliament one night when they saw a police van drive past fully laden. They contacted radio control to ask whose vehicle it was and radio control said that the van had not been booked out. They pulled the van over. There was a sergeant driving in uniform and the van was full of car radios etcetera. At the same time the subject heard that a Ford Sierra had just been stolen and he knew this sergeant was involved. They eventually caught a few police officials while they were busy stripping cars and putting police plates on them.

A subject mentioned something else members got involved in, related to petrol. There was a place at a police station where the vans filled up with petrol. "We would take our 'kannetjies' (cans) and first put petrol in these cans and then in the van. We write up 40 litres, put ten litres in the van and 30 litres in our personal cars. To reflect this properly (that 40 litres went into the van), we would use a sharp object to reverse the numbers on the petrol pump. We also had to record the van's speedometer kilometres, to do this we loosened the speedometers cable so the speedometer does not run and drive around like this all night. We also took R10 or R20 from gangsters and used this to put petrol into the van at an ordinary petrol station."

One subject mentioned that the *opportunity for corruption was big in police intelligence*. For example, officers were given an operation to do, they were given a set of keys for a Mercedes vehicle, they would break into the car, have the registration changed, use it for an operation and burn it out. The officers had connections at Mercedes Benz and eventually more members caught on, they would go to the dealer and ask for fake licence plates for "operations" then they would go and steal a legal Mercedes and sell it. This was easy then because "you always had cover and the bosses protected you."

One subject related a **hijacking** incident in which he was involved. "Three guys in Station X, who are still working there (inspectors) – I can vouch for this hijacking because I was with them. One night on the corner of Lansdowne Road and Lower Ottery Road, we hijacked a car with a female driver (a guy from Hanover Park was with us). We were in a SAP13 stolen vehicle at the time. We threw the occupants of the car out in Hanover Park and drove to a 'smokkelhuis' (drug den) in Philippi, robbed the owner of all his cash, stole his liquor (he didn't know we were cops because we wore balaclavas and we were dressed in civvies). I was the driver and I sat in the car while they did the robbery. We don't do 'orders' for cars or go with syndicates because 'that's heavy stuff.' *We think about what we can do criminally and we go off and do it after work.*"

9.3.2.3 Police Relationship with Gangs

Two subjects that worked in gang-soaked areas illustrated aspects of the relationship between gangs and corrupt policemen. One subject said that: "when I was charge-office commander, working shifts, I worked with guys who 'had their friends outside,' and food would come in from outside, including having braai's (barbeques). No one on the shift would contribute money for this, they would just pick up the phone and their gang friends (mainly gang leaders) would bring the stuff. *Also, if a gangster was arrested during our shift, we would let him go.*"

A second subject reiterated that it was common for members to go to a merchant and say "we are having a braai tonight, give us something. "We always braaied behind the police station while on night shift and there was a lot of alcohol involved in these braais as well." This subject added that members did not actually get involved with gangsters, for example, if gangsters are shooting at each other the "work must be done" by the police. Police members must intervene and *when they do catch someone with an unlicensed firearm they lock him up.*

Firearms would often disappear from the SAP13 store. These firearms were sold to gangsters. “There was a policeman who stole a firearm out of the safe and sold it to someone in Manenberg.” The subject added that helping gangsters get firearm licenses is also very common practice. A third subject mentioned that there were members of the (erstwhile) Gang Unit who actually *had the tattoos of certain gangs on them*, for example under their watches. In “those days” there was a fear of policemen by gangsters. Also because if a gangster had a vendetta against a policeman, members would put him in the van and drop him in a rival gang’s turf where “he must run or die.”

The subject mentioned that they had their own methods of sorting out the gangs. For example, a gangster threatened one of his female colleagues while she was travelling in a taxi. When they were called out to attend to a gang fight, the policewoman identified the gangster who had threatened her. “We went to Station Y, picked up a Caspir and booked out some heavy weapons and we flattened the leader of the gang’s (which this gangster belonged to) Opel Monza. We also got involved with the shooting. These people who made the threats were there to defend themselves, and they got shot. In those days if you took on the Gang Unit, people said it was like taking on the army.”

*A subject was asked whether gangs targeted **good police members**? He replied that these members would raid a drug lord’s house, confiscate any drugs they found and actually hand them into the SAP13 evidence store and arrest the gangsters. Because they are not “in” with the gangsters, they become a target. Their safety is threatened, as are their families and homes. Two officers were transferred from Station X to West Coast towns because they were in danger. The gangsters had put a R50 000 ransom on their heads.*

9.3.2.4 Theft

Perhaps the most common examples given by subjects pertaining to theft by police members involves stealing from places where alarms had gone off or places that had already been burgled (stealing from crime scenes). “Corrupt cops organised break-ins and then these same cops go and investigate. They load their car full of goods, then they call the key-holder and he comes to the scene. The cops obviously blame the burglary on other thieves.” Also, “a member of the public phones in to report a disturbance at their house. Two cops walk through the house to check and your partner gets back with pockets full of goods – we look out for each other, a strong bond develops. In another instance, I teamed up with other cops – bad guys from Wynberg and we did a **shakedown** of a place where we found lots of

money, which we stole.”

One subject mentioned that he knew of a sergeant who was working with a syndicate of robbers. When they had finished breaking-in to a place, the sergeant would go in and cleanup what was left to steal. *The subject added that there is police involvement in almost every syndicate out there.* Another subject added that when police received a call from radio control that an alarm had gone off at a grocery shop or a food outlet, they would go straight to the back of the shop where the wine is kept, “there has been no break-in, but there is a break-in (by the police),” two police vans leave the scene with the goods. After the shift, the members involved all come together and split the stolen goods. “I saw this happening because I was there. We broke into a sweet manufacturing factory as well and we told the key-holder that when we got there, the place had already been burgled.”

One subject related another incident where members went to the scene of a burglary in Woodstock. The business that was burgled stocked car parts, mag wheels etcetera. When the police got there, the owner was there and told them that “the damage was already done, the insurance will pay out” and he proceeded to give the police goods for their cars and invited them to take what they want because the insurance will pay. This subject added that when he got to the scene of a burglary at a popular shop, the security guard commented that they were: “one of numerous police vans that had already been there to help themselves.”

“Confiscated stuff should be recorded in the SAP13 book for evidence. We just declared half of the stuff and only half of the money. We were supposed to record the serial numbers of the notes, but we didn’t do this. There were many times when no confiscated goods got reported in the evidence book at all.”

Another subject gave an example of an internal case of theft he had to investigate. A policeman had stolen a few thousand rand out of the evidence store (people had been arrested for dealing and police confiscated drugs and cash). The defendant in the latter case was acquitted and demanded his cash back from the police, which had been stolen. This money was paid back by the SAPS and taken off the accused policeman’s pension. The member was charged with theft but acquitted because police rules say that if you are responsible for the SAP13 store, you must have the keys with you at all times. This policeman left the keys in the draw. The judge said that anyone could have had access to the keys and taken the money. *This policeman was found guilty in a Departmental hearing because he should not have left the keys in a draw. The member merely paid back the*

money with no further sanction.

Another example of theft by police, as mentioned by a subject, involved police members from Bellville who arrested someone for being drunk in public. It was a Friday afternoon and the individual had attended a braai at his place of work. The man was walking home afterwards with his pay packet and his cellular phone on him. The police arrested him and when he was released told him that he had nothing on him when he was brought in. They did not declare his property when he was processed and stole it. The man was locked up for four hours.

“We saw two Toyota Corolla’s parked next to each other and when we stopped the drivers ran away. We found one driver and pulled him into the Nyala. We found R3000 on him, took this and divided it amongst five cops. One Corolla was a stolen car. We gave the guy a few ‘klappe’ (smacks) and let him go (because it was safer to let the crook go). We returned the Corolla to its legitimate owner. The cops stole the golf clubs, car radio etcetera out of the car and obviously told the owner that the thieves had taken the stuff. We even got a reward.”

The subject added that on the East Rand there were two brothers, both in the police who were driving around in Porche motor vehicles. One of the brothers refused to go off duty until he had made his R2000 for the day. *One of the favourite ways of making money is to shakedown taxis.*

One subject was asked whether corrupt members would steal anything? He responded: “basically yes – anything of value, for example, if there has been a car accident and there is cellphone lying around, they will steal it, or a wallet, they will take the cash out and leave the wallet on the scene.”

9.3.2.5 Bribery

One subject mentioned how during the late 1980’s police at the Protea base in Soweto pulled off taxis for anything because they did not need a reason, asked them for R10 bribes, then let them go.

Another subject mentioned that: “another common thing that I was actually involved with was, for example, pulling cars off the road to check for a licence. If they didn’t have a licence then I would tell the driver ‘it’s going to cost you, it’s up to you, can either go to the police station with us and we will give you a fine or you can give me something now.’ People usually pay

the bribe, but not all of them. People who don't pay the bribe get a 'nice' fine." The bribes are usually between R100 and R200 per vehicle. They set the price, not the police. Another subject added that: "When a driver is speeding, we must issue him with a J534 fine, but we didn't carry the fine-book with us, we took the guy to the police station and on the way- if the fine was R100, he gives us R30 and walks away. This is very common."

"Do get offered bribes of R50, R100 for certifying copies of non-existent ID books, or non-existent licenses or for fake qualification certificates."

Another subject mentioned that if they found an individual in possession of dagga, he would be taken to the police station and the police would phone the leader of his gang who instructs them to release his member. The officers then go out in the police van to "collect" from the gang leader. "When the cops caught a guy with an illegal firearm (gangsters do not have firearm licenses), we would phone the boss of the gang again. At Station X all the members have the gangsters cellphone numbers – even the superintendents have these numbers. The gang boss comes to the police station with R500 or R1000, hands it over, cops keep the firearm and let the gangster go with a warning. They then hand the gun to the gang boss around the corner."

9.3.2.6 Assault

According to a subject, there is a high incidence of assault in the police. "Show me one policeman who hasn't smacked a suspect because of the levels of frustration experienced by cops. It is the nature of the job." Most assaults occur during arrest and interrogation.

Another subject added that *assaults by police happened "big time," because the police could do it and to get information.* In one incident of gratuitous assault that took place a number of years ago, "a black guy was arrested for the rape of a white woman. An officer and a sergeant removed the guy from the cells and 'knocked him senseless.' The next day I went into the cell to check on the suspect and found him dead, he had obviously been tortured. The suspect wasn't even the rapist." The subject arrested the officer because he had taken the suspect out of the cell without permission and because the suspect had died whilst in his care. The officer was fired and the sergeant demoted.

One subject stated that: "we used to 'panel-beat' people all the time and we didn't have to have a reason. For example, we would beat people up because they ran away from us or we

would find a dagga pip in a guy's pocket – we would beat him to find out where he got the dagga. **It becomes like a drug because you have got power.** It's not really because of the nature of the job. Most assaults are totally unnecessary. Race is also important, I hated blacks because of the friends I lost during apartheid.”

Another subject related his experience. “If I come to work in a bad mood because somebody at home made me cross, I want to get rid of this stress by hitting somebody. I'll get into the van and go looking for a drunk or a 'skollie' (criminal) and search him, if he resists being searched in public I will give him a 'klap' (smack) or a 'skop' (kick). They don't complain, if they did lay assault or crimen injuria charges against me, I will lay counter-charges. They don't make a case. It is more a personal thing than the nature of the job.” Another subject reiterated that assaults were not really a result of the nature of the job. “They happen a lot, especially at Station X. I did hit someone because he was swearing at me, at the police station, not in the cell. This happens a lot in the police station.”

“Assaults are a result of frustration because of pressure. For example there are two vans to cover a huge area and at the end of the day you have a lot of outstanding complaints and radio control tells you at the end of your shift that you have so many outstanding complaints. The people on the next shift don't want to take these over – you must do your work. It is the same with detectives. Ten detectives must do the work of 40. At the end of the month they sit with 400 dockets. They can't do it.”

9.3.2.7 Other Crimes

The subjects mentioned additional types of crimes that police members perpetrate and these include:

- Fraud

A member of the erstwhile Syndicate Fraud Unit was convicted for printing American dollars from a template and selling them for rands.

- Murder

“If people really are a problem, we would help them to 'disappear,' especially troublesome crooks. We would arrange with two cops from a local police station to put the 'skelm'

(criminal) in a van – bad things happen in the back of a police van (he would be killed and the body dumped). This is still happening.”

- Prostitution

A subject provided an example: in Lansdowne Road there were three girls from Hanover Park who were working for an inspector at Station X. The inspector was the pimp. “I was driving the van one night and this inspector was my passenger, he asked me to go and ‘make a turn’ in Lansdowne Road. The inspector got out of the van and spoke to the three girls – he told me that because they weren’t working he must have a talk with them.”

The subject added that it is not uncommon for members to pick up prostitutes in return for sexual “favours.” If the prostitutes do not comply, they are arrested.

- Abalone

Another subject mentioned that it is also very common for policemen to be involved in the smuggling of abalone. This is not confined to small places such as Hawston and Hermanus. *“We used to take the police van to Hawston or nearby, pick up the stuff and bring it back to wherever the syndicate wanted it to be. We used the police van to courier the stuff because it was not likely to be stopped. Abalone poaching and smuggling is still a big problem, it is still going on.”*

“**Syndicates** generally do not approach members directly if they need something, they go to an intermediary and they will go to a specific member, or a member acts as an intermediary.”

- Search Warrants

One subject mentioned that the issuing of false search warrants is a common crime and it still happens. “It is easy, during the week we must go to court where a magistrate signs the warrant, but after 4pm the court is closed. Then the official with the highest rank at the police station, or from captain up, can also sign a warrant. If there aren’t officers around after 4pm we phone radio control because there is always an officer on duty there. We take the search warrant to radio control to be signed. In other cases I will sign the warrant myself.”

These warrants are used, for example, when a drug dealer phones a corrupt member and complains about another dealer who is doing more business than him. The dealer asks the policeman to “check the rival out.” The policeman goes in with a search warrant, searches the rival dealer’s house and steals his drugs if any are found. The subject added that false warrants are more drug-related.

- Public Driving Permits

“This is how it works: you go to the traffic department and tell them you want a PDP. Go to the police department with the forms, have fingerprints taken and pay R21. Fingerprints must be sent to the police’s fingerprint experts in Pretoria. This takes three weeks to six months, depending on whether the applicant has a criminal record. I take his fingerprints, sign the application form and give him a receipt for R21 because they want a receipt number at the traffic department. I go onto the computer to check if he has a criminal record, I see he is ‘clean’ but I don’t tell him he is clean, I sign the form the same day. The application only takes three weeks. ‘I sort you out, you sort me out.’ Favours for friends.”

“On the application form it asks whether the applicant has a previous record. If the applicant has a record for example, for rape, I will tick the ‘yes’ box. If the applicant has a record for drunken driving, I will tick the ‘no’ box because he is my friend. I don’t take money, only eatables and cool-drinks only, or maybe my car is outside and I tell him the juice is low, he takes the car and puts petrol in for me.

Everybody knows to go to Station X to apply for a permit because there is a cop there who will make your application hassle-free. An individual is supposed to go to the police station in their area to apply for a permit, but they get hassles at their station, so they go to their friend in Station X and this friend comes to me and I help them quickly.”

- General

One subject illustrated how some police members took service pistols into Hillbrow and sold them in the street. The member would then go around the corner and take the gun off the buyer and sell it again. The same gun would be sold approximately four or five times a night at R500 a time, without bullets.

Court orderlies get **kickbacks** for recommending certain lawyers. Also, members working at courts get paid for smuggling women into holding cells.

“Today cops are involved in more serious things, even cash-in-transit robberies. Pre-1994, Natal was a haven for corruption because of the political unrest there. Cops used this to be corrupt. The police were all pro-Zulu and they charged members of the ANC for protection to be able to walk through certain areas. In the meantime they had already told the Zulus that the ANC was on their way.”

One subject mentioned that while he was in the Gang Unit, four of the members lost their jobs because of corruption. This particular subject did not tolerate corruption in his command. Friends would tell him about it and managers exposed it. The subject found out about these four policemen through informers that had contacted him. “Many informers gave me information about corrupt cops who worked with me.”

The subject gave an example of a colleague who was a sergeant at his unit and he was living in Constantia. The telephone number he had given the subject was that of a neighbour where he used to live. The sergeant was paying the neighbour to lie for him. The subject did his own investigation, he went to Constantia, could not find a listed telephone number for the sergeant in Constantia. The subject checked the sergeant’s postbox and noticed the mail was all in the sergeant’s or his wife’s name at the Constantia address. The investigation took six months and the information the informer was giving the subject was always spot-on. After six months the subject called the sergeant in and confronted him with the evidence. The subject took it to a higher authority and the sergeant was fired. In those days, the police did not follow up criminally like they do today. The ultimate punishment was to be fired from the police. *This sergeant was making his money by “taxing” – **extorting** money from drug, abalone and crayfish-smugglers.* Also, whenever there was a raid, this policeman had his own “squadry” (team) with him and they always had their own little minibus.

One subject mentioned that he knew of immigrants in the 1980’s who were robbed of thousands of rand outside banks. They would come and open a case in town. They were robbed by “skollies” but the people who were arrested for the crime were innocent “bergies” (Cape Town street people). The culprits were never arrested because they shared the money with the police.

9.3.3 RANKS/UNITS AND SHIFTS MOST AFFECTED

Subjects mentioned that all police members are exposed to corruption, both higher and lower ranks, but not everyone participates. There are a greater percentage of lower rank members involved in corruption. Higher ranks tend to be more responsible. Another subject mentioned that constables and sergeants were more prone to corruption because they are the more active members and they have greater access to the public.

Any unit working with drugs and the uniform branch are the most susceptible to corruption. "Members working in black and coloured stations tend to be more vulnerable to corruption. Lower ranks normally get the small stuff and higher ranks get the big stuff, the big money. For example, the detectives, they get a lot of money for making dockets 'disappear.' This is very, very common and it still happens." The subject mentioned the example of a court translator in the same prison, who used to sell dockets for R15 000 per docket. The value of a docket depends on the nature of the case, for example, certain crimes equal a certain of money, a murder docket would be very expensive. Armed robbery and drug-related dockets are also big money and they are the most common types of dockets bought. .

Another subject reiterated the propensity for corruption amongst detectives and the regular "disappearance" and sale of dockets. *Detectives are vulnerable because they investigate and build cases.*

Most subjects believed that day and night shifts are equally vulnerable to corruption. **"If the opportunity arises a cop will take it if he is so inclined."** There are good shifts and there are bad shifts, it all **depends on the quality of the commander.** Another subject mentioned that the night shift was more at risk because there was **less supervision** and it was therefore easier to get away with it. Also, at night there is less movement on the streets, corruption is easy if the commander is laid back, he won't notice if his staff are crooks. "If you are a 'skelm,' you are a 'skelm' it doesn't matter when you work. It also depends on the area you work in. If it is a well-off area it is not so easy to be corrupt, but in bad areas it is expected of you to be corrupt."

A subject added that: "inspector was usually the highest rank on duty per shift, or sometimes a captain. Corruption happened on all shifts, even during the day when the station commissioner is there. We will just phone and organise for our braai that we have on the night shift. At 8pm the vans will go out and collect the stuff for the braais." Another subject added that he thought night shifts were more vulnerable. "When I was working night shift –

say ten of us on the shift, we would arrange for five of us to go to a club or pub (while on duty) and the following night the other five would go. The five that are left at the police station are having a braai and drinking anyway. *The people in charge of the shift participated in all of this.*”

9.3.3.1 Quality of Supervision.

One subject was a shift commander. There were two 12-hour shifts a day, with between eight to 12 people per shift. “I would tell them where they are working for the day. Their jobs would be rotated otherwise they get too comfortable, for example, they would work in the office for two days and do patrols in the van for three days etcetera. As commander you must be free to do other things and to supervise other people. When your shift is done, you must know exactly what has happened on your shift. It usually doesn’t work like this today anymore.”

“Inspectors were supervising shifts and they were all in on this, he controls the action, otherwise it wouldn’t be possible. The inspector will cover for you as well, for example if you are off without permission. **Most of the corruption happens while out on patrol**, or over the phone, but not the charge-office phone. *The policeman is working for the state, but he is also working for himself – he must get something because the money we got paid was not enough.*”

“Commanders just sit in their offices and do what they want to do, that’s why those on patrol do what they want to do as well.” *The subject was asked what supervisors are supposed to do?* He replied that they are supposed to check the pocket books of members who have been on patrol but they don’t check, they just sign (everyday). Sometimes there is only a follow-up if someone has come to the police station to complain about police lack of action. “At the end of every month, we are supposed to hand in a report of what we did that month.”

9.3.4 WHY DO POLICE MEMBERS GET INVOLVED IN CRIME?

Some subjects believed that members got involved in corruption and criminality for **financial reasons**. For example, one subject said that he had seen members take home R200 to R400 a month (mainly constables and sergeants). This is compounded by the fact that they cannot purchase anything on credit because they have reached their limits and they are probably blacklisted as well. Three subjects said that they did not commit their crimes for financial reasons as they were earning an adequate salary. One subject added that there was always

an **opportunity** for committing corruption or a crime. *“If you don’t make an opportunity, somebody else will.”*

One subject explains about **salaries**: for example, as a constable, after policies have been paid, he/she takes home R900. The family wants money and there are shops to pay etcetera. This is not enough money. **“It is at this level where corruption normally starts.** As a sergeant you may earn R400 extra but by now you are in the trade already, you are earning extra money. Then onto inspector, earning an extra R300 or R400, you want a nice car but you know you don’t have enough money, so you get together with your ‘friend’ and see what you can do. By the time you reach captain level, you are earning ‘alright’ money, getting R7000 out, by now you are well into ‘it,’ and you want to spend more – you want to go out or you want to sponsor this or that, it becomes **GREED**. Greed is a big contributor.”

*“Its all about money, we work for a ridiculous wage when compared to the private sector, especially if you are married, can’t afford anything. It also depends on the **type of person** you are, some members do not get involved. Police officials also **abuse their power.**”*

A subject mentioned that some members **think they are not going to be caught**. They have got away with little things for so long they get an “I’m too good and I won’t get caught” attitude. For example, “I had a friend fired from the police for stealing a petrol cap instead of buying one for R20 from a scrap-yard.” This is more being **naughty** than corrupt. Corruption is not necessarily about money.

A subject was asked if SAPS management were aware of all this corruption and were they doing anything about it? He responded by saying that of course management was aware of it because they also started in the lower ranks. They were doing nothing about it because they did not want a scandal. As a result nobody wants to initiate a full-scale investigation. “If I run a police station, nothing must go wrong, everything stops at the station commissioner. Cops are not allowed to talk to the media. In fact, management gave us something to this effect to sign recently. We must go through a media liaison officer at SAPS.”

When asked why members get involved in criminality, one subject related his personal experience.

“When I joined the police and went to Station X, that was my big mistake although we could not choose which police station to go to. When I got to Station X, the guys there were making money while they were working, mostly from the gangs in Hanover Park, the drug lords, especially on night shift. That’s how I got involved in this abalone thing as well – made some big bucks. It was greed, not need. I’m being honest when I say this because my wages were okay. **It’s nice to have money in your pocket every day.** I bought myself an Opel Astra. It wasn’t uncommon for people to go to work with nice cars, nobody asked any questions, we had nice shoes, clothes etcetera. **Nobody asked ‘where did you get that stuff?’** Managers did comment on fancy car etcetera, but there was nothing they wanted to do about it. Commanders are the ones who should be getting higher wages, the wages they deserve, but they were driving old cars compared to some in the junior ranks. Commanders were not involved in this corruption, it was mainly up to inspector or captain. Above these ranks, they must set an example to the junior staff.

This corruption is a problem in ALL police stations. I can guarantee this because I have ‘pals’ working all over the Western Cape and they are all involved in this. The majority don’t get caught. Commissioners etcetera are aware of corruption ‘on the ground’ but I don’t know what they are doing about it.”

Another subject added that: “managers only work with us during the day, not at night. During the day was normal police work. Some managers did go to the corrupt members from time to time and ask them to ‘organise something for me’ – these members would know where to ‘get organised,’ usually with money or whiskey. The corrupt members would collect the stuff and pass it on to the manager.”

9.3.4.1 Police Culture

One subject mentioned that police partners are not expected to protect a corrupt colleague but in most cases they do protect each other or else they will be accused of being a “backstabber.” There are instances where members do not protect each other, for example if they do not get along. One subject mentioned that as a shift supervisor he would not allow two members to be partners for too long because they get too attached and **this facilitates corruption.** It is more common to protect each other than to “split” on your colleague.

Another subject added that protecting corrupt colleagues is still very strong because bonds are formed the minute members walk into their first policing incident. They are also taught not to speak out. "Cops form strong friendship and loyalty bonds." Another subject added that a "good" partner would probably talk to a corrupt partner first instead of reporting him. The subject added that the bonds between police partners are greater than marriage because "you are totally dependant on your partner in dangerous situations." Police colleagues become like family, "they understand each other, protect each other and don't split on each other." Colleagues who do split are given the "cold shoulder."

Another subject mentioned that everyone at the police station where he worked knew who was "in with the gangsters, but nobody talks about it." Good members do not come forward because they will be **victimised**. The trend in the SAPS today appears to be changing, with more members speaking out. **Heavy drinking** is still very much a part of police culture ("polisie koffie" = brandy and coke).

"Being part of a team of corrupt cops is like being a part of a very exclusive club." A subject drew the comparison with paedophiles, not because of the nature of this crime. If someone is a paedophile there will not be things out in the open but if he knows where to look it is easy to find. This is the same with corrupt police, they identify each other as being corrupt.

One subject was asked if there were any good police members at his station? He responded that: "there were a lot of good guys but they were always in the minority. Also, there were no white guys at Station X, only a few old ones (long service), we didn't worry with them. There were a lot of 'kitskonstabels' (special constables) and they were rough men."

A subject explained that: *"the guys who did not want to get involved in corruption made us nervous that they were going to 'impimp' (inform) on us, so we tried to get rid of them. If the guy in charge of us is also corrupt, he will give the good guy the really 'shit' jobs to do and give him a hard time. Eventually the good guy will request a transfer from our shift. If he does not ask himself, the guy in charge of us will go to the superintendent and complain that the good guy is lazy, sleeps all night on his shift and makes the other guys negative, so we can't work with him. The shift members all gang up against him, all sign a statement confirming these accusations and the guy is taken off the shift. The good guy can't protest because he is alone and he can't tell the commander that his shift is corrupt because he must provide evidence, he must have proof."*

9.3.4.2 Psychological Assistance.

One subject mentioned that he was not aware of any psychological or social assistance pre-1994, and even if it existed, he would not ask for help anyway. There is a major stigma attached to visiting a psychologist. *“We were taught that if you could not handle your own problems then you were not worthy. Psychological help was never offered to us.”*

Another subject who was involved in warfare pre-1994 added that: “I saw dreadful things while I was in the South African Police and this was not good emotionally. I received no help from psychologists, social workers or priests. I had a nervous breakdown in 1991, where I only woke up five days later. There was still no help after the breakdown. I left the police a year later. Before the breakdown my house was full of guns and one night we were about to have a braai – after that I can’t remember anything. I was apparently looking for guns. Two cops tried to arrest me and I knocked them ‘senseless.’ A woman offered to help me and I went to the police station with her where three cops tackled me. I went to Tygerberg hospital for five days and I was only off for a month.”

Another subject gives a graphic description of how untreated Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) affected his behaviour right up until the commission of his crime. This will be elaborated on in the “Descent into Crime” section of this chapter. This same subject mentioned that the SAP’s attitude at the time was that “cowboys don’t cry,” so he would not have made use of psychologists anyway. “You would have been pulled out of your unit to do office work. If you talk about your feelings nobody would trust you anymore. It would be on record anyway even if you used a private psychologist.”

A subject mentioned that he did need the assistance of the police’s social services a few times. “They didn’t help me, they didn’t even come to the police station. I also called them after my arrest and there was no response. They did say every-time that they will be sending somebody, but nobody ever arrived. There was also an incident when I was working as a duty officer. I got called to a house where an off-duty member from Mitchell’s Plain had brought a R5 gun and a service pistol home (he worked at the SAP13 evidence store at the Mitchell’s Plain police station). The member was drunk and threatening his family. I was taking the wife’s statement and I called social services, I am still waiting for them to arrive!”

One subject added that there is a lot of stress in police work and that it was possible that this could manifest in corruption, depending on how an individual handles stress. The subject

mentioned that he had witnessed individuals being burned in tyres, old people who had been dead in their baths for three months and murder victims, yet he had never been debriefed. "It depends on who you end up with as your commander."

9.3.5 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.

A subject mentioned that police members will not be completely familiar with the SAPS's policies and procedures when they leave college after basic training. The details are learned as they progress. Another subject mentioned that he did not make use of the **grievance** procedure because he believed in working problems out in other ways. Similarly, he did not like to invoke **disciplinary** steps because he believed nothing was achieved through negative discipline. Better results are achieved through "one-on-one chats," talking through problems. In terms of discipline, there will always be favourites, not everyone is treated equally.

9.3.5.1 Promotions Policy

Pre-1994 there were two promotional streams:

- A) A merit system or gradually progressing through the ranks. This type of promotion was not automatic, commanders would make recommendations.
- B) An academic stream.

Subjects stressed that post-1994, members do get upset by Affirmative Action. "For example, a cop with five years experience becomes an 'instant' officer, now he wants to tell me what to do, but I know that he doesn't know what he is talking about. He is wrong but you can't tell him that and this causes friction. (I was aware of members being promoted to senior officers and they can't even write). If I am unhappy with a senior officer who is neither knowledgeable nor experienced and he gives me an order, I must follow that order first and only then can I lay a grievance against him. If there are consequences as a result of this order then I can say sorry I was just following orders. Promotions today are also all about who you know."

Another subject added that: "if someone is promoted up the ranks faster than me, then it is because someone in the higher ranks is his friend – 'boetie-boetie' (brother-brother). Your friends look after you even if you can't do the job you have been promoted into. It's always been like this and it is still like this."

A subject mentioned that he never experienced problems with promotions while he was in the police because he was always promoted on academic qualifications. The subject also mentioned that he was part of the "Inspectors Club." This refers to the glut of inspectors in the SAPS because they removed the in-between ranks and consequently there are fewer ranks to be promoted into. "It is a case now of being well qualified without being promoted. In previous years there were incremental increases within a rank but this was done away with about six years ago. A new inspector now gets the same salary as someone who has been an inspector for seven years. Members only get the general public service increase of approximately 6% annually. Members can apply for incentive bonuses, which are awarded according to certain elements in the PEP (Performance Enhancement Programme)."

9.3.5.2 Disciplinary Procedure

Two subjects mentioned that there was no regulation 18 (departmental hearing) done on them after they were arrested, even though their criminal case took seven years to finalise. One subject mentioned that he was disciplined during his career as a result of negative behavioural changes that occurred because of severe trauma he experienced while serving in the Internal Stability Unit on the East Rand. (This is illustrated clearly in the descent into crime section below – Subject E). The subject's behaviour was such that he was told that it was better for him to resign from the police, which he did in 1996.

9.3.5.3 Grievance Procedure

A subject reiterated that he preferred to resolve problems by discussion. Most subjects mentioned that they never made use of the grievance procedure. One subject did make use of it and mentioned that the process takes too long. "They give you a form, then you must first go to your immediate superior, then to the station commissioner, each time its five days or 14 days. Then it's to the area commissioner and he says there is no complaint/grievance. *I laid a grievance against my station commander because he wanted to take me out of my post (which I had applied for and got) and put his friend in the post. I went straight to the area commissioner who told the station commissioner to sort it out. I went to Pretoria on a course and this is when the station commissioner opened a docket of fraud and corruption against me.*"

- Complaints

“If the public came into the police station to complain about the police, the station commander would call the cop and the complainant into his office and have a chat, that’s it. The public was usually happy with this because it did get handled. Since 1994 and since a new commander came to Station X, there was no more talking - just opening of dockets against police members straight away.”

9.3.6 INTERVENTIONS

Interventions offered by subjects include the following:

- Pay members a little **more money**, especially the lower ranks.
- People joining the police must be properly **vettted**, must be very strict with this.
- **Ethics and integrity** must be introduced into police **training**.
- Members need more training in terms of **respect**.
- Nobody should be appointed an officer until they have actually done an **officers course**.
- Members need to go for **driving lessons**. There are still members who do not have driver’s licenses. There are many vehicle accidents with police cars and the drivers “will tell you they bought their licenses in Umtata for R10.”
- Members need to be taught skills such as **how to write**. “There are members who cannot fill out dockets and when a complainant comes into the police station they have to call someone who can write to take down the complaint – that’s training.”
- **Should use convicted ex-members as part of basic training, to show recruits that it is not worth it.** (One subject is prepared to do this).
- Try and rid the police of the **culture of alcohol abuse**. Remove drink from bases, police clubs and stop allowing members to buy alcohol “on the book.”
- Try and **identify problems** before they happen. If someone has a problem, help him before he loses his job. (a member does not always realise that he has a problem).
- **Listen to members when they have a problem.** Management’s attitude is “it’s not my problem.” Some members do feel as a result of this that “you don’t care about me so I won’t care about you or the public.”
- Must have an **open-door policy**, for example the constable must be able to go

to the Provincial Commissioner to report corruption at her station. The PC must walk into that station and do something about it (see box below).

- If there is something wrong, a member should be able to **talk to the media**, especially if he cannot talk to the Area or Provincial Commissioner.
- Police members must learn to **live within their means**, therefore it does not help to give them bigger salaries.
- Bring back **discipline** to the Service.

ONE SUBJECT'S EXPERIENCE OF WHY POLICE CORRUPTION/CRIMINALITY IS NEVER DEALT WITH:

"My girlfriend would often complain to me about what was going on at Station Z where she works. She wants to report it but if she does, she will be victimised, so she doesn't report it."

*The subject was asked why she does not go directly to the Provincial Commissioner? The subject responded: "she is just a constable!" She is supposed to complain to the supervisor of her shift – must work through the ranks. She can use a hotline, but her colleagues will know it's her, she can't even do this anonymously. If she does manage to go higher up, *the station commissioner will come down on the shift commander who will take it out on her for not reporting through the ranks.**

Even before anything gets to the Provincial Commissioner it must go through a Zone Director. There are five police stations in a zone, must first go through the director, then the Area Commissioner, so she can't report corruption to the director either, he will 'chase her away' and tell her to go through the ranks.

So, practically, any police member who wants to report corruption, can't, especially if their seniors are corrupt. They will be **victimised**. As a result, most people ignore corruption, '*didn't see anything*' – *that's the attitude in the police*. Also, at the police station, the management want their station to look good, because the Zone Director must think that there is nothing wrong at this police station, he must think – this guy in charge, he's the right guy."

9.4 PART THREE: PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

9.4.1 ILLUSTRATING THE CRIME

This section of the offender interview findings highlight each subject's offence for which they were convicted and are subsequently serving a custodial sentence. *The researcher will include her observations of each interview.*

9.4.1.1 Subjects A and B

Subjects A and B were involved in the commission of the same crime. According to Subject A, what occurred was that the wife of a notorious German fugitive living in Cape Town, was having a relationship with a local doctor and she gave him a bag containing Deutsche Mark and jewellery to store for her as she was apparently planning to elope with him. The doctor stored the goods in a locker at a gym. One morning the staff at the gym opened all the lockers and discovered the bag. Subject A mentioned that the doctor is presently practicing in North Africa with his "cut."

A gym instructor took the money to his office and phoned the police a few hours later. The bag was handed over to the two subjects who responded to the call. *"On route to the police station we took some of the money."* It took three days to write up all the money in a register at the police station because all the serial numbers had to be recorded. Once all the notes had been recorded, the gym staff came to sign and expressed their satisfaction with the amount handed in.

Subject B added that when he saw the bag containing the money and jewellery he thought that it contained costume jewellery and false notes because there was just so much of it. The subjects took the money to the bank and they confirmed that they were real Deutsche Marks. When the subjects got back to the police station they contacted a variety of different units, such as the Gold and Diamond Unit. Subject B mentioned that *it was while waiting for all these different units to arrive they stole some of the money. "We just put a little wad each in our uniforms."* The amount taken was estimated to be between R500 000 and R550 000. When all these police members descended on the station, they all proceeded to count the money, which resulted in a big commotion. *Subject B added that in retrospect it was a big mistake allowing all those units into the charge office.*

The two subjects got a police reservist involved because he was a Finnish citizen and he could use his passport to have the money changed into rands. The only paper trail the investigator had was from a foreign exchange bureau. *Subject A bought himself a new car and a motorbike and Subject B also bought a new car as well as a fishing boat.* Subject B: “while I was spending the money I was very nervous. I come from a good family so I kept questioning whether I had done the right thing – what was bought was never enjoyed. We both realised we had done the wrong thing.”

“We were caught due to suspicious colleagues at the police station where we worked who had obviously noticed the new cars, motorbike and boat. The police reservist also spilled the beans.”

- Why did you do it/Motive?

Subject A: “It’s not worth it. I had a clean record for 21 years in the police, I didn’t live like a king, but I didn’t need money. **It was a spur of the moment thing** (OPPORTUNISTIC) – there was this big bag of money and it wasn’t anyone’s money, we only took a little bit. The crime had nothing to do with my work environment.”

Subject B: “**Spur of the moment – it was purely opportunistic.** I didn’t realise what I was doing. I didn’t think of the implications. I didn’t need the money, there was no financial need as my salary was adequate and my parents had investments.”

- Consequences

Subject A: “I did not like all the media attention because I am not used to it. We both gave back a lot more than we took. They even took our pension. I am very disappointed with myself for what I did and I regret doing it. Although there was no victim in this case, it did affect the police’s reputation – but there are hundreds of other cases that tarnish their names ten times more.”

Subject B: “The media attention, I locked myself up for two months, I wouldn’t face anyone. I was embarrassed and filled with remorse. I was proud of being a cop, so my reputation was affected and my dignity impaired. *I would like to go back to the SAPS.* I had a totally clean record before this, not even a traffic-fine, no disciplinary hearing during my career and I was never counselled for bad behaviour. They took everything, the executor of the German

fugitives insolvent estate sued the SAPS for R2.4 million which SAPS settled and they took our pension.” The Asset Forfeiture Unit also tried to take Subject B’s house and Subject A’s mother’s house but they did not succeed.

- Effect on Colleagues

Subject B: “They ended up laughing at us – we were embarrassed.”

- Would you do it again?

Subject A: “I will never do it again.”

Subject B: “If someone put a bag of money in front of me now, I would run a mile.”

- The Sentence?

Subject A: “On the quantum they should have used to determine how much was taken, it would have been fair, but it was not. The way they worked it out, we are being punished for R2 out of R70.”

The two subjects were immediately suspended after their arrests. They were suspended for over a year with full salary (according to the precept of innocent until proven guilty). They then went back to work before their trial began. Subject A went to work at Legal Services at the Provincial SAPS headquarters.

Subject B: “The sentence is too severe considering that the case took seven years to be finalised, together with having to work with colleagues during this time, losing my job and pension and then being incarcerated.”

The two subjects appealed their suspension and returned to work. Subject B worked at the Cape Town Courts, he was working in the same court where their trial was conducted – even continuing to work while the trial was on.

The researcher's observation:

The interviews took place in an administration office in the facility where the two subjects were incarcerated. Both subjects appeared to be at ease during the interview and willingly offered any information required by the interviewer. Both subjects appeared to be genuinely remorseful about what they had done, particularly Subject B who became overwhelmed with emotion when he spoke about his young son. They also appeared to be extremely unhappy with the custodial sentence they received when considering that their trial took seven years to complete. Both offenders made a point of mentioning the good quality policemen they were (perhaps even embellishing on this) and how they finally made an opportunistic error of judgement.

9.4.1.2 Subject C

Subject C would not talk about the actual deed, but he was very open with all other aspects (more details in the “descent into crime” section). At the time of this specific crime, the subject was heavily involved with one of Cape Town’s Chinese triad gangs – the “blue pole faction.” Their rivals were members of the “red pole faction.” The subject was initiated into the “blue pole faction” even having him-self tattooed with their insignia. By his-own admission, “things became more drastic,” he became involved in the illegal shark fin business with the triad. Eventually, one faction had a dispute with the other faction and *“one guy had to be eliminated.” Subject C was chosen to do the deed.*

Subject C was eventually caught in a roadblock on his way from Johannesburg to Cape Town, transporting cocaine and diamonds for the triad. *“I didn’t think they would arrest me, even tough they had already arrested other gang members. We subsequently found out that the gang had been infiltrated.”* Policeman X teamed up with Subject C and his accomplice (someone in the security industry) in the commission of some other offences. When Subject C and his accomplice were on the way back from Johannesburg, they were in regular contact with policeman X. Policeman X was in the mean time, sitting in the offices of the Murder and Robbery Unit, continually relaying the two’s position to members of the unit. They were eventually caught in a roadblock on the N1 highway in the Karoo. Policeman X received immunity from prosecution. Their triad crime boss got bail and skipped the country. Subject C and his accomplice also attempted to skip the country. The two of them, together with their partners hid in the Cederberg Mountains near Cape Town for three months. They were eventually led into an ambush and arrested by members of the Special Forces and Interpol.

- Why did you do it/Motive?

“I know I am responsible for my own actions, but because of my ignorance I was manipulated into the situation (the murder). I was **gullible** (INTRINSIC). *I never thought about the consequences. I never thought I would go to jail. I was engrossed in a power trip (INVINCIBLE = EXPRESSIVE). I had crossed the line so many times that the line did not exist anymore. I had no fear of dying or being incarcerated, but I was shocked when I was locked up.*”

Greed definitely played a role as well (INTRINSIC). The subject’s **aggression** contributed greatly to his criminal behaviour (also EXPRESSIVE).

- Consequences

This did a lot of damage to the SAPS. “I was a likeable guy – no one knew, they were all in shock. My fiancé did not know and my partner only knew about my tattoo. The words ‘Chinese Mafia’ were never mentioned. What happened is not relevant to me, I lost so much, but what matters is the effect on the victim and his family, my family, my fiancé and her family etcetera. The hurt caused was immense. It was also the first time in South African history that the Chinese Mafia managed to pull in a cop.”

- Effect on Colleagues

“My actions had devastating effects. I was really hurt to see the disappointment on the faces of the cops who brought me dismissal papers. All my friends in the cops went on duty just to arrest me. No cops have contacted me since, especially those I knew to be involved in corruption.”

The researcher’s observation:

This interview took place in the same office as the previous two interviews. The subject was initially sceptical of the interviewer’s exact intentions, but as the interview progressed he was more at ease. This subject came across as being of high intellect, eloquent and he was calm, which seemed to be in contrast with the extreme aggression he equated with most of his earlier life (this may have had something to do with the fact that he had become a devout Buddhist). The subject offered very good information on police criminality generally, not only his own involvement during his career. The subject admitted that he was shocked when he was arrested for the murder and accepts responsibility, but perhaps he has not dealt with the deed completely as he refused to talk about it.

9.4.1.3 Subject D

Subject D's crime was committed after he had left the SAPS. "My mother-in-law was very money conscious. My old man had money and my construction company was doing well, but my in-laws' business was not doing well. They thought I was their ticket out. I had also adopted my wife's son from another partner. My father-in-law didn't have sons and he thought he could adopt his grandson. I adopted him instead and this infuriated my in-laws. My mother-in-law had a huge psychological problem because she had no boys and she tried to break up our marriage.

On the day of the incident, my sister-in-law was on my parents-in-law's farm and I went there to pick up building materials. My sister-in-law made sexual advances towards me (I think my mother-in-law put her up to it). I was shocked and angry. My sister-in-law didn't take no for an answer – she tried everything. Eventually she came running towards me with a knife, we were fighting and I fatally stabbed her. I was taught never to fight with a woman, if it was a man I would have known how to fight." (Subject D was however a highly trained individual with plenty of killing experience - this will be highlighted in the "descent into crime" section).

- Consequences

"If I had known I would be set up like this I would never have gone to the farm. For about two weeks before this incident my mother-in-law kept phoning me to ask when I was coming to the farm. It was a set-up." Subject D mentioned that his wife was still supportive of him although she had to divorce him because she was not getting a job. She was not finding work because her husband was in jail. "I don't ever want to get involved in fights again."

Also, Subject D had to be moved out of Pollsmoor prison because his life was in danger. The media had labelled him an "apartheid hitman" (this will also be made clearer in the "descent into crime" section).

- The Sentence

Eight months after sentence was handed down, Subject D was preparing for his appeal and discovered that tapes pertaining to his case had disappeared from court and he couldn't appeal without these tapes. DNA and other evidence had also been hidden away at the Bellville police station. This evidence was never used in the appeal. It took three years for the

appeal to get to the high court, documents had disappeared there as well. The appeal was turned down.

The researcher's observation:

This interview took place as per the previous interview settings. The subject was at ease and very verbose, offering more information than was probably required. The interviewer got the impression with most of the subjects that they relished the opportunity of sharing their experiences with a stranger who was clearly interested in what they had to say. This subject also took responsibility for what he had done but he did not seem to equate his police training and subsequent warfare experiences with the instinctive killing of his sister-in-law. If he had not been trained to kill, he probably would have handled the situation differently. The subject was positive and even mentioned that he wanted to stay on in prison after he is due for parole in order to complete the course he is doing.

9.4.1.4 Subject E

Subject E had already left the police at the time his crime was committed. (The “descent into crime” section will illustrate vividly what led to this over an extended period of time).

Subject E had been having a bad day and he was spoiling for a fight, he also had his first drink in three months. “I went to a local pub where I had a few more drinks. I was known as a good fighter and while I was in the pub I had to help sort out seven youngsters who were causing problems. Fortunately they left the premises, but I was still hoping for a fight. I went home. I heard a noise in a storeroom outside the pub, and found a black guy inside. I thought he was stealing something so I jerked him around and choked him a bit. I went back into the pub and the manager asked why I didn't kill the guy. The manager went and fetched a knife - not a very good one, it looked like a butter knife and he gave me another 'dop' (drink). I left the pub and when I got outside, the black guy was waiting for me with a knife. I went for him, but after one stab with this butter knife, it broke. The guy struck my jacket twice but I managed to take the knife off him and stabbed him twice in the throat – he died immediately. I went back into the pub and phoned the cops. They put the phone down in my ear. I phoned again and asked what part of this story they didn't understand. The phone was put down in my ear again. Some civilians checked out the story and eventually the cops came and arrested me.”

- Why did you do it/Motive?

Although Subject E did not mention his Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in this context, untreated **PTSD and this murder were directly and irrefutably linked** – (EXPRESSIVE). Subject E mentioned that there were two ways individuals handled PTSD: either by avoiding confrontation or by seeking it out. The latter obviously applied in this case. “I had a death wish – for cops, after seeing all these terrible things – death is not the same as it is for the general public, one becomes numb, feel nothing. I used to love people and socialising. After I left the police I started to push everybody and everything away. My PTSD was never treated, not even in prison. I was in a single cell for one and a half years and I made peace with myself then. The last fight I had was seven years ago.” High levels of **aggression** contributed to the subject’s negative behaviour (EXPRESSIVE).

- Consequences

“I accept that I am guilty, but **part of the responsibility must be put in front of the police and society**. Society does not give a damn about cops. I started out in the police with the best intentions. In those days we didn’t have anyone to complain to. If we did complain we would be victimised and harmed. There was no one to turn to and life was very cheap then.”

- Would you do it again?

“I would kill again, especially if someone touches my family – for no other reason.”

- The Sentence

“I feel my sentence is too harsh because if you look around me at what murders others have committed, my sentence is too heavy. My case became political because I used the ‘k-word’ a few times in my statement - the ANC became involved. I became very calm after I killed this guy, it was a form of release from my aggression.”

The researcher’s observation:

This interview also took place in the same office as the previous four interviews (these interviews were conducted over two days). The subject was at ease and shared information readily. The subject accepted that his actions were wrong and looking back he seemed to have worked out where things went wrong and also blames the police for the situation he is

in today. This subject clearly suffered from untreated PTSD and the police organisation should have picked up on this and sent him for the relevant treatment. The subject also appears to have made peace with himself, to such an extent that he was quite prepared for the interviewer to use his name in the study. It did appear however that there were aspects of his personality he had not quite dealt with, such as saying that “nobody tells me to change.” Perhaps his aggression has not been dealt with completely.

9.4.1.5 Subject F

“When applying for a firearm license, the individual completes an application form and brings the application form to the police station, then I must go out to your premises to check your gun safe. I had two reservists working for me and they co-signed the applications. Everything was fine until I went on a course in Pretoria. When I came back, there was a docket registered against me for fraud by the station commander – he had gone to one of the applicants in Hanover Park to check up on me and the applicant told him that I had not been there to inspect his safe, only a reservist had been. I sent the reservist because I had too much work to do. I didn’t interview the neighbours either.

All applicants from the surrounding areas would come to me with their applications, they wouldn’t go to their nearest police station. They don’t come to me alone but with a policeman or a friend that I know. I ask them if they have a safe at home and who their next-door neighbour is. I give them an interview. Then I ask them if they have a competency certificate (can they handle a firearm). If they say no, I recommend they go to a particular shooting academy. I phone the owner of the academy and tell him that I have someone here who doesn’t have a competency certificate - can you help him? ‘Just send him here and I will sort it out, no problem.’ *If the applicant does not have time to go to the academy, I will send one of the reservists to pick up the certificate.* The application is sent to Pretoria where I now have friends (because I had just been on a course with them) and they process the applications I have sent in five days, there is usually a three to six month wait.

When Pretoria receives the application then I go onto the firearms system on the computer and I see the application has been received and it is with the fingerprint experts. I then phone a few guys I know at fingerprints and ask them to ‘help’ the applicants (referring to applicants who have criminal records, specifically gangsters). Then I see on the computer about three days later that the application has been approved. The applicant is informed that his application has been successful.

I don't take money, I don't drink or smoke, but if an applicant brings me wine I leave it at the station and the superintendents help themselves – that's their reward for being involved. I never took money, but if there was a braai, I would get meat etcetera from gangsters who I had helped."

Subject F had 86 counts of fraud against him based on 86 firearm applications and the fact that he had not personally visited applicant's homes to check their gun safes or interviewed the neighbours. The corruption charge related to his receiving gifts for processing these licences.

- Why did you do it/Motive?

Subject F was asked why he committed this fraud if he was not taking money for "assisting" with firearm licences. He replied that he "only got 'stuff' – because if anyone comes to me for help I will help him. I was helping people from all areas as well as gangsters from Hanover Park.

There were instances throughout Subject F's career where he did receive money for a variety of other crimes he was involved in – so **greed** is definitely a factor (INTRINSIC). Subject F was corrupt because of his **environment** (EXTERIOR), together with a **propensity for crime** (INTRINSIC) and plenty of **opportunity** (EXTERIOR).

- Consequences

"I felt there was a 50/50 chance that there was going to be trouble if someone finds out that I was helping all these people and they were bringing me stuff. The people of Hanover Park all suspect that the whole of Station X is corrupt. Most of the time the community don't complain if they know a cop is corrupt. If a member of the community reports a robbery to the cops, it goes to the detectives. The detectives are sitting with 100 to 160 dockets each, so there is a good chance they won't even look at the complaint, this means there is no case."

- Would you do this again?

No.

- The Sentence

“Too little! If they took all the fraud charges separately, I should have got 15 years. The court took into account that I had been on bail for three years and that it was a first offence.”

The researcher’s observation:

This interview took place in an administrative office in a different prison from the one where the previous five interviews took place. The subject appeared to be relaxed and was very willing to share all his knowledge of police criminality. The interviewer felt that information provided was truthful and extremely pertinent to the study. The subject was literally a wealth of information as he had been a policeman as well as a criminal for his entire career, only being convicted for fraud relating to firearms and corruption charges and receiving a very fair sentence.

9.4.1.6 Subject G

“I was at Nyanga Police Detective Branch when this happened. I met another detective sergeant and he introduced me to his friend (Mr X) who is not a policeman. Mr X is a drug dealer and he had a connection who bought in abalone. One day my new colleague came to me and said there was going to be a shipment of abalone and am I interested? The money is good, all we have to do is pull the vehicle off the road and take the vehicle with the abalone in it.

My colleague and I each had a detective (police) car and we went to Mr X’s house. At this point, the main organiser arrives and tells Mr X that the ‘bakkie’ (truck) with the abalone is in Durbanville somewhere at a garage and he is going to meet them there (because he also acts as a ‘look-out’ for this rival gang – he drives in front of the ‘bakkie’). There are a lot of phones ringing and a lot of co-ordinating. Then it happened on the N1 just before the Kraaifontein bridge. My colleague and I pulled off the ‘bakkie’ and the driver was very co-operative (unbeknown to the officers, the driver of the vehicle was also an officer doing an undercover sting operation). This was a planned operation by undercover cops to nail Mr X, but we were totally unaware of this. We told him to open the back of the ‘bakkie’ where we saw the abalone. The driver got into my colleague’s car and Mr X drove the ‘bakkie’ away. I followed my colleague in my police car.

Somewhere in Bellville, Mr X (who is driving the 'bakkie') phones my colleague to tell him that there is something wrong because cars were following him (10 to 12 cars). Mr X dumped the 'bakkie.' We still didn't suspect anything. We left the policeman who was the original driver of the truck on the N1 and went to where Mr X had left the abalone. We scanned the area and noticed a few cars around but we didn't suspect that they were cops.

The guy who was buying in the abalone said he was going to fetch the 'bakkie,' he went to fetch the bakkie and drove it to Belhar. This guy was actually the 'main guy' in the police operation. The police were using him to get to Mr X. This guy got stuck with the 'bakkie' and Mr X arranged for a tow truck to pull him out (still full of abalone). My colleague and I are getting suspicious because of all the cars around the 'bakkie,' there are cars everywhere. We checked the registration plates and it didn't show that they were registered to a police station, showed nothing, just a name. One car was registered to Mill Street and I know that that is where undercover cops work from.

There was a tracker device in the 'bakkie' as well, so wherever the 'bakkie' went, the cops went. When we realised this, we told the organiser to take the 'bakkie' and drive it as far away from Belhar as possible. Instead, he bought the 'bakkie' directly to where we were in Belhar, with all the police in tow. They arrested us on the spot. We were arrested by the 'High Flyer' task team and intelligence cops from town. They were mainly set up to get drug lords and Mr X was a drug lord, that's why this team handled it."

After years of being involved in corruption and crime this was the first time Subject G was convicted for anything. *Subject G did have other cases against him during his career. These include a case of drunken driving and the negligent handling of a firearm, which the subject describes as 'normal' and a charge of corruption. The first two charges were withdrawn and "someone else took the wrap for the corruption charge."*

- How did you feel when you were arrested?

"I laughed it off because I had got away with so many other things."

- Effect on Colleagues

"After I was convicted I was supported by ex-colleagues from Station X, but not by anyone from the last police station I worked at."

- Why did you do it/Motive?

“When I joined the police, if the other guys at Station X stuck to the rules, none of this would have happened.” (Blaming others – not taking responsibility). “I saw that they had money everyday, spending money everyday, its nice to have money to spend.” **Greed** (INTRINSIC). Subject G also had plenty of **opportunity** (EXTERIOR) to be corrupt as well as the **propensity** (INTRINSIC) for it, together with a **corrupt environment** (EXTERIOR).

- Consequences

“I have to feel bad about all the things I have lost, such as policies etcetera. I did get a percentage of my pension.”

- Would you do it again

“I don’t think so but I don’t know. Honestly, I don’t know. If it’s coming towards me with both hands – I don’t know. I don’t want to do it again. My mind will say no but my hands won’t!”

- The Sentence

“I feel that my sentence is fair. We went for a plea-bargain and it does make a difference because the judge said that if we didn’t plead guilty and come up with this plea-bargain we were looking at eight years in prison.”

The researcher’s observation:

This interview also took place in an administration office in a different Western Cape Prison. Although the interviewer felt that this subject was largely telling the truth, he appeared less at ease than all the other subjects interviewed. The subject came across as arrogant and dishonest, even attempting to conceal blank paper in his overall on the way out of the office. This subject also had a parallel policing/criminal career and reluctantly admitted that he had a choice not to be corrupt. The subject largely blamed the corrupt officers and his corrupt policing environment for his criminality. The subject was a bit surprised that he was caught because he had got away with so many other crimes through the years.

9.4.1.7 Subject H

Subject H's parents had their own business and they employed the mother and son of a particular family. The mother had worked for the family for many years, and her son had practically grown up "in-front of" Subject H. One day while Subject H was off-duty, the mother asked him to go and fetch her son from a local shebeen, which was also a drug den. When the subject arrived to take the son home he realised the son was intoxicated with both alcohol and drugs. The subject was familiar with the shebeen owner who did not like him because he had arrested his son a while back.

The subject managed to get the young man out of the shebeen and once they were outside the youngster pulled a revolver on him and fired a shot. They got involved in a scuffle and the gun got wedged in the youngster's sleeve. During the scuffle the revolver went off and a shot hit him in the stomach, wounding the man. Subject H rushed him to hospital where he later died. As a result of taking the youngster to the hospital, Subject H forgot the revolver at the scene. He was arrested for murder and the investigating officer also charged him with possession of an unlicensed firearm (the firearm belonged to the deceased). The investigating officer was later charged with making a false statement, for which he was sentenced to three years imprisonment (later changed to correctional supervision, on appeal). Subject H also mentioned that he knew this officer was previously receiving bribes from this particular shebeen owner, who probably also wanted revenge because of the arrest (and conviction) of his son.

- The Sentence

Subject H received a long sentence for something that appears to be accidental death, or at the very least, self-defence. "The sentence is really unfair. They really punished me for something I did not do. I did not pull the trigger because the gun was not even in my hand. The court said the sentence was heavy because this was planned and I did not show any remorse and as a policeman I should know better." (Remorse would attest to culpability).

"There were many irregularities in the investigation and the court case. Not one witness was called for the defence. The shebeen owner's daughter testified against me and told the court that I arrived there and caused a stir. If the community's word was considered in court at that time I would not be in jail today. Even the youngster's mother said that I did not kill her son." Subject H had a state lawyer, not a private one because he believed he was innocent, he

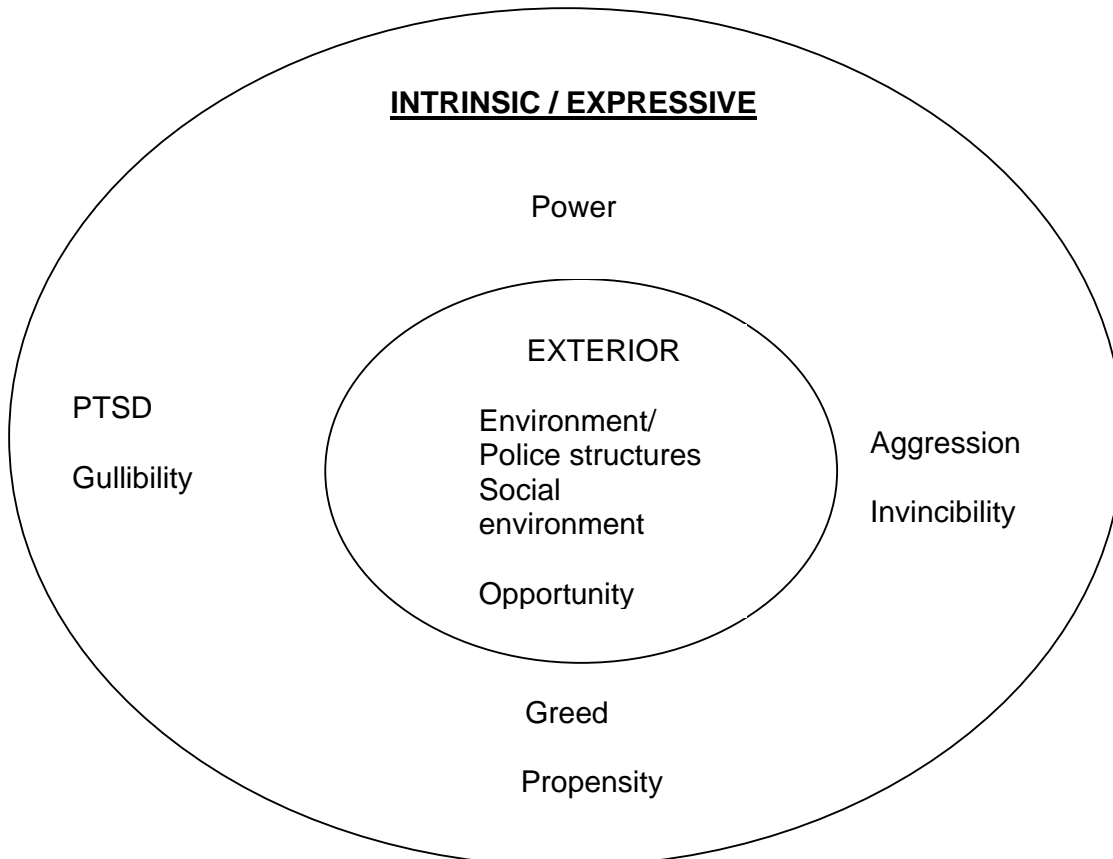
also appealed against his sentence and to this day he has heard nothing.

Subject H has been studying law for the past four years and plans to follow up his case to clear his name once he is released from prison.

The researcher's observation:

This interview took place in an administration office at Cape Town's Pollsmoor Prison. The subject was at ease and offered information willingly. It appeared as if this subject was a good policeman who genuinely did not indulge in corruption (he did admit to accepting the odd fresh fish as this was his weakness). The subject also appeared to be without bitterness for what on the surface seems to be a miscarriage of justice. The subject is obviously a model prisoner as he has a single cell where he studies and he presents various courses to other inmates, also at other prisons. Good information was provided on the policing of gangs.

Diagram of Motives:



9.5 DESCENT INTO CRIME: THE PROGRESSION

Subject's A, B and H are excluded from this section because their crimes are not a result of definite **patterns** and **triggers** clearly evident throughout their careers. These phenomena will be highlighted in this pertinent section.

9.5.1 Subject C

*Subject C was trained as a street fighter (trained by a Chinese guy) and he was a bouncer from the age of 17. Subject C mentioned that he was always aggressive and he used steroids regularly while doing bodybuilding. If there were big guys in clubs that management could not take care of, Subject C took care of them. That's how his **parallel career** started.*

*"When I joined the police, I started out as a student constable (before going to college) at Kuils River police station, I helped out at the detective branch. *What happened here was relevant to the rest of my life. I experienced things that I shouldn't have seen and this unleashed something in me that it shouldn't have. I had to assist with torturing suspects. The detectives used me because of my size and my aggression. This set the tone to be violent for the rest of my life. I had already been taught to break the law and that this was acceptable behaviour. I had already crossed the line between right and wrong.**

After college I eventually joined the Flying Squad. I enjoyed the Flying Squad but there was major indoctrination here. For example, the very first shift I worked, I was put into a car as third passenger with two older coloured guys. (I was about 21 years old). It was a Sunday morning, we drove around areas such as Grassy Park and Steenberg and stopped at a 'smokkies' (drug dealer) place and a guy came to the car door and dropped R200 in the cop's lap and gave the other cop a bottle of brandy. This was a standard procedure. We went Tokai Forest and got pissed on duty. This was my initiation, my right of passage. The two cops booked me off and took me home to recover. I was initially shocked at myself for doing this in Flying Squad uniform.

We did a lot of riot control in Soweto in the early 1990's and there were very few boundaries/laws that we adhered to. There was also no debriefing after traumatic incidents.

In one incident back in Cape Town, we were responding to a housebreaking call at 2 am, on the way I hit an old man and I was very shook-up. I found out the next day that the guy had died. My partner took me to make a statement and on the way I lost it, I cried, my partner was very supportive. At the police station the investigating officer said: 'what's with you?' the guy had not died. Other cops laughed at my reaction to the old man's apparent death. This played a major role in my behaviour and I subsequently **became a bad boy.**

In another incident, we received a call that a massive shooting had occurred in Khayelitsha, but we were pissed on duty again. I was fairly sober but my partner was bad. We were each in our own car and we both had accidents, wrote off both cars. The only reason I had an accident was because I was trying to stop my partner from having one – he was driving in front. There was an investigation launched and they **took away our licenses.** It is a big blow for a Flying Squad member to have his license taken away. I told the commander that my partner had been driving drunk. I was **ostracised** for doing this. **I started losing interest in my job – developed a 'f-you' attitude and eventually got into organised crime.**

When I came back from college my salary was inadequate so I went back into bouncing, 'moonlighting' all through my career. I was exposed to more violence than as well – **this made it easier to go into crime.** I was involved in nightlife all the time. I saw the other side of life.”

Subject C eventually got involved with the Chinese Mafia (triads) and this is how it happened. “I could fight very well and because of my work at nightclubs, I became highly respected (by fear) in Cape Town. I teamed up with another guy and we employed bouncers (we eventually had about 19 bouncers working for us, we had our own 'mafia') and acted as security and bodyguards for celebrities, etcetera.

One night, two groups of Chinese were fighting. My business partner (Mr Z) and I solved this particular conflict without any violence. The owner of a Chinese karaoke and entertainment bar (Jack – a member of the “blue-pole” triad), which catered mainly for Asians visiting off the ships, watched Subject C and Mr Z resolve this conflict and eventually employed the two at his business known as the Cashbox. We conducted our business from here. We started small. If new Chinese arrived in Cape Town they would borrow money from Jack. We were sent to collect the money owed to Jack. If someone did not pay, we would use violence. This eventually led to us extorting money from the newcomers. We got flown all over the country to collect money from people who owed it to Jack. We would stake the guys place out and

then hit him when he was doing his illegal business. We even abducted some of these guys, which was a terrifying experience for them, but they paid up.

This led to extorting money from Chinese all over the country. Eventually we were extorting money from all Chinese immigrants. Because I had access to documents such as blank search warrants, police dockets, false police ID's, I would supply these to members of the triad who were helping us. I would give them police uniforms and we would go in as full-force cops and raid premises, confiscate goods etcetera. Played 'good-cop, bad-cop' go in with the intention of accepting a bribe and when he paid I would 'flush' the docket. The victims weren't ALL bad guys, but they all provided us with a stable income through extortion. Once a month Mr Z and myself would go and collect extortion money. One round trip could bring in about R18 000 which we shared between the three of us: Jack, Mr Z and myself."

All this culminated in the commission of the murder of a rival triad member as mentioned in the previous section. Subject C added that: *"on the scene of the crime (murder), I had to make the decision between right and wrong – I couldn't. I had to choose to walk away – I couldn't because of everything that had happened the previous few years. This was a result of conditioning."*

9.5.2 Subject D

Subject D did a VIP course while he was at police college and his first posting in the police was as a "jackal" doing undercover work protecting the State President at the time. While subject D was at college (1985) he was introduced into intelligence operations and he received Special Task Force training. The subject would disappear for a week at a time on "leave" but he was actually over the South African Border destroying APLA (Azanian Peoples Liberation Army) and Umkhonto (ANC military wing) bases. Nobody close to him knew exactly what work he was doing. There is a difference between the police's Intelligence Unit (advisors to Koevoet) and the Security Police. The Intelligence Unit's function was akin to that of a soldier and this was the unit Subject D was in. The South African Police was a kind of cover for him and intelligence was his job.

"Lived like a real James Bond – nobody really knew. It was not the adventure I

thought it would be, you attack entire bases, **it gets to you, you see too much.**”

Subject D spent a large portion of his time in the police deep undercover across the border destroying the camps of South Africa’s “enemies.” Subject D was a highly trained soldier who had killed many times. With the commission of his crime a few years later, it would probably be fair to assume that he reacted to a knife-wielding individual on instinct. Instead of disarming the individual and leaving it at that, his training kicked in and he completed the task.

9.5.3 Subject E

Subject E made a point of mentioning that he “was born out of wedlock.” Subject E served in the Internal Stability Unit in the early 1990’s. This later became the Public Order Policing Unit. “This unit was always used in trouble spots to do the dirty work.” Subject D worked all over, in townships in Cape Town, the Transvaal, the Eastern Cape and the Transkei.

“In my first unit I never saw corruption because we worked in big groups, all white guys, they are a lot more honest. When I went to the Transvaal (including the East Rand) these perceptions changed and I became a part of it. The way we were raised, listen to your parents, to the priest, to teachers, to authority. Also taught to never split on your friend because then you are not a man anymore.”

In the Transvaal townships, we had ex-Koevoet guys in our platoon and we looked up to them. Every morning we would fill metal containers with booze. That’s how the day started. We were always **drinking during working hours**. I started noticing that the leader of our platoon was selling confiscated guns back to the IFP (Inkatha Freedom Party). Nobody said anything because the Lieutenant was too senior. It escalated from here. The houses in no-mans-land, in the war zone between the IFP and the ANC (African National Congress) were stripped by the cops and burglar bars, doors etcetera were sold to a family member of the Lieutenant. Besides drinking on duty, we would go drinking afterwards as well.

When I returned from the East Rand I was mentally screwed up. I was booking off sick a lot and my behaviour was very different. I was being disciplined for minor things, such as having a messy house on police base. This was as a direct **result of my work experience**. I didn’t have one complaint against me before I went to the East Rand. There was also **no psychological assistance**. On the way back from the East Rand, a guy shot himself on the bus, in front of us. The group on the bus were called to a debriefing session where all the talking was done by the people doing the debriefing, *the cops didn’t express their*

feelings/thoughts at all.

Things deteriorated, I did not get on with my Colonel. On my days off I was always involved in fights. I started to get worried, so I went to an outside psychologist and I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (**PTSD**). The psychologist was more concerned about the people around me than about me and he suggested I find a new job. Medication made me more aggressive. **The PTSD was never treated.** Eventually the cops asked me to resign. I received no benefits after I resigned.

I got a job as a manager of a pizza shop but this was short-lived. I bought my Dad's garden service and I got married. Things continued to get worse, drinking, fighting and eventually my wife left. She told me that I must change and **nobody tells me I must change.** Things went to pieces, Dad took back his business and I stayed with my parents again. I didn't stop drinking, I went to rehab at Stikland and they decided that my problem was not booze but that I was depressed due to the post-traumatic stress. The profession did not know how to handle PTSD at that time and after one week I returned home.

*In the 'old' South Africa, the police trained their recruits the same way the army did. The first phase was to break you down emotionally and physically then build you up again in the way they want to build you up. They did hours of testing before you went to the police so they knew where to place you. The SAP did everything for a reason. There was massive **indoctrination**. I subconsciously started hating blacks and I was never like this before I joined the police. After 1994 I did a course with blacks and coloureds and we all started fighting. **You can't shoot a black man one day and be his friend the next day.** I had to reverse-indoctrinate myself. I felt sold out in 1995 because of all the major changes happening in the country."*

The context of Subject E's murder of a black man is probably better understood after illuminating his experiences.

9.5.4 Subject F

"You come out of college, get put on a shift with ten other guys, with one in charge. The first week they don't do anything, first check you out, then they invite you to a braai. One doesn't think anything bad initially - you just think they are being friendly. *If you want to be with the crowd, you must join the crowd otherwise you will always be on the outside of the police. Police culture is very strong – they stand by each other.*

My first experience of deviance was when I went to the 'smokkelhuis' (drug and illegal alcohol den) with the older guys. We were each given two beers and I was introduced to the owner. The older guys tell you before you go in to just take two beers, don't take anything else if offered and don't ask for money or smokes. After this, you are 'hooked,' tomorrow night you go there alone and the owner will know you are a cop.

Then you get more and more friendly with the gangsters. You spend your off-days with them or phone them and say you are having a 'braai' at home, they will give you some meat, which you pick up in Hanover Park or they deliver to your home. *At this stage you are not doing crime with them yet. You are socialising and the gangsters are checking you out.* The gang boss then phones our shift and tells us that there is a guy giving him problems because his rival is selling more drugs than him. Our group goes to the rival gangster and we 'shake him out' – we take all his drugs. Then we sell the drugs to the complaining gangster for a commission of between R1000 and R4000. We don't want a lot of money because we can't sit with the drugs. The cops decide the price. Also with drug shipments that have been resold by the guy in charge of us for R10 000, he shares it with all of us involved with this. **After this, gangs can basically come to us with any request. We were just not involved in murder, that's heavy stuff."**

This is just a brief synopsis of how Subject F descended into a lengthy **parallel career of crime.**

9.5.5 Subject G

"Once I started at Station X in 1992, we used to drive around Hanover Park, if we saw a drug merchant we would go to him for money. We would go to all the dealers and collect money from them because they don't want to be raided or arrested.

At first I didn't know what was going on, I would travel with the older guys who used to go to certain places at certain times. After a while I discovered that something was not right. I soon became involved in this corruption myself. When I got to Station X I was working with a group of corrupt cops and when they went to visit merchants they would tell me to wait in the police van. Eventually I asked them why I always had to wait in the van when they go to these places? They told me that these were drug merchants and they were collecting for a 'braai.' That's how I got involved."

This very brief synopsis also serves to highlight Subject G's almost immediate entry into a **parallel career of crime.**

9.5.5.1 Would you recommend a career in the Police?

"I wouldn't recommend the police as a career because of the corruption, the way they do things, the whole system including promotions, courses, training etcetera, even though I was mostly happy in the police throughout my career." Another subject mentioned that he would not recommend a career in the SAPS because of the potential for a psychological and mental breakdown as a result of what members see everyday: "you can't just switch off, some accept it, but never forget it." One subject added that he would definitely not recommend a career in the police because there is no real future for white policemen in South Africa. "I have seen too many policemen destroyed. I don't know any cops who have seen their career through and retired without becoming alcoholics etcetera. SAPS do not help their staff, for example with lawyers if they need them."

"I would recommend a career in the police but cops must stay away from corruption and they must study." One subject would recommend a career in the SAPS but they must study first, they must decide what they want from the police service and they mustn't take anything for granted. Another subject would recommend the police as a career but added that "not to just go there and do what I did. Only join if you really want to help the community."

9.5.5.2 Rehabilitation

One subject felt that he did not need rehabilitation because he knew that what he did was wrong. Two subjects mentioned that they still had not been placed on a life skills programme and this was a prerequisite for parole.

All the subjects mentioned that there was no real rehabilitation taking place. "Inmates try their best but people in senior positions squash incentives." Another inmate bemoaned the fact that in the six years existence of this particular prison, nobody has qualified from the workshop, and they were lucky if the school was open for 60 days a year. "The school classes that really mean something are the classes taken by prisoners (they do the teaching). Most of them were studying courses that they organised themselves, such as Bible-study, pottery, business courses, architecture-related courses, computer courses and law.

Another subject said he had actually presented many programmes to prisoners himself, as well as attending programmes such as restorative justice, anger management (a prerequisite for a murder conviction) and life skills. One subject did mention that Correctional Services were looking after him very well.

9.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter dealt with the pertinent findings compiled from interviews held with eight incarcerated ex-police offenders. The themes varied slightly from those used in the specialist interviews because the offender interviews are more personal and therefore contain questions relating to the offenders background, his opinion on aspects such as policing and he is encouraged to talk about his experiences in the police particularly pertaining to deviousness, his own and that around him. The subjects also shared aspects of policing they most enjoyed and those they least enjoyed. Because most of them joined the police before 1994, they underwent military-style training. This is different today with the training aspiring to a human rights culture and community policing. A common sentiment amongst the subjects was that this new style of training has resulted in a collapse of discipline in the SAPS.

Themes used in the second section of the interview guide are an extension of themes used in the literature study and the specialist interviews and they include the question of the extent of police crime and criminality, perceived or real. Extent is difficult to measure, but every subject used only negative adjectives when describing the prevalence of this phenomenon in the SAPS. These ranged from “pretty bad” to “huge.” When illustrating the types of crimes committed by members, the crimes mentioned mirror those mentioned in the literature study and the specialist interviews, with an emphasis on drug-related criminality and gangs, as these were area where at least two subjects were involved.

It would appear that the lower ranks are more susceptible to deviance, but it occurs across all ranks. In terms of the quality of supervision, there are good supervisors but there are also supervisors who were complicit in the corruption and criminality. This obviously facilitates the perpetuation of the problem. There were a myriad reasons provided by the subjects as to why police get involved in criminality, including aspects of police culture and the dearth of psychological assistance. Police policies and procedures are discussed briefly with more information provided about some controversial aspects of the SAPS's promotions policy. Suggested interventions offered by the subjects are similar to those mentioned in the

literature study and specialist interviews with a few additional ones, such as teaching members to write and to drive properly, as some driving licenses have been bought by these members. There is also a need for more caring, open and perceptive police management.

The third part of the chapter deals with individual offenders. The crimes for which they were convicted are highlighted individually and these range from murder to corruption. Descent into crime depicts various circumstances, patterns and motivations that led to the situation in which some of these subjects find themselves today. In at least four cases, the subjects had a parallel career - they were criminals as well as policemen.

Although the subjects came from relatively diverse backgrounds, their **working environment** was more of a factor in influencing their behaviour. The subjects involved in South Africa's cross-border wars and township internecine conflicts, pre-1994, were extremely negatively affected by aspects of their training, such as indoctrination against black South Africans. They were also adversely affected by all the bloodshed they witnessed and the killing they did. These factors together with aggression, violence and alcohol were a lethal combination that culminated in murder (in three cases).

The working environment of two other subjects was less violent but no less corrupt. These two started their careers in a police station with a seemingly high incidence of corruption. Although they did have the choice of not joining in the corruption on their night shift, they chose to become a part of it. This decision was influenced by a variety of factors including a lack of integrity and dishonesty (one subject proved this by attempting to conceal a wad of blank paper in his overall taken from a desk, during the interview). These subjects also wanted to "belong" and they were probably not prepared to be ostracised or "worked out" of their job for being honest. They did not give themselves a chance to be ethical policemen because they both got involved in corruption during the first few weeks of their career.

The adage of "bo blink, onder stink" (the top is shiny, but the bottom smells) is appropriate when referring to Station X. This is by no means the only police station that has corruption problems, it has been singled out because two subjects worked there for many years and both were wholly corrupt. Clearly, police management (the shiny top) at these stations are either unaware of what is going on because they are not on duty when the deviance is happening (such as the night shift – the smelly bottom), or they are in denial, or they are not interested in doing anything about it. The latter is of concern if this is the case. This is especially worrying in the light of information given by two subjects pertaining to middle and

senior managers that had come through the ranks with them and progressed ahead of them to become commanders and senior managers. The subjects said that most of these officers were involved in corruption and crime with them during the early stages of their careers but had ceased these activities once they became more senior officers. *There is a real danger that the corrupt members who are left behind could blackmail their seniors into not taking action against them, they do not take action because of their past or they think this behaviour is acceptable.*

It is clear from these findings, as well as the previous chapter's findings and the literature study, that when there are managers in an organisation that do not take care of their members, problems will arise. Many subjects felt that they could not approach their managers when they had problems, also as a result of the police culture which has traditionally been "cowboys don't cry" and "don't make your problems mine." This is an area that needs to change urgently within the policing environment and this is evident in some of the interventions put forward by subjects. These include training managers to listen to the concerns of their members and to adopt an open-door policy where, for example, the constable from Station Z can walk into the Provincial Commissioner's office and report corruption at her station without adhering to the rules and regulations of this monolithic organisation. Happy police members would be less likely to feel nobody cares about them, so they will be less likely to not care about anything in return.

One of the subject's was a definite candidate for an Early Warning System because of the number of cases and complaints against him. If managers were vaguely aware of an intervention of this nature, they could have saved the SAPS a lot of damage. Why is the problem of new recruits being drawn into corruption at the outset of their careers being allowed to perpetuate? This has obviously been going on for decades. Urgent systems need to be put into place to undo this significant problem, especially in high crime areas. Senior managers should be put onto night shifts and weekend shifts and supervisors must be far more vigilant with other aspects of policing such as checking pocket books and patrols. There is an undeniable symbiotic relationship between gangsters and corrupt members, which is extremely difficult to police, but a start must be made.

A few subjects indicated that at the time of their arrests, their salary was adequate so this was not necessarily a motivation for that particular crime. The problem seems to be at entry level, as this is when the recruits who become career criminals start their deviance. They mention that the reason they start at this point is because of the low salary. This generally

appears to be more a case of greed than need because all members start at this salary level and they are certainly not all corrupt. So, increasing salaries at entry level would not necessarily solve the problem. When one subject was asked whether he was involved in corruption, his reply was "I didn't need to be because I did not have to give my pay packet to my mother every month. My parents had their own business." This was indeed telling, if an argument was to be made for corruption because of need.

The following chapter is very important because it includes the interpretation of the empirical findings, backed-up by literature correlates. These findings are then explained by means of aspects of general strain theory and institutional anomie theory – on a macro level (the organisation/police structure) and by aspects of the general theory of crime – on a micro level (the individual).