

COMPARISONS OF SELECTED STRESS PRODUCED
CHARACTERISTICS IDENTIFIED AS THE
JOHN WAYNE SYNDROME AMONG
POLICE OFFICERS

By

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Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
May, 1994

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Chief Everett Eaton, Oklahoma State University Police Department who first introduced me to the John Wayne Syndrome and then offered support and encouragement throughout the three years of research involved in this study.

To my committee, I express gratitude and appreciation for their continued concern, encouragement and gentle nudging throughout the past six years. I'm also deeply in debt to Dr. Garry Bice, whose guidance, advice and encouragement kept me focused and on the right track through my entire graduate program. As an advisor, counselor and friend, he is the best.

To Dr. Jim Reese of the FBI Academy, and to all the members of the 149th and 176th FBI National Academy class who participated in the survey, my sincerest thanks. Without your help, it would have been very difficult to gather all the data needed to give meaning to this research.

A special note of gratitude is extended to all my co-workers and colleagues who willingly, or otherwise, became sounding boards and critics for many projects, papers, and tests. Thanks for putting up with me.

Thanks are also extended to Rex and Phil and many other friends and associates, without whose continued encouragement and sometimes guidance, this study might not have been completed.

I must also extend my special thanks and love to Sharrall, my wife, and Scott, my son, who understood, supported and covered for me when my research or writing kept me from family events.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1970's, counselors, researchers and managers working with a population of stressed police officers have repeatedly described a stress-associated phenomenon that reportedly threatens marriages, relationships and often, job success. Reiser, a veteran psychologist and counselor with the Los Angeles Police Department, has written numerous articles about police psychological challenges and stresses. In a 1974 article, Reiser reported on a syndrome that he had observed in many young officers on the Los Angeles Police Department. He felt that it was predictable, would occur early in their careers and was characterized by certain recognizable attitudes such as, "a tendency to talk tough, to chronically tense muscles and to develop a kind of a tunnel vision in which people are either good guys or bad guys". In his report, Reiser referred to this stress malady as the "John Wayne Syndrome".

Monroe-Cook (1975), a doctoral student at Michigan State University, reported in the March 1975 issue of 'Crime Control Digest', that

when policemen and women start swaggering, being cool and aloof, displaying their weapons while off duty and assume a cynical, unemotional attitude, they are into the John Wayne Syndrome (p. 2).

"A large percentage of the police officers who become involved in police brutality complaints are young officers in the grip of the

John Wayne Syndrome", was the consensus of a panel that included psychologists attached to three major police departments and an FBI instructor from the National Academy, as they discussed psychological support services during a police conference in Hawaii in September, 1977. During the conference, Reiser reported, "A study in Los Angeles showed that the mean age of officers involved in such complaints (police brutality) is 24 and we found that 99 percent of them were in the John Wayne Syndrome" (Adamski, 1977, p. 5).

It was the consensus of the Hawaii panel that the syndrome strikes after officers have gone through the recruit and rookie phases of police service. During those phases they evolve from the 'service-oriented' instinct similar to that of social workers and teachers into a 'defensive and cynical attitude' toward the community that is brought on by dealing with the worst elements in it (Adamski, 1977, p. 6).

Today's police officers operate with considerable autonomy, empowered to exercise certain executive functions that often require making decisions with little opportunity for research or reflection. In this capacity, the officers must handle a variety of human crises, some critical and demanding, and often even threatening.

Some of the typical stresses related to police work include environmental factors such as danger, violence, misery, verbal abuse and suffering. The police organization adds stresses associated with regulations, evaluations, promotions, assignments and shift changes.

Peers add another level of stresses as the officer tries to meet their expectations of image and conformity.

All of these factors are compounded by the officers' daily street contacts, which are largely negative. Whether it's writing a traffic ticket or answering a disturbance call, most of the interaction will be heavily laden with conflict, accusations and stress. "It can be expected that if the officer mentally survives, he will probably develop strong mental defenses" (Chandler and Jones, 1979, p. 10).

Reports suggest that not all officers experience this phenomenon, but those who do and survive, usually become good, well-adjusted officers. More contemporary researchers report that the problem may surface in officers well beyond their rookie years. Police managers and counselors need contemporary information about this syndrome, its parameters and influence on modern police men and women, so that effective counter measures can be introduced through training, counseling and supervision.

Statement of the Problem

The history of any police department will include citizen complaints of police brutality or excessive force. It will also show a high rate of divorce and alcoholism among line officers. In many instances, the officers involved were described by supervisors and co-workers in terms associated with the John Wayne Syndrome. The problem is that no empirical evidence exists that provides police managers, trainers and counselors with persuasive information

about the condition known as the John Wayne Syndrome as it exists among the ranks of modern police men and women. Most often the syndrome is reported only after its tragic effect on officers' careers, marriages and personal health.

Purpose of the Study

There are volumes of literature that deal with the stresses associated with the police profession. Many in-depth studies have been conducted and reported. Some of these studies mention or describe the John Wayne Syndrome but none have attempted to study the characteristics that might shield an officer from the effects, or enable managers to plan effective counter-measures. Each researcher and reporter describes it with the same general descriptors, "cynicism, hard, tough, tunnel-vision, ruthless and unemotional". Many researchers also connect a period of personal conflict with the syndrome.

Almost all the reports refer to Reiser as the originator of the term John Wayne Syndrome and its' attached parameters. No new, original or repetitive studies were found since his work within the ranks of the Los Angeles Police department in the early seventies. When contacted, Reiser (1990) advised that he knew of no studies that sought to identify demographic or behavioral characteristics with the syndrome.

The purpose of this study was to compare those stress produced characteristics associated with police service and collectively known as the John Wayne Syndrome, across a spectrum of selected

demographic and personal (behavioral) characteristics, of individual officers, to see if significant differences exist between officers who experience the syndrome and those who do not.

The study sought to answer the following broad research questions:

1. Do certain personal characteristics of police officers influence the onset of the John Wayne Syndrome?
2. Do certain demographic characteristics of police officers influence the onset of the John Wayne Syndrome?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions apply to this research study:

Basic Police Academy: Every state requires police officers to attend a certified course of instruction pertaining to basic police tasks prior at the onset of their police careers.

FBI National Academy: Operated by FBI at Quantico, Virginia for specially selected senior police managers, both national and international. The eleven week course of instruction covers contemporary police training topics and management philosophies.

John Wayne Syndrome: Sometimes called the "Wyatt Earp Syndrome". Refers to police officers, firemen and sometimes military soldiers, who react to job stresses by displaying certain recognizable, but inappropriate attitudes or actions.

Large Department: More than 200 sworn officers.

Line Officer: Assigned to routine patrol duties as opposed to special assignments such as parking, vice, internal affairs, etc.

Police Manager: Generally refers to Sergeants and above who have management responsibility over several line officers.

Small Department: Less than 50 sworn officers.

Limitations and Assumptions

This study was limited to 320 police managers selected from both class 149 (1987) and class 176 (1994) of the FBI National Academy. These subjects were selected because they represented both large and small departments as well as rural and urban communities from throughout the United States. Since each National Academy class contains a cross section of police managers, their use as subjects made the data gathered more representative of the entire police population than a random sampling. Only the International students and federal agents (do not have line officers) were excluded from participating. Each manager was asked to rate one or two officers who had completed a basic police academy and were in their second year of police service or beyond and that they (the managers) had direct knowledge or association with the officers being rated.

In addition, this study was limited to the John Wayne syndrome as it applies to police officers, although some reference is made, in the literature, to a similar syndrome, with similar characteristics, but applied to soldiers on the battlefield and to firemen.

Several of the police supervisors who participated in the pilot testing of the survey instrument voiced a concern that the characteristics associated with the John Wayne Syndrome were not

necessarily, nor always, bad. Especially when associated with a profession that often demands aggressiveness, cynicism and a take-charge attitude to survive. Other police officials and knowledgeable professionals were not convinced that the syndrome was a product of stress but may be a recognizable personality type or could even be a product of the organization in which the officer serves.

This study therefore, was necessarily limited to the theories and findings of the experts who have published works concerning the syndrome, as noted in the review of literature, and those researchers who were open to an interview. Collectively, the current body of research into the John Wayne Syndrome clearly limits the research questions of this study to the assumption that it (the syndrome) is a defense mechanism related to stress.

The following specific assumptions were made in this study:

1. Each rater would answer the survey questions candidly and within the spirit and intent of the instructions.
2. The resulting 350 rated officers were representative of the general population of first line police officers in the United States.
3. The syndrome, as postulated and characterized by Reiser and others, does exist, as a stress produced phenomenon.

Organization of the Study

The purpose of this study was to see if some personal characteristics could be identified that may lead a police officer

into the John Wayne Syndrome or help insulate him/her from the effects. Although much has been written about occupational stress and the challenges of the police profession, this thesis reviews only those studies and reports closely related to the characteristics identified by experts as associated with the John Wayne Syndrome.

Based on the review of literature, a questionnaire was designed using descriptors from reports and studies and the expertise of several current researchers in the field of police psychology. The data gathered from the completed questionnaires represented a sample of officers in the United States. It was then statistically compared and analyzed.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Defining the John Wayne Syndrome

Modern society is well aware of stress and the holistic effect it has on humans. The entire organism reacts emotionally as well as physically to stress producers often resulting in both physical and mental disorders. Reiser (1974) suggests that the John Wayne Syndrome may be a survival mechanism for some officers unable to cope with all the negative interactions, public expectations and suffering that an officer may experience daily. Coupled with a lack of experience, the officer may begin to talk tough, chronically tense muscles and to develop a kind of tunnel vision in which people are either good guys or bad guys. He may become aloof from family and civilian friends which leads to additional stresses. Additionally, the officer develops a cynical attitude, about society, the department, or just the system (p. 52). In the same article quoted above, Reiser suggested that the syndrome centers around traits considered as hyper-masculine.

Nelson (cited in Fuhrman, 1983), of the Detroit Police Department described the John Wayne Syndrome during the trial of an officer as "a period of cockiness an officer goes through during which he places too much stress on his badge" (p. 10). His definition seems right in line with the parameters listed by Reiser.

And so does the description rendered by former Cleveland Ohio Police Chief Rudolph when he described the John Wayne personality type as "tending to be introverted and badge heavy, suspicious of everyone and would give his mother a ticket" (Rudolph, 1989, p. 30).

After interviewing dozens of young police officers about the dangers, rewards, risks and excitement of police work, Lemke (1988), a staff writer for the Los Angeles Times reported,

There's a syndrome that goes with being a cop. It's called the John Wayne Syndrome, and it strikes the average rookie cop at six months. And no one is to be trusted except for cops, and nobody understands you but other cops and the whole world is out to get you, and you're the only one defending an undeserving society ----- (p. 4).

Experts do not all agree that the syndrome is a malady of the novice officer. Although Reiser (1974) reported that it always strikes between six months and one year of police service and continues for two to three years, others report observing cases of the syndrome in more senior police officers and emergency workers. In a telephonic conversation with Dr. Reese, Director, Behavioral Science Unit, FBI Academy, Quantico, Virginia (1992), he advised that the John Wayne Syndrome could not be fairly characterized as occurring only during rookie years. It may often occur to young officers but that may not always be the case.

In his Toronto Star Article, Boys-Breaking the Link Between Masculinity and Violence, McLeod (1992) stated that the John Wayne Syndrome is "an explicit, if unwritten, code of conduct; a set of masculine traits we've been taught to revere since childhood"

(p. 23). He listed the syndrome traits as including, "hard, tough, unemotional, ruthless, and competitive".

Commander Stonich, Los Angeles County Sheriffs' Department contended that an officers' decision to shoot is often "the result of panic, adrenaline or the John Wayne Syndrome, which causes the officer to force a confrontation for fear of appearing weak" (Katz, 1991). Stonich and other researchers see the syndrome as a defense mechanism, triggered by stress and frustration.

A slightly different and interesting application of the John Wayne Syndrome appeared in the Los Angeles Times, (June 24, 1990) when staff writer Watson reported that several female officers talked about the John Wayne Syndrome which sometimes makes female officers feel that they must out-smoke, out-drink and out-cuss men to be accepted. In that instance, the syndrome was used to establish identity perhaps more than as a defense.

Regardless of how it is used, we know that the John Wayne Syndrome is centered around cynicism, tunnel vision, distrust for society and a reverence for machoism.

Stress and the Police

The line police officer often finds themselves caught in the middle, between the growing problems of crime control, changing social values, a double standard demanded of our public servants in the area of exacting conduct, and an increasingly critical public. Adding to those problems, the officer frequently faces conflicts and competition within his/her peer group, temptations arising from the

job, sudden challenges eliciting fear or courage, decisions on deadly force and the recurring exposure to the worst evil and misery that society can offer (Chandler and Jones, 1977). Police officers are routinely trained to be suspicious, to question and to examine, and to be skeptical; it's presented as part of rookie training for survival. When added to the normal stress of being a husband/wife, father/ mother, etc., it's little wonder that police officers feel a heavy daily bombardment of stress, both mentally and physically. Organizational and role pressures also routinely impinge on the policeman, contributing to his total stress load (Reiser, 1974). Monroe-Cook (1975), a doctoral candidate at Michigan State University, conducted a special program to help police officers deal with job stress. In an interview with "Crime Control Digest", Monroe-Cook reported that "When police men and women start swaggering, being cool and aloof, displaying their weapons while off duty and assume a cynical, unemotional attitude, they are into the John Wayne Syndrome" (p. 2). Monroe-Cook further reported that the syndrome was a defense mechanism for hiding powerful emotions, both from other people and themselves (p. 2).

FBI Special Agent Minderman, who travels across the country presenting training courses on the stress and psychological problems facing police officers, said "It [John Wayne Syndrome] is a form of combat neurosis of officers who work on the streets, the ghettos or low-income trouble areas, a matter of having too much activity, too fast, over too long a period" (Adamski, 1977, p. 6).

The combination of factors in police work, dealing with terrible situations and traumatized victims and working under the threat of physical danger, results in sometimes, overwhelming stress. At some point in time, a sort of profound emotional hardening' occurs, the method by which an officer can deal with all the human misery he sees. The John Wayne Syndrome allows an officer to protect himself by becoming cynical, overly serious, cold, authoritarian and emotionally withdrawn (Reese, 1987, p. 10).

In a New York Times (1991) news article, Brenner described the victims of post-trauma stress as:

Suffering from what some have termed the John Wayne Syndrome; often keeping their feelings to themselves and attempting to deal with their problems alone. Among the most likely to suffer from the disorder are armed forces personnel, emergency medical technicians, police officers, and firefighters (p. 12).

In the same article Brenner (1991) quotes James Cosse, a Hartsdale, New York Psychologist, who expressed, "we're talking about the people who regularly face life-threatening situations, who experience things out of the range of normal human experience" (p. 13).

Lieutenant Mitchell, a member of the Yonkers, New York Fire Department and a colleague of Dr. Cosse, has been successful in implementing specially trained "debriefing teams" of former firefighters to work with newer people and with those who seem to be suffering from the disorder. Mitchell's teams try to deal with experiences and feelings that are not covered in regular training classes. "Finally, we're realizing that it's time for the John Wayne Syndrome to go out the back door" (Brenner, 1991, p. 14).

Cosse and Mitchell listed the following descriptors of the John Wayne Syndrome: flashbacks, irritability, problems with

relationships, tough-guy facades and drinking instead of talking.

Cindy Spitzer (1988), a writer for the Washington Post, recounted the comments of Jeffrey Mitchell, a University of Maryland Emergency Health Services Psychologist, as he explained some of the conclusions he has drawn about the John Wayne Syndrome:

One is that the macho self-image often evident in people in the 'hero' professions is only skin deep--and when it fails them, it fails them dramatically. For hundreds of years, he says, 'rescue workers have suffered from the John Wayne Syndrome--'I ain't hurt unless the bone is showing' (p. 12).

To this point, the review of literature has been largely psychologically oriented, based on the horror, suffering and demands placed on them by the police profession. Not all writers however, concur that the John Wayne Syndrome actually exists as individual traits or characteristics but more as organizational or departmental values adopted by the line officers. The following comments by Chief Deutch (1987) of the Birmingham, Alabama Police Department illustrate a more sociological view (definition) of the disorder.

"Upon assuming command, I found that a 'John Wayne Syndrome' and a propensity to use firearms by some officers had been having an unfavorable impact on the entire community" (p. 44). Deutch further explained that he wrote new regulations regarding the use of deadly force and trained the officers to use other defensive weapons such as mace and the police baton. He also initiated training programs to help the officers express authority and to gain professional respect when defusing most situations without resorting to the threat of a weapon.

Since most of the researchers clearly associate the John Wayne Syndrome with individual stress factors, this study will be limited to research in that area, as previously stated in the Scope and Limitations, and will not be concerned, in the research stages, with other possible situational or sociological factors.

Other Factors Associated With The Study Of The John Wayne Syndrome

Reese and others have suggested that certain demographic characteristics may influence the way a person (officer) copes with stress. Although no studies exist that show a correlation with the John Wayne Syndrome, several researchers have reported that a positive relationship exists between the following characteristics and a persons' ability to cope with stress;

1. Being active in sports
2. Working in a smaller, less impersonal department.
3. Attaining a higher level of education.
4. Reaching maturity and greater life experience.
5. Completing a stress management course.

An additional concern of Dr. Reese, in direct relationship to the John Wayne Syndrome, was the influx of women into the police ranks. In addition to all the identified stress producers that affect a police officer, women face the hurdle of gaining acceptance in a traditionally mans' role. This poses the question, do women succumb to the John Wayne Syndrome as readily as men ?

All of the writers and researchers seemed to identify the John Wayne Syndrome with the same general descriptors;

1. Being aloof or different (better) than ordinary citizens, or sometimes, other officers.
2. Being overly confident, sometimes to the point of swaggering.
3. Showing cynicism toward the public, authority and even other officers.
4. Hiding emotions or trying to appear hardened to the suffering of victims or others.
5. Being very dictatorial, authoritative or continually talking tough.
6. Lacking perspective, unable to control reactions to danger or abuse at the appropriate level.
7. Always presenting a macho image.
8. Possessing tunnel vision, in that everyone is either good or bad.
9. Often overly aggressive with no tolerance for excuses or failures.

Researchers have stated that characteristics associated with the John Wayne Syndrome are basically defense mechanisms that the officer is using to shield himself/herself from the emotional suffering and damage that threatens them, as a part of their job. One or two of these mechanisms, used occasionally, or in the context of a situation that clearly demonstrates the need for such action to cope with a specific instance, would not necessarily brand the

officer as having the John Wayne Syndrome.

Summary

The review of literature presents a clear set of descriptors related to the John Wayne Syndrome. Mostly, affected officers become cynical, distrusting and overly aggressive. Officers may experience the syndrome at any time in their career, but it usually strikes between one and four years of service. It can be expected to last for one or two years and will place a strain on relationships and interfere with the officers objectivity. The syndrome may be a defense mechanism that keeps the officer from internalizing all the negative experiences that surround him. Some will survive and become fine officers but others will experience divorce, discharge or perhaps injury. No literature was found that attempted to compare different characteristics of police officers to determine if some had a more negative or positive influence toward the onset of this syndrome.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Despite the many studies and reports available on stress as it relates to the police profession, there is no empirical evidence that identifies certain officer characteristics as having an influence on the onset of the John Wayne Syndrome. This study evolved out of a felt need that more information about the syndrome was essential to police managers and counselors.

This chapter describes the research design, study population, instrumentation used, data collection process and method used to analysis the data.

Research Design

This study was descriptive. Descriptive studies are concerned with conditions, influences or relationships that exist (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1972,). The focus of the study was on certain characteristics, both demographic and personal, of police officers and the relationship of those characteristics to that officers' affliction of the John Wayne Syndrome, so that managers, trainers and counselors could be more effective.

A research instrument briefly describing several personal and demographic characteristics of police officers was constructed using the author's personal knowledge of information available to police

managers and descriptors taken from the review of literature. In addition, two experts, Dr. Finnegan an Oklahoma State University Psychologist and Dr. Reese a Psychologist with the FBI Academy, both with experience working with police officers, collaborated in the construction of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was then given, together with a brief letter of explanation and instructions to 270 police managers from across the nation while they attended the 176th FBI National Academy. An additional 50 surveys were mailed to 50 members of the 149th National Academy class, Recipients were further selected so as to have representation from both large departments situated in urban areas and smaller departments in the rural communities. The only further requirement was that they employ enough officers that each manager could be expected to supervise at least two line officers.

Population

Three hundred questionnaires were given to police managers attending the 176th (1994) FBI National Academy at Quantico, Virginia, during their fifth week of studies. They were selected evenly based on their affiliation with large urban departments (200 or more officers) and small rural departments (25 to 50 officers). All international members and federal agents (approximately 30) who do not supervise line officers were excluded from the study. Dr. Reese supervised the administering of the surveys. An additional 50 surveys were mailed to 50 members of class 149 (the authors' classmates [1987]) to ensure that adequate representation existed

between large and small departments and those in urban and rural settings. The total number of surveys given to managers was 350 (300 to the 176th class and 50 to the 149th). Each manager was asked to rate one or two officers under their current or previous supervision in relationship to that officers' 2nd and subsequent years of police service. The combined return rate was 42 percent.

Instrumentation

A review of pertinent literature was conducted and a compilation of characteristics that might have a causal relationship with the John Wayne Syndrome was obtained. As a result, the instrument focused on the following six general officer characteristics:

1. Identified syndrome characteristics were statistically compared between male and female officers.
2. Identified syndrome characteristics were statistically compared between officers in the 21-25 year old bracket with those 26 and older.
3. Identified characteristics were statistically compared between those officers in large urban departments with those serving in smaller, predominantly rural department.
4. Identified characteristics were statistically compared between officers involved in regular athletics and those not involved in any sports activity.

5. Identified characteristics were statistically compared between officers who had attended a stress course and those who had not.

6. Identified characteristics were statistically compared between officers with a high school education and those with more than two years of college.

Validation

The instrument was constructed with the assistance of Dr. Rex Finnegan, psychologist, Oklahoma State University. Upon completion, it was sent for review and validation to Dr. James Reese, Psychologist, Department of Behavioral Science, FBI National Academy, Quantico, Virginia. A pilot study was completed with the assistance of ten police professionals representing both large and small and urban and rural departments in four states. Included were:

1. Operations Captain, Joplin, Missouri.
2. Patrol Supervisor, North Platte, Nebraska.
3. Sheriff, Payne County, Oklahoma.
4. Chief, Stillwater, Oklahoma.
5. Operations Supervisor, Stillwater, Oklahoma.
6. Patrol Supervisor, Stillwater, Oklahoma.
7. Chief, Oklahoma State Univ Police.
8. Patrol Supervisor, Roy, Utah.
9. Psychologist, FBI
10. Psychologist, Oklahoma State University.

They were asked to review the questionnaire for both construct and content validity. One of the first returns suggested that a better definition be included on each characteristic, such as 'cynical, aloof" etc. Others suggested that each characteristic be clearly identified by a separate question. The resulting changes were again reviewed and the final survey was approved by both Finnegan and Reese for validity. It was agreed by Finnegan, Reese and the researcher that a score of three (3) or higher on only one or two characteristics would not be an indicator of the John Wayne Syndrome. A rating of (3) or more on four of the characteristics would indicate the presence of the John Wayne Syndrome.

Data Collection

The initial subjects of the study were 320 police supervisors who were either currently attending the 176th class of the FBI National Academy or were selected from the 149th class, of which the researcher was a member. Therefore, these supervisors are the population for the primary data on the survey concerned with demographic information about the 350 officers being rated. Current or former members of the FBI National Academy were used because they are selected by the FBI to attend based on a representation of all law enforcement in the United States and therefore came from both large and small departments and from urban and rural communities. It was further believed, by the researcher, that police managers involved with the academy would be more receptive to the study and

complete the survey forms at a higher percentage rate than police managers selected at random.

These supervisors also served as a secondary source of information on the 146 (number of surveys returned) line officers under their supervision, who were the primary target of this study. As secondary sources, they related information, on the survey, about line officers in relation to the characteristics of the John Wayne Syndrome.

Dr. Reese supervised the administration of the surveys at the FBI National Academy. Each police manager (excluding international and federal agents) was provided a survey form and instruction sheet (Appendix B) that asked them to rate an officer in their department on both the demographic and characteristic scales. Neither the identity of the manager completing the instrument nor the identify of the officer being rated was recorded. No other coding device was used. Extra survey forms were provided for those managers willing to complete two. Managers were directed to select the officer to be rated at random.

An additional 50 survey forms were mailed to 50 former members of the 149th National Academy class. The researcher was also a member of the 149th class and selected these managers to equally represent large and small departments and urban and rural communities. The researcher also felt that former colleagues would make a special effort to complete the survey forms.

Analysis of the Data

The procedures used to analyze the data collected on the sample of police officers were divided into two categories: (1) the preliminary preparation of the survey forms, and (2) the statistical testing of the research questions.

Preliminary preparation of the forms consisted of coding each response for entering into the computer. In addition, the appropriate statistical procedures were selected to match the type of data collected and the comparisons needed to satisfy the research questions stated earlier.

Analysis of the data was performed using the computer software program "Systat." Since the data was coded as nominal data, the researcher chose the Pearson Chi-Square test for comparison of each variable to determine if a significant correlation existed which was established at the .05 level. Some simple frequency and percent charts were also produced to indicate trends and patterns that might be of interest.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATIONS OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze data on six demographic and personal characteristics as they relate to line police officers who could be identified as suffering from the John Wayne Syndrome at the time they were rated. The study was conducted using current and past students of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia, as primary and secondary sources of information. These students are police supervisors and represent a cross section of police departments from across the United States and several foreign countries. For the study, all international students, federal and state agents, and other police supervisors not directly involved in the management of line officers were excluded.

A total of 50 survey forms were mailed to selected former graduates of the 149th Academy on February 24, 1994 and 300 survey forms were provided to members of in-session Academy class (176th class) on March 14, 1994. Of the 350 survey forms mailed or furnished, 146 (42%) were returned as of April 1, 1994.

Twenty-four of the surveys returned were found to be unusable for several reasons: all the questions were not answered or the respondent marked all one column including the two control questions, which should have varied from the primary questions. Of

the 50 mailed, 12 were returned with incorrect addresses, and 26 were not returned.

No follow-up was attempted on the surveys mailed. At the FBI Academy, reassignments in the instructional staff and other interruptions resulted in one complete section (50 students) and portions of other sections not receiving the surveys prior to the graduation of the class on March 24, 1994.

Part I of the questionnaire contained demographic information about the officer being rated and the size of his/her department. Part II of the questionnaire contained specific questions related to the individual officer being rated in terms of personality characteristics and traits.

Analysis of Data

The analysis of data centers around two research questions:

1. Do certain personal characteristics of police officers influence the onset of the John Wayne Syndrome?
2. Do certain demographic characteristics of police officers influence the onset of the John Wayne Syndrome?

For the study, six demographic and personal characteristics were identified from research as factors that may have a correlation with the amount of stress present in an officer's life or are considered as stress relievers:

1. Size of the officer's department.
2. Age of the officer.
3. Sex of the officer.

4. Educational level of the officer.
5. Participation in fitness and sports by the officer.
6. Participation in stress relief courses by the officer.

The second part of the survey presented 12 personality traits and/or characteristics identified by the experts in the field of police psychology as strong indicators of the presence of the John Wayne Syndrome. The supervisors were directed to rate an officer against these factors using a Likert-type scale. Based on an arbitrary score set by the researcher and two experts in the field, the survey forms were separated into those officers who seemed not to be experiencing the syndrome and those who were experiencing the syndrome (Table I).

Results of the Research

Demographics

Of the 122 officers described by the surveys, 33 (21%) were from small departments of ten to 50 commissioned officers. Thirty-five (28.7%) officers were from medium sized departments of 51 to 200 officers. The largest group, 54 (44.3%) officers, were from large departments of more than 200 officers (See Table II).

Almost all the officers rated were 26 years old or older (92.6%). Only nine (7.49%) were in the 21 to 25 category (See Table III).

TABLE I
JOHN WAYNE SYNDROME

Scores	Number of Officers Independent	Percent
Scored Positive for Syndrome	65	53.3
Scored as Negative for Syndrome	57	46.7
Total	122	100.0

TABLE II
SIZE OF DEPARTMENT

Department Size	Number of Officers	Percent
Small: 10-50 officers	33	27.0
Medium: 51-200 officers	35	28.7
Large: More than 200 officers	54	44.3
Total	122	100.0

TABLE III
AGE OF OFFICERS

Age	Number of Officers	Percent
21-25 years	9	7.4
Over 26 years	113	92.6
Total	122	100.0

One-hundred and three (84.4%) of the officers rated were males and 19 (15.6%) were females (See Table IV).

Of the officers rated, 77 (63.1%) had more than two years of college. Forty-four (36.19%) of the officers had a high school education, but less than two years of college. One (.8%) survey form was marked unknown and was dropped for the purposes of the statistical comparisons (See Table V).

Fifty-six (45.9%) officers participated in fitness or sports activities on a regular basis several times per week. Thirty-three (27%) officers exercised occasionally, mostly on weekends and 29 (23.8%) were not very active in fitness or sports. Four (3.39%) surveys were marked unknown and were dropped for purposes of the statistical comparisons (See Table VI).

Forty-seven (38.5%) of the line officers rated had attended a stress reduction class and 51 (41.8%) had not. In the case of 24 (19.7%) of the officers, the supervisors did not know whether or not they had attended such a class (Table VII).

Each of the six demographic and personal characteristics discussed above were statistically compared against the number of officers identified as having the John Wayne Syndrome and the number identified as not having the Syndrome, using the Pearson Chi-Square test for significance at the .05 level. The Chi-square test was selected since the data were either nominal data or ordinal data (size of the department) used as nominal data. The data were analyzed using "Systat", a recognized computer software statistical program.

TABLE IV
SEX OF OFFICERS

Sex	Number of Officers	Percent
Males	103	84.4
Females	19	15.6
Total	122	100.0

TABLE V
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Education	Number of Officers	Percent
Less than 2 years college	44	36.1
More than 2 years college	77	63.1
Unknown	1	.8
Total	122	100.0

TABLE VI
FITNESS OF OFFICERS

Activities	Number of Officers	Percent
Very active	56	45.9
Occasionally active	33	27.0
Seldom active	29	23.8
Unknown active	4	3.3
Total	122	100.0

TABLE VII
STRESS CLASS

Category	Number of Officers	Percent
Participated	47	38.5
Did not Participate	51	41.8
Unknown	24	19.7
Total	122	100.0

None of the comparisons resulted in a significant correlation except for the size of the department in which the rated officer served. The Chi-Square test indicated a significance of .032 between the small departments (10-50 officers) and the larger departments. Those officers in the small departments were more likely to be in the John Wayne Syndrome than officers in the large departments.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter has five parts: (1) Summary, (2) Findings, (3) Discussion of Findings, (4) Conclusions, and (5) Recommendations. A discussion of the procedures for this study has been included in Chapter III and the presentation of the findings is contained in Chapter IV.

Summary

The problem is that no empirical data exists that provides police managers, trainers and counselors with persuasive information about the condition known as the John Wayne Syndrome, as it exists among the ranks of contemporary police men and women. This syndrome is most often reported after-the-fact, when an officer is involved in a citizen complaint of excessive force or starts to suffer from marital or behavioral problems.

The purpose of this study was to compare some demographic and personal characteristics of a selected sample of police officers against those characteristics identified by experts as indicative of the John Wayne Syndrome to see if a significant correlation exists between one of these characteristics and the onset of the syndrome. The study sought to prove the following research hypothesis.

1. The size of the police department has no effect on whether or not individual officers might suffer from the John Wayne Syndrome.

2. The age of the officer has no effect on whether or not the officer might suffer from the John Wayne Syndrome.

3. The sex of the officer has no effect on whether or not the officer might suffer from the John Wayne Syndrome.

4. The educational level of the officer has no effect on whether or not the officer might suffer from the John Wayne Syndrome.

5. Participation in supports and physical fitness has no effect on whether or not the officer might suffer from the John Wayne Syndrome.

6. Attending a stress reduction class or course has no effect on whether or not an officer might suffer from the John Wayne Syndrome.

Findings

Only the size of the department in which the rated officer served was significant at the .05 level. Officers in departments of over 50 commissioned officers were significantly less likely to have the John Wayne Syndrome.

Discussion of the Findings

This study did not attempt to determine why each characteristic might or might not have some significant correlation with the onset

of the syndrome; the goal was to establish only that a relationship did exist.

One possible rationale for the syndrome being more prevalent in the smaller departments could be the "big duck in a small pond" phenomenon. In very small communities, each officer or deputy may take on a much larger role, at least in their own (the officer's) eyes, and perhaps even in the communities' eyes, than an officer in a larger department. The responsibilities of the job become much more singular and personal to an officer in a small community, and a certain amount of swaggering, aloofness, machoism and aggressiveness might be expected or even perceived to be necessary to fill the role.

A second possibility is that large departments have more policies, better training and closer supervision, all of which may help to identify and modify the symptoms of the John Wayne Syndrome before they have a negative outcome to the officer or the department.

Several interesting trends did develop when comparing the other five characteristics against those officers with the syndrome.

In constructing frequency charts (Tables II-VII) for the six characteristics, the educational level seemed to make no difference in whether an officer might succumb to the syndrome. The same is true of age and sex (male or female).

The indication that educational level has no effect on the onset of the syndrome is somewhat surprising, given the conclusions of most of the research reviewed that the John Wayne Syndrome was

stress produced. That conclusion would lead a researcher to theorize that officers with a higher educational level would be more likely to recognize the symptoms and be able to moderate the effects or at least know how to seek help.

Most of the researchers studying the John Wayne Syndrome suggested that as an officer matures, he/she reaches a point in service beyond which the syndrome does not usually occur. This study does not seem to support that conclusion, although very few of the officers rated were under the age of 25.

Since no research was found regarding female officers and the syndrome, no expectations were possible. The findings that just as many females (percentage wise) had the syndrome as males, would suggest several possibilities. First, females are affected by the job the same as males; thus, no difference.

Secondly, the symptoms reported on the female officers may have resulted from identity efforts as suggested in the Watson (1990) article. To gain acceptance, within the ranks, women have to "be one of the boys."

Those officers who participated in regular (several times per week) fitness and sports however, appear to be less likely to be afflicted with the syndrome (Figure 1). Similarly, those who have participated in a stress avoidance class seem less likely to become victim of the syndrome, as indicated by percentage of occurrence only (Figure 2).

These two findings (trends) were expected, given the findings of other researchers who have concluded that active participation in

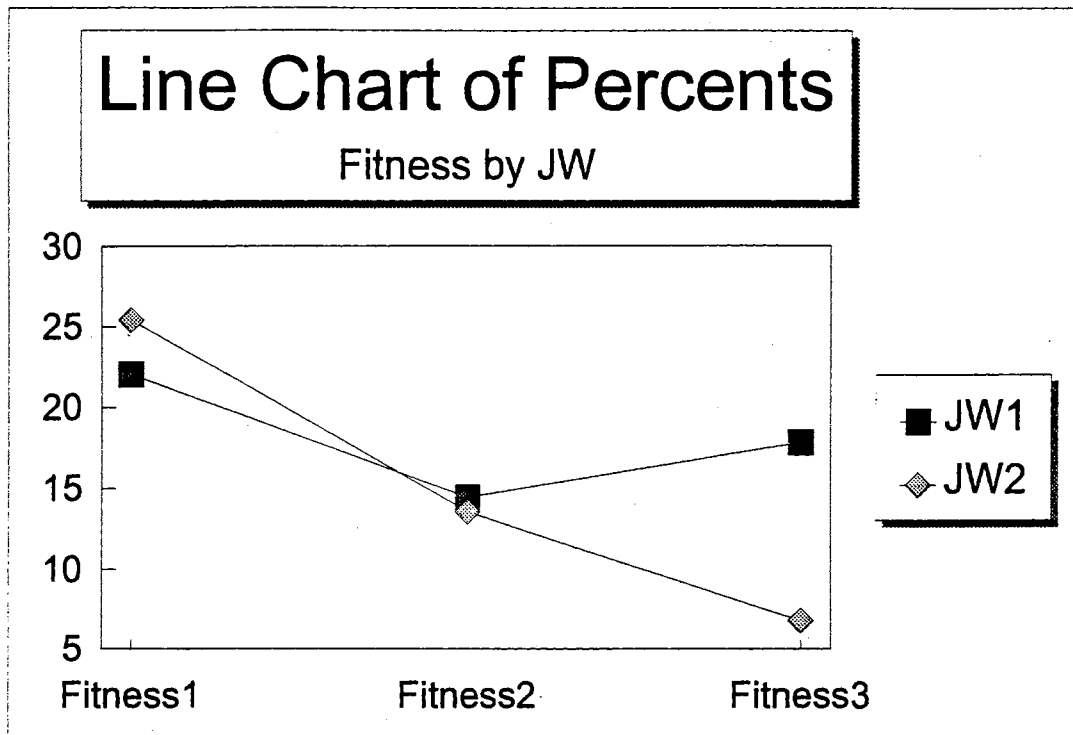


Figure 1. Officers Who Participated in Regular Fitness and/or Sports Activities

- JW1 - Represents officers with John Wayne Syndrome
- JW2 - Represents officers without John Wayne Syndrome
- Fitness 1 - Represents officers who participate regularly and often in fitness and sports activities
- Fitness 2 - Represents officers who participate occasionally in fitness and sports activities
- Fitness 3 - Represents officers who seldom participate in fitness or sports activities

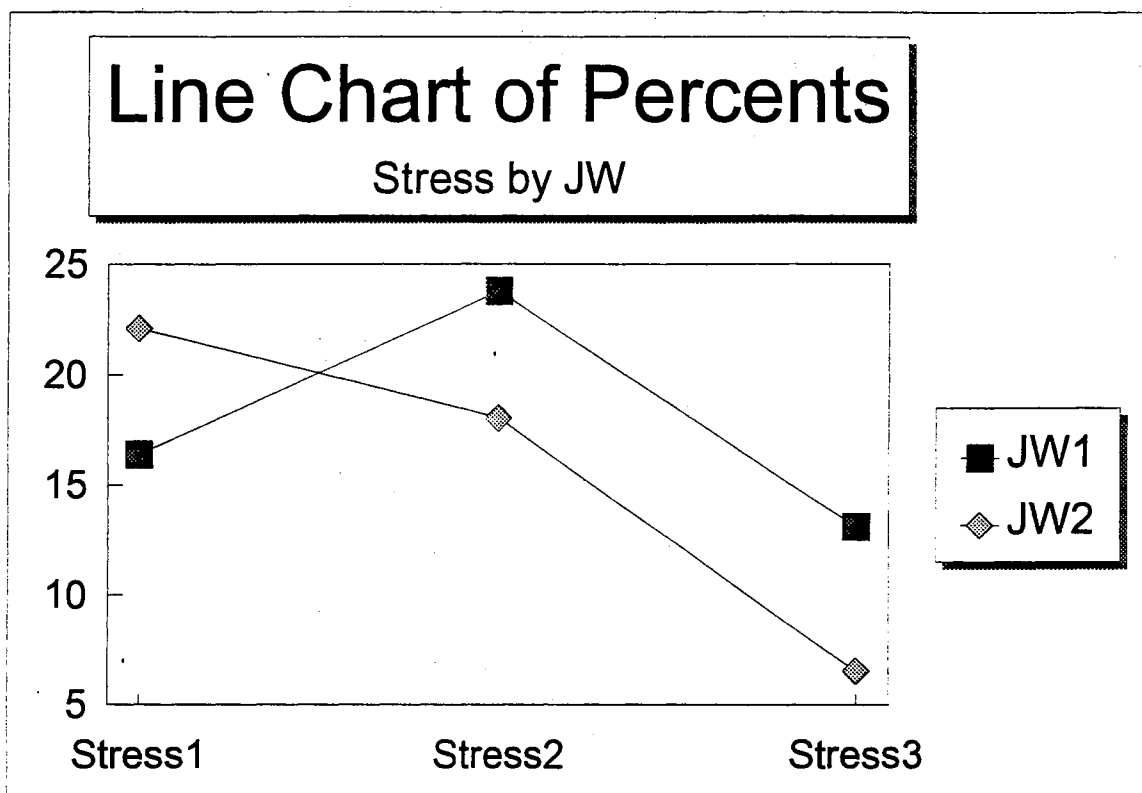


Figure 2. Officers Who Participated in Stress Avoidance Classes

- JW1 - Officers with John Wayne Syndrome
- JW2 - Officers without John Wayne Syndrome
- Stress 1 - Officers who attended a stress management class
- Stress 2 - Officers who did not attend a stress management class
- Stress 3 - Unknown attendance - disregarded

sports and fitness is a way of relieving stress for most people. Similarly, classes in dealing with stress have become a routine requirement in most law enforcement academies.

As this research project progressed, it became apparent to the researcher that although Reiser and most of the other writers and researchers considered the John Wayne Syndrome to be a product of personality traits and characteristics (psychological approach) there was some evidence that the syndrome might also be the product of organizational influences and pressures (sociological approach). This study considered only the psychological approach but cannot discount the other influences that might be dominant in a particular situation. Regardless of the source, the identifying characteristics are still the same.

The researcher believes that the John Wayne Syndrome is deeply imbedded in personality characteristics and traits, perhaps influenced, on occasion, by organizational models, policies or expectations.

Conclusions

Officers in smaller departments will exhibit the characteristics of the John Wayne Syndrome to a greater intensity and in greater percentages than officers in larger departments. No conclusion can be drawn from the data presented as to the reason this occurs.

Recommendations

This study certainly justifies the need for additional studies about the John Wayne Syndrome. More officers were judged to have the syndrome than not (65 vs 57). A study similar to this one should be conducted with the researcher going to the Academy and personally monitoring the completion of the survey forms. If 600 additional forms were to be gained over a one year period, the findings of this study could be verified and the two trends could be checked with some certainty.

Since the surveys indicate that approximately the same percentage of females in policing suffer from the John Wayne Syndrome as to their male counterparts, a study is needed to see if these characteristics are a defense mechanism from stress, as most researchers claim happens with male officers, or an overly aggressive effort on the part of some women to emulate the male officers through exaggerated "bravado and machoism."

A separate study needs to be conducted to examine the influence of organizational policies and role models on those officers exhibiting the John Wayne Syndrome. Some departments may actually train and expect officers to act in a manner closely emulating the characteristics associated with the syndrome.

Police supervisors, trainers, and academy supervisors need to be discussing the characteristics associated with this syndrome openly and frankly with both new and seasoned officers. The research presented here sheds only some light on the subject, much more investigation is warranted.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE WITH DR. MARTIN REISER

Dr. Martin Reiser
Los Angeles Police Department
Box 30158
Los Angeles, California 90030

Dr. Reiser:

You may not remember but I visited with you, on the telephone, in the fall of 1988. Our football team was preparing for the Holiday Bowl in San Diego and I was trying to arrange an interview with you during that visit. Unfortunately, you were traveling the other direction and we were unable to make connections.

I'm still pursuing my doctorate in adult education and trying to solidify a research program that will result in an interesting and useful thesis. As I mentioned during our earlier visit, I am a police manager and have been intrigued by a stress related phenomina that you dubbed the " John Wayne Syndrome " in one of your early books. I've found the syndrome widely referenced by others in the field and many managers are also familiar with the characteristics associated with it.


With your help, I'd like to explore this particular phenomina further, especially in light of the dramatic increase of women in the ranks. With the blessing of my committee and the help of a colleague here, who is a psychologist with Oklahoma State University, I would like to reexplore the occurrence of the stress related descriptors that you (and others since) have collectively associated with the " John Wayne Syndrome ."

Do you know of a survey instrument that has been used to measure the concepts of the syndrome? If so, would you share that instrument with me or direct me to the author.

Are you aware of any research that explores this particular topic over a sizeable sample group? If so, could you direct me to the report.

I would be very interested in visiting with you personally and would consider traveling some distance for an opportunity to spend a few hours together. If your summer or fall travel schedule includes a stop in Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, Missouri or even at the FBI academy, I would certainly try to arrange an interview.

Thanks for your consideration.


Ernest B. Tye
Captain, Police Operations
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078
405 744 6527

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT



TOM BRADLEY
Mayor

DARYL F. GATES
Chief of Police

OSU POLICE
RECEIVED

JUL 30 1990

P. O. Box 30158
Los Angeles, Calif. 90030
Telephone:
(213)- 485-2620
Ref #: 2.4

July 24, 1990

Captain Ernest B. Tye
Police Operations
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078

Dear Captain Tye:

In response to your inquiry about substantive research on the John Wayne Syndrome, unfortunately, I don't know of any. Other than Rokeach's measures of authoritarianism, I haven't seen any instruments that assess the Syndrome variables more directly.

You may want to touch bases with Professor Charles Spielberger of the psychology department of the University of South Florida at Tampa on the status of research in that arena. It is possible that the National Institute of Law Enforcement, U.S. Justice Department may have some relevant information in their data base.

If I thought I had something more to share, I would certainly welcome a visit with you. However, I'm afraid I have pretty much spelled out in my articles, many years ago, my thoughts and observations on the Syndrome.

Best wishes on your dissertation research.

Sincerely,

MARTIN REISER, Ed.D., Diplomate
in Clinical Psychology, ABPP
Director, Behavioral Science Services Section

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLES OF THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT AND
INSTRUCTIONAL LETTERS

February 24, 1994

Dear Colleague:

As a fellow graduate of the 149th FBI National Academy, I need your assistance in completing my doctoral thesis.

Please ask a supervisor in your department who has daily contact with patrol officers to complete one or two of the attached surveys. Each survey should take about ten to fifteen minutes and does not require the officer being rated to be present.

The survey asks the rater (supervisor) to consider the officers in your department, select one at random, and then rate them against the criteria in the survey. The rater should not do exhaustive research or record reviews, just rate the officer to the best of his/her knowledge.

No identification of rater or officer being rated is necessary.

If you have female officers and your supervisor is willing to do two surveys, ask that one be on a female officer.

This survey is also being administered during the current FBI/NA class and the results will be shared with several researchers including the Behavioral Science Unit of the Academy.

I'm on a tight schedule and need the surveys mailed back by Friday, March 11th.

Thank you for your assistance. Keep in touch.



Ernie Tye
405 744-6527
Campus Police
Oklahoma State University

NATIONAL ACADEMY COUNSELORS

Instructions for administering the attached surveys.

Surveys are intended for police supervisors (municipal, military, highway patrol, etc.) who have daily contact with patrol officers. A chief or assistant chief in a very large department may have difficulty completing the survey on an individual officer. This survey is not appropriate for deputy sheriffs', state and federal agents, military investigators or International officers.

The survey asks the rater (police supervisor) to consider the officers in his/her home department and to rate one of them against the criteria on the form. Considering that the NA students completing this survey are away from their departments and do not have access to the officers' records, they should be encouraged to just do the best they can.

Careful completion of a survey should require ten to fifteen minutes.

It would be greatly appreciated if some NA students would complete several survey forms on several officers.

No identification of rater or officer being rated is necessary.

The information gathered from these surveys will be used by several researchers, including the Behavioral Science Unit of the National Academy.

Thank you for your assistance.

RATER: Please complete the following questionnaire on an officer in your department. It is not important whether you are the direct supervisor or not, as long as the association has been close enough that you know the information requested. If you have several choices, select the officer at random. It is not important if the officer, being rated, was outstanding or otherwise. You may also rate an officer who has recently left the department.

THE IDENTITY OF THE OFFICER BEING RATED IS NOT NECESSARY.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: Circle most appropriate answer

Size of department (number of commissioned officers)

- A. 10 - 50
- b. 51 - 200
- C. More than 200

Age of officer being rated

- A. 21 - 25
- B. 26 or older

Sex of officer being rated

- A. Male
- B. Female

Educational level of officer being rated

- A. High school but less than 2 yrs. college
- B. More than two years of college
- C. Unknown

Participation of officer being rated in physical fitness or sports activities

- A. Often- several times per week
- B. Occasionally- perhaps on weekends
- C. Not very often
- D. Unknown

Did officer, being rated, participate in a stress management class?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Unknown

PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS

RATER: It is the combination of all the input and experiences that you have had with this officer that decides the rating. For instance, you may have known his/her family or non-departmental friends. You may have been socially associated with the officer off-duty or known officers who were. The rating you assign to each characteristic is to the best of your knowledge.

Rate officer against each descriptor, exclusive of the others. Example- an officer might have seemed to you to have been aloof and be rated as a 4 or 5 but you may not have seen the officer as swaggering, thus a rating of a 1 or 2.

It is not implied that some of each characteristic is always bad in a police officer. Also note that several questions seem at odds with the others; that is a part of the test design.

RATING SCALE (Circle the appropriate number)

never	seldom	sometimes	often	always
1	2	3	4	5

Officer is seen as aloof from ordinary citizens or other officers and his/her demeanor could be described as " swaggering ".

1. Officer is seen as aloof, perhaps considered unfriendly or hard to get to know, and may talk down to citizens, or some other officers. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Officer could be described as overly confident, and may walk and move in a very authoratative or swaggering manner. 1 2 3 4 5

Officer is cynical towards most job activities. Officer may have tunnel vision, in which every one is either a good guy or a bad guy. This cynacism may also apply to other officers, except for a small, select group.

1. Officer is cynical or suspicious toward department policies, procedures and most assignments. Often sees new policies, procedural changes or new assignments as harrassment. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Officer is always on the defensive, and suspicious, whether out in the community or in the department. Trusts no one, except perhaps his/her partner. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Officer classifies all contacts as either good or bad. Sees everyone as " for him or against him ". 1 2 3 4 5
4. Officer is supportive of department policies and often contributes suggestions or ideas on beneficial changes. 1 2 3 4 5

Officer is viewed as unemotional, perhaps withdrawn from non-officer friends and family. Exhibits a coldness toward those outside his immediate working partners.

1. Officer hides emotions, may appear unaffected by tragedy or suffeing. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Officer keeps an emotional distance between himself/ herself and others. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Officer has a large circle of friends with several close relationships both inside and outside the department. 1 2 3 4 5

Officer tends to be dictatorial or very authoritative. Wants to be seen as " tough ".

1. Officer takes immediate charge of most conversations with strong opinions. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Officer has no tolerance for opposing opinions or suggestions. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Officer is overly " macho " and presents himself/ herself as a very " tough" person. 1 2 3 4 5

Officer tends to be overserious. May be prone to overreact to criticism, especially from a citizen.

1. Officer seems to lack perspective, and escalates even routine criticism or suggestions to an unnecessary level of formality or seriousness. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Officer is known to use a little "extra" force when making arrests. May have been reported as abusive by peers or citizens. 1 2 3 4 5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP. PLEASE PLACE QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENVELOPE PROVIDED.

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

Date: 10-28-93

IRB#: ED-94-029

Proposal Title: COMPARISON OF SELECTED STRESS PRODUCED
CHARACTERISTICS, IDENTIFIED AS THE JOHN WAYNE SYNDROME, AMONG
POLICE OFFICERS

Principal Investigator(s): Garry Bice, Ernest Tye

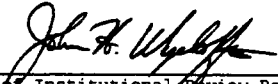
Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

APPROVAL STATUS SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT
MEETING.
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION
OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL. ANY
MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for
Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:


Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: November 1, 1993

VITA 2

Ernest B. Tye

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor for Education

Thesis: COMPARISONS OF SELECTED STRESS PRODUCED CHARACTERISTICS
IDENTIFIED AS THE JOHN WAYNE SYNDROME AMONG POLICE OFFICERS

Major Field: Occupational and Adult Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Phoenix, Arizona, October 6, 1940, the son of George and Florence Tye.

Education: Graduated from Muskogee High School, Muskogee, Oklahoma in May, June 1958; received Bachelor of Science in Criminology from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska in 1972; received Master of Arts in Police Administration from Webster University, St. Louis, Missouri in 1979; completed requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in May, 1994.

Professional Experience: Commander, Armed Forces Police, United States Air Force, 1975-1977; Inspector, Air Force Security Police, United States Air Force, 1977-1979; Chief of Policy, Greece, United States Air Force, 1979-1981; Instructor, ROTC, Oklahoma State University, United States Air Force, 1981-1983; Captain of Police Operations, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1983-1991; Assistant Director of Public Safety, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1991-Present.