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Number 4

Repeat Calls To Police In Minneapolis

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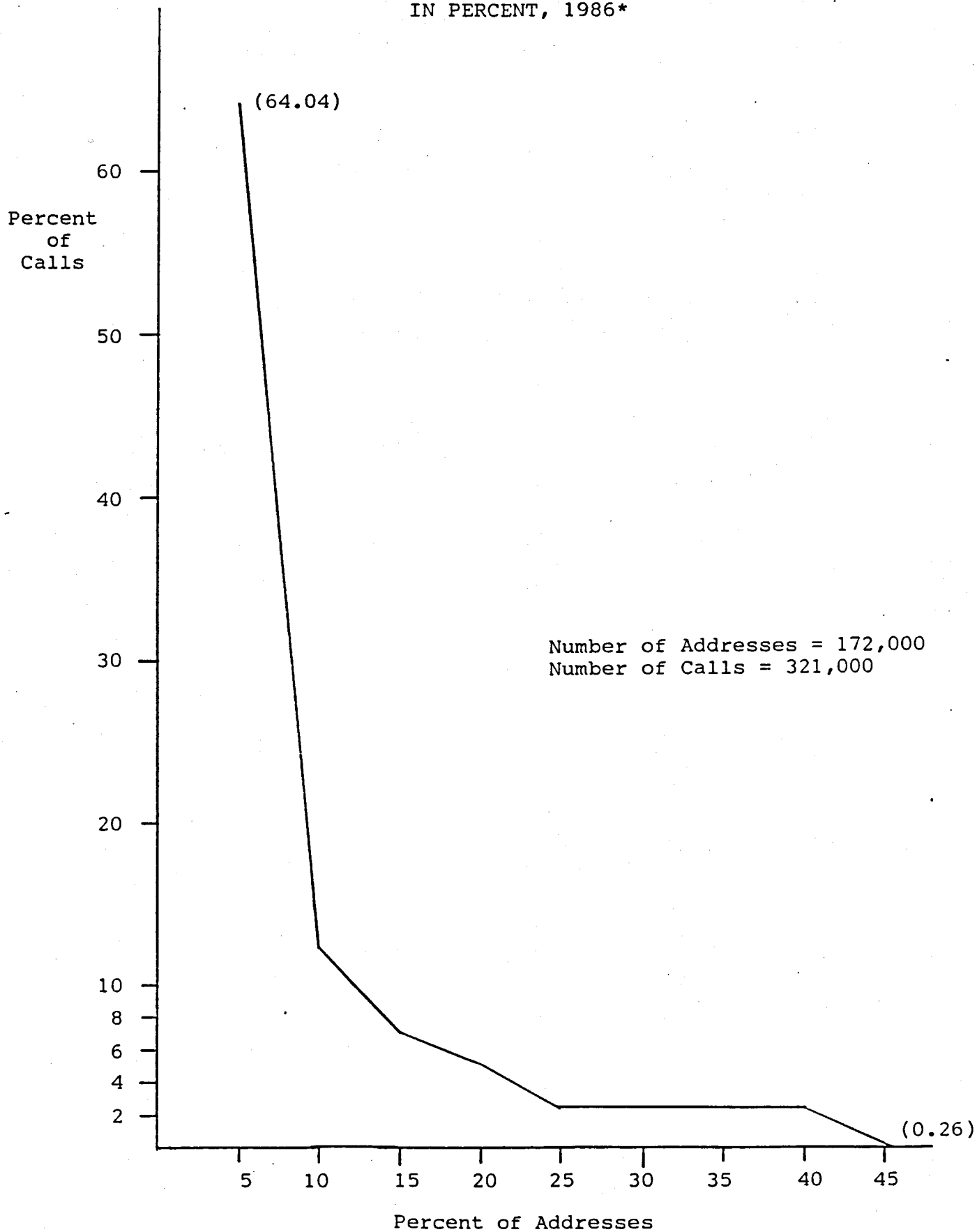
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Figure 1

DISTRIBUTION OF POLICE CALLS
BY ALL ADDRESSES IN MINNEAPOLIS
IN PERCENT, 1986*



*December 15, 1985 - December 15, 1986

Five percent of the estimated 172,000 addresses and intersections in Minneapolis were the subject of 64% of 321,174 calls to police between December 15, 1985 and December 15, 1986. Sixty percent of the addresses and intersections produced no calls to police at all. Of the 40% with any calls, the majority (52%) had only one call, while 84% had less than five. The top 5% of locations with any calls produced 48.8% of the calls.

This highly skewed concentration of all police calls in relatively few locations raises substantial questions about current police strategies, and suggests the need for focusing police resources on the chronic repeat call locations. This report is the first step in a research and development effort to create such a strategy, under National Institute of Justice funding of a collaborative project of the Crime Control Institute and the Minneapolis Police Department.

I. 911 Runs The Police Department

Much of the work sponsored by the National Institute of Justice since 1982 has attempted to develop a variety of new strategies for accomplishing police objectives. Prompted in part by Professor Herman Goldstein's landmark proposal for "problem-oriented policing" (Goldstein, 1979), NIJ's work has created and tested strategies focusing resources on specific, high priority police targets. Implicit in these new strategies is a strong critique of the prevailing "dial-a-cop" system of allocating most police resources on the basis of the phone calls police receive.

With the recent growth of 911 systems and the steady increase in the number of calls to police, a virtual coup d'etat has taken over American policing. Gradually, with little public notice, police managers have lost control over how police spend their time. The usurper is the telephone, and a common policy that requires all calls to be answered rapidly.

In the words of one police chief, "911 runs the police department." This means that for all the orders headquarters may make, most police effort is directed simply on the basis of telephoned citizen requests for immediate service, almost all of which are now received in many cities at the emergency "911" number. This system is neither rational nor fair.

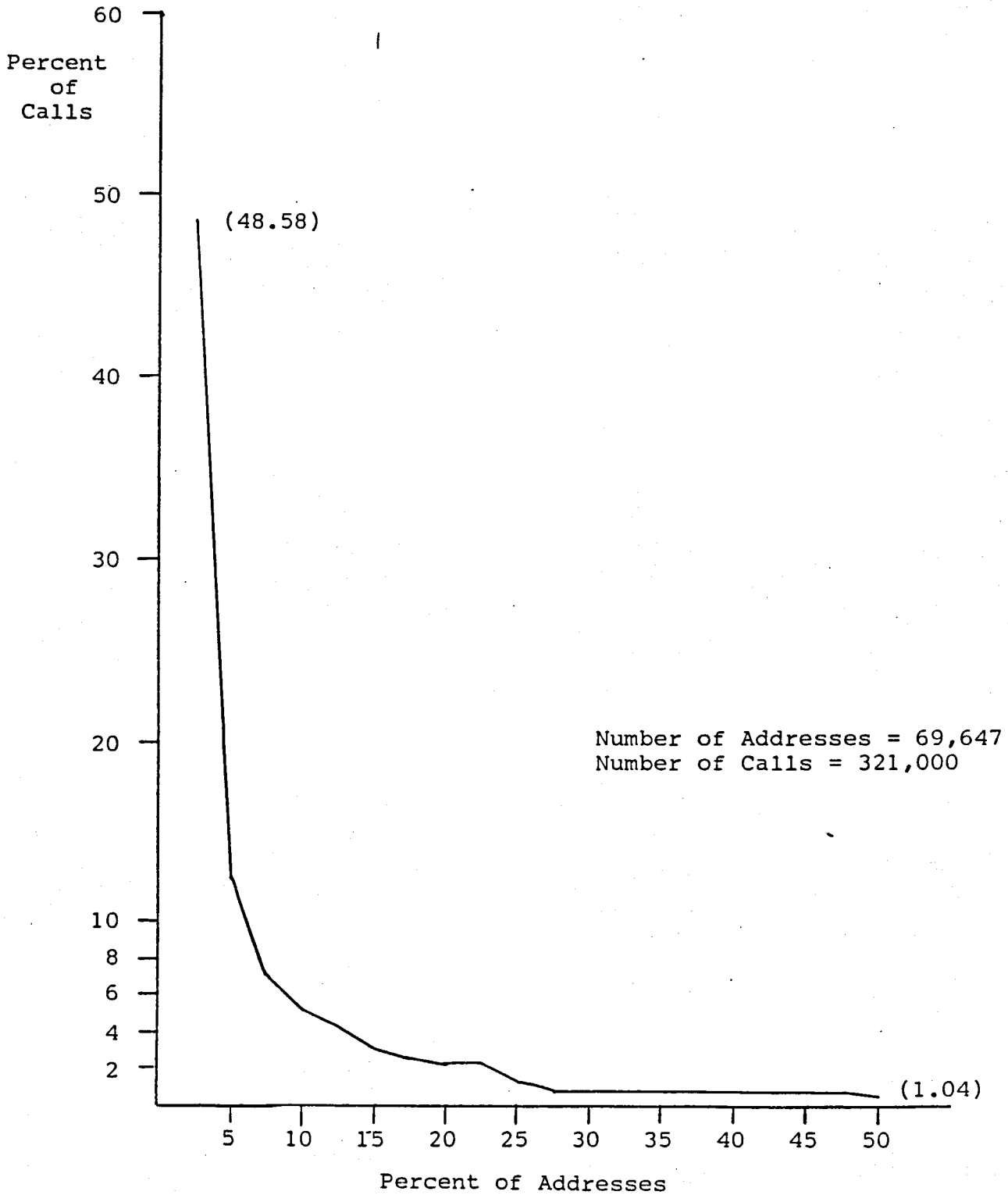
The dial-a-cop system is irrational because it prevents police from setting priorities and controlling crime more effectively. By letting each citizen decide whether a matter is appropriate for police work, we make it impossible for police to decide which matters deserve the most attention. In some cities, homicides literally go uninvestigated while police cars respond rapidly to help people locked out of their cars.

Of all the calls to police in the city of Minneapolis last year, for example, 5 percent were for car lockouts, 4 percent were for noise complaints, 1 percent were for picking up already captured shoplifters, and 25 percent were for domestic and other arguments which generally had no violence (see Table 1). Meanwhile, scarce police resources permitted only limited efforts against narcotics pushers, repeat offenders, and serious domestic violence.

Dial-a-cop is also irrational because, as National Institute of Justice-sponsored research has shown, rapid response by police makes little contribution to the apprehension of criminals or the prevention of victim injury, in the overwhelming majority of calls (Spelman and Brown, 1981). Other NIJ research shows that the calling public is generally happy to wait for a police response, or to receive no police car dispatched at all, as long as the telephone operators politely and accurately explain to the callers exactly what is going to happen (McEwen, et al, 1984).

The dial-a-cop system also allocates resources unfairly across the problems which generate calls. Because all calls must be answered quickly, very little time can

Figure 2
DISTRIBUTION OF POLICE CALLS
BY ADDRESSES RESPONDED TO
IN MINNEAPOLIS, IN PERCENT, 1986*



*December 15, 1985 - December 15, 1986

be spent on each call. The chronic locations are not given extra attention to try to reduce their heavy demands on police. Each call at the chronic locations receives the same limited attention that a call to a once-in-five years location receives. Dial-a-cop goes on putting out the fire, but it never takes away the matches.

Recognizing these problems, the National Institute of Justice has funded tests of a variety of police efforts to focus resources proactively (Reiss, 1971)--not waiting for telephone calls for direction--on high priority police problems: repeat offenders (Martin and Sherman, 1986), unjustified community fear of crime (Pate, Wycoff, Skogan and Sherman, 1986), and area patterns of street crime (Spelman and Eck, 1986). We now add to the list of these proactively policed, high priority targets the chronic repeat call locations that generate the majority of police patrol dispatches.

The purpose of this report is to demonstrate the concentration of police work at a small number of locations, and the justification for assigning extra resources to those locations as a way of reducing total calls to police. While it is true that much of that concentration may simply reflect concentrations of people using or living at those locations, that does not alter the logic of police identifying and focusing their efforts on those locations. Whether extra resources can succeed in reducing repeat calls will be the subject of a later report on the Minneapolis RECAP (repeat call address policing) experiment.

Research Methods

In order to develop the RECAP alternative to the dial-a-cop system, the Crime Control Institute obtained National Institute of Justice support for two tasks. One task was analyzing the patterns and concentrations of repeat calls. The other task was selecting, training and evaluating the effectiveness of a small RECAP unit of police officers devoting full time to proactive policing of the most chronic locations in the city.

The analysis was intended to identify those locations as the targets for the unit's efforts. But it also serves to demonstrate the need for the unit, which would have been abandoned if the analysis showed little concentration of calls.

The analysis proved to be far more difficult than anticipated. Most police departments will experience similar or greater difficulties in undertaking the same analysis. The problem is that a full year of call data is needed to develop a reasonably complete picture of the distribution of repeat calls. But such a large data base seems to be beyond the current capacity of most big-city police departments.

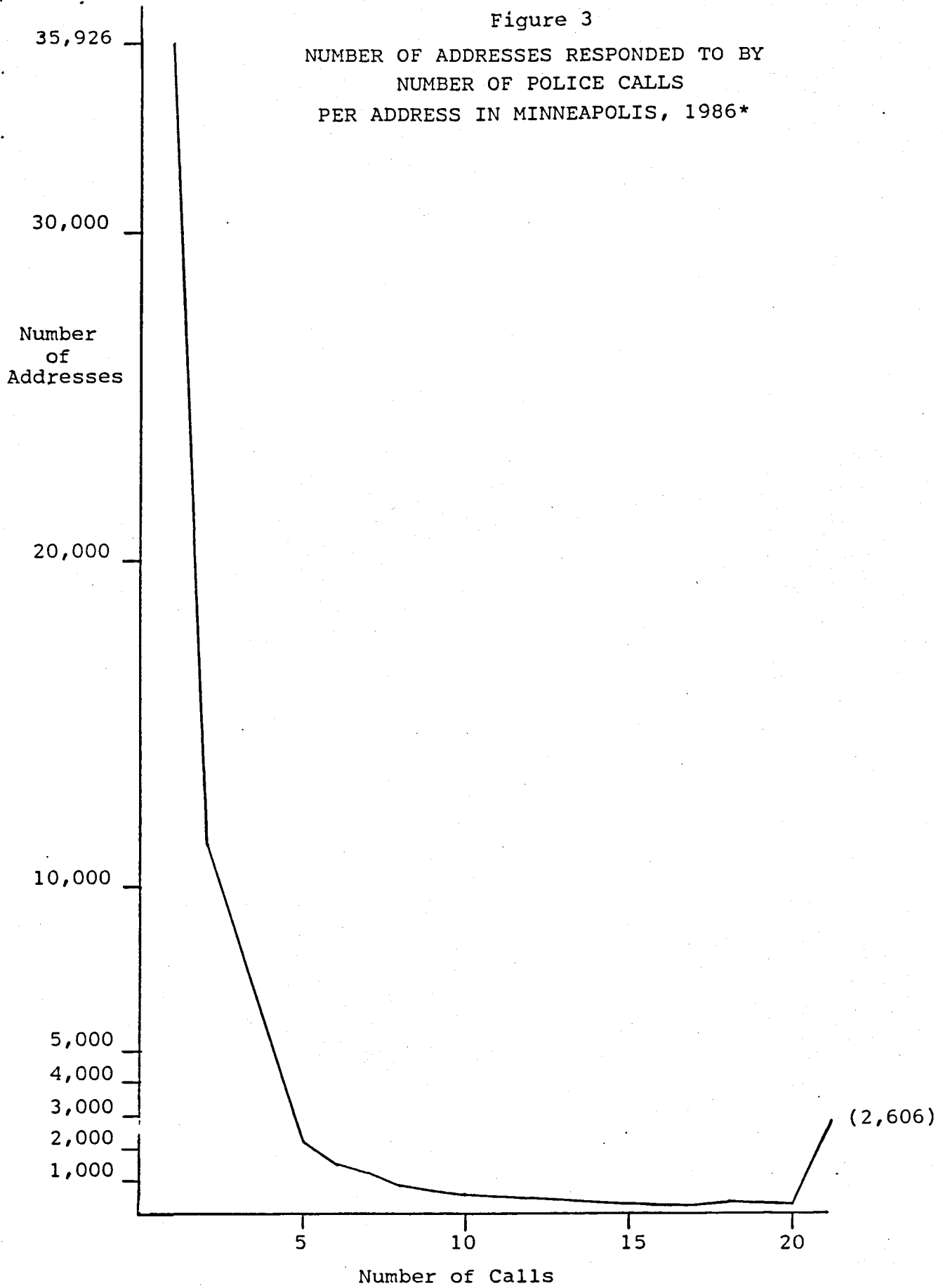
We have not surveyed this issue systematically, but we can offer some examples to illustrate the problem. The minimum requirement for this kind of analysis is that police call records must be computerized. In some big cities like Milwaukee, this is still not the case (although it is changing rapidly). Even among the computerized dispatch systems, few if any have sufficient data storage capacity for analyzing a full year of calls.

The subject address and call nature code data punched into the computer--as distinct from a tape-recording of the words exchanged between the caller and the police telephone operator--is generally removed from the computer and recorded on tape as soon as the computer's capacity is reached. In Minneapolis, the data are removed to tape about every seven days, depending on the volume of calls. In Colorado Springs, with an advanced computer-aided-dispatch system, the storage capacity is reportedly three months.

In order to identify the most active Minneapolis addresses over the course of a year, a new data base had to be constructed specifically for that purpose. Such an extensive task was not something the Minneapolis city government computer programmers

Figure 3

NUMBER OF ADDRESSES RESPONDED TO BY
NUMBER OF POLICE CALLS
PER ADDRESS IN MINNEAPOLIS, 1986*



*December 15, 1985 - December 15, 1986

had time to do. Nor, with a high hourly use cost, was it economical for the Crime Control Institute to use the city's mainframe computer. Both of these problems were handled, at the city's recommendation, by the Crime Control Institute's buying a microcomputer and retaining a programming firm familiar with the city's dispatch system.

The Unadjusted Data Base. The analysis proceeded by our agreeing on a few data "fields" in the computerized "record" of each call that would be transferred from the weekly tapes into the microcomputer data base. The fields included street name, address, floor number, apartment number, nature code of call, date and time of call, and officer's disposition (which would tell whether a report was filed from the call). The total information taken from each record was 80 "bytes". With an estimated 300,000 calls, we purchased a microcomputer that could handle at least 24 million bytes. We then used a tape drive attached to the micro to read those fields off of each weekly dispatch tape and into the hard disk data file.

The original plan had been to define addresses down to the level of apartment, but the programmers advised us that the complications involved in creating that definition would be enormous and very expensive. Thus "address" in the data base is no more specific than the building address, and the data base is thus biased towards addresses with large resident or user populations.

The data base was limited to calls to police, thus excluding fire department and ambulance calls. It also excluded administrative calls recorded in the system, such as police officers notifying the dispatcher that they are "out to lunch." We asked that calls be excluded if there was no police car dispatched. Finally, we directed that the address in question would always be an address where the problem was located, not the address from which the call came (if that was a different address).

Both of the last two definitions were difficult to impose, given the nature of police dispatching systems. The address employed in the data base was generally the address to which a police car was dispatched, but there was no way to insure that the problem had actually occurred at that address. Thus the "unadjusted" number one call location in the city is the Hennepin County Medical Center, because police respond there to take a crime report whenever medical staff notify police (as required by law) that a crime victim has arrived in the emergency room. The crime, of course, happened elsewhere, but the dispatch computer does not record the address of occurrence.

The address in the data base is only "generally" the address to which a car is dispatched because some of the included calls--we do not know how many, but believe it to be relatively few--did not produce a police car being dispatched at all. There was an exclusion made of one code indication showing that the call was screened out, or handled by the telephone operator. But other non-dispatched calls slipped in because they had a "closed" disposition at the time they were received.

The "closed" disposition means that the purpose of the call is to create a record of an event rather than to request police service. When an off-duty police officer working as a retail security officer apprehends a shoplifter, for example, he can fill out all the paper work to charge and release the suspect right at the scene. But he must still call the police operator to receive a case number for the arrest report. Such a call is listed as a closed call under the "event" disposition field, as distinct from the "officer" disposition field, on each call record.

At the time the data base fields were selected, we were not aware of this distinction. It only emerged as we analyzed the preliminary report from the last six months of 1986. We had omitted it in trying to conserve on computer storage space, since including it would have taken close to a million bytes. But when we discovered how crucial it was to determining whether cars were actually dispatched, we decided to rebuild the data base from scratch. That effort will begin shortly, and will provide the basis for the final evaluation of the RECAP units effectiveness

at reducing calls to which police are actually dispatched.

The data base as described to this point will be defined as the "unadjusted" data base, which included 321,174 calls. The following exclusions describe how the "adjusted" data base was constructed for the purposes of identifying the most active addresses in the city.

The Adjusted Data Base. In order to limit the target list more closely to addresses where problems actually occurred, the RECAP commander (Emerson) and officers (Goodmanson, Martens, Revor, and Rumpza) went through a printout of the top 2,000 addresses in the last six months (approximately) of 1986. The time period was selected merely on the grounds of moving speedily, at a time when the data base was only half built. They tried to eliminate all addresses, such as all hospitals, city hall, police precinct stations, the St. Joseph's Shelter for lost, abandoned and abused children, and the courthouse, which were clearly not the locations of the problems but rather the locations to which police were dispatched to take a report. (Unfortunately, two small hospitals slipped through, but were deleted from the target list described below.)

They also decided, after a three day planning retreat with Crime Control Institute staff and extensive debate for a week thereafter, to eliminate intersections. The problem with intersections from the standpoint of proactive police work is that there is very little chance of finding a stable group of people who generate or deal with the problems. Recurrent traffic accidents at bad intersections are already being mapped by another unit, so the remaining problems of muggings, fights, car lockouts, etc. could not be dealt with conveniently by a small unit.

For similar reasons, the RECAP unit also decided to eliminate parks and schools (which also have their own special police units), and the one block area downtown in which an enormous amount of vice consumption is concentrated: pornography stores, movies, and the most active bar in the city for calls to police. The city council was debating the future of that block heavily at the time, and even considered condemning it and tearing it down. When this analysis found that the twelve addresses and four intersections of the "E" block, as it is known, were the subject of 3,230 police calls in the unadjusted data base--more than one percent--the finding was the subject of a detailed story in the Minneapolis Star and Tribune (January 15, 1987).

The fact that .001 percent of the addresses and intersections produced one percent of the calls, or 1,000 times more calls than would be expected by an equal distribution, is a striking part of the overall concentrations reported here. But it also suggests a problem so major that it was prudent for the RECAP unit to exclude it from its work.

The final categorical exclusion was the check cashing establishments, which generate many calls for arrests of felonious bad-check passers. These arrests have a high conviction rate, and the RECAP officers did not want to discourage the arrests. One such establishment, however, slipped by into the adjusted data base reported here.

In addition to these categorical exclusions, the officers dealt with two other issues. One issue, which will affect any police department attempting to identify repeat call locations, is the fact that police telephone operators enter the same address in different ways on different occasions. A good example comes from the most active bar on the "E" block, Moby Dick's, which is entered in at least these different ways:

- o 620 Hennepin Ave.
- o 620 Hennepin Ave--Moby's
- o 620 Hennepin Ave--Moby Dick's
- o 620 Hennepin Ave--Moby's Bar

These different listings made the address appear to have fewer calls than it actually had, because the true total was split among the different ways of labeling the address.

Other buildings may have entrances and addresses on different streets, or have similar variations in the description of the premises following the address. We had asked the programmer to suppress those descriptions in the analysis, but it was not possible to combine the multiple listings without far more complex programming. Thus both the unadjusted and adjusted data bases show less concentration of calls than actually exists.

The problem was somewhat reduced for the top 2,000 addresses. The RECAP officers read the address listings for the full year data set. They instructed the programmer to merge the remaining addresses that were presented under multiple labels, to the extent that they were able to detect them.

In addition, less than twenty addresses were deleted for reasons related to the evaluation research design, which will be described in later reports.

Commercial and Residential Addresses. The preliminary inspection of the top 2,000 addresses showed that they were predominantly commercial addresses. In order to insure that the RECAP experiment would have enough residential addresses to explore the full range of police problems, we decided to stratify the study sample. The officers went through the top 2,000 locations, using the reverse telephone directory to supplement their formidable knowledge of city addresses, and labeled each location as residential or commercial.

Once the designations and all the exclusions were complete, the programmers rank-ordered the commercial and residential addresses in separate lists. The top 250 addresses in each category were then identified as the project targets. It is this final, adjusted list which is the basis for the data presented in Tables 2 and 3. For the purposes of the experimental phase of the unit, only half of each list will be assigned to RECAP. The other, randomly selected half of each list will be left alone as a control group against which to compare the frequency of calls at the experimental locations.

III. Letting Calls Set Priorities

Table 1 presents the overall distribution of calls by nature code in the unadjusted data base of 321,174 calls. The distribution is a regrouping of 114 separate nature codes into six more general categories. The categories are guided by the prior literature on the nature of police work (e.g., Wilson, 1968; Goldstein, 1977). The results show what police work becomes when police priorities are determined by the calls that come in.

There is no question that police are needed to deal with angry conflicts that can erupt, or have already erupted, into violence. It is hard to criticize the fact that one third of all calls fall into this category. It is also hard to argue that police should not attend to calls about actual or potential property crime, which comprise 29% of calls, or traffic control at 19%, or even some of the service calls, at 13%.

It is possible to argue that police should not be providing a free car lockout service (5% of calls), when private locksmiths could do the same on a fee-for-service basis, a plan that is under much discussion in Minneapolis. But there are few such categories of calls that police could reasonably abandon altogether. The problem is not one of need, but one of balance.

The fact that only two percent of all calls concern the most serious crimes, stranger to stranger crimes against persons, suggests that the balance does not

Table 1

Nature of Calls to Police in Minneapolis, All Addresses, 1986*

<u>Category</u>	<u>(Unadjusted Data)</u> <u>Number</u>	<u>Percent**</u>
<u>1. Conflict Management</u>	<u>104,354</u>	<u>32.5%</u>
Domestics	24,948	7.8%
Other disturbances	55,568	17.3%
Noise	12,204	3.8%
Assault	11,634	3.6%
<u>2. Property Crime-Related</u>	<u>91,055</u>	<u>28.4%</u>
Theft	35,741	11.1%
Burglary-related	33,384	10.4%
Vandalism	11,197	3.5%
Alarms	10,733	3.3%
<u>3. Traffic Problems</u>	<u>59,630</u>	<u>18.6%</u>
Traffic Enforcement	27,992	8.7%
Property damage accident	10,296	3.2%
Parking	8,007	2.5%
All other traffic	13,335	4.2%
<u>4. Service</u>	<u>42,473</u>	<u>13.2%</u>
Lockouts	17,389	5.4%
Medical Aid	9,008	2.8%
Emergencies	6,986	2.0%
Assistance	6,308	2.0%
Persons lost/found	1,578	0.1%
Fires	1,204	0.4%
<u>5. Miscellaneous</u>	<u>17,591</u>	<u>5.4%</u>
Arrests and Bookings	5,059	1.6%
Other	12,532	4.0%
<u>6. Stranger to Stranger</u>		
<u>Crime Against Persons</u>	<u>6,071</u>	<u>1.9%</u>
Robbery	4,219	1.3%
Criminal Sexual Conduct	1,852	0.6%
<u>Total</u>	<u>321,174</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

* Actual Period covered 12/15/85-12/15/86

** Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding

Table 2

Nature of Police Calls to Most Active 250 Commercial Addresses
And Most Active 250 Residential Addresses In Minneapolis, 1986*

(Adjusted Data)

Category	<u>Commercial</u>		<u>Residential</u>	
	Number	Percent**	Number	Percent**
<u>1. Conflict Management</u>	<u>6,357</u>	<u>32%</u>	<u>11,427</u>	<u>59%</u>
Domestics	462	02%	3,703	19%
Other Disturbances	4,919	25%	5,560	29%
Assault	919	5%	1,254	6%
Noise	57	-	910	5%
<u>2. Property Crime-Related</u>	<u>7,857</u>	<u>40%</u>	<u>3640</u>	<u>19%</u>
Theft	5,757	29%	1,583	8%
Burglary	940	5%	1,432	7%
Vandalism	425	2%	587	3%
Alarms	735	4%	68	-
<u>3. Traffic-Related</u>	<u>985</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>519</u>	<u>3%</u>
Traffic Enforcement	131	1%	131	1%
Property Damage Crash	130	1%	130	1%
Parking	251	1%	251	1%
<u>4. Service-Related</u>	<u>3,006</u>	<u>15%</u>	<u>2,584</u>	<u>13%</u>
Lockouts	1,993	10%	706	4%
Medical Aid	700	4%	1,025	5%
Emergencies	435	2%	940	5%
Assistance	486	2%	640	3%
Persons Lost/Found	88	-	206	1%
Fires				
<u>5. Miscellaneous</u>	<u>756</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>882</u>	<u>4%</u>
Arrests and Bookings	304	2%	460	2%
Other				
<u>6. Stranger to Stranger</u>	<u>722</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>548</u>	<u>2%</u>
<u>Crime Against Persons</u>				
Robbery	616	3%	371	2%
Criminal Sexual Conduct	106	1%	177	1%
<u>Total</u>	<u>19,564</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>19,462</u>	<u>100%</u>

*Actual period covered, 12/15/85-12/15/86

**Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding

match citizen priorities. The Minneapolis police do expend other resources on street crime besides patrol car responses to citizen calls. But the total resources dedicated to stranger crime are probably minimal in comparison to the high priority many citizens would place on such offenses.

Bittner (1980) has defended the picture of police work presented in Table 1 by defining policing as the intervention in "situations-about-which-somebody-must-do-something-now." That is no doubt the common theme that runs through all of these calls. But it is arguable that police work can and should be more than just immediate responses. A good analogy is found in medicine, which is increasingly moving away from just treating the sick towards the preventive maintenance of health.

The analogy to public health is even more compelling, with the recent growth of proactive efforts to identify carriers of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) to stop them from spreading the disease. Far more lives may be saved by such efforts than by doctors treating sore throats and the flu. Similarly, far more lives may be saved by focusing police resources on serious crime problems than by simply waiting for calls on minor crime problems to come in.

Whatever the merits of the priorities reflected in this distribution of calls in the unadjusted data base, it is important to note how it differs from the nature of calls about the top 250 commercial and residential locations in the adjusted data base. As Table 2 shows, both commercial and residential addresses are relatively free of traffic problems. But commercial addresses have proportionally more property crime calls than addresses in general, and residential addresses have proportionally twice as many conflict management calls as addresses in general.

Solving the problems that produce the high concentrations of repeat calls at these locations will not necessarily reduce street crime, but they may free up other police resources to concentrate on such crimes.

IV. The Chronic Call Locations

And the concentrations are substantial indeed. Each of the locations in the two adjusted lists of most active addresses generates an average of about 80 calls per year, slightly less than two a week. Each list of 250, with only one tenth of one percent of the city's addresses, produces six percent of the calls in the city. These addresses are thus sixty times more likely to produce a call to police on any given day than the average address in the city.

The concentrations are even more clearly demonstrated by the data from the unadjusted list. Figure 1 presents the same data as Table 3, showing the steep decline in the total percentage of calls produced by addresses ranked below the top five percent of addresses in call frequency, which produce sixty-four percent of the calls. The second five percent of addresses produce only 13 percent of the calls, the third five percent of addresses only seven percent of the calls, and so on.

Figure 2 and Table 4 show a similar distribution among the forty percent of addresses and intersections that had any calls at all, with almost forty-nine percent of the calls concentrated in the top five percent of those addresses.

Figure 3 and Table 5 show the distribution of addresses with calls by the number of such calls at each address. The majority of those addresses had only one call, and 85% had less than five. Thus the concentration of most calls in the few most active addresses is clearly intense.

These statistical concentrations raise the obvious question: what kinds of locations are consuming the lion's share of police patrol responses? The answer is not just low rent apartments or tough bars, although they are well represented. The lists also include major commercial locations, which attract large numbers of people for

TABLE 3 - DISTRIBUTION OF CALLS TO POLICE BY ALL LOCATIONS IN MINNEAPOLIS, 1986*
(Unadjusted Data Base)

Percentile of all addresses	Number of Calls	Raw Percent of Calls	Cumulative Percent of Calls (figures may not total 100 due to rounding)
5	205721	64.04	64.04
10	41382	12.88	76.92
15	22392	6.97	83.89
20	16519	5.14	89.03
25	8601	2.68	91.71
30	8601	2.68	94.39
35	8601	2.68	97.07
40	8601	2.68	99.75
45	839	0.26	100.01
50	0	0.00	
55	0	0.00	
60	0	0.00	
65	0	0.00	
70	0	0.00	
75	0	0.00	
80	0	0.00	
85	0	0.00	
90	0	0.00	
95	0	0.00	
100	0	0.00	

*Dec. 15, 1985 - Dec. 15, 1986

TABLE 4 - DISTRIBUTION OF CALLS TO POLICE BY LOCATIONS GENERATING POLICE CALLS
 IN MINNEAPOLIS, 1986*
 (Unadjusted Data Base)

Percentile of all addresses	Number of Calls	Raw Percent of Calls	Cumulative Percent of Calls (figures may not total 100 due to rounding)
5	156076	48.58	48.58
10	40040	12.46	61.04
15	24142	7.51	68.55
20	17106	5.32	73.87
25	13216	4.11	77.98
30	10449	3.25	81.23
35	8456	2.63	83.86
40	6966	2.17	86.03
45	6966	2.17	88.20
50	5845	1.82	90.02
55	3483	1.08	91.10
60	3483	1.08	92.18
65	3483	1.08	93.26
70	3483	1.08	94.34
75	3483	1.08	95.42
80	3483	1.08	96.50
85	3483	1.08	97.58
90	3483	1.08	98.66
95	3483	1.08	99.74
100	3352	1.04	100.78

*Dec. 15, 1985 - Dec. 15, 1986

TABLE 5
NUMBER OF LOCATIONS RESPONDED TO BY NUMBER OF POLICE CALLS
PER ADDRESS IN MINNEAPOLIS, 1986*
(Unadjusted Data Base)

Number of Calls	Number of Locations
1	35926
2	11329
3	5691
4	3511
5	2304
6	1680
7	1253
8	964
9	817
10	655
11	508
12	417
13	358
14	302
15	301
16	260
17	203
18	225
19	175
20	162
> 20	2606

*Dec. 15, 1985 - Dec. 15, 1986

many hours of the day.

Table 6 lists in rank order the top fifty addresses, both commercial and residential, in the adjusted list, showing the frequency of calls and the generic type of location at each address. An analysis of these locations shows that 21 are apartment buildings, of which four are public housing projects. Twelve are retail or grocery stores, and the grocery stores are generally open 24 hours a day. Five are bars, three are 24-hour convenience stores with the same national company, three are hotels, one is a fast food hamburger chain (not McDonald's), and five others are of varied character.

It is fairer to say that these addresses usually attract trouble rather than cause it. The role of the late-night hours, when many people are intoxicated and more vulnerable to committing or being victimized by crime, appears to be substantial. Yet the profits from all-night operations are also reportedly substantial, and a strong incentive for businesses to stay open.

It is also interesting to note the role of big business in these demands for local police service. While many of the locations are owned by local small businesses, especially the apartments, six of the top ten are operated by Fortune 500 companies.

User Fees? Whether they simply attract trouble along with large numbers of customers by offering the public a needed service, or in the case of certain bars, cause trouble by serving intoxicated customers, these addresses do place major demands upon the police. Whether they pay disproportionately larger taxes than other police users is unclear. If not, then one implication might be to create a system of user fees for calling the police, restricted to commercial addresses--just as garbage collection is charged to commercial, but not residential, addresses in many cities.

V. The RECAP Strategy

A less extreme approach is simply focusing police resources on the chronic user locations, in order to reduce their use. The goal of such a strategy should not be merely to reduce calls to police, and certainly not to discourage people from making calls in emergencies. The goal should be solving or reducing the problems generating the repeat calls.

One way to accomplish that goal might be to assign a small unit of officers to spend full time on proactive police work at these locations. These officers would not answer radio calls, but would work flexible hours to accomplish the following tasks at the high volume locations identified through the computer-generated analysis described in this report:

- Description of the nature and use of the premises
- Diagnosis of the problems generating the calls
- Planning of police or user action for reducing those problems
- Implementing the action plan
- Following up on repeat call rates to measure success

The description can generally be done on the basis of existing officer knowledge or merely driving by the location. The diagnosis should be based upon a review of a computer printout of the nature, days and time of the calls at the location, as well as the narratives in the crime and arrest reports previously filed for those locations. The diagnosis may also include personal contact with owners, managers, users or residents of the locations.

The planning could be done after discussion with colleagues or supervisors, and possibly after consultation with other community resources, such as social service agencies. The action plan can then be implemented by the RECAP officers, other police units, social welfare organizations, or persons on the premises. The important

TABLE 6
 Top 50 Addresses in Minneapolis
 By Nature of Location and Number of Calls, 1986*
 (Adjusted Data Base)

Rank	Nature of Location	Number of Calls
1	Large discount store	810
2	Large department store	686
3	24-hour national convenience store and bar	607
4	Apartments - public housing	479
5	Large discount store	471
6	Large discount store	449
7	Homeless Center - former hotel	379
8	Transportation center	343
9	Large department store	319
10	Downtown business mall	251
11	Bar	244
12	Large department store	242
13	High-priced hotel	240
14	Bar	237
15	Apartments	233
16	Bar	222
17	Community Center	209
18	Apartments	208
19	Apartments	207
20	Apartments	195
21	Grocery store - 24 hour	195
22	Medium-priced hotel	193
23	Supermarket	192
24	Apartments	190
25	Supermarket	190
26	Small apartment	187
27	24-hour national convenience store	183
28	Apartments - high rise	181
29	Apartments	177
30	Apartments	175
31	Apartments	168
32	Halfway house	163
33	Bar	158
34	Apartments	156
35	Apartments	156
36	Low-priced hotel	152
37	Apartments	149
38	Apartments - public housing	149
39	Apartments - public housing	148
40	Bar and 24-hour restaurant	147
41	Social Service Center	147
42	Fast food restaurant	146
43	24-hour national convenience store	145
44	Grocery store - 24-hour	145
45	Liquor store	143
46	Apartments	142
47	Apartments	142
48	Apartments	142
49	Apartments	142
50	Apartments - public housing	136

TOTAL CALLS 11870

*Dec. 15, 1985 - Dec. 15, 1986

point of departure from conventional police work is the followup: the RECAP officers' efforts to insure that the action plan was indeed implemented, and their monitoring of weekly computer reports on subsequent calls at the addresses they have worked upon. These reports, ideally, will take the form of a trend line showing how many calls were dispatched each week, with a vertical line through the trend showing the date the action plan was implemented.

This RECAP strategy is now underway in Minneapolis with four handpicked volunteer officers and one sergeant commanding them. These officers are among the most experienced, hardest working and creative officers in the department. Two are college graduates in social science, and they average over fifteen years of patrol experience. They were intentionally chosen for their excellence, as they would be in normal operational circumstances.

Whether even such a high quality team can implement the complex strategy described here remains to be seen. If it is implemented properly, the experimental design being employed will give a fairly clear answer to the question of whether such a unit can reduce repeat calls at these chronic locations.

The ultimate success of such a strategy may depend as much upon the tactics used as upon the strategy itself. Negative results would not necessarily disprove the value of the strategy. But it would show that the methods used by the Minneapolis RECAP team failed to deal with the problems producing the calls, and raise serious doubt about whether any tactics could have made a difference.

The Minneapolis RECAP team is well aware that, perhaps for the first time in the history of the department, there is a "bottom line", profit or loss statement that they will show at the end of the experiment. With approximately 400 patrol officers handling 321,000 calls a year, each officer on patrol will handle roughly 800 calls per year, or about four per day worked. In order to justify their removal from patrol to RECAP, the officers must reduce calls by five times 800, or 4,000 calls, on an annualized basis. Anything more than that will be considered "profit"; anything less will be considered a "loss".

An annualized reduction of 4,000 calls amounts to about 20% fewer calls at the target addresses than in the previous year. Such a goal is not easy to attain, but neither does it seem unrealistic. Given the high quality of the group, there is good reason for optimism.

That optimism is supported by their record in the first six weeks of operation, in which they accomplished the following:

- o Developed information leading to the largest heroin seizure in recent years in Minneapolis, at one of the targeted addresses.
- o Received approval of a new plan for eliminating 1100 police car dispatches a year for "no-pay" incidents at gas stations, which merely require giving the company the name and address of the registered owner of the vehicle for collection by mail.
- o Obtained agreement by the number one call location to book its own shoplifters by hiring an off-duty police officer, rather than calling for a police car.
- o Prompted one manager to rip out a faulty alarm system that had produced repeated false alarm calls.

If the initial level of productivity can be sustained, then the RECAP theory will at least be given a very fair test.

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