

Profiling 'Cop Killers' in South Africa

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Introduction

In trying to formulate protection measures and preventative strategies for the murder of police officers the profiling of the murderers provides just one of the tools which can be of assistance to the authorities. This article looks at the formulation of a profile for so-called 'cop killers' in the South African situation. In building such a profile enables pointers to be given of what kind of training and which specific measures should be implemented to provide a more secure working environment for police officers as they go about their daily work of fighting and combating crime in South Africa. This article is based on individual interviews undertaken in a number of prisons(1) in Gauteng during January and February 2000(2) of offenders who have perpetrated attacks on or murdered police officials and who were willing to be interviewed.(3)

The interviews were conducted according to a semi structured interview question schedule with a range of open ended questions in order to establish an offender profile.(4) The offender analysis is based on information obtained from 26 out of the 28 interviews conducted.(5)

Offender personal history

Introductory questions were asked of respondents regarding their childhood in an effort to establish whether environmental factors such as social deprivation, poverty, a broken home, single parenting, mistreatment or a "tough" upbringing might have influenced later actions or been a factor in precipitating an attack on a police official.

In a majority of cases a lack or shortage of money, even though possibly experiencing a happy childhood and never being really hungry (shortage of food in house) led to their education being cut short (leaving school early) or being curtailed, i.e. never had the opportunity to complete their schooling. This is corroborated by the fact that most also possessed low levels of educational qualifications.

Fifteen percent(6) of the respondents never went to school although one of them received some informal tutoring being taught to read and write by a friend. Of the rest 23% managed only a primary school qualification (Standards 1 - 5/Grades 3-7), with in fact 80% not completing their schooling (i.e. obtaining a Standard 10/Matric qualification). Only 19% of the respondents managed to complete matric (Standard 10) and of those only one had a post-graduate qualification (a four year diploma in nursing), while one did a

welding apprenticeship and another was a qualified diesel fitter.

In terms of childhood experiences the following breakdown in responses (inclusive of multiple combinations) occurred:

Twenty three percent indicated that they experienced a "tough" time during their childhood and struggled because of poverty while 15% mentioned that they left school early because their families could not afford to continue to send them to school (pay school fees or they were needed to go out and work to support the rest of the family and make a contribution towards family finances).

I was happy but I left school early because of money (Interview No.1)

I did not go to school because my father was not capable of paying the school fees (Interview No. 7)

Moreover, 19% of the respondents also mentioned that they went hungry during their childhood.

Yes I went hungry I can say often, sometimes a day would pass without food or eating anything (Interview No. 7)

We struggled when I was young (Interview No. 22).

I had a happy childhood but sometimes there was no food (Interview No. 23).

I grew up very hard my, my father died while I was still a young boy.... So I went and stay with my uncle. The reason I went away was because of poverty (Interview No. 26).

Furthermore, 15% also indicated that they were beaten or mistreated. In addition, 27% revealed that they grew up in either a broken home (divorced) or single parent household, while 27% indicated that they were brought up by someone other than a parent (grandparents, uncle/aunt or an older brother/sister). However, in contrast to the above 35% did indicate a "happy" childhood growing up "normal" and in a stable environment. Overall one can, however, draw or infer the conclusion that, in particular poverty, but also social deprivation played a role in their life circumstances and later criminal actions. Unemployability resulting from poor or little education with the resulting unemployment or under-employment (intermittent employment)(7) would also appear to have been a factor in some of the respondents turning to a life of crime. This conclusion links up to the motives revealed for those who were already involved in criminal activities at the time of the attack (see later section).

In respect of employment categories the majority (those in some form of formal employment) were in the more

unskilled or semi-skilled menial type of work category where low skills or minimal educational qualifications were required (the type of work linked strongly to and indicative of the generally low levels of schooling achieved by respondents). None of the respondents (except for the qualified nurse although even he was no longer a nurse at the time of the attack) can be said to be in any "professional" category of employment. Moreover, those who indicated that they were unemployed or not in any formal work situation (included in this category were those who indicated they 'were working for themselves stealing and robbing') comprised a significant approximate third (31%) of the respondents.

In terms of marital status 42% of respondents were married, 90% of whom had children. However, 58% of the respondents were not married of whom 47% had children (i.e. were not married but had children out of wedlock).

With regard to the age of the perpetrator at the time of the attack the average age was 27 years. Furthermore, the bulk (62%) of the perpetrators were in their 20s at the time of the attack, with an almost even split (35%) between the 20-24 year old category and the 25-29 year old range (27%), while 19% fell into the early 30s (30-34 years old) with only 4% in the 35-39 year old category. There were also a number of perpetrators (12% of the respondents) still in their teens when the event occurred, none in the 40s and only one perpetrator outside of the 18-39 years old range, namely 57 years old at the time of the attack. Overall then offenders/attackers would appear to be relatively young with the majority (73%) being below 30 years of age at the time of the attack.

The relatively young age of the offenders would seem to indicate a certain youthful recklessness or even disdain for the life threatening consequences of their actions. It is a common symptom of youth that the full realization of the value of life and its very temporary nature (no sense of mortality) is often not present in the young. Alternatively, their age would appear to link strongly to their possible experiences relating to the high levels of political violence in the former black townships during the late 1980s and early 1990s -- the so-called culture of violence whereby life has become cheap and the ready acceptance of the use of violent methods as the only way to resolve conflict or to achieve your aims and get what you want has almost become a way of life for certain members of a society already experiencing high levels of violence and conflict.

With regard to gender no female perpetrators were identified as having specifically killed a police official hence the respondents were all male. In addition, the majority of respondents (92%) were black males. This can be interpreted in one way namely that blacks have traditionally been the most disadvantaged sector in society and suffer the greatest poverty within South African society and are therefore more likely to participate in crime (to "get money" or "to survive"). However, my contention here is that using race as a central factor (being a perpetrator or a reason for the attack) is in fact not the most compelling explanation for those attacks. Other more compelling motives exist especially when the random nature of the killings, the "heat of the moment" circumstances, exploiting opportunities and more importantly the lack of premeditation in most of the killings

is so clearly evident from the descriptions of the actual attack event itself. Moreover, in 27% of the cases there was a white police official as a victim. In responding to crime and in attacking and killing police officials both victims and perpetrators would appear to be color blind. In other words the likelihood of being either a victim or a perpetrator depend largely on the circumstances of the event and not to the race of either the victim or the perpetrator.

Respondents were also asked to indicate whether they or any members of their family had ever been a victim of police use of force (harassment, brutality or mistreatment e.g. a beating or torture while in detention, kicking a door down during a raid etc.) during an arrest or a raid where violent methods had been used in an effort to establish whether revenge or hatred for the police (as a legitimate political target during the struggle years) might have been a motive or factor in the attacks. However, an overwhelming majority (77%) indicated that they or their families had never been victims of police violence or brutality while only 23% affirmed receiving some form of violence at the hands of the police. Of the latter 50% indicated they had been mistreated by the police during the State of Emergency in the mid-1980s and as a result of the prevailing political violence at the time or their own alleged political activism.

Involvement in crime prior to attack/murder of a police official

In terms of involvement in crime prior to the attack some of the respondents openly put down as the main reason for committing their criminal offenses as being "wanting to get money".

I don't have money outside I'm not working I have kids I want to wear nice expensive clothes like 3 500 [Rand] for a shirt and 400 for pants and shoes. Now that money [I stole] I needed to buy those things (Interview No. 1).

Because I wanted to do something for myself, it was maybe to buy myself clothes, expensive clothes, like trousers that cost between 900 and 1,200 [Rand] (Interview No.2).

...other students ...they all had special clothes everything was okay for them. But me I was suffering, so what can I do to make myself better. I make friends with other people and these people were breaking into houses. I started breaking houses and getting some money and buying some clothes (Interview No.5).

More often than not this need for money was merely naked greed, envy of the possessions of others, the expensive lifestyle of criminals or some form of peer pressure to have expensive clothes and drive round in fancy cars.

You see you go round the location and you hear about somebody who is famous but he doesn't work. All the people knows he doesn't work, he does crime in the location but doesn't get arrested. So these people

become the motivation some kind of hero and actually everybody wants to live their kind of life... And I wanted to get money when I committed that crime (Interview No. 17).

However, another reason of more serious implications was unemployment, hunger and the basic but desperate need to survive.

I committed offenses because I had no work and I needed the money because I was hungry (Interview No. 9).

You see the work -- I have it, then I don't have itI wanted the money, you see if I didn't have the money I wouldn't be able to survive. My little sister was at the house, my brother he works but he does not get good money and he has his own children who go to school. But my little sister doesn't go to school and I wanted to send her. So I look for money. You see those chommies [friends] of mine they were into house breaking, so I went with them and we used to break into the houses (Interview No. 21).

Not that any of these reasons should be taken as justification or as an excuse for being involved in crime but they do indicate that once they became involved in crime, driven by greed but also desperation, they had very little compulsion not to resort to violence (murder of police officials) when confronted by the police, or interrupted, during the commission of such crime (stealing and robbing).

In describing their employment status at the time of the attack on a police official 27% openly stated that they were involved in crime namely:

I was working for myself, I was stealing and robbing (Interview No.1).

I was unemployed at the time of the attack. I worked for myself... yes, stealing (Interview No.2).

I was unemployed, I was just doing crime (Interview No. 9).

Not employed I was stealing for myself (Interview No. 13).

At the time of the attack I was on suspension -- for attempted car theft (Interview No. 17)

Moreover, 35% admitted to previously being charged with a criminal offense while another two (8%) had either been suspended (for attempted car theft) or been discharged for misconduct from the SAPS. Furthermore, in describing the event (attack on a police official) 62% in fact indicated that they were involved in some form of crime or illegal activity prior to the actual attack. This would appear to indicate a high prevalence of criminality or criminal tendencies among the respondents.

Of additional significance here was the fact that 40% of those who replied that they had been involved in crime prior to the actual attack began to do crime in their teens (between 14 and 19 years of age).

Modus Operandi

From the descriptions of the circumstances of the event (attack and killing of a police official) a number of patterns and trends emerged.

i) Time and day of the week

A significant proportion (31%) of respondents could not remember or did not know the day of the week on which the attack occurred. Furthermore, the occurrences were evenly split between during the week (Monday-Thursday) and over the weekend (Friday-Sunday) with each at (35%) although within these two periods a specific day cluster (Tuesday - 15%; Friday - 19%) in each occurred.

With regard to the time of day there was a similar randomness to the times attacks occurred. In both instances (day of the week and time of day) no real consistent pattern emerges which in my view would point to a considerable absence of premeditation in any of the attacks. This conclusion has resonance and is supported by the descriptions of the exact event where the randomness, spur of the moment and spontaneous response to circumstances comes out as a strong thread in the modus operandi of attackers.

For the purposes of trying to establish patterns four categories have been imposed on the times (merely in an effort to ascertain whether any significant or discernible clusters/ trends were apparent even though attacks were spread throughout each category), namely:

- i) Morning (morning, mid-morning and late morning);
- ii) Afternoon (midday/early afternoon, mid afternoon and late afternoon);
- iii) Evening (early evening and late evening); and
- iv) Late night/early morning

However, again there would appear to be a more-or-less even distribution through all four categories: morning (27%); afternoon (23%); evening (31%); and late night/early morning (15%) (there was only a 4% response for unknown/can't remember). Overall there was also a fairly even split between daylight hours (50%) and night-time (46%). Accordingly no precise time of specific vulnerability to attack for police officials could be established.

ii) City/town where attack occurred

More attacks (54%) occurred in a city or large urban area than in a small town/peri-urban area (31%) or rural area (12%) (4% unknown/not declared). A clear assumption here being that there is more crime, and hence the chances of police intercepting perpetrators that much higher, in the cities than in small towns or rural areas.

iii) Place and location of event

Of far more significance in this regard was the fact that the most frequent location (just more than a third of the incidents) occurred "in a street". The following were the most frequent places of attack:

- In a street 35%
- In a house/shack 19%
- At a shebeen(8) 8%
- Vicinity of shops/ at a shopping complex 8%
- Open field 8%

Of lesser frequency where the following locations:

- On a highway 4%
- At a taxi rank: 4%
- On a farm 4%
- In a car 4%
- Main gate guardhouse 4%

iv) Event description

With regard to the circumstances surrounding the attack the following categories were of significance, namely:

a) To avoid being arrested (42%)

This was the largest category in terms of circumstances leading to a murder of a police official, although there were also a number of sub categories to the description of the event. However, the highest frequency (19%) within the broad circumstance of trying to avoid arrest occurred during police response to a crime and trying to apprehend the suspects - for instance during or just immediately after a robbery/hijacking of a vehicle.

Other sub categories under "avoiding arrest" were inter alia:

- Being stopped on a highway as a suspect or because of suspicious behavior (driving erratically)
- Stopped in the street -- did not want to go to jail
- Looking for suspects in a shebeen when confronted co-accused killed the policeman
- Executed by colleagues to prevent exposure of their corrupt activities
- Did not know they were police who tried to arrest him but thought they were robbers (the policemen in plainclothes had refused to show any ID or to tell him why they wanted to arrest him) and he fled the scene but returned later with a firearm and killed one and wounded the other
- During a house break-in (the owner had returned unexpectedly and one of the perpetrators was known to him, he was therefore killed in order that the perpetrators avoid being identified)

b) Direct attacks on police (31%)

Direct attacks on police officials was the next biggest category. However, most of these attacks can be construed as ambushes under the following circumstances:

- To release prisoners being transported, a deliberate and premeditated attack on police with specific target selection
- To steal a police officer's service pistol
- An attempted murder of a police officer in his private car and theft of his firearm
- Politically motivated attacks:
 - i) An attack on police as agents of the state by members of a Self Defense Unit
 - ii) Attempted theft of firearms for the cause (political organization) from a military base (which was at the time being guarded by members of the Internal Stability Unit of the SAP)
- Direct attacks on police (unknown motives): 12%.

c) During the commission of a crime (12%)

In these circumstances the victims were not known to be policemen and killed during the actual perpetration

of the crime and not as policemen responding to the crime.

- During a house break-in
- The victim was robbed, his car hijacked and they also stole his firearm before killing him (burning in the boot of his car)
- Involved in a smuggling deal which went sour and killed his partner (a corrupt policeman)

d) Attacks on colleagues (8%)

There were only two circumstances that occurred in terms of attacks on colleagues, namely

- Stress related attack on colleagues at a social function
- Self-defense - perpetrator was defending himself in his own house from an attack by a drunken police official

e) Opportunistic attack (4%)

There was only one such instance namely in a shebeen where the perpetrator stole a firearm from a drunk policeman and killed him.

Overall in exactly half of the cases (50%) a crime (excluding the actual murder) was in progress (for example housebreaking, vehicle hijacking, robbery or theft of firearm). (9)

While in a number of these cases (35%) a police official's firearm was also stolen or taken during the attack. In only one was it specifically indicated that the motive (intention) of the attack was for the theft of the police official's service pistol. In other words, their firearms were taken as the opportunity to do so presented itself (spur of the moment) or during the attack (response to the police's presence) to avoid arrest.

Moreover, in a number of cases the police official was alone (i.e. had no back up or was a specific target or victim) under the following circumstances:

- attacked for firearm
- partner had stayed in the police vehicle outside shebeen and he
- had gone into the shebeen to look for a suspect
- only one policeman in the guardhouse

- alone drunk in a shebeen
- policemen in civilian clothing with girlfriend hijacked and killed by robbers

In terms of perpetrators not knowing that the victims were policemen, in 23% of the cases the biggest factor was the wearing of civilian clothes or not properly identifying themselves as policemen (while in plainclothes). In terms of a prior relationship (did you know the victim at all) 65% did not know them at all and had never seen them before. In other words the victims were not identified as policemen and on that basis selected as targets in a premeditated attack. Moreover, the extent of this relationship (knowing them), besides the two cases of direct attacks on colleagues, was merely on the basis that:

- had seen him working at the local magistrates court; or
- the victim lived in the same street as the perpetrator (i.e. knew him by sight only)

v) Weapons used in the attack

In only 12% of the cases was a firearm or firearms not used (knives used, beaten to death with a metal rod or strangled with a fan belt of a car). In other words in an overwhelming 88% of the cases a firearm was used. However, in only 8% a firearm other than a pistol was used (in these instances AK47s were used). Accordingly, in 81% of the attacks pistols were the preferred weapon. In terms of type of pistol .38 specials were used in 23% of the cases and 9 mm pistols in 15%.

vi) Number of attackers

In 27% of the cases there was only a single attacker while in 23% there were two attackers. The majority (42%) of cases were in a group (gang) of three attackers while in one instance it was a group of four and in another a group of seven. This would indicate that attackers largely work together and are organized in a gang when committing crime. Police responding to crime should be made aware of this tendency so that they can always enter a crime situation preferably with adequate back-up and not alone or only two of them.

vii) Attack preceded by any argument or provocation by the victim

The question whether the attack was preceded by any argument was designed to ascertain whether the situation resulted from any conflict situation, provocation or argument by the victim or was mainly spontaneous and on the spur of the moment. In only 15% of the cases was there any form of argument, which led to the attack. In terms of provocation the respondents mainly identified being confronted by the police (in a crime situation) or being told to stop as being provocation enough for them to shoot the police official.

viii) Any role played by alcohol or drugs in the attack

The prior consumption of either alcohol or/and drugs does not seem to have played any significant role in the attacks. In only 19% of the cases was alcohol consumed by the perpetrators just before the attack, and in only two cases did perpetrators admit to excessive use, i.e. can be considered to be drunk (intoxicated) while in one of these cases both alcohol and dagga (marijuana) had been taken together. Interestingly in one case (attack to release a prisoner) the attackers had had themselves sprayed with muti(10) in order to protect themselves (from being shot by the police) and give themselves courage.

In two cases the victims themselves were drunk which intoxication directly played a role in their deaths (robbed of his service pistol and killed in a shebeen; the self-defense case).

viii) Police as easy targets

Respondents largely recognized the vulnerability of policemen responding to and entering (in some instances the perception was of rushing in recklessly without any thought for personal safety) a crime situation (crime in progress) and the fact that things develop very quickly which puts policemen not taking proper and adequate precautions at greater risk of being killed.

When it comes to policemen there is no time for him to freeze or put your hands up because he is going to shoot you and you must shoot him first (Interview No. 1).

Yes, the way they approach criminals they make themselves easy targets (Interview No. 25).

(These perceptions direct attention towards, and to a certain extent, link up to possible training and preventative strategies when examining how to prevent such attacks.)

ix) Intentions when entering the situation leading up to the attack

In only two cases was there a clear intention to kill a policeman/men (the politically motivated SDU attack and the execution of a colleague to prevent exposure of criminal activities). In all the other cases the intention was largely to either:

- just to release prisoners
- wanted to take his gun not kill him
- avoid being arrested
- my intention was just to get the money that was all, not to shoot them (police)
- to get away from the crime scene

- I did not know he was going to die, I just wanted to threaten him. He grappled with me and was going to shoot me, I was afraid
- They (the police) confronted me, I was afraid because I had an illegal gun with me. I did not want to be arrested and go to prison
- I thought they were robbers from the township
- I was fighting with another gangster and thought the policemen (in plainclothes) was coming to help him (the other gangster) and I shot him
- I was just the driver
- He pointed his gun at me, he came back to kill me so I had to shoot him to protect myself

Premeditation or even a planned and deliberate attack in order to murder a policeman are both conspicuously absent from the descriptions of the attack event or of their stated intentions in entering the situation leading up to the death of the victim (police official).

Emotions

i) Feelings of perpetrators immediately before, during and after the attack

In general just before the attack occurred besides feeling "normal" or unaware of an impending incident perpetrators felt nervous or scared or did not have time to feel anything else as the incidents happened so quickly.

I was scared I thought maybe we would be caught and we must get away very fast (Interview No. 5)

It would, however, appear that anger, hatred or feelings of revenge played no part in the attacks.

Besides either not having the time to feel anything during the attack, being in a state of shock or feeling numb the overwhelming emotion running through the attackers was the fact that they were scared of being caught or of being killed:

I felt very bad during the attack I thought I was going to die (Interview No. 3)

I was scared that they would shoot me (Interview No. 9)

During the attack I felt fear so that is why I ran away (Interview No. 13)

Post attack emotions centered largely around a state of shock (the unexpectedness of it all) but also of confusion and uncertainty because things had happened so fast as well as of the reality that a killing had

occurred. For example:

I was very confused at that time I did not expect something like that to happen (Interview No. 3)

Just after the attack I felt very, very bad. It was either be shot or shoot (Interview No. 12)

After the attack I didn't do all right because I've now killed a policeman (Interview No. 13)

Worried. I thought we would be going to jail (Interview No. 20)

Post attack analysis

i) Have ever been in such a situation before?

Interestingly an overwhelming 88% of the respondents claimed that this was their first time that they had found themselves in such a situation (killing a policeman) and that they had never attacked the police before. However, 12% admitted to being involved in other attacks while one of these in fact admitted to:

[I] have attacked policemen more than 20 times. Sometimes we attacked policemen while we were robbing the communities -- ten times, and some of them just for taking their guns (Interview No. 2)

ii) Do you know of other people who have attacked police?

In contrast to the fact that for 88% of the respondents this was apparently their first attack/involvement in such an incident 31% said that they knew of people (outside of prison) who had perpetrated such attacks on the police, although some of these attacks occurred during the political violence of the late 1980s and early 1990s. However, one in fact replied that he knew of:

Many, my friends but they [police] did not catch themthey did brutal attacks on police. The police were cornered and just started shooting (Interview No. 1)

Respondents were also asked whether they knew why these other people had attacked police and the responses are interesting in terms of general perceptions concerning the main reasons for attacks and killing of police, particularly with reference to the theft of service pistols (75% of those who said they knew of people who had attacked and killed police referred to the acquisition of firearms as the main reason for these attacks).

They wanted guns just guns (Interview No. 1)

The reasons are the same as mine -- to get their guns (Interview No. 2)

Maybe they attack because they needed ammunition and guns for doing the political violence [in the early 1990s] (Interview No. 3)

.....in the location people say "I'm not having a gun" and I want a gun and there is somebody I want to rob and I don't have a gun. And my friend is having a gun so I will take him [with to do the robbery]. So to get a gun I wait there at the stop sign and the policeman will pass there on the way to the police station and we will shoot him and take his gun (Interview No. 5)

In most cases they [members of SDUs at the time of the political violence in the 1980s] used to ambush them and take their firearm from them (Interview No. 8)

They kill the police for their firearms and sell them for 1 000 Rand. Criminals buy a gun every time they do a robbery and get rid of it after they are finished (Interview No. 13)

These respondents all highlight a public perception and belief that most of the attacks on police are for the theft of their service pistols and for use by criminals in crime. While this may well be the case in a certain proportion of police killings, findings from other research done appear to indicate that this is not an overwhelming motive for the killing of a police officer in South Africa. It is, therefore, obvious that a specific public awareness campaign needs to be instituted to educate the public about the frequency of other reasons other than only the theft of their firearms from police.

An offender profile

In conclusion the following offender profile for those who murder police officials was developed from the responses given in the interviews of perpetrators of attacks on and killing of police officials:

Offender Profile

A perpetrator of an attack and killing of a police official is most likely to be a black male in his mid twenties, with a 50% chance of being unmarried and having a low level of education (80% chance of not having completed his secondary schooling and an approximate 40% likelihood of only having received schooling -- if any -- up to a primary school level. Furthermore, such an offender has a better than average chance of experiencing a deprived childhood, growing up in a dysfunctional or 'broken' household where hunger was at times experienced and there was a shortage of money which led to the curtailment of his schooling. If employed he would have largely held a menial or unskilled type of job. However, such a person would also have a 60% probability of being involved in some form of crime or illegal activity at the time of the attack with a 35% probability of having previously been charged with a criminal offense. Furthermore, such an offender will be armed with a firearm or use a firearm, which in most cases will be a pistol, in

the attack which would be likely to occur under the circumstances of avoiding arrest or in trying to escape from a crime scene. The attack itself will be more than likely to be spontaneous and 'spur-of-the-moment' response to these circumstances (i.e. not a deliberate and premeditated attack) and occur in a street in a urban area.

End notes

1. Zonderwater, Baviaanspoort, Leeuwkop and Krugersdorp prisons

2. Due to time and funding constraints interviews were confined to the Gauteng province and to these four prisons, which all have a maximum security section for housing such convicted offenders. However, respondents came from all over the country.

3. Permission to conduct these interviews was obtained from the Department of Correctional Services. Although the Department was requested to identify and select only those who had perpetrated an attack and killing of a police official since 1994 a number of offenders who had perpetrated such attacks before that date were among those interviewed. Although there was one respondent who confessed to a police killing to between the years 1976-1980 -- he was not prepared to be more specific -- but who had also never been convicted of this crime, there would, however, appear to be an acceptable spread of murders of police officials for the mid-90s namely:

1991 (8%) 1993 (19%) 1994 (12%) 1995 (12%)

1996 (19%) 1997 (15%) 1998 (8%)

There were no cases for any period later than 1998. This can largely be ascribed to the fact that there is currently a backlog of all cases being dealt with by the South African courts. In addition, there is normally quite a long lead time before perpetrators are convicted and sentenced in South Africa -- it is not unusual to have awaiting trial prisoners kept for as long as 14-18 months before their cases come before the courts.

In total 28 interviews were conducted. Permission was granted by prison authorities to tape the interviews (respondents were also asked whether they objected to having their responses taped. They were also guaranteed confidentiality and that no information would or could be used against them). Only two interviewees declined to be taped although agreeing to notes being taken. Each respondent was interviewed separately in a room on their own. Contamination of information or the influencing of answers was further avoided by not allowing respondents to mingle in between or after interviews and by interviewing respondents selected in one prison facility all on the same day. Three respondents required translators (which were fellow inmates provided by the Correctional Services authorities at the specific prisons visited) since they felt more

comfortable responding in an African language. At times some of the respondents used only Afrikaans or a mixture of Afrikaans and English in their responses. For analytical purposes these transcriptions were translated into English.

4. The profile was built up not only by obtaining not only background information (early childhood, basic biographical information such as marital status, number of children, employment status, any previous criminal offenses), the emotional state of the perpetrator just prior, during and after the attack but also a description of the actual event (attack/murder) as well as information surrounding modus operandi, weapons used, number of attackers, victims, intentions, emotional state before, during and after the event and whether they had any feelings of remorse. Additional questions asked revolved around whether the victim could have avoided the attack, if they (offender) feared being shot by the victim or of being captured, the circumstances of their arrest, whether they saw police as being "easy targets" and what they thought could be done to prevent such attacks on police officials. Finally, they were asked what their sentence was and whether they thought it was fair/justified.

5. Two of the interviewees denied all knowledge (i.e. claimed innocence or of being falsely accused) of the murder of a police official for which they had been convicted and declined to give any detail on the attack or answer the other questions.

6. Please note that all percentages have been rounded off to the nearest decimal point

7. 31% indicated they were unemployed or not formally employed e.g. helping a friend

8. An illegal tavern or bar

9. Excluded here are the cases of the attack to release prisoners, the SDU attack, the execution -- which is excluded even though it occurred as a result of corruption and fear of exposure of that crime -- and the attack on colleagues and the self-defense case

10. The term *muti* derives from the Zulu *umu thi*, which means tree, bush, herb, poisonous concoction or medicine. In Venda the term *mushonga* is used to describe a magic potion. The *muti/mushonga* or medicine/magic potion, which is usually provided to a client by an inyanga (traditional healer or diviner) is a material substance which according to African tradition contains magic power it is medicine with power. Reputedly, muti having human body parts as ingredients is the most powerful of all muti. *Intelezi* would be war muti sprayed on warriors just prior to battle to protect them and to ensure they fight bravely.