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Solicitor General
Canada

Solliciteur général
Canada

THE POLICE FUNCTION IN OUR CHANGING SOCIETY:

Proceedings of Conference "A",
"THE ROLE OF THE POLICEMAN",
Lake Couchiching, Ont.,

SPONSORED BY: The Department of the
Solicitor General

CONDUCTED BY: Project Planning Committee

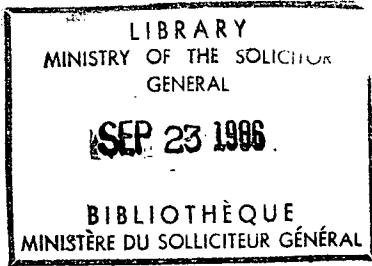
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FOREWORD:

The views expressed in this report represent the consensus of all persons associated with the project, but do not necessarily represent the opinions or policy of individuals, the Agencies they represent, or the Department of the Solicitor General.

Additional copies of this report are available on request from the Consultation Centre, Ministry of the Solicitor General, Ottawa, K1A 0P8.

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Appendix I Planning Committee

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1. INTRODUCTION

During January 1971, a two day conference of training representatives from several major Canadian police forces was held at Lake Couchiching, Ontario, under the joint sponsorship of the Department of the Solicitor General and the Foundation for Human Development, Hamilton, Ontario.

The original objectives of this project were:

- to study the needs for human resource developments in urban police departments
- to develop and validate new methods for developing these resources
- to recommend general systems changes which will improve efficiency and create a climate for individual growth with police forces
- to present the results of these investigations in a form which can be used by any urban police force in Canada

The goals of the initial conference were:

- to identify the problems in human resource development among police in urban centres
- to explore various solutions to these problems
- to develop a plan of action to investigate the key problems thoroughly and develop actionable solutions

Three major problems were identified by the conference participations as:

- the need to define the police role in terms of the changing society and the relationship of the police to the community
- the selection and training of police personnel at and for all levels
- the lack of coordinated Canadian police research, bilingual publications and implementation of ideas

Having identified the apparent problems, the participants produced three general statements to chart the direction to proceed in search of solutions. Briefly, the statements are:

Police Role

In addition to traditional functions, the police should also work together with other agencies and community representatives. There should be a built-in redefinition process at all levels, in order to adapt to changes in society. Dialogue, contact and liaison must be initiated with all subcultures. The general policy of the police should be framed in terms of commitment to the whole social system. The role of the police as both catalysts and initiators in all areas should be more fully exploited and appreciated.

Selection and Training

New criteria for selection are needed in order to fulfil a new police role. The standards have to be less arbitrary and more in tune with modern needs. The socio-cultural values of the selection committee should not prejudice the applicant's chances. Rules ought to be altered, if necessary; and other opinions sought out, acknowledged and evaluated. Training in order to be successful, should develop and fulfil the individual, both within and towards his profession, as well as within and towards his society. To achieve this, the police role should be well defined and training geared to meet the requirements of the role, always bearing in mind the variables present in our society.

Research and Communication

A central body for the coordination and dissemination of research projects and their findings should be formed. As the police

function is one of social control, research projects in social as well as criminal justice areas are relevant and important. This body could be either within the Solicitor General's Department or outside of it. Since police research has been neglected, this body should consider methods of stimulating needed research. All communications should be bilingual, properly catalogued and published in regular digest, available to all.

Recognizing that these general statements represent the view of a very small segment of the police community, and the limited research that formed the basis for the statements, the participants recommended a plan of action which would generate more meaningful analysis and rational conclusions.

In essence, the action plan called for three national conferences, each dealing in depth with one of the three major problems. The factual basis for these conferences would be supplied by a comprehensive systems analysis of the role of the police, their training needs, and the needs for special research projects. The objectives of the three conferences were:

Conference "A" - The Role of the Policeman

Redefine the relationships between the police and society, including antagonistic "out groups", taking into consideration how they effect the police role and the police attitude.

Conference "B" - The Training of the Policeman

Evaluate police training methods by comparing them to

training techniques in other fields, examine and evaluate the effectiveness of both present and proposed training methods and establish what training is necessary to prepare the policeman for the role determined in the first conference.

Conference "C" - Research and Communications

Determine ways to generate and improve the present state of research within police organizations and establish methods of communication.

Following the initial conference at Lake Couchiching, a Planning Committee was established to provide direction and primary guidance in the conduct of the Project. Whereas only six police forces were represented initially, the Committee was expanded to include fourteen forces from across Canada, representative of Federal, Provincial and Municipal agencies. A complete list of Planning Committee representatives can be found in Appendix I.

The objectives of the project, redefined by the Planning Committee and accepted by the Solicitor General as the basis for continuing the study, are:

- define the police role in terms of the changing society, and the relationship of the police to the community;
- define selection and training criteria which reflect the current role of the police;

- identify the requirement for a central body to stimulate, coordinate and disseminate research in the police field; and
- recommend viable plans of action which will ensure that the role, selection and training criteria, and research requirements identified become realities.

In pursuit of these objectives, the following goals were

identified:

- develop patterns of communication between elements of the criminal justice system, at all levels, to maintain continuous assessment and formulation of objectives;
- promote dialogue between the various elements in society which are directly concerned with the criminal justice system in general, and the police function in particular;
- identify present functions of police forces in Canada, through consultation with a representative group of municipal, provincial and federal police forces;
- identify present selection criteria and training programs in all major police forces and a representative sampling of small police forces in Canada;
- identify the current state of police research in Canada, including needs, current projects and information dissemination systems,
- establish and sponsor a series of national conferences of police personnel with multi-discipline community involvement in various locations across Canada with the following themes
 - "A" - Role of Police
 - "B" - Police Selection and Training Criteria
 - "C" - Police Research; and
- present the results of these investigations and conferences in a form which can be used by police forces in Canada in future planning and development.

2. CONFERENCE "A" - THE ROLE OF THE POLICEMAN

2.0 SUMMARY

The objective of this Conference was to explore the role of the policeman in today's changing society and determine his relationship to the community, with a view to subsequently determining if he is adequately educated and trained to fulfil this role. It was generally agreed that the role of the policeman is now, and will continue to be, "law enforcement", a total concept which includes prevention of crime, protection of persons and property, and enforcement of laws.

Conceding that the police are relatively effective in the protection of persons and enforcement of laws, the "technical" part of their role, the conference focussed on prevention of crime, and ways and means of increasing the total community's effectiveness in this integral part of the social defence system.

Generally, although not a consensus, it was felt that prevention of crime could best be achieved through a better awareness of community needs and expectations and increased interaction with all segments of society.

The degree of increased interaction could not be quantified

at this conference and it was agreed that a standard which would be applicable to all communities could not be established, having regard to differing socio-economic conditions, cultural backgrounds, population densities, etc.

There was a general agreement that police involvement in social problems should be restricted to immediate problem resolution, disengagement as soon as practical, and referral to the appropriate social agency for follow-up action. There was total acceptance of the fact that the police are not trained in therapeutic counselling, nor should they be so trained in the future. Trying to function in both roles, that of "enforcer" on the one hand, and therapeutic on the other, could create conflict and confusion in the minds of both police and the public.

A better awareness of community needs and expectations is certainly obtainable through education and training. Suggestions that advanced education and/or training in human relations, sociology and psychology with a view to establishing a better understanding and a more effective relationship between the police and the community, will be explored at a subsequent conference of police representatives and professional educators.

2.1 Objective

To define the police role in terms of the changing society, and the relationship of the police to the community.

Goals

Promote dialogue between the various elements in society which are directly concerned with the criminal justice system in general, and the police function in particular.

Identify present functions of police forces in Canada, through consultation with a representative group of municipal, provincial and federal police forces.

Present the results of this conference in a form which can be used by police forces in Canada in future planning and development.

2.2 Participants

All members of the Planning Committee, additional observers from the Department of the Solicitor General and twenty community representatives were invited to attend the first two days of the conference. The final day was restricted to Planning Committee members to permit a cursory examination and evaluation of the conference findings. For a complete list of participants, please see Appendix II.

2.3 Conference Design

The Planning Committee selected as conference coordinator, Mr. Hedley Dimock, Ph.D., Chairman, Department of Applied Social Science, Sir George Williams University, Montreal. Mr. Dimock was assisted by two graduate students, Mrs. Marcella Gilmour and Mr. Ellis Katsoff.

The program was unstructured, by design, to facilitate a high level of participation and sharing on an informal basis and to permit the methodology to evolve around the participants' desires.

The opening focus was on sharing perceptions of police work at a very functional level. Thusly, after the opening remarks and conference orientation by the Chairman, participants were divided into four groups - two of police representatives and two of non-police. The police groups were asked to describe how they saw their role and then to describe how they thought the community saw them. The non-police groups were asked to describe how they saw the police role and then describe what they thought the police role should be. A plenary session then explored the similarities and differences in these descriptions. The results set the pace for the rest of the conference. The Co-ordinating Committee worked out the rest of the schedule, responding to the pace set by the group.

The opening exercise provided a specific focus for further discussion and clarification which centered on police/community interaction as a "strategy" of law enforcement; the technical "role" of the policeman received little further discussion. Consequently, the major areas for further discussion were summed up in the following question:

How far should the police move beyond the traditional roles of protection and law enforcement into involvement with the community around crime prevention concerns, including:

- crises intervention (family, labour, etc.);
- referral and counselling (referral of problems to other social agencies vs. therapeutic counselling by police as a supplement to, or instead of, the service provided by other social agencies);
- catalyst of coordinator with community-serving organizations (family counselling, ex-offenders, drug rehabilitation, etc.);
- operation of programs (traffic safety, drug abuse, etc.);
- education of other professional (involved in criminal justice system but lacking knowledge of law enforcement prerequisites, e.g. volunteer probation officers);
- social action and community development (political involvement vs. a political attitude); and
- information services and clearing-house function
- other (add your own).

New groups were established on half police and half non-police to work on this question. Groups were also asked to propose some principles regarding implementation that could apply to rural and urban areas of Canada.

Working out these questions and checking on areas of agreement and disagreement, with further clarification at a closing plenary session was the focus for the rest of the conference.

2.4 SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

2.4.1. POLICE WORKSHOPS

On the first day of the conference, two workshop groups of police participants, all of whom are members of the Planning Committee, applied themselves to the following tasks.

1. Describe your role as a policeman.
2. Describe your self-image as a policeman.
3. Describe what you think the community sees as your role and image.

Role as a Policeman

It was generally agreed that the police are "locked-in" to specific functions by legislation, and that, the primary role of a policeman is now, and will continue to be, law enforcement. This was expressed in a variety of ways, e.g. "enforce all laws", "maintain law and order", "protection of persons and property", "law enforcement agency", etc. Crime prevention was acknowledged as an integral part of law enforcement, as was the need for interaction with the community to maximize the effectiveness of crime prevention programs. There were, however, definite differences of opinion concerning the desirable extent

of this interaction. One representative held the view that the police should provide a 24-hour "referral and counselling" service to the community, without defining the scope of counselling envisaged, while another commented that the police are, "scape-goats for other agencies", that is, they are required to "fill in" for other social agencies in the community because of these agencies' inability or unwillingness to become involved in community problems after regular office hours.

There was general agreement that police departments were, "crises, emergency and help agencies", however, again a clear definition of the specific areas of concern to the police is lacking. The inference is, of course, that the police are there to help in any crisis or emergency.

The inescapable conclusion that one reaches at this point is that the police are well aware that their primary role is law enforcement and crime prevention, using whatever legal means are available to them, to ensure the peace and tranquility of the community. However, either by design or default, the police have broadened their role to include additional functions usually associated with other community service agencies, for which they are not adequately trained. The majority of policemen feel that these functions, e.g. counselling, etc., are not part of the police

role, whereas a small minority feel they are, and that policemen should be trained in social work or social workers should be hired by police departments.

Self-Image as a Policeman

Consistent with his perception of role, the policeman considers himself to be a "technician and interpreter or law", an "enforcer of laws", an "evidence gatherer", fulfilling an "apprehension and detection" role. Some of the participants were critical of the police image as a whole, suggesting for instance that most police departments were "traditionally conservative". Others agreed that the police are conservative but felt that this conservatism was quite often necessary. In reply to the criticism that many departments and forces were "inward looking military structures", most participants agreed that para-military training instills self-discipline and is an absolute necessity in preparing policemen to perform effectively as a cohesive group in, for instance, riot or disturbance situations. Other criticisms voiced were "class conscious", "does not look at the human side", "authoritarian", "paternalistic", and "very poor at human relations".

At this point it should be pointed out that because of the completely unstructured format of the conference,

participants were permitted, in fact encouraged, to advance their personal perceptions, with no obligation to explain or rationalize any theories or opinions advanced by them.

Community's View of Role and Image

It is interesting to note that the police representatives were able to express their views on what the community believes the police role to be, in four simple statements:

1. enforcer,
2. protector,
3. crisis, emergency and help service, and
4. information bureau.

The policeman's view of the image he projects to the community simply reflects his own self-image, as one would expect. He thinks that the community feels that police are, "isolated from the general public", "generally authoritarian", "unpopular with certain cultural and labour groups", "power seekers", "very secretive", and "indifferent towards the public".

2.4.2 RESOURCE GROUP WORKSHOPS

The community representatives invited to participate in the conference, primarily persons involved with agencies providing social services to the community, e.g., John Howard Society, Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, British Columbia Association of Indian Chiefs, Canadian Civil Liberties Association, Winnipeg Council of Self Help Groups, Ontario Department of Correctional Services, Recreation Canada, Toronto Community Services, etc., were divided into two groups and assigned the task of defining:

1. the police role and image, and
2. what the police role should be

Two of the community representatives were serving police officers, involved in innovative, preventive programs in their own Departments; however, they were assigned to the non-police groups for the purpose of this exercise.

The Police Role and Image

One group saw a division of the police role into two elements, enforcement and political, sub-divided into justifiable and unjustifiable role involvement.

This group felt that the police were justified in continuing the traditional law enforcement role as it pertains to criminal activity, specifically, crimes involving violence to persons and property, but that harassment of persons whom they feel are potential or probable law breakers, e.g., ex-offenders, youth, etc., is unjustified. They also felt that any discriminatory action in use of police discretionary power is unjustifiable. In the total community concept of law enforcement, it was agreed that the police role included the referral of persons needing help, with whom they come in contact, to those community agencies whose function it is to provide these services. The group felt, however, that the police should not become actively involved in the provision of services beyond their capacity. As an example, the police have the responsibility of responding to a potentially explosive family conflict, de-fusing the situation and bringing in the appropriate family service agency to provide therapeutic counselling and taking whatever preventive measures are required to ensure the future stability of the family. The police should not become involved in counselling following the initial problem resolution; such a mixture of functions would create an atmosphere of uncertainty as to the actual role of the police, both in the minds of the public and the police.

The group agreed that a policeman was justified in participating in organizations or associations whose aims include legislative or social changes, but should not have any direct political

involvement which could lead to discriminatory execution of the enforcement role. Some felt that policemen should be permitted to hold minor political offices while others suggested that such political involvement was completely unjustifiable.

The second non-police group concentrated their efforts on a determination of image; therefore, their perceptions are being integrated with those of the first group. Since these are perceptions of persons representative of the community, they are listed hereunder in their entirety, without additional comment:

Police are:

- enclosed - not open to cultural groups, e.g. natives, blacks (cultural groups or their representatives do not want to be part of the oppressor (police).
- limited in training - regarding social roles or in interacting with the community
- unavailable when needed
- interrogate but do not explain why
- powerful over people's lives with broad range of discretionary power
- supported and dependent on the legal system which is not always seen as a viable alternative
- committed but inconsistent regarding stress and diverse problems
- torn with responding to diverse problems that are complex and frequently beyond their role
- doing a poor job in demonstrating the humanness that does exist in police forces

- doing a good job in protecting the image of hard line, anti-change (i.e. capital punishment)
- still depending upon selection of people (recruits) for physical and romantic roles (adventuresome, thrill, etc.)
- positive in communities where negotiating with community groups is developed (taking place in both rural and urban areas)
- building respect when diversifying through other groups, e.g. native officers or police on reserves
- responding to request from community to assist in problems, e.g., youth, etc.
- restricted in their capacity to gain resources in community development, education, or human relations area
- increasing political posture, e.g. capital punishment, parole and temporary absence, etc.
- ultimate problem solver; arbitrator, mediator and judge
- only twenty-four hour service
- agency of establishment rather than plurality (association with management position as opposed to labour)
- right wing and reactionary rather than radical
- "militaristic", hierarchal structure
- "official", authoritarian figure
- two types: 1. hard core, military aggressive
2. young, sensitive, interested
- the only agency for restriction and able to use physical force
- forced to social isolation by the community and they isolate within themselves - do not participate in political affairs
- "physical", all alike, aloof in cars, uniform, "hired by the pound"
- the community's ultimate conscience
- poorly paid
- low prestige in the community
- police considered only as males - what about women?

What Police Role Should Be

One non-police group placed great emphasis on the law enforcement role, suggesting increased interaction with the community and further education, while the other failed to arrive at a consensus and did not attempt to dialogue on differing viewpoints. Instead, they dealt exclusively with "strategies" for improving citizen-police contacts.

Group 1

Police should act as an enforcer who is sensitive to the community, able to personalize.

Police should be closer affiliated with schools. Police should develop training to give an awareness of ethnic, racial and cultural differences and education in social sciences, etc.

Police should develop "total policemen", not specialists in one field.

Group 2

Police should recognize a much heavier involvement in community preventive activity but clearly recognize the diffuseness of role and the need to establish limits. Police should recognize

that their preventive responsibility requires liaison with existent and developing community bodies, but is subject to continual negotiation and dialogue.

Police should recognize that, in response to political role and functions, there is need of citizen participation in all phases of the police operation, e. g., ethnic, language, race, advisory bodies from the community. Police need to become more democratic in representation, regarding political activity. (Opinions ranged from, "police should not be involved in social action", through, "police should be involved and have a right as individuals", to, "police should and have this right, as associations".

2.4.3 FIRST PLENARY SESSION

Each of the four workshop groups presented their findings and invited questions from all participants. A spirited discussion followed each presentation and major issues were identified. It is perhaps significant that the traditional role of the police, i.e., enforcement of laws, prevention of crime and maintenance of peace, order and security, were not questioned, in fact, they received only a cursory examination. On the other hand, the strategies of law enforcement generally, and crime prevention in particular, quickly surfaced as the area of major concern. More precisely, the whole question of police-citizen contact and the involvement of the police, both as community agencies and individuals, in the total social defence system became the focus. Such a focus permitted a more in-depth examination of how the police relate to the community in performing their assumed function, rather than a continuation of the broad based approach to examining the many and varied tasks which either individually or collectively create the police role and define its parameters.

At the conclusion of the plenary session, participants were divided into four workshops, each consisting of police and non-police representatives, and presented with the question summarized under the section "Conference Design".

2.4.4 MIXED GROUP WORKSHOPS

In order to work on the question posed by the conference coordinator, two groups deemed it necessary to define "crime prevention", having arrived at the conclusion that police-citizen contact occurred primarily in the preventive aspects of policing and it was in this area that increased interaction could be mutually beneficial.

The two definitions were:

1. "Any act or measure designed to reduce or eliminate any conditions leading to crime and/or danger or threats to persons or property".
2. "Measures taken to prevent crime or anti-social behaviour. Crimes against persons are of major concern, crimes against property of lesser concern. Generally, although not a consensus, it was felt that prevention could best be carried out through increased interaction with the community (police-community relations)".

The second group added a rider to their definition of prevention which is, in effect, a critical perception of police operations, and a recommendation:

"Police Departments are encouraged to improve their interaction with residents, agencies, and the general community in order to increase their mutual effectiveness in the fields of crime prevention".

In regard to the general question, "How far should the police move beyond the traditional roles of protection and law enforcement into involvement with the community around crime prevention concerns ...", the workshop groups agreed that:

"Police must have human contact, with interface, with criminal and dissident groups, but must at all times retain their role as maintainers of law and order and preventors of breaches of the peace".

Groups reacted to specific points in the question as follows:

1. Crises Intervention is a police role and includes immediate action with referral where indicated - disengagement should come as soon as possible.
2. Referral and Counselling - Referral is definitely a role. Counselling should be limited to guidance with youth or specific needs in rural areas. There should be nothing long-term or with a therapeutic orientation.
3. Catalyst and Coordinator - Police should provide leadership to get what's needed started and maintained in any crime reduction program. Coordinating should not be a police role in general programs but may be appropriate around police business such as safety education.
4. Operate Programs - Police should not operate programs increasing community involvement (drug education, youth, recreation, etc.) but should provide support for other agencies and assume the role if it is really important and where it doesn't exist.

5. Educate Other Professionals - While police should not generally take on the training of professionals, they should cooperate by providing experience-based information, help enlighten youth, and may take on some training with volunteer probation workers and other similar groups.

6. Social Action - Police should play an advisory role in town planning, safety control, property safety, etc.

7. Information Services - This is an important role and should be coupled with referral.

8. State Security and Catastrophe - In these situations, police are the first line of defence in protecting people and property, and maintaining law and order.

2.4.5 SECOND PLENARY SESSION

At the closing session of the conference, the areas of agreement and disagreement were carefully reviewed and summarized. Areas of agreement are as follows:

1. The primary role of the police consists of law enforcement, crime prevention and protection of persons and property.
2. Crime prevention requires community interaction, without compromise to the law enforcement role.
3. A broader base of association with the community should be established through each policeman.
4. Involvement in study committees, advisory boards of schools and social agencies as part of the crime prevention role is encouraged.
5. Informal meetings with school and community groups are encouraged, to foster crime prevention programs.
6. Extension of the police role into community social services is confusing to both the public and the police, and potentially dangerous, e.g., invasion of personal privacy.

7. Police involvement in social problems should be restricted to immediate problem resolution, disengagement as soon as practical, and referral to the appropriate social agency.

The areas of disagreement were:

1. While it was agreed that every policeman is a community officer and uses information with discretion, there were some different interpretations on when a policeman should report crimes uncovered through his community work, e.g. drug possession offences observed by a policeman working with youth groups, etc.
2. The closer involvement of police work people may present a risk to personal privacy.
3. Police should maintain a neutral political image and not get involved with political parties or social action causes. Some felt it was time for police to join the mainstream of community life and express their opinions, including those that may have political implications.
4. While it was agreed that police must be sensitive to the needs and expectations of the community in order to deal with conflict situations and similar social problems with which they come in contact, there was not a consensus on the degree of advanced education and/or training required to equip the individual policeman to fulfil this rôle.

2.5 CONFERENCE EVALUATION

All non-police participants were asked to comment on their perceptions of the conference, in the following four broad areas:

1. What do you feel you were able to contribute to the conference?

Most felt that they had contributed from their experiences, ideas and methods of community-police interaction and where police could benefit from more community involvement. Only one person felt he had contributed little, i.e., "not a hell of a lot".

2. How did the conference affect you and your ideas?

Many found the conference a surprising experience in gaining an appreciation of police roles and problems. "The effect was most profound - the commitment and concern of many officers was striking". "Police are finally showing interest in a human way". "A stimulating display of intelligent research..."

3. How sincere did you feel the police were in getting your ideas?

All felt that police were very sincere. Two also wondered what follow-up would take place after the conference.

4. Do you have other suggestions that could further the goals of these three conferences?

- A more representative group
- include ordinary constable and more ex-offenders in next conferences
- communicate the results of this conference to all levels of police in all provinces
- attempt to formulate policy guidelines for police in general
- publicity and distribution of information on the conference
- after all three conferences, there could be some material drawn up and tested again on previously uninvolved police personnel and community resource people for reaction - possibly in regional meetings
- prior to conference two, have a small representative group come together to investigate the implications of this meeting.

APPENDIX I
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The above Planning Committee members constitute a Co-ordination Committee, empowered to act on behalf of the Planning Committee in the on-going conduct of the project.

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Inspector Kenneth C. Evans
Vancouver Police Department

S/Inspector Kenneth W. Evans
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Mrs. Olga Foltz
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Chairman, Quebec Police Commission

Inspector Robert N. Heywood
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