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Scientific Analysis

FINAL REPORT
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF
INDIRECT CRIMINAL JUSTICE
PRESSURES ON COCAINE SELLERS
(NIJ Grant #87-IJ-CX-0036)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The general objectives of this in-depth study is to explore the perceived risks and criminal justice pressures on cocaine sellers. In short, the study proposed to answer the following questions:

How do cocaine sellers perceive the risks associated with their illegal activities?

Are the perceived possibilities of arrest important consideration to sellers?

Are the activities of other sellers and users more of a risk to sellers than the possibility of arrest?.

How effective are criminal justice pressures, both direct and indirect, in forcing cocaine sellers to abandon sales activities?

If criminal justice pressures do not cause sellers to stop selling what does?

What are the criminal justice policy implications of the findings?

Methods and Sample

Eighty ex-cocaine sellers were interviewed for the study. An ex-seller was defined as someone who had sold cocaine or crack for a period of at least one year and had stopped selling for six months or more. The original plan for the study was to interview 70 ex-sellers from 7 different levels of sales. This plan was revised when the staff realized that the organization of sales in the San Francisco Bay Area had changed. The project located and interviewed the following numbers of respondents according to 8 levels of sales:

Levels of Sales	Number Interviewed
Smugglers	2
Kilograms or Pounds	13
Parts of Pounds	6
Ounces	18
Parts of Ounces	13
Grams	12
Parts of Grams	11
Crack	5
Total	80

The sample was located from contacts developed in two previous studies and chain referral methods. The project had difficulty locating Smugglers and Crack Sellers. The plan to locate Smugglers from the San Diego area did not materialize, because the network of sellers known to a consultant had disbanded. Ex-crack sellers were difficult to locate because crack sales is a fairly recent phenomena in the Bay Area.

Data was gathered by means of a pre-coded quantitative schedule and an in-depth interview guide. Interviews lasted from two and a half to four hours, and some respondents were interviewed twice. Part of each interview was tape recorded and transcribed for content analyses.

The sample differs from previous studies of drug sellers in that it includes more wholesalers than retailers. Previous studies with but two exceptions are of retailers (usually street sellers); our study includes only a small number of street and bar sellers and many more wholesalers (persons who sold parts of ounces or greater). Nearly a third of the sample were female sellers and two-fifths from minority groups. The education level was high and suggests that a large part of the sample were middle class.

Drug Use and Associated Problems

Drug use by the sample was, as expected, extensive. The most frequently used drug in terms of the overall period of drug use was marijuana, cocaine, valium, methamphetamines, opium and heroin. Cocaine use was both extensive and of long duration. Reports of the peak period of use were phenomenal; the median peak period was 6.1 grams a week for 9.0 months. The median period when they used two or more grams a week was 26.0 months. The full duration of their cocaine use was 10.0 years (median). Two out of five (40.0%) reported some drug treatment experience; usually this was for heroin use or a combination of heroin and cocaine.

Not unexpectedly given the levels of cocaine abuse respondents reported myriad problems. Problems were explored in five domains - physical, mental health, relationship, sexual and financial. The mean number of physical health problems reported was 4.36. Five persons reported experiencing convulsions and 11 angina or heart attacks associated with cocaine. The most recurrent physical problems were nasal problems.

The most recurrent mental health problems were feeling that there cocaine use was out of control and paranoia. And again there was considerable problems reported; the mean number was 4.1. Cocaine was instrumental in disrupting relationships, most particularly with spouse/lovers and friends. The most severe problems were those that had to do with relationships and mental health.

Perceived Risks

The risks associated with cocaine sales was seen to be the following:

- General fears of arrest,
- Fears from informants,
- Fears about robbery and violence,
- Fears associated with suppliers and customers,
- Fears about police investigations,
- Fears about Internal Revenue Service audits,
- Fears about the possibility of property confiscation by the police or other authorities, and
- Unanticipated risks.

Beginning with the first possible risk we found that most cocaine sellers believed that there was always a possibility that they could be arrested but believed they could minimize this risk by limiting their sales activities to small networks of known and trusted friends. Wholesalers and some retailers limited sales activities to small networks, but street and bar sellers did not.

Informants were known to be principle sources for information to the police and heroin users who were sellers believed that informants were genuine risks to continued sales activities. Again street and bar dealers were subject to this risk more than wholesalers.

Fears about possible police investigations were perceived as a regular risk for nearly all the sellers from this sample. Much of this had to do with paranoia that often accompanies abuse of cocaine. When paranoia was not involved many thought that traffic by customers could lead to police investigations. Many, but not all sellers, were concerned about controlling traffic and took measures to do so.

In general sellers did not express much concern that police or other authorities would confiscate property derived from cocaine sales. Many low level dealers did not think that the police would use this tactic with them because they had so little property. Higher level dealers were more concerned with possible property confiscation and made efforts to be sure that proof of legal income could justify the purchase of property and large material items. Only one seller said that she felt considerable concern about property confiscation and this occurred after a former supplier of marijuana was arrested and lost all his property and the property of his parents to the police. Very few of our sample knew from first hand anyone who had lost property in this manner. We expect that this lack of first hand knowledge had to do with the recent nature of the police confiscation strategies. But just as well many in our sample were not selling cocaine when confiscations were being carried out actively.

Internal Revenue Service audits were not perceived as a possible risk to sellers. Sellers who had legal incomes filed income taxes, but just forgot the illegal income. Sellers who did not have legal jobs did not file returns.

If sellers felt comfortable with suppliers and customers they did not perceive any particular risks from robbery and violence. If they felt uncomfortable then these risks were a very real possibility. A good deal of cocaine sales take place in a relative non-threatening environment so that most sellers did not anticipate such risks. We heard of only six accounts of robbery, violence or threats of violence. Two involved gang activities to take over sales - one powder and the second crack sales.

Cocaine sellers do not usually fear customers or suppliers, but realize that they have to control the activities of customers. Control of customers are usually managed by establishing simple rules. Rules such as: no direct talk about drugs over the telephone, don't bring strangers to the seller's house, having hours when purchase can be made, do not front drugs to persons who cannot meet their financial responsibilities or not selling to persons who are out of control. Customers who freebased were considered to be particularly problematic. Some suppliers, most particularly Columbians, were considered potentially violent, but most sellers were not afraid of suppliers unless they had problems paying for drugs that were fronted.

A good number of the sample found that their personal use of cocaine got out of control and as a result they experience myriad physical, mental health and relationship problems. In general, this was an un-anticipated risk which had considerable impacts on their decision to stop sales activities.

Criminal Justice Pressures

Criminal justice pressures to stop cocaine sales was conceived as being of two types - direct and indirect pressures. Direct pressures were arrests for some violation of the law either drug related or not. Indirect pressures were seen as being:

- Arrest of someone from a supplier network,
- Arrest of someone from a customer network,
- Arrest of a drug selling partner,
- Fears of being investigated by the police, and
- Fears of going to prison.

The majority of ex-sellers we interviewed reported that they did not experience any criminal justice pressures to stop selling cocaine, neither direct nor indirect. Sixty percent (48) reported that they did not experience any criminal justice pressures. Of the 32 who reported criminal justice pressures, 16

(20%) stopped selling because of some arrest. The details of these arrests are as follows:

Sales and possession of cocaine - 6,
Possession of cocaine with intent to sell - 4,
Possession of cocaine only - 1,
Possession of other illicit drugs - 2, and
Other arrest not drug related - 3.

Sixteen people (20%) reported indirect pressures to stop sales. The most common form was arrest of someone from a supplier network; 10 (12.5%) reported that they stopped selling cocaine for this reason. Arrest of someone from a customer network was not reported as a reason to stop selling. Two women sellers reported that they stopped selling when business partners were arrested. Two sellers reported that they stopped selling when they suspected that they were being investigated by the police and two stopped selling when they feared arrest, rearrest and imprisonment. The last two were respondents who had previously served prison terms and expected that a new arrest and conviction would bring long prison sentences.

Other Reasons to Stop Selling Cocaine

While criminal justice pressures did not seem to have much impact upon our sample's decisions to stop selling the lifestyle of seller and the myriad physical, psychological and social problems associated with their cocaine abuse had considerable impacts. A sizeable number of the sample who did not experience criminal justice pressures to stop selling found after varying periods of time that the lifestyle of a seller was not as appealing and attractive as they had thought initially. What this meant was that the combination of their own cocaine use, psychological and physical problems associated with drug use, impacts on social relations, problems dealing with customers and the illegal nature of the activity cause many users to re-evaluate their activities.

Furthermore, cocaine abuse, high doses for long periods of time, cause most users to experience myriad problems, many of which they did not anticipate. Over time these problems cause many to wonder whether continued cocaine sales is worth the physical and psychological tolls it inflicts.

Policy Implications

Our findings about perceived risks associated with drug sales do not support the notion that police activities against sellers will deter people from selling drugs. In general, cocaine sellers concede the possibility that they may be arrested for their illegal activities but believe that they can avert such risks by limiting sales to persons who are known not to be police and trusted not to reveal their activities to authorities.

Wholesalers have the ability to limit sales more than retailers and especially street and bar dealers whose activities are obvious and highly visible. The risk of arrest is not an abiding concern of most sellers, but they clearly put themselves at risk when they sell to strangers, which happens more often than most sellers would like to admit.

New criminal justice strategies to confiscate the property of drug sellers could not be fully explored by our study as many people in the sample had stopped selling cocaine before these tactics were in full force. Only one female seller was fully aware of the powers of prosecutors to confiscate property and curtailed her illegal activities because of it.

Sellers were generally more concerned about informants, disgruntle customers than they were police investigations. Again street and bar sellers were more concerned about these risks than wholesalers who are able to control their markets more. Many dealers developed strategies to obviate disgruntle customers and informants by striving to accomodate customers if and when they were dissatisfied with products and quantities.

In general, activities in the drug selling scenes are not as violent or hostile as popular accounts would have the public believe. Wholesalers operating in middle class communities have little fear of robbery and violence. However, sellers who operate in urban ghettos must be vigilant against the possibility of both; nearly all of our accounts of robbery and violence occured among black dealers who lived in urban ghettos.

Motivations for stopping sales activities were complex. Very often sellers abuse the drug they sell and suffer a variety of physical and psychological problems. Furthermore, many become tired of the drug scene and the problems of dealing with customers who are having drug problems also. In short, they become dissatisfied with the life style. Education programs that seek to prevent drug sales and drug use could emphasize the realities of drug sales and its associated lifestyle. High flying drug sellers too often succumb to the temptations of their products and abuse the drugs in ways than non-sellers cannot imagine. The extent of drug abuse of our sample was phenomenal. During two other previous studies of cocaine users that the staff have conducted we have never heard of such high peak periods of cocaine abuse.

Criminal justice pressures, both direct and indirect, figured largely in roughly two-fifths of all the ex-sellers accounts to stop selling. Of particular interest are the responses of many dealers to an arrest of their principle suppliers. Twelve percent of 80 ex-sellers reported that they stopped selling when suppliers were arrested by the police. The consequence of such arrests were two fold - supplies were often cut off for short or long periods and many anticipated that the arrested parties would

probably act as informants against them. By no means do all drug sellers have multiple sources for high quality drugs; very often a wholesaler may not be able to find good reliable alternative suppliers and may find that his customers drift away.

Furthermore, if sellers are having problems with their own drug abuse and are feeling some disillusionment about the life style then the arrest of a supplier can serve as an important factor to end the illegal activities. Very often it can serve as a final straw in the career of a drug seller.

Criminal justice agencies should realize that indirect criminal justice pressures, most particularly as they arrest sellers who sell relatively high quality cocaine, often have significant, although unknown impacts, on other wholesalers. We expect that this might occur more often among middle class drug sellers than their working class counterparts. Middle class sellers often had more resources - better education, more skills etc. - than working class sellers and so can move out of drug sales to legal occupations. Working class sellers, and most particularly street sellers, did not have the luxury of changing occupations so easily and are more likely to continue to sell.

Products

During the 21 months of the study the project generated two articles that describe the findings of the study. They are:

"Perceived Risks and Criminal Justice Pressures on Cocaine Sellers", written by Dan Waldorf and Sheigla Murphy

"Drifting into Dealing: Becoming a Cocaine Seller", written by Sheigla Murphy, Dan Waldorf, and Craig Reinerman.

The first was presented at the 1988 annual meeting of The American Society of Criminology, November 9-12, 1988 in Chicago, Illinois. The second has been submitted for publication to Journal of Contemporary Ethnography. Both are included in the Appendix.

The study staff plan to write two other papers from findings. The first will describe self-reported reasons for stopping sales and will be presented at the 1989 meeting of the American Society of Criminology in Reno, Nevada. This paper will use both quantitative and qualitative data from the study. The second paper will utilize qualitative data and describe the activities of cocaine sellers to control their drug markets, in short the "rules of dealing".

CHAPTER 1 METHODS AND SAMPLE

The initial plan of the study was to locate and interview 10 persons from 7 different levels of cocaine sales. Early in the study we realized that the levels of sales that we had identified earlier (in 1974 and 1975) did not necessarily apply in the 1980's. Consequently, we revised the plan to include 8 different levels of sales with a plan to interview 10 persons at each level. In all 80 ex-sellers from 8 different levels of sales were located and interviewed.

Levels of Sales	Number of Interviews Completed
Smugglers	2
Kilograms and Pounds	13
Parts of Pounds	6
Ounces	18
Parts of Ounces	13
Grams	12
Parts of Grams	11
Crack	5

Placement within these levels was made according to the units of powdered cocaine and crack sold. That is to say if a person bought ounces and sold grams he/she was considered a gram seller rather than an ounce seller.

In general, we did not locate as many Smugglers and Crack sellers as we had originally planned. Smugglers are less numerous than other levels and we could not develop the contacts to locate them. Street Crack sales is a fairly recent phenomena in San Francisco, beginning in 1987, and we had difficulties locating them because the numbers of former Crack sellers were still very small during the time of the interviewing. In fact, two of the five Crack sellers we interviewed were persons who operated Rock Houses in the North Bay, two were Street Dealers and the last was a wholesale Rock seller who provided bicarbonate of soda processed Rock to a network of Street Sellers in the Mission District of San Francisco.

The reader should know that this organization is arbitrary and does not necessarily reflect the levels of sales as reported by drug sellers and users. The typology of cocaine sellers from sellers' and users' points of view is as follows:

- Smugglers
- Big Dealers
- Dealers
- Sellers (Unspecified)
- Bar Dealers and
- Street Dealers.

In this scheme street and bar dealers usually sell parts of grams, grams and crack. Unspecified sellers sell grams and parts of grams, but neither in bars or on the street. Dealers and Big Dealers can sell anything from an eighth of an ounce to multiple kilograms, but there is little consensus among sellers themselves about what constitutes a Dealer and Big Dealer. Smugglers, are a different matter; everyone knows and agrees that they bring kilograms into the country from foreign sources.

No attempt was made to generate a random or representative sample of sellers as there are no known lists or populations of cocaine sellers available. We did not attempt to locate known cocaine sellers (to the criminal justice system) in jails and prisons as we thought that such a procedure would bias the findings of the study. We do not know if the sample represents cocaine sellers as a group and doubt very much if a representative sample ever can be drawn because of the illegal nature of the activity.

In general, our sample of sellers differs from previous studies of drug sellers in that it includes more wholesalers (Smugglers to Part of Ounce Dealers) than retailers (Grams, Parts of Grams and Street Crack Dealers). Most studies of drug sales have focused on street sellers. The exception is the work of Patricia and Peter Adler (Adler, 1985; Adler and Adler, 1983) which is a detailed ethnography of a group of Smugglers (both cocaine and marijuana) in Southern California.

Location Strategies

Respondents were located by a combination of methods. A number of respondents were known by the project staff because of previous contacts on other drug related studies; a short-term ethnography in 1974 and 1975 and a survey of active and inactive users for a study of cocaine cessation conducted during 1985 to 1987. These ex-sellers were simply re-contacted and interviewed by the principle staff. The project also hired three ex-sellers as interviewers (all three were college educated, one with a PH.D.) who interviewed previous suppliers and customers who had stopped selling. In an effort to reach Black ex-sellers the project hired a former pimp as an interviewer who had long-standing contacts with a number of prostitute-sellers. This man never sold cocaine himself and seldom used it as he was a diabetic. Lastly, the project generated a small number of respondents by means of classical snowball referral methods; that is to say the respondents were not known to the interviewers or the project but were referred by other respondents.

Interviewing

Interviews were conducted from a quantitative schedule and a focused interview guide. The focused interview was tape recorded and later transcribed. Interviews took from two and a half to

four hours to complete on average and everyone was compensated for their time. In some instances second and third interviews were conducted with selected respondents. In one instance a female ex-seller who had sold parts of kilograms and pounds was interviewed for ten hours at three different sessions. Additional information was also available from earlier studies for 22 respondents. Many of this last group have been known by the study staff from five to fifteen years.

Characteristics of the Sample

From the onset the project attempted to get a good gender and ethnic mix in the sample. Nearly a third of the sample (32.5%) were females and 2 out of 5 (41.3%) were from minority groups. There were no differences in the levels of sales between Whites and minorities. The median age of the sample was 35.4 years and the range was 18 - 60 years. The youngest person in the sample was an 18 year old Crack seller who was forced to retire when the police arrested him for assault and the court placed him on probation. The police had known that he sold Crack and threatened him with probation revocation if he continued to sell.

The general level of education is quite high; nearly 2 out of three (64.0%) had attended college or university. Five persons (6.3%) reported that they had received graduate degrees and 18 (18.7%) under-graduate degrees.

TABLE 1.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE EX-SELLER SAMPLE

Age	
Range	18 years -60 years
Mean	37.1 years
Median	35.4 years
Sex	
Female	(26) 32.5%
Male	(54) 67.5%
Ethnicity	
Black	(28) 35.0%
Latino	(4) 5.0
White	(47) 58.7
Asian	(1) 1.2
Education	
Range	4 - 19 years
Mean	13.2 years
Median	12.9 years
Religion Raised In	
Protestant	(52) 65.0%
Catholic	(23) 28.7
Jewish	(7) 8.7
Other	(2) 2.5
None	(3) 3.7
Marital Status	
Presently Married	
or Living with Lover	(36) 45.0%
Previously Married	
Living Alone	(13) 16.2
Single	(31) 38.7

Queries about the history of arrest, conviction and imprisonment were surprising. More the 1 out of 5 (23.8%) reported that they had never been arrested as either an adult or a juvenile. Half (51.2%) reported that they had been arrested as a juvenile and 7 out of 10 (70.0%) reported that they had been arrested as an adult.

As juveniles the most common arrest was for property crimes and only 5 persons were arrested for drug possession and 4 for drug sales. As adults the median number of arrests, for those who reported that they had been arrested, was 2.2 times. Convictions were half the number of arrests or 1.1 median times.

Arrests for drug possession as an adult was reported by 32 people (40.0%) and only 16 (20.0%) were convicted. Arrests for drug sales was reported by 15 people (19.0%) and 13 (16.0%) were convicted.

Incarceration as both a juvenile and adult was reported by 59 people. Thirty five (44.0%) reported that they had spent some time in juvenile halls or jails. The median time was 8 days, but one man had spent 52 months in a juvenile institution. Fifty five (69.0%) reported that they had spent time in jails and prisons, but the usual stay was short (median 60 days, but 24 reported less than 16 days). One man as a heroin addicted, safe cracker spent 10 years in prison, most of the time in San Quentin and Folsom, the two highest security prisons in California.

TABLE 1.2 SELF REPORTS OF ARREST AND CONVICTIONS

		Percent Reporting		
Ever Arrested as a Juvenile	(41)	51.2%		
Ever Arrested as an Adult	(56)	70.0%		
Never Arrested as either Juvenile or Adult	(19)	23.8%		
Enumeration of Arrests as a Juvenile				
	Range	Mean	Median	
Total Number	0-32	2.0	1.2	
For Property Crimes	0-20	0.7	1.4	
For Drug Possession	0-1	Only 5 persons (1 each)		
For Drug Sales	0-1	Only 4 persons (1 each)		
Enumeration of Arrests as an Adult.				
	Range	Mean	Median	
Total # of Arrests	0-87	5.3	2.2	
Total # of Convictions	0-10	1.5	1.1	
Arrests for Drug Possession	0-16	0.8	0.4	
		32 people arrested, 1 sixteen times.		
Convictions for Drug Possession	0-3		16 people convicted, 1 three times.	
Arrests for Drug Sales	0-4		15 people arrested, 1 four times.	
Convictions for Drug Sales	0-3		13 people convicted, 1 three times.	

TABLE 1.3 SELF-REPORTS OF JAIL AND PRISON HISTORY

	Range	Median
As a Juvenile in both jails and juvenile institutions	1- 1,560 days	8.0 days
As an Adult in both jails and Prisons	1 day - 10 years	60.0 days

CHAPTER 2 ILLICIT DRUG USE OF THE SAMPLE

With but a few exceptions most cocaine sellers use and often abuse the drugs they sell. Among the people we interviewed there was only one person who was not using cocaine while they were selling. This was laboratory assistant/kilogram and pound dealer who had used cocaine in the past, but became allergic to it and did not use it at all when he sold or at the time of the interview. In another study conducted by the staff we heard of a somewhat mythological character; a kilogram dealer who never kept cocaine in his possession, seldom used the drug and when he did went to a friend and paid gram prices. Both of these people were exceptional in their ability not to use the drug they sold.

Drug abuse can often serve as a strong motivation to stop selling drugs and so we will describe the drug use and abuse of the sample. More than 3 out of 4 of the 80 people interviewed reported that the first illicit drug they used was marijuana; only 3 people reported that the first illicit drug used was cocaine. This beginning drug use began at a relatively early age; one person reported that he first used marijuana when he was 5 years old. The median age of first use was 14.5 years with a range of 5-29 years.

By age 16 to 17 years most of the sample (16.5 median) was using marijuana regularly (72.5%), at least once a month. One out of every 10 (11.2%) reported that the first drug they used regularly was cocaine.

To assess general drug use we asked questions for two time periods (ever and during the last year) for 15 different illicit drugs. The most frequently used drug over a lifetime was marijuana followed closely by cocaine. Reports of recent illicit drug use, during the year previous to the interview, indicate a high percentage had cut back on their cocaine use but continued to use marijuana. This was not unexpected.

TABLE 2.1 SELF REPORTS OF DRUG USE FOR TWO TIME PERIODS, EVER AND LAST YEAR - PERCENT REPORTING

Drug	Frequency					
	Never	Once	2-10 Times	11-250 Times	251-1K Times	More than 1K Times
Marijuana						
Ever	--	--	6.3%	8.8%	7.5%	78.7%
Last Year	18.8	3.7	11.3	31.3	28.8	5.0
Cocaine						
Ever	--	--	--	5.0	22.5	72.5
Last Year	15.0	5.0	26.3	37.5	11.3	5.0
Opium						
Ever	30.0	10.0	27.5	26.3	3.7	2.5
Last Year	95.0	2.5	1.2	--	1.2	--
Heroin						
Ever	35.0	8.7	23.8	8.8	6.3	17.5
Last Year	81.3	1.2	2.5	8.8	5.0	1.2
Methamphetamine						
Ever	25.0	7.5	22.5	31.3	5.0	8.7
Last Year	80.0	3.7	5.0	8.8	1.2	1.2
Pill Amphetamines						
Ever	30.0	2.5	18.8	33.8	10.0	5.0
Last Year	75.0	--	6.2	--	--	--
Valium						
Ever	17.5	2.5	17.5	43.8	12.6	6.3
Last year	57.5	5.0	21.3	17.5	--	--

Cocaine Use

In order to assess cocaine use we asked a battery of questions about:

- The overall period of use
- The peak period of use,
- The length of time that 2 or more grams a week were used,
- Various methods of use and the percent of time that each method was employed.

Cocaine use for this group was no means a fleeting experience. The median number of years that cocaine was used was 10 years. Ten people reported that they had used cocaine for at least 20 years. One man who we call Peter had sold cocaine for 25 years on and off reported that he had used the drug for 37

years and was still using it at the interview, but at a sharply reduced rate.

At the peak period of use the amounts reported were phenomenal. The range was 1 - 98 grams and the median was 6.1 grams. The median time used at peak amounts was 9.0 months. Males tended to report higher peak periods of use than females as did wholesalers (persons selling at greater units than grams) and minorities (See Table 2.3).

Peter who we mentioned earlier as having the longest cocaine career also reported the longest period using 2 grams or more per week. He reported that he had used that amount for 21 years. In general, his claims are supported by the interviewer and another seller who have known him for more than 20 years. Most persons did not have his stamina or staying power as the median period using 2 or more grams per week was 26.0 months.

TABLE 2.2 SELF-REPORTS OF OVERALL PERIOD OF COCAINE USE, PEAK PERIOD OF USE AND LENGTH OF TIME USED 2 GRAMS OR MORE PER WEEK.

Length of Time - Entire Period

Range	1 - 37 years
Mean	11.7
Median	10.0 years

Number of Months Used 2 Grams or More a Week

Range	1 month - 28 years
Mean	56.7 months
Median	26.0 months

Number of Grams Used a Week During Period of Heaviest Use

Range	1 - 110 grams
Mean	13.87 grams
Median	6.1 grams

Length of Time Used Greatest Amount

Range	1 week - 10 years
Mean	14.5 months
Median	9.0 months

TABLE 2.3 NUMBER OF GRAMS USED PER WEEK DURING PEAK PERIOD OF COCAINE USE BY LEVELS OF SALES, SEX AND ETHNICITY

	N	Range	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
Level of Sales					
Wholesaler	(50)	1 - 98	6.20	17.458	14.78
Retailer	(27)	1 - 25	3.75	6.815	6.72
Total	(80)				
Sex					
Females	(25)	1 - 30	5.00	11.346	7.9
Males	(52)	1 - 98	6.29	15.079	14.4
Total	(80)				
Ethnicity					
Minorities	(30)	1 - 98	5.75	19.80	15.57
White	(47)	1 - 49	3.90	10.23	10.78
Total	(80)				

Methods of Using Cocaine

In general, most of the sample were intranasal users rather than injectors or freebasers but there was considerable variations in the methods of use. The median percent of time that the sample reported ingesting the drug intranasally was 90.0% and 10 people reported that they had snorted the drug all the time or 100%. Only 1 person reported that he had injected the drug all the time and 4 persons reported that they had injected the drug more than 50% of the time.

Somewhat more of the sample reported that they had freebased the drug for considerable periods of time. Nine people reported that they had freebased cocaine at least half the time (50% or more) and 2 reported that they freebased all the time. We expect that there would be more freebasers in the sample if we had begun the interviews in 1989, as most of our ex-sellers operated during an era when intranasal use was more frequent than freebasing.

Smoking, or the method whereby cocaine is mixed with tobacco and/or marijuana, was reported by 3 out of every 10 persons in the sample, but it was not used with any frequency as indicated by the percent of times reported (mean 5.6%).

TABLE 2.4 SELF-REPORTED METHODS OF USING COCAINE

	Percent Reporting Using Method
Intranasal	96.2%
Injection	41.2
Smoke	60.0
Freebase	71.2

Percentage of Time Using Each Method

Intranasal	
Range	0 - 100%
Mean	73.9%
Median	90.0

10 people reported snorting 100% of the time.

Injection	
Range	0 - 100%
Mean	16.9%
Median	0.1%

Only 4 persons reported injecting more than 50% of the time; 1 person reported injecting 100% of the time.

Smoke	
Range	0 - 99%
Mean	5.6%
Median	0.1%

Only 1 person reported that he smoked cocaine more than 50% of the time; he smoked it 90% of the time.

Freebase	
Range	0 - 100%
Mean	19.4%
Median	0.94%

9 people reported that they had freebased more than 50% of the time; 2 people reported 100% if the time.

Severity of Drug Abuse

To further illustrate the range of drug abuse of the sample we asked two additional questions about feeling addicted to illicit drugs and going to treatment for drug abuse. Three out of every 5 (60.0%) reported that they had felt addicted to some illicit drug. Of those who said they felt addicted the most

frequently mentioned drugs addicted to were cocaine (46.9%), heroin (34.7%) and marijuana (10.2%).

If a majority felt addicted to some illicit drug it did not mean that they went to treatment for such a condition. Considerably fewer people reported going to treatment than felt addicted; three out of five (60.0%) said that they had never been to treatment. Of the 32 people who reported going to treatment the most frequent mentions were for heroin (43.11%) and the combination of heroin and cocaine (9.4%). Cocaine alone was mentioned by slightly more than a quarter (28.1%). It should be noted that going to treatment did not necessarily mean that persons wanted to stop using drugs. Some went to treatment to cut down on their heroin habits, others went under duress from the criminal justice system. This last group were usually people who were diverted to drug abuse counseling programs rather than face going to trial or to jail.

CHAPTER 3 PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH COCAINE USE

Not unexpectedly given the large amounts of cocaine used by the sample there were considerable problems experienced as a result of cocaine abuse. To explore these associated problems we asked questions in 5 different domains: physical health problems, psychological problems, relationship problems, sexual problems and financial problems. We also sought to assess the severity of problems and asked specific questions for each of the items for physical, psychological and relationship domains.

Physical problems associated with cocaine abuse was explored by means of two questions (with 13 parts). The first question was a list of 12 physical problem items where respondents were asked if they experienced the problems and how severe they were. The second part asked respondents to cite the most serious problem experienced.

TABLE 3.1 SELF-REPORTED PHYSICAL HEALTH PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH COCAINE USE, PERCENT REPORTING PROBLEMS AND SEVERITY

	Percent Reporting "Yes"	Not Severe	Severity Moderately Severe	Very Severe
Nasal Problems				
Burnt or perforated septum	(20) 25.0%	25.0%	55.0%	20.0%
Other nasal problems	(53) 66.2	45.0	34.0	21.0
Heart Problems				
Heart palpitations	(45) 56.3	44.4	37.8	17.8
Angina, heart pains or heart attacks	(11) 13.7	36.4	45.5	18.2
General Nervousness	(53) 66.2	35.8	37.7	26.4
Grinding teeth	(46) 57.5	47.8	26.1	26.1
Frequent colds or sore throats	(29) 36.2	48.3	37.9	13.8
Diarrhea	(35) 43.8	62.9	37.1	—
Skin problems	(19) 23.7	26.3	47.4	26.3
Urinary problems	(8) 10.0	12.5	62.5	25.0
Convulsions	(5) 6.3	20.0	40.0	40.0
Other problems	(25) 31.3			
Number of Problems Reported				
Mean	4.36			
Median	4.50			
Mean Severity Score	1.66			

Reviewing the list of 12 items in Table 3.1 we find that 5 persons reported that they experience convulsions, 11 heart associated conditions (angina, heart pains and heart attacks) and 20 burnt or perforated nasal septums. These were the most serious problems reported, but the most frequently mentioned problems were general nasal problems, general nervousness, grinding teeth and heart palpitations. All four of the last mentioned problems were reported by more than 50% of the sample. The range of problems associated with cocaine abuse can be seen in the mean number of mentions of physical problems. On average respondents answered "yes" to 4.36 physical problems.

Following the list of possible problems we asked what was the most serious problem. Eight of 10% reported that none were serious problems, but 72 (90%) reported at least one serious problem and 16 (20%) reported two serious problems. The most frequently mentioned serious problems were similar to the previous list of problems - general nasal problems, general nervousness and heart palpitations.

Psychological Problems

Psychological problems were explored in a similar format as physical problems. Eight different psychological problems were explored in the first question and all eight were reported by more than half of the respondents. The most frequently mentioned psychological problems were: feeling that their cocaine use was out of control, paranoia and feeling despondent about continuing cocaine use (See Table 3.2). Severity of psychological problems (very severe and moderately severe) was judged by at least 80% of all those who reported feeling out of control and despondent, while nearly two-thirds (63%) of all those who reported paranoia was judged as moderately or very severe. Like physical health problems the range of questions were extensive; average number of mentions was 4.14.

TABLE 3.2 SELF-REPORTED PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH COCAINE USE, PERCENT REPORTING PROBLEMS AND SEVERITY

Psychological Problems	Percent Reporting "Yes"	Severity		
		Not Severe	Moderately Severe	Very Severe
Recurring Depression	(45) 56.3%	26.7	51.1	22.2
Frequent insomnia	(43) 53.7	16.3	53.5	30.2
Paranoia	(52) 65.0	34.6	36.5	26.9
Feeling generally Emotional	(46) 57.5	26.1	32.6	39.1
Feeling despondent about continuing coke use	(49) 61.2	16.3	42.9	40.8
Feeling that your coke use was out of control	(57) 71.2	17.5	35.1	45.4
Feeling isolated from other people	(40) 50.0	32.5	30.0	37.5
Number of Problems Reported				
Mean	4.14			
Median	4.00			

Mean Severity Score 1.98 When respondents were asked what were the most serious psychological problems only 6 people said that they had no serious psychological problems. More than 9 out of 10 (92.5%) reported at least one serious problem and 18.8% reported two. The most frequently mentioned serious problems were: paranoia (27.5%), feeling despondent (20.0%), feeling out of control (18.8%) and frequent insomnia (13.8%).

Problems with Relationships

As one might expect give the large percentages reporting psychological problems associated with cocaine abuse that these would cause users to have problems in social relationships. Using a similar format we learned that on average 1.71 social relationship problems were reported. As one might expect the most frequently mentioned problems were with spouse and/or lovers (73.7%) followed by friends (45.0%), children (35.8%) and people they worked with (31.1%).

TABLE 3.3 SELF-REPORTS OF NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS ASSOCIATED WITH COCAINE USE, PERCENT REPORTING AND SEVERITY

Negative Effects on Relationships	Percent Reporting "Yes"		Severity		
			Not Severe	Moderately Severe	Very Severe
With lover(s) or spouse	(59)	73.7%	15.3	25.4	59.3
With children	(19)	35.8*	36.8	36.8	26.4
With friends	(36)	45.0	22.2	44.4	33.3
With people you work with	(23)	31.1**	13.0	38.9	26.1
Number of Problems Reported					
Mean		1.71			
Median		2.00			
Mean Severity Score					
		2.23			

* Does not apply = 27

** Does not apply = 6

Sexual Problems

In a previous study of cocaine users and quitters we learned that cocaine was not necessarily the aphrodisiac that it has been said to be (Macdonald, Waldorf, Reinerman and Murphy, 1988). In fact, many report sexual dysfunctions associated with cocaine use most especially after long periods of heavy use. Our sample of sellers was no exception.

Sexual experiences with cocaine were explored in three questions - an open-ended question, a list of problems that persons might experience followed by a question about the most serious sex problem. The first open-ended question was meant to be neutral in its presentation as it asked, "Did your cocaine use have any negative effects on your sex life? Tell me about it." This question revealed the complexity of individual's responses to cocaine. Four out of 10 (40%) reported no negative effects. Within that group 11.3% reported only positive effects. So roughly six out of 10 reported at least one negative effect.

The second question sought to explore possible negative effects. A list of 5 possible negative effects were listed and each person was asked if they had ever experienced any of these

problems because of cocaine use. Four questions were asked of all the women and five were asked of men. Women could not be asked about problems having to do with erections. Out of a possible four items women answered "yes" to 1.85 (mean) items while men said "yes" to 2.87 items (See Table 3.4)

The most frequently mentioned sexual problems were erection problems for men (60.7%), trouble having orgasms (58.7%), feeling distant or remote from partner (56.3%), and feeling not interested in sex (51.2%). When we asked what was the most serious sexual problem the order was essentially the same erection problems for men (20.0%), feeling distant or remote (21.3), feeling not interested in sex (20.0%) and trouble having orgasm (10.0%).

TABLE 3.4 SELF-REPORTED SEXUAL PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH COCAINE USE, PERCENT REPORTING AND FREQUENCY

Sexual Problems	Percent Reporting "Yes"	Frequency		
		Infrequently	Regularly	Very Frequently
Feeling too sensitive or insensitive	(38) 47.5%	44.7	34.2	21.1
Trouble having an orgasm	(47) 58.7	51.1	29.8	19.1
Trouble getting or keeping an erection (Men only)	(34) 60.7	52.9	29.4	17.6
Feeling distant or remote from partner	(45) 56.3	46.7	20.0	33.3
Feeling not interested in sex	(41) 51.2	39.0	14.6	46.3
Number of Problems Reported				
Females				
Mean	1.85			
Median	2.00			
Males				
Mean	2.87			
Median	3.00			
Mean Frequency Score				
Females	2.19			
Males	1.52			

Financial Problems

Drug users often cite financial problems as a result of cocaine abuse and to explore this area we asked two questions. The first of these questions was an opened-ended question that simply asked, "...did you have any money problems while you were using or selling cocaine? Tell me about them." Slightly more than half (53.8%) of the sample said they had experienced money problems. Very often these were problems that had to do with their own cocaine consumption - using too much cocaine so it cut in on their drug sales profits; 21 of the 43 people who said they had money problems gave such elaborations to the question.

The remaining questions to explore financial problems were very specific ones about specific items lost or sold and appear in Table 3.5.

TABLE 3.5 SELF-REPORTS OF ITEMS LOST OR SOLD AS A RESULT OF COCAINE USE OR SALES - PERCENT REPORTING

Items	Yes, lost	Yes, sold
Savings or inheritance	28.8%	—
Other money assets such as stocks, bonds etc	7.5%	5.0%
House or property	8.7	3.7
Car or cars	13.7	11.2
Large material items such as boat, stereo, t.v. etc.	15.0	15.0
Furniture	12.5	5.0
Business	8.7	3.7

The most frequently mentioned items lost or sold were large material items, savings and/inheritances and cars (See Table 3.5). Seldom were these items lost to the police or the criminal justice system as only 8 people reported such losses; most often these loses were cash and jewelry. One seller who was arrested by the DEA reported that arresting officers took \$3,000 and a half pound of cocaine that was never turned into the police.

These data suggest that cocaine sales is by no means always a profit making venture. Roughly a quarter had financial problems as a result of their cocaine use and sales. Often the sellers' own drug use and/or ineptitude as a seller caused financial problems that they did not anticipate.

Severity and Frequency of Problems

In order to assess the severity of problems experienced because of cocaine abuse we asked each respondent to rate the severity of each of the physical, psychological and relationship problems they experience on a three point scale - not severe, moderately severe and very severe. The mean severity score of all persons who reported such problems were:

Physical problems 1.66
Psychological problems 1.98
Relationship problems 2.23

These scores indicate that relationship and psychological problems were reported as being the most severe among the three different types of problems. Cross-tabulations of each of the mean severity scores by sex, ethnicity and type of seller did not reveal any statistically significant differences.

Sexual problems were treated differently than the other three problems. Instead of asking about severity of problems we asked about frequency. Again a three point scale was used - infrequently, regularly, and very frequently. Females generally reported more frequent sexual problems when they reported problems than did males; frequency scores were respectively 2.19 for females and 1.52 for males. These differences were statistically significant.

Summary

The cocaine abuse of sellers often caused them myriad problems. The most frequently cited problems;

Among physical problems were nasal problems,
Among psychological problems were feeling out of control and paranoia;
Among sexual problems erection problems for men and Trouble with orgasms for women and, lastly;
Among relationship problems with spouse/and lover and friends.

Roughly half reported financial problems because of their cocaine use.

Relationship and psychological problems were said to be more severe than physical health problems. And females reported more frequent sexual problems when they had them than did males.

CHAPTER 4 PERCEIVED RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH COCAINE SALES

In general, the study envisioned that perceived risks associated with drug sales could be categorized into eight groupings:

- General Fears of Arrest,
- Fears About Informants,
- Fears About Robbery and Violence,
- Fears Associated with Customers or Suppliers,
- Fears About Police Investigations,
- Fears About Internal Revenue Service Audits,
- Fears About the Possibility that Property Might be Confiscations by Police or Other Authorities, and
- Un-anticipated Risks.

Each category was explored in the in-depth focused interviews with questions that asked how individuals viewed such risks associated with drug sales, what were their specific experiences of risks, and what actions were taken to minimize risks. We will begin our description with general fears of arrest.

General Fears of Arrest

In general, most persons realized that there was a general possibility that they might be detected and apprehended by the police for drug sales, but it was not an abiding concern of most of our sample of sellers. In fact, most sellers believed that they could minimize this possibility of arrest by restricting their sales to a small group of friends, people who they work with and associates - people who they have known for some time and were known not to be police or persons who would reveal their activities to the police. In short, they believed that they need not fear arrest if they restricted their sales activities to persons they knew and trusted. Here is a typical example of a seller who had little concern about the risks involved in drug sales:

- (I) Okay what did you perceive as the risks involved in sales?
- (R) I didn't think I was at any risk. My biggest risk was when I had to go over and pick up from my dealer. But I didn't think I was at any risk at all when I was selling.
- (I) Do you still think that?
- (R) No if I was a neighbor across the street looking at all the business I would have called the cops long ago. So it was very obvious. (Case #035)

Other persons were more cognizant of how to minimize the risks involved as a kilogram and pound dealer explained:

(R) Yeah, well I think the major thing is just keep your network closed, you know. If you've got a network, you only expand it to the people that you know and the people that they know. And if they want to buy for them, and if you could afford to give them a deal so they can go sell to their friends, you know...and in that way they can start their own small network. I think that was the easiest way. Like I had 10 interactive networks going [that he sold to], you know, expanded families type thing.

(I) Any fears of arrests?

(R) No, not really. I was pretty sure of my network. (Case #032)

One way to manage possible risks or to minimize the general possibility of arrest was to establish personal rules about who one would sell cocaine to. For example, an ounce dealer expressed some concerns about traffic in and out of his house to buy cocaine and rules about who he sold to:

(I) So what were the risks from police, I mean did you feel that very much?

(R) No, uh, I worried about like traffic, so most of the time I would deliver the product, you know. I kept decent hours, you know, if somebody wanted to come over late at night I refused, you know, I kept control of it pretty much so I wasn't worried in that sense. It's like the police, the only thing that could happen is like somebody introducing you to somebody and just being a little sloppy or a little greedy. If you deal with the same people, or let someone roll over ...otherwise I think it's really hard for them to legitimately bust you, you know. (Case #010)

Traffic seemed to be an important consideration when sellers dealt out of their home and how the neighbors would respond to a large volume of persons coming to and from a house or apartment. The strategies to deal with traffic were various. Some persons delivered the drugs themselves rather than have customers come to their home. Some were sure to locate their homes in areas that had high densities and large natural traffic, rather than live on a suburban cul de sac where traffic would be obvious. Other sellers required that buyers act like friends and other visitors and stay for a period, rather than rush in and out. One very outgoing and social pound dealer made it a point of inviting policemen that he knew to come to his house to socialize, feeling

that if neighbors saw him socializing with the police that they would never suspect that he was a drug seller.

The rule about restricting sales only to persons known by the seller generally works for wholesalers, but is rather difficult to maintain for street and bar dealers to maintain. Street and bar dealers contact customers in public places and are more likely to take on new customers that they do not know; therefore they are not as cautious as other types of sellers and are perhaps overly anxious to develop new customers and expand their business. Selling cocaine in small units, parts of grams and grams requires a larger number of customers to realize a reasonable profit. If a street or bar seller is ambitious and/or is using his own product too much then he may be less prudent about screening the persons he will sell to. And the less careful you are, the more willing you are to develop new and unknown customers the more likely you are to sell to an undercover narcotics officer.

Fears About Informants

Cocaine sellers usually know that most arrests for drug sales come as the result of information provided to the police by informants. The use of informants by narcotics police has a long and enduring history for perhaps several reasons: drug sales with the exception of street sales is usually clandestine; drug users do not, as a rule, complain to the police about drug sellers; investigations of sellers requires a good deal of time and effort; and most undercover police are easily identified as such.

Fears about informants is a particular concern for heroin users who sell cocaine because of ways the police use heroin addicts to gather information. This was illustrated very well by a heroin addict who sold ounces and parts of ounces for 6 years and was arrested only after he went to treatment for his heroin addiction:

- (R) Like when I did get busted I had a feeling in the beginning [that something was wrong] and then these guys kept calling...
- (I) How did you meet that guy, the fisherman?
- (R) The one guy that I was in treatment with in the hospital.
- (I) He introduced you?
- (R) When he came in the first time, he says I want to come and see you, right, I'm at the bar and they both [two DEA agents] come in and they both look scruffy as hell, they both looked like they just came in, you know, like

they both had been fishing in Alaska. And he [the informant] introduces me to the guy and he [the undercover agent] says, "We're fishing in Alaska and I got a chance to make some big money in Alaska and we need some coke," and I said, "Well I don't do it anymore," and he said, "Well can you get me a quarter gram or something so we can snort now?" So I go down to the end of the bar and get him a quarter gram and that in turn was one of the counts [charges] against me.

(I) Really?

(R) There were 3 different counts, it was a pound sale that they got me the last time and then I got a quarter of an ounce the next time they came into the bar and I set it up to get him a quarter of an ounce but he brought this guy in and he leaves the scene. Marty, the guy that I knew, and the other guy came.

(I) So the guy in treatment he is an informant?

(R) He is a paid informant.

(I) Right.

(R) Paid informant, that's all. He wasn't in trouble it's just that he wanted money.

(I) Right. And so he introduced the D.E.A. to you?

(R) Right.

(R) Sure. I mean it's hard when you like somebody and you open up to somebody, I mean you're not thinking of everything your saying is going to be used against you.

(I) Yeah.

(R) I mean this guy had his kids over to the house and I met his family you know. (Case #010)

Another woman who was selling parts of grams in a Latino community in Oakland expressed similar concerns about an informant. In this case it was her sister-in-law, who became angry with her brother who was selling heroin and informed on him to the police. This police activity against her brother was also viewed as a possible threat to herself.

Again street and bar dealers are also subject to this risk more than larger, more clandestine dealers because of their high visibility and their lack of caution.

Fears About Police Investigations

Fears about a possible police investigation were perceived as a regular risk for most of this group of sellers. This usually took one of two forms. This first form had to do with individuals cocaine consumption and was most apparent when individuals were abusing the drug. The second form had to do with actual or possible police observations of individual sellers and the people they were associating with.

In the case of the first form, fears associated with a sellers own cocaine consumption, there is a general paranoia that accompanies regular and/or heavy use which causes many dealers to imagine possible police surveillance and instigates certain cautions. One female dealer who sold parts of pounds for her lover described this form in combination with concerns about traffic:

- (I) And the traffic didn't raise much heat?
- (R) We heard a lot of people say, "Well we know that the cops are watching this house for sure". But sometimes when somebody puts that in your mind that they [the police] can be upstairs...like I would walk through the halls and I would be tweaking out and feel like they were following me upstairs...stupid sick stuff. But it would make you wonder. You would look outside and you would see figures in other houses across the street. And I would think people were watching me through binoculars. I'm sitting there not moving because I'm tweaked out but that figure would just be there not moving too. Like I thought this lamp was a person that just never left and this person always watched us. It's sick. (Case #042).

Eventually this woman became so cautious about concerns with her neighbors, and the fears of being observed by the police that she developed a rather elaborate scheme where a) she did not allow anyone to come to their house for the drug and b) she went to considerable trouble to deposit the drug in an airport locker and then sold the key to the locker to the buyers.

Actual police observation was reported by a Latino smuggler who made regular forays to Mexico to bring back kilograms of cocaine which was eventually distributed by persons which he called the "Mexican Mafia".

- (I) Do you think that you ever had your phone tapped or they were investigating you at all?
- (R) Yeah. For sure they were investigating me at one point. The last part of the year that I was dealing

I'm positive of that. I was stopped more than a few times and they were drug agents that were stopping me.

(I) Oh really, in your car?

(R) I think basically because of the association. Like the people that I knew were heavily into it and of course there was always arrests of people like that. You know when they get one person ...

(I) When you got stopped what would they do to you?

(R) Just give me a bunch of shit, you know, search me and the vehicle I was in. Feed me a bunch of bullshit.

(I) And you never had any on you?

(R) No, they'd always tell me something like, "We're going to get you. We know what you're doing and you know so and so." And I said, "I don't know that person." And they say, "You know so and so." And I say, "No I don't." They'd say, "Well we seen you with him." I said, "Well I don't know that person by that name so I don't know who you're talking about." I said, "I have a lot of friends." So they always, you know, the fact that they were watching other people. (Case #062)

Fears About Confiscation of Property by Police, DEA etc.

In general sellers did not express much concern that police would confiscate their personal property derived from drug sales should they be arrested. Low level sellers did not believe that the police would use that tactic with them because they had so little property that it would not matter to the police. High level sellers knew about the powers of the police to confiscate property and were either careful not to buy property or large conspicuous material items if they could not prove that the purchases came from legal income or did not spend drug money on items that could be confiscated. Only one seller reported that she felt considerable concerns about property appropriation. She was a long time marijuana and cocaine seller who regularly received kilograms and sold pounds and half-pounds to a small network of customers (8 persons). She became concerned about her property when an old marijuana supplier who she had not done business with for four years was arrested and had all his property confiscated as well as all the property of his parents. Eventually the parents of the accused regained their property, but the seller never did. Her way of handling the risk was to always work at a legal job and speculate on the stock market so that she had some way of verifying any purchases that she and her husband might make.

Fears About the Internal Revenue Service

In general, most sellers who did not work did not file income tax returns and always dealt in cash. None had any problems with the IRS when they returned to work and filed returns. For persons who worked regularly while they sold cocaine it was seldom an issue, they just reported their legal income and forgot their illegal income. Some of the large sellers had legitimate businesses in which they invested cash and had ways to launder illicit drug money to make it appear that they earned the money legally.

Fears About Rip-offs and Violence

When sellers felt comfortable with the persons they were buying or selling cocaine from they had no particular fears about robberies or violence, but if they felt uncomfortable then it was a very real possibility. There was also some concern about customers revealing their activities to thieves who in turn might rob them. This was a particular concern for some women who dealt on their own, without the assistance of a man.

There were only six mentions of robbery, violence or threats of violence and we will illustrate three. The first is a robbery. A forty six year old woman, who had worked as a prostitute for 20 years and sold cocaine for four years reported how she was robbed and both she and her lover were badly beaten by three men.

- (I) Just what happened on that break in?
- (R) I didn't have any drugs in the house. I had some money but I didn't have any drugs and it was about four in the morning and a bunch of people had just left my house and these people must have been waiting outside. And there was a knock on the door and my kids were in the house too. And I guess whoever set me up knew who I was because that's usually what happens but anyway...they came to the door and they had stocking masks on and I opened the door, I was high, I just took a hit off the pipe [freebase pipe]... and there was a knock on the door and I went downstairs and I was really high and the guy knocked on the door and I asked, 'Who is it?' He goes, 'It's me, open the door,' and I thought it was my son. But that was not my son, my son was in his room asleep. And I opened the door and three of them came in with stocking masks on their face and one of them said, 'Let's blow them away now,' and then the other one said, 'No man, don't do that'. And one beat me so bad that they had to shave my whole head. They knocked my old man out and took his jewelry and they got about \$1,000 in the envelope that I had just laying around but the rest of my money they didn't

get. But they got \$1,000 and they pulled a gun on my son and they told him to freeze before they blew his brains out. And I played like I was passed out because I knew if the guy was to pull me outside he was gonna kill me. But when he did that to my son, I didn't care about me anymore. I go, 'Please don't hurt my son' and he goes, 'We know, we won't hurt your kid'. So they left and after that I stopped dealing and I went back to prostitution. And then about a year later I started dealing again and I dealt for about 6 months and then I stopped. (Case #023)

The second illustration is of a woman who dealt multiple kilograms with her lover until he was murdered. She was not exactly sure if he was killed because of his sales activity, but we were advised by an associate of the woman that the police believed her husband's death was drug related.

- (I) Okay let's talk about the circumstances that caused you to quit. Can you give us the story of what happened with your spouse and best as you can and how it is that made you make this particular decision.
- (R) Well he felt that for once we had stacked up all this money...he wanted to have a million dollars, that was his goal. So he felt like once he had a million dollars and 4 or 5 pieces of property then we can decide on some kind of business for both of us to be involved in, either the same business or a different business but where we would never have to work for anybody else. And so we were very close to that amount of money. And I wanted to get married and, you know, and have another kid. He didn't want me to have any kids while he was in that business because you never know what is going to happen. But he was really close to hitting his goal and we had always said that we would quit and get out of the business then. So there was a time when he wouldn't make anymore purchases or do anymore sales and I don't really know why but he was killed shortly before we were gonna get married. So that brought an abrupt halt to everything. I didn't really know people to buy from but I knew other people in the business and some of the customers I could have kept. Because I knew a lot of people selling ounces.
- (I) But basically you do believe that his death was drug connected?
- (R) Yeah, it was either someone jealous because they knew he had a lot of money or maybe they...it could have been that he was robbed and they could have taken a package that he had that I just didn't know about. Or they could have taken the money because when he got

killed I didn't have the money and it wasn't found in his place. So, you know, I don't really know what happened to the money. I don't know. He had been telling me that he wasn't transacting anymore business and, you know, there was a time when I tested him because I didn't believe he was really out of the business. So I called him up and I said, 'Hey, you know so and so, it will be simple cut and dry', and I'm talking like a \$10,000 or \$15,000 transaction and a lot of profit for us and he did not do it. I don't know whether he realized I was testing him and he said no or if he was really sincere and was out of the business. But it was either someone robbed him and he lost his life through that or, you know, he had a couple little girl friends who didn't want to see him getting married. And they could have really been angry and feeling like they had been used and they could have set him up for the robbery, you know, and didn't realized he was gonna get killed too. I really don't know. He was the kind of person who kept a lot of protection around those he loved...(Case #049)

Another good illustration of threats of violence was related by a 38 year Black seller who sold pounds of powder and crack to several sellers in San Francisco housing projects. It also illustrates how a gang took over his crack business by use of violence against his network of customers.

- (I) Then how did you decide to stop. What caused you to get out of it?
- (R) Well the thing that really caused me to get out of the business is the fact that...the whole process is being organized and organized crime is moving in. Okay they've got the L.A. Crypts that are up here now.
- (I) The L.A. Crypts.
- (R) Yeah, that's a big gang in L.A. like the Black Stone Rangers in Chicago.
- (R) And they're down in Watts and in Compton [in the Los Angeles area] and they're, you know, 3 or 4000 strong. As a matter of fact, a friend of mine is working for the gang task force in the prison. Because they go to jail and they get out and they're still running the shit from inside the jail. Now they want a piece of the drug trade. After they knocked out the mob in the 69 Street gang and all of them over in Oakland they got a club called the Out of Control gang now, the OCs. Out of Control Bloods is what is, the OCB's.
- (I) Where are they from?

- (R) Oakland and they've got a branch over here now. But see they're in war with the Crypts and that's why all that shooting is going on over there. The Crypts want to control everything and they don't want the individual entrepreneurs out on the street. They want you to come to them in the morning and get an ounce of rocks and go out there and stay out on the street until you sell it all and then bring back the money.
- (I) And that's it.
- (R) And that's it. They give you an x-amount of money for being out there but it's not like you're making 100% profit. They give you \$70 or \$80 a day to go out there and do it. And that's equivalent to a job, net, you know. Five times \$80 that's \$400 a week.
- (I) So what happened...
- (R) Well I started getting some heat and I started getting people beat up on the street and threatened not to come back out there.
- (I) So someone knew it was your man.
- (R) No, they didn't know it was my man but I mean people were coming back to me saying, 'Hey man, somebody robbed me and took all of my shit,' or 'Somebody told me not to come back out there unless I've got a gun.' And the clientele really started to really decline so that's why I got out of it. And you would have to deal with people that, you know, if you turned your back they would steal the white off of your teeth.
- (I) Your connections were still open.
- (R) Yeah, but if you went to certain corners and their people weren't out there then you would get harassed or possibly even shot at.
- (I) So the scene just got ugly and you decided the hell with it.
- (R) Yeah, that's when I decided to get out of it and, you know, the people getting killed and robbed and stabbed and I didn't want that around. And I made a couple of enemies too because people would sit up and start getting high and they would want me to give them credit or give them some or something and it's like I'm sorry. Then, you know, they're like, 'Well this mother fucker is selling coke up in that house,' and before you know it they tell another person and the other person says, 'Yeah well he's selling coke and he's got a bunch of

freaky women up there,' and they keep the story on until it snowballs to where it's I'm selling coke and selling women and selling hot cars and apartments and everything else.

(I) So things got weird.

(R) Yeah. (Case #013)

There was a second report of gang activity to take over drug sales by a kilogram/pound dealer who reported that he was approached by a friend of a customer (who vouched for him) about putting together a ten kilogram deal. After he arranged to get the ten kilograms and the transaction was made the customer returned with two others, who were heavily armed, and demanded that he buy back the cocaine, not for the \$100,000 for which he sold it for but \$150,000. Furthermore, they demanded that he deal with them exclusively in the future and made threats that he could not disregard. His response to this threat was to pay them \$150,000, take his family on a long vacation and retire. He was in a position to do this because he had bought several income producing properties and did not need either the trouble or the money from cocaine sales.

Fears About Customers

Customers of sellers can be a problem for sellers. Very often customers will make unusual demands upon the seller that become irritating - calling at all hours of the day or night, talking about drugs on the telephone, being unable to pay for the drugs that they wish to buy and consume, and as we saw earlier by introducing narcotics police into the network who could pose some threat to the seller.

Freebasers and persons who cannot afford to buy the drugs they are using are particularly problematic. Sellers usually establish rules to deal with some of these issues, but there is a general rule that many dealers lived by, "Do not make your customers mad at you so they would not drop a dime on you." This usually translated into not turning troublesome customers down when they approached them for cocaine, but telling them that you did not have any cocaine for sale. As one man explained:

(R) No, not too many deals went bad because we would give more [when customers complained about quality or short weight] ...we didn't want to have any complaints or hassles. We didn't want anybody to snitch on us, you know. (Case #042)

A white, male gram dealer expressed his problems with customers:

(I) ...What were some of the circumstances that actually made you decide to quit?

(R) Being woken up in the middle of the night by phone calls from customers who wanted to score. Having trouble collecting money from people who owed it to me. Having that lead to cutting people off and then having arguments with them about that and then being afraid of having them turn me into the police in retaliation. (Case #065)

Freebasing customers could be particularly problematic as a 29 year old female, Black, ounce dealer elucidated:

(I) And what were the circumstances of you leaving the business?

(R) Well the people around me, the people who were buying from me, were getting a little bit weird... a lot of people started basing and I didn't want any part of that or feel like I was contributing to that.

(I) This is '81?

(R) Yeah.

(I) So basing was kind of coming around.

(R) Yeah.

(I) But it wasn't on the street.

(R) No.

(I) How about the friends you were hanging with?

(R) They started using a lot more too, you know... They wanted more and asking for more and wanting to base and stuff and it just started getting out of control and when it's out of control it's bad and you run more of a risk of getting busted when it's out of control...

(I) So did you just suddenly say you were going to quit?

(R) It started building up in me and then one day I just said this is it. I think I went and bought some more and paid off the last one and I said this is it. But I didn't tell my connection that or anybody else...Made one more cop and cleaned it out, paid the man and I said that's it for me. (Case #053)

Some sellers have continuing problems from customers and find them extremely troublesome to deal with:

(R) Well as I learned how difficult coke fiends are to deal with, when it come to money and they're

reliability and how they will transgress on your life in order to get their powder, and you see people in really bad shape coming to you with nothing, you know, with fantastic stories of how they can pay you later cause something has happened to them, they just sold a screenplay or, you know, all this weird stuff their telling you so you can front them just a few lines of blow, cause they're jones'n [addicted].

(I) They're desperate.

(R) Yeah. And seeing that too often and then having people who were real nice to me when I had blow and when I didn't have any or wouldn't sell to them, have them scream at me and threaten me, and I think well Jeez, I don't want this guy to be picked up by the police....

(I) When they threatened you, what kind of threats were they? That they'd hurt you?

(R) Oh, well no. ummmmm, that was a bit of an exaggeration. I remember this one guy who call me up asking me if I could get him some cocaine or other drug and I said no I can't and he goes, 'You can't or you won't?', was I personally cutting him off, and I really didn't care at the time and I said, 'Well it amounts to the same thing', and kind of hung up on him. And then I felt a feeling of fear, that now this guy is mad at me, I've got this guy who's paranoid on cocaine, now he's going to think I'm part of his problem and he can get even with me by turning me into the cops and I think that was a legitimate fear on my part.

(I) Yeah. Did you have a lot of bad customers?

(R) They're all....yes.

(I) They're all bad?

(R) No, no, they aren't actually all bad customers, no. No, I sold many times without any problems at all.

(I) But there were some bad customers. What did bad customers do?

(R) They would call you at any hour of the night, okay, to see if you had something. They might show up at your door, any hour of the day or night, whether or not the lights were on then knock on the door to see if you just went to bed, maybe you just went to bed, "I was seeing if you just went to bed", it's 3:30.

(I) Yeah, I just went to bed, um-hmmm.

(R) So they're extremely egotistical and uhhhh, and oh just coke fiends. Often they had no money at all, and would have all these stories they could pay you later and sometimes they are friends of yours and you figure you can front them the stuff, then each on of your friends always owes you \$25 for the latest quarter and your out a few \$100.

(I) And that kind of strains relationships too doesn't it?

(R) It strains relationships too. Cause your letting their drug problem, their inability to pay for their drugs put you out. (case #065)

Most sellers try to develop rules in dealing with customers; rules that will provide structure to the transactions much the same way shop keepers have rules about when business will be conducted, who will given credit etc.:

(I) Okay how about rules and hours when someone could call or, you know, who you would sell to. You didn't hustle new customers did you?

(R) No, I only sold to the people that I knew and they knew they weren't suppose to bring anybody to my house, not even parked outside or anything like that.

(I) That's a good rule.

(R) Yeah, and they knew that they shouldn't call me after ten and if they did my machine was usually on.

(I) What time of day did you like to do most of your business?

(R) Early, before I went to work.

(I) So mornings huh?

(R) Yeah. (Case #053)

One gram dealer who had a number of troublesome customers had a particularly good tactic for dealing with them. He sold them very heavily diluted cocaine and they did not return. Upon getting his supply he would organize it into three baggies - his own personal stash which was not cut, a cut supply for good customers, and a very heavily cut supply for customers he wished to stop selling to. The tactic worked every time. Supplies were plentiful and customers would not return to a seller that sold them low quality drugs. His customers where persons who would

not come back and demand their money back and the tactic seem to work for non-violent customers, but by no means are all customers non-violent.

Fears About Connections

Some large sellers were potentially violent, but most sellers were not fearful of connections unless they had problems paying for drugs that were being fronted. Again freebasers and persons who injected the drug were particularly vulnerable to threats from connections when they could not make payments for fronted drugs. One ounce dealer, who was also an injector of both heroin and cocaine, told of one incident he had with a old friend who was connected to "the mob" and supplied him with large supplies from Miami.

(I) You didn't feel any risks with the mob?

(R) No, well one time I owed them money. I think I was into them for about 4 or 5 grand and I get a phone call and, uh, they are at the Miami airport... Perry who I would only see at his home in Fort Lauderdale, uh, my old roommate from years that past says me and Frank... are on our way out here. Now I owed him like, I don't know, 4 or 5 thousands and I don't have any money on me and I don't have any coke and they want me to rent them a car and they'll be here in 5 hours right so I get real nervous but at that time I was using a lot of drugs and strung out on heroin.

(I) Uh huh.

(R) So I'm loaded, so I got the car with a credit card and I met them at the airport and we drive like 2 miles outside the airport and Perry tells me to pull over and I go 'Oh shit,' you know, and I am thinking, 'Get in the fuckin trunk,' right and we get out and he slaps me, you know, not hard, you know, 'Hey you fucked up and don't do it again, okay,' and I say, 'Okay.'

(I) Uh huh.

(R) And after that they proceeded to give me like 3 or 4 pounds of cocaine and I mean I don't know, I just beat them for like \$4,000 and he slaps me in the face and you do it again I'm going to hurt you, that's what he said, 'If you do it again I'm going to hurt you, now take care of business,' you know, and I was loaded on heroin and the guys give me...

(I) They are just reminding you. (Case #010)

A second case, a smuggler, told us that he regularly shaved off 5 or 6 ounces from kilograms that he smuggled across the Mexican border. He used these purloined supplies for his own rather outrageous freebasing sessions. Eventually the persons who financed his Mexican forays discovered the shortage and approached him about it. He denied the pilferage, but felt that he was in real danger of being shot or killed. He eventually convinced them that he did do it, but felt that he only got away with it because he was related to one of the major financiers. Eventually when his own use began to get out of control the group simply cut him off from all moneys and supplies.

Un-anticipated Risks

Many persons found that their personal use got completely out of control so that it either cut down on the their profits or they had trouble meeting their debts to suppliers who was fronting them supplies. For example, one woman who sold for 10 years and did very well when she only snorted the drug became a compulsive user and an unreliable seller when she began to freebase it:

- (R) ..., let me tell you what happened. When I started freebasing, I started losing money, you know, but the people that I was involved with and I had been involved with the same people for so many years they could not believe that I wasn't capable of doing it anymore. So they kept giving me these amounts of drugs, you know, half pounds, you know. And then they'd cut it down and I would end up with part of their money and not all of their money. Then they gave me quarter pounds and would come back with hardly no money but, I mean, the average person would have been dead because they would have been killed probably. But by me knowing them since I was like 19 or 20 years old and I had been dealing with them for so long and I'm sure I probably made them a lot of money too as well as for myself...they kept trying it but I kept slipping backwards. After awhile...after I started basing I tried to sell it for about a year after that and I couldn't. I just went so far in debt that (end of side one)
- (I) Okay now let's talk about the circumstances that caused you to make a decision to stop selling? Was it your own cocaine use or did you have some other problems with it or was it fear of arrest or going to drug treatment? What caused you to come to that decision to stop selling cocaine?
- (R) My own use.
- (I) How did your own use cause you to stop?

(R) Freebasing. When I was using and selling, well, when I was snorting and selling cocaine, you know, I made money and I didn't have any pressure. Because like I said, over the years I had built my clientele to where they were all very close to me. Everything that I did worked out fine, with the exception of that one robbery, that was the only time that ever turned me completely me around because that was near, you know, it could have been...my kid could have wound up with brain damage. That time I stopped for a period of time and I left the area. In my head I didn't quit or say hey, I'm gonna stop doing this. I quit to make a new location and that was just for a short period of time. But in my head to quit selling cocaine completely was when I knew I couldn't handle it anymore and I couldn't make it pay...do you understand? It was costing me too much. Everything I had lost, just everything that I had. I tried to obtain more and the more I would try to climb the farther I would slip back. And it became a problem when I started freebasing cocaine because it gave such a craving that you can't stop. Whatever you have, whatever you're doing, whatever money you've got, you're gonna spend it. I haven't seen anyone do any different either. So I still was at a level...I had gone to a real high level like I was buying \$10,000, you know, in Vegas and whatever...Miami, I was going everywhere. I was buying large quantities of dope, well, cocaine. Everything cort of worked out fine until someone struck that pipe in my mouth and said try it this way. But I had seen people doing it and some friends of mine, in fact the same guy that introduced me, you know the White boys said, 'Dennie show them this here.' He said, 'I never seen anything like it and whatever money they spend they'll sit and they'll spend...if they've got \$1,000 they'll spend \$1,000. If they've got \$3,000, they're gonna sit there until the \$3,000 is gone.' But I couldn't believe it, you know, it didn't phase me when said that. Well the first time I tried it I didn't like it. The second time I tried it I didn't like it. And then one day someone goes, 'Oh come on try it this way, you've got to try it, you've got to feel what I feel.' So I did it the way they did it and they showed me and I got sprung.(Case #024)

Another 24 year old, student, ounce dealer reported similar problems of being out of control, losing the confidence of his suppliers and physical problems:

(I) So that's another factor in the whole thing. Your own use was getting pretty outrageous.

- (R) My own use was getting way out of hand and I was real skinny and way under nourished and I couldn't even stay awake anymore because I was....
- (R) Tired all the time.
- (R) Physically fatigued and I couldn't even keep my eyes open.
- (I) It's an exhausting lifestyle.
- (R) So exhausting. I've been more tired from a night of bingeing that I could have ever been from back packing for two weeks and hiking 100 miles a day. That's when my grades dropped in school because I was too tired for school, too tired to do anything. I would spend a lot of time in the shower or trying to suck some food down just to be somewhat nourished.
- (I) In order to do it again.
- (R) Yeah.
- (I) So when you did decide to quit, what did you do? Did you leave the scene or did you get out for awhile?
- (R) Well it also kind of happened the same time when my dealers weren't trusting me anymore. I was getting out of hand and not paying the debts fast enough and finally I think they got nervous. They were getting bigger and they had other customers so they didn't need me really as much anymore. And so they were kind of giving me the cold shoulder and cutting me out. And they were tired of me scaring them because I was scaring them to death.
- (I) By your use?
- (R) My use and involving them. Four in the morning, I'm not a real threatening person but just the look in my eyes when I would say, 'I have to get some more right now.' I would scare them enough for them to say, 'Okay just don't bug me anymore tonight,' or they would just give me some so I would go away. I was getting too out of hand. (Case #063)

With only a few exceptions most persons who sold cocaine tended to use it very heavily and with heavy use came various unanticipated physical and psychological problems. There were of course certain variations among users, in the ways that they used the drug, but it was a very common occurrence for sellers to have myriad problems with their own use.

One man who was a very heavy drinker as well as a prodigious user of cocaine reported that he nearly died of peritonitis while he was using and selling cocaine.

- (R) Yeah, so I ended up getting real sick and uhhh, having surgery. Cause I pickled my inside.
- (I) Liver?
- (R) Well I just had a distended liver, I had peritonitis.
- (I) Peritonitis that's where....
- (R) Where the whole inside....
- (I) Oh, you got a big scar there huh?
- (R) Pickled. All my inside was pickled, my kidneys and everything. So they had to..., and they said if I drank again, I would die and my liver was going bad and so filtering the coke through your liver where it filters, was tearing up my liver, so I was be bruising really...and, I had hepatitis.
- (I) You got hepatitis?
- (R) I had hepatitis.
- (I) From what?
- (R) From alcohol. They call it alcohol hepatitis, I don't know if it's A, B, or what it is.
- (I) Oh, I see, hummm.
- (R) So it was medical reasons is why I quit.
- (I) It looked like some knarly surgery, I mean.
- (R) Yeah, I was in for 17 days.
- (I) 17 days, and did they take anything out or.....
- (R) No. They thought it was the gallbladder, opened it up and then all doctor's passed out because of the rotten smell.
- (I) Oh my God! Really?
- (R) Well they got sick yeah. They just cleaned it all up and put me back together and then just told me that, you know. (Case #064)

One young, female pound dealer became anorexic with her heavy use and had to go to the hospital with a urinary infection:

(R) I was like anorexic. I probably ate 10 times that year or maybe more like 12 times, like once a month. No really, I would not eat. I would maybe eat a bag of potato chips and that would keep me going for 3 days. Then I would sleep and I would wake up and I might have a piece of toast... I would be sick all the time. I would be nauseous, faint.

(I) Colds?

(R) I had a constant cough that year and I would always be able to cough up black stuff.

(I) So no serious illness?

(R) No, the urinary infection was serious. I got to the point where I couldn't walk and I bleed....I thought I was on my period for a full month and I knew something was going on. I put it off for another week and it was a urinary infection that went into my kidneys and it was in my back and I was bent over...and I was so thin and weak I just had to stay like that until they took me to the hospital. I was too weak to even pull myself up. I was just drained and I had no color. I had these big black things on my face and they would peel. Oh God...

(I) And how long were you like this?

(R) A couple of days. They gave me some medication and I took the medicine and the pain went away in a day. Then I rested the next day and I had some soup and a meal and just went right back to it. I put on 50 pounds since then. (Case 042)

Summary

The general possibility of arrest for sales is perceived by ex-cocaine sellers as a risk that most sellers can minimize by restricting their selling activities to small networks of persons that they know and trust. Such a possibility was not an abiding concern, but very clearly sellers put themselves at risk when they sold to strangers or persons who were not personally known by the seller. Sellers were generally more concerned about disgruntle customers, informants and possible rip offs and violence than they were of police investigations, possible confiscation of personal property by the police and IRS audits and investigations.

CHAPTER 5 CRIMINAL JUSTICE PRESSURES TO STOP SELLING COCAINE

As we expected the motivations or reasons for stopping cocaine sales was for the most part very complex. In order to assess the circumstances and reasons given to stop we asked a series of questions in the quantitative section of the interview and in addition we have accounts of the processes from the open-ended focused interview. Very briefly, the quantitative questions sought to explore:

- What criminal justice pressures were felt.
- What were the general circumstances of the decision.
- What were the most frequent reasons given to stop.
- The most important reason to stop.

Our exploration of criminal justice pressures to stop selling cocaine were conceived as being of two types - direct and indirect criminal justice pressures. The first was pretty obvious - an arrest for some violation of the law, either drug related or not. Indirect pressures were a little more complicated - arrest of someone from a suppliers network, arrest of someone from a customer network, arrest of a drug selling partner, fears of being investigated by the police and fears of going to prison. Both types of pressures was explored in both the quantitative section of the interview and fleshed out in the focused interview. We will begin with the quantitative data.

In general, the majority of ex-sellers we interviewed reported that they did not experience any criminal justice pressures to quit, neither direct nor indirect. Forty-eight persons or 60.0% of the 80 respondents reported that they did not experience any criminal pressures to quit. Of the remaining thirty-two who reported some pressures, 16 (20%) said that they stopped selling because of some arrest, the majority of which was for sales and possession; and 16 (20%) reported indirect pressures to quit.

Direct Pressures

The most direct criminal justice pressure was as might be expected arrest for sales and possession of cocaine and 6 persons were arrested for sales and possession (See Table 5.1). Another 4 were arrested for possession of cocaine with intent to sell. Analyzing these data by sex, ethnicity and levels of sales we found that males (35.2%) reported direct pressure (being arrested more than females (11.5%). And minorities were arrested for drug possession (24.3%) more than whites (6.4%). There were no statistically significant difference for levels of sales.

Three respondents were arrested for other crimes: one for driving under the influence, another for assault, and a third turned himself into the police for check forgery under the pressure of his live-in girl friend.

TABLE 5.1 SELF REPORTS OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT CRIMINAL JUSTICE PRESSURES TO STOP COCAINE SALES

	Number	Percent
No Criminal Justice Pressures	(48)	60.0%
Direct Criminal Justice Pressures		
Arrest for sales and possession of cocaine	(8)	10.0
Arrest for possession of cocaine with intent to sell	(4)	5.0
Arrest for possession of cocaine	(1)	1.3
Arrests for other crimes	(3)	3.8
Sub-total	(16)	20.0
Indirect Criminal Justice Pressures		
Someone in Supply Network Arrested	(10)	12.5%
Business Partner Arrested	(2)	2.5
Police Investigation	(2)	2.5
Fear of Rearrest and Imprisonment	(2)	2.5
Sub-total	(16)	20.0

Indirect Criminal Justice Pressures

Indirect pressures to stop sales could take several forms as we mentioned earlier. The most common form was arrest of someone from a suppliers' network. More than one out ten (12.5%) reported that someone from a suppliers' network was arrested (See Table 5.1). A good illustration of this was case of a 40 year old ounce dealer who sold cocaine on and off for six years.

In general, she was very careful about restricting her sales to a small group of customers that she knew and trusted but her major connection, who drank very heavily, was not as careful. Just prior to her voluntary retirement two incidents happened.

The first incident involved four thieves masquerading as police who broke into her connection's house, held him, his wife and two children at gun point and stole \$30,000 and approximately a pound of cocaine. Three weeks later police contacted the wife of the

connection and told her that they knew that her husband was selling cocaine and asked for their cooperation in identifying the gang. Both agreed to help the police, but could not identify anyone in a police line up. The connection continued to sell despite the protests of his wife.

The second incident occurred one month later. Whenever the connection went out of town she assumed delivery to several of his suppliers in the South Bay. On this occasion she was out of town herself, taking her children to a Girl Scout camping outing, and an associate took over the tasks of delivery. The associate was arrested with several ounces and the respondent believed that had she made the delivery they same thing would have happened to her. She decided that it was time to quit selling shortly thereafter.

A second illustration is the account of a 46 year old pound dealer who regularly traded guns for pounds and kilograms of cocaine. The guns were not military weapons, but rifles and pistols that were eventually smuggled to Mexico by his connection who was said to be part of the "Mexican Mafia".

(I) What were the circumstances of your decision to quit selling?

(R) Well the circumstances is that this whole network seemed to have gotten busted and I haven't heard from any of them in about 13 or 14 months.

(I) So your connection dried up.

One stock-broker seller told an unusual story about his growing concerns about being arrested, a portentous dream he had that his whole suppliers network was arrested and his subsequent decision to retire from drug sales:

(R) I mean when business got to its highest and best point ... I believe it was the administration policy, the Federal Administration Policy to say that they were really going to go after the smaller dealer type thing and they were really going to bust a lot of these people and continually it was like a wave that moved east to west across the country and you know you'd always get these newspaper reports about this bust and this bust okay, and even in the paper they said that they were coming to S.F. Like they could have put a billboard up on the freeway that said, 'They're coming to S.F.,' and I kept looking at the people that knew I was dealing and I saw, you know, we've been in it for a long time, and people were getting flakier and flakier, and depending on it more and more for their income, and

they were taking more chances and selling to strangers, and meeting new people, and like I said the dealer wasn't buttoned down and squared away and secure. He had a card table and the shit was dumped on it like you dump dirt or top soil in your back yard, you know, the whole room was full of that shit. The phone was ringing continually when you were there and I said, 'How many thousands of people know about his shit.' I mean when they sweep it all up am I going to get caught and I didn't want that to happen. I had no intention of ever going to jail, uh, I would have posted bail and gone to France on the next Concorde out. I mean my passport was ready, my credit was ready and you know rather than deal with that I would have been gone, you know. I would have been and expatriate. I would have gone some place where they didn't have an extradition treaty and I would have figured out how to get in over there. But I wasn't going to go back and spend any length of time in confinement just after spending that one night in confinement back when I got drunk in college and I got arrested for the night. I said this place is not for me it's sucks...

- (I) Like business was really going great.
- (R) I don't remember any significant changes until I started feeling that these people are sloppy. And there is a lot of busts going down, and I suggested to them several times that they cool the activities and let this storm that is obviously coming blow over and we will see how the waters are at that point but everyone else was really into it and so I pretty much pulled the plug on it. And I also had these dreams. I had this dream 3 times it was like the movie, "Little Big Man" where I had certain morality play... but the bottom line was that I kept dreaming that everybody got caught. And, uh, and the vividness where it took place and what happened and how it went down it was like playing a video tape. It was the same dream three times. Well I had stopped dealing [regularly],... somebody had asked me to pick something up for them and this was a very important guy ...
- (I) You are saying that you stopped dealing already?
- (R) These were the one occasions where I would say, 'Okay at my convenience I will do this for you.' I think I did it once or twice. And one time there was this painting crew at the house next door and they were there painting ...like I went and tested and didn't like it. I think I made 3 trips in 4 days or 5 days and this fuckin crew of painters was there for 5 days and there were about 9 guys. I mean you could have

painted a Taj Mahajal in 5 days. And I said, 'I don't like this at all.' I mean they had this van parked out there and nobody had paint on them and they were all standing around and doing their stuff and I don't know what was going on. And they had them filming everybody walking in and I don't know what the hell they were doing but it was weird and it scared me a little bit. And another time I went back, there was a cement truck there. I went back in the morning the my dealer was not there he blew an appointment on me. And I went back later that day and there was the same cement truck, the license plate was the same. The cement pump truck had been there for 8 hours and he would have to be pumping it by the shovel full to be there that long. And nobody rents a cement truck that long, I mean it just didn't make any since...anyway there was two circumstances there that I felt very uncomfortable about and, uh, I was able to cover my going in and out in front of these people because I had luckily met the nurse that lived upstairs and ran into her one day and ran into her roommate the other day and introduced myself and talked and stuff like that in front of these people. And I felt fortunate well there is a sly cover there and maybe they think I'm here to see the nurse on floor 2 instead of dealer on floor 3.

- (I) Uh huh.
- (R) So a couple of weeks later I'm coming back from Tahoe on the behalf of these people that I decided to make an exception for and I phoned and phoned and nobody is there. And, uh, then I picked up the newspaper and there is everybody in a drawing. They picked up so many people they are all being arraigned in a jury box cause there are so many of them and I said, 'The heats gone down.'
- (I) Your people?
- (R) My people and all of their North Bay connections and all of the lower people in the Haight. Everything blew over and around, and somehow I ducked and I missed it all.
- (I) So your dream came true, everybody got busted but you.
- (R) And they did and they didn't finger me. By that time I'd been out [of it] for a few months and they didn't see me on a weekly basis or any kind a regular basis. I was the drop-in. (Case #004)

Arrest of Customers

Indirect pressures stemming from the arrest of customers was not reported as a sole reason to stop selling cocaine. When customers were arrested sellers usually denied them all access, refused to take phone calls, refused to sell to them and generally avoided them. All of which suggests that sellers were acting cautiously.

Arrest of Business Partners

Arrest of drug selling partners was viewed as indirect pressure and was reported by two cases (2.5%). One was a woman who sold ounces and parts of ounces for four years and who at one point financed two lesbian friends to go to South America to smuggle cocaine into the United States. The two eventually became regular and reliable connections for the respondent. This woman's partner (another woman) was arrested for possession of one gram of cocaine was judged to be guilty and served six months in a county jail. During her imprisonment she suffered considerable psychological distress and her hair turned gray during the imprisonment. The respondent thought that the sentence was severe and noting the effect it had upon her partner she decided to stop using and stop selling.

Another woman who sold kilograms and pounds and was closely associated with Columbian smugglers stopped her activities when the DEA arrested 15 persons in her supplier and customer network, one of whom was her brother-in-law. When she was not arrested herself other Columbians in the supply network threatened her and others with violence to make sure that they did not reveal information to the DEA.

Police Investigations

Only two cases reported that they stopped selling cocaine solely because of an imminent police investigation, but two other respondents said that it was a contributory factor among other reasons. A woman who said a police investigation was a principle reason to stop selling first sold marijuana for three years. When the price of marijuana was increasing she and her lover decided to move on to cocaine. Initially, they traded marijuana for cocaine, but eventually they found a good supply for high quality cocaine and began to buy three or four kilograms a month. They sold it to a small group of 8 trusted customers who would buy pounds, half pounds and ounces.

Early in their transition from marijuana to cocaine sales she was arrested by the police for possession of marijuana after a police informant directed narcotic officers to her home with the information that they sold cocaine. The police did not find the cocaine that was hidden there, but they did find several ounces of marijuana. She remained in jail over a weekend, plead guilty

to the charge, and was sentenced to a diversion program which she described as a joke. "The counselor regularly asked me to score for him and tried to convince me to give up my marijuana use by utilizing meditation techniques." (Case #001)

Upon being released from jail she and her boyfriend (who she eventually married) moved to a new location and kept selling both drugs but at a reduced rate. Gradually they increased their business and began to make regular money, but she continued to work throughout the whole time that they sold cocaine. During the last year of their cocaine selling career they learned that an old marijuana supplier who lived in Arizona had been arrested by the police and was being prosecuted. Police confiscated the supplier's property and began to arrest other customers of the supplier. Although they had not done business with the old supplier in a number of years they began to feel that they might be being investigated themselves. To avoid possible investigation they moved a second time to a town in another county and were careful not to give out their new address and telephone number to any of their old associates. At the time her husband was using the drug very heavily and experiencing paranoid ideation about the investigation. Both became fearful that the police were imminent and decided to cut back on their sales activity. Six months later after she took on a new more responsible job, separated from her husband they both stopped selling completely.

Fears of Re-arrest or Imprisonment

Two respondents reported that they stopped selling cocaine because of fear of re-arrest and imprisonment. Sellers who had previous convictions for drug sales and possession and/or were ex-convicts who had a good deal to lose if they were re-arrested had considerable fears about going to or returning to prison. This naturally acted as an indirect pressure on some to stop selling. One ex-convict illustrated this type of indirect pressure very well. He had a long and checkered arrest history from an early age and had spent 10 years in San Quentin and Folsom prisons and had no desire to return. Prior to going to prison he had sold various types of drugs - opiates, cocaine, barbiturates, amphetamines. After serving his last prison term he built a small but profitable contracting business and managed to change his life considerably. He was a regular user of marijuana and on occasion he used cocaine. When cocaine became more plentiful he undertook selling ounces and parts of ounces to a very small network of friends to finance the his and his wife's use. He knew his connection very well, she was the best friend of his wife, so had no fears on her part. He never allowed customers to bring any strangers into the house and on one instance when it happened he became livid with the culprit.

In general, he felt he had too much to lose if he were arrested and this acted as continuing indirect pressure on him to

limit the scope of his sales activities. Eventually he decided to stop when his connection stopped selling and he did not seek any other sources, even though two others were available to him.

Summary

Criminal justice pressures, either direct or indirect, was not a particularly recurrent factor in this sample's accounts of their decisions to stop selling cocaine. Three out of five reported that they felt no criminal justice pressures at all to stop sales. Of those who reported pressures there was equal percentages of direct and indirect pressures. The most frequently mentioned indirect pressure to stop was an arrest of a member of a supply network.

CHAPTER 6 OTHER REASONS TO STOP SELLING COCAINE

There were of course other important reasons to stop selling cocaine that were cited. Some people were simply inept or incompetent as sellers and abandoned the business when selling was not profitable to them, they had difficulties paying a supplier for fronted supplies, or a supplier denied them supplies. Very often these people found that they were using too much of their supplies and did not have the control to meet the financial demands of the job. In the quantitative section of the interview we asked two questions to explore these reasons to stop sales. More than a quarter (26.2%) reported that cocaine sales was not profitable and 17.5% said that they had financial problems with their connection. This was illustrated well by the case of 31 year old, black systems analyst's account. For purposes of the report we will call her Sylvia.

Sylvia began selling cocaine in 1978 when she lived with a boyfriend who was a regular seller of cocaine hydrochloride. She served a short apprenticeship as his assistant and helper - learning how to cut, package and price the drug. When that relationship deteriorated she stopped selling for a time and then at the instigation of her present husband she began to sell again in partnership with him. She, however, took the lead because she knew much more about it than he. For a time they made some money which they used to buy a new television set, a V.C.R. and Hi Fi set. Then they began to freebase and set up a party or rock house. At this point they stopped selling powder and began to sell bi-carbonate soda freebase. Friends and their friends would come to the house and freebase during the evenings and on weekends. Both the sellers and their customers became very rowdy and noisy at these parties and the neighbors in the building called the police a number of times about the noise. Eventually they were evicted from the apartment for this reason.

With freebasing the couple's consumption escalated dramatically. The husband had a particularly bad time of it as he was not working and freebasing during the day as well as at night. She used less as she had a good job as a programmer and had ... "to keep it together to get to work mornings". With their heavy freebasing they began to have difficulties paying their supplier who was fronting them ounces at the time. This occurred several times and the supplier became indignant and at one point came into their apartment and stole their V.C.R.

Eventually he cut off their supplies and they did not have the money to go to another supplier as they had also failed to pay him as well. Once supplies were cut

off they stopped freebasing and began to moderate their intranasal use. Three months after they lost their connection she became pregnant and she decided to stop using cocaine altogether while she was expecting so they both stopped completely during her pregnancy. It should be noted that the interviewer knew this couple during the period when they ran the rock house, attended a number of their parties, observed their increased consumption and final demise as sellers. (Case #050)

Physical and Psychological Problems

Not the least of reasons to stop selling cocaine were problems that their drug abuse caused them. As we saw in Chapter 3 sellers experienced numerous physical and psychological problems because of their drug abuse. More than two out of every five (45.0%) cited psychological problems associated with their cocaine use as a reason to stop and a third (35.0%) cited physical health reasons.

TABLE 6.1 SELF-REPORTED REASONS TO STOP SELLING COCAINE - PERCENT REPORTING

	Percent	Rank Order
Financial Problems		
Problems with connection	(14) 17.5	7
Other financial problems	(13) 16.2	8
Selling not profitable	(21) 26.2	4
Physical and Psychological Problems Associated with Cocaine Use		
Physical problems	(28) 35.0	2
Psychological problems	(36) 45.0	1
Social Pressure		
From spouse of lover	(25) 31.3	3
Pressure from family	(16) 20.0	5
Other Reasons		
Difficulties obtaining drug	(15) 18.8	6
Decline in quality of drug	(13) 16.2	8

Psychological problems are illustrated by this account of a Mexican smuggler who sold cocaine for three years and at his peak period used two ounces a week, which is an extremely large amount. For this report we will call him Pedro. Pedro experienced a wide range of psychological problems: insomnia, isolation and irritability. He explained his problems thus:

- (I) ...What were the circumstances that made you decide to quit selling?

- (R) ...It's kind of hard to describe. I was torturing myself and that's probably the biggest thing and the fact that I had lost my girl friend at the time. She just got to the point where ... I was having a lot of problems with people at the time. So that kind of led to that because of the heavy usage and a lot of bills being incurred.
- (I) How much were you using in a week?
- (R) I'd say I was going through a few ounces easy...
- (I) Fifty or sixty grams then.
- (R) It seems like it's a lot but I was up all hours of the night. I'd go on binges for a week.
- (I) A week?
- (R) A week, you know, straight. I was going days and days without sleeping during all that time I was doing it. It's like you do a gram and it's not enough, you know, 20 minutes later you are doing another gram... I was addicted to it I felt at that point, you know. I was doing it senselessly anyway...
- (I) Yeah. Were you having trouble with your supplier and your customers too?
- (R) Yeah because shit was getting short. They were going and they were weighing them out and they'd tell me that I barely gave them over a half of 3/4 of a gram. A lot of that started occurring and became more so I was in a hurry and always frantic type of predicaments. Everything had to be done then and there. I had to have everything done where I would have my time. I felt they were invading my privacy because they wanted to buy coke from me.
- (I) Right cause you wanted to be basing or snorting.
- (R) Yeah it was like really weird. I turned from being a casual type person and happy go lucky and even when I was using that it started occurring that people were bugging me.
- (I) So you got really irritable.
- (R) Yeah. It was like I was dealer and they were coming for the drug and I didn't want to sell it to them.
- (I) "What are you doing here man. Get out of here."

- (R) Yeah I got shit to do. I don't want to do it now come back in 2 or 3 hours and I wasn't doing anything. I was just sitting there but I didn't want to talk to anybody. I wanted to just sit there by myself.
- (I) So you started to get really isolated?
- (R) Yeah.
- (I) And then your girl friend left.
- (R) Oh man I'd go weeks at a time without uttering a word to anybody in the house. I had no reason to say anything to anybody.
- (I) Serious. Just sit there and do more coke...
- (R) ... It was like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde type of situation. I was really paranoid and I was getting really frantic. Everything was having to be done now. The dealer wasn't wanting to mess with me cause he thought I was absolutely crazy...I could have been committed because of the fact I was abusing myself that way.
- (I) Well also just the lack of sleep.
- (R) Yeah that would probably be the biggest factor and probably biggest problem I have right now to deal with.
- (I) Is sleeping?...And you've been out of it for 3 years now?
- (R) And still can't sleep.
- (I) Still can't sleep more than 4 hours at a time?
- (R) Not more than 4 hours at a time. I'm lucky if I get 2 or 3 hours...So it's kind of rough. I still haven't learned how to control that problem. (Case # E062)

Social Pressures to Stop

Pressures for other important people in the cocaine seller's life also could act as a motive to stop selling - most particularly from a spouse or lover, and family. Nearly a third (31.3%) reported that pressures from a spouse or lover was important to their decision to stop. Another fifth (20.0%) reported that pressures from family - children, parents etc. - were part of their decision. One white, 52 year old gram dealer described his wife's attitudes toward his cocaine use and sales:

Well she didn't approve. She didn't approve of me doing coke. She didn't approve of some of the people that I associated with and some of the people that came to the house to pick up...not even to pick up but like they had no place to go and they were hanging out for a beer or two or three or four or five. And I can see that, you know. I may have not seen it at the time but after awhile I began to see that. We didn't need that around, that's asking for trouble. (Case # E012)

One woman who sold parts of ounces and grams for over three years began to feel social pressure from her two daughters, who were 9 and 7 years at the time. She knew that they knew or had a good idea what she was doing and did not want them to feel constrained in their relationships with their friends. Both were becoming sociable and were beginning to invite friends home and she did not want them to feel that they could not invite friends into the house. At one point her oldest when asked by a friend what her mother did for a living said, "She sells small packets of paper to men who come to the house." The small packets of paper was cocaine sold in grams. (Case # E075)

Another male who sold parts of ounces turned himself into the police at the urging of his wife when he began to write checks to cover his debts to his connection. She gave him an ultimatum - stop using, stop selling, go to the police and go to treatment - and it worked. (Case # E035)

The Most Important Reasons to Stop

Toward the end of the quantitative interview we asked all respondents to summarize the most important reason or reasons for stop selling cocaine. We had responses from all respondents, but very often they gave more than one response; in all we had 190 responses or approximately 2.3 per respondent. To our surprise the most often mentioned reason to stop was something we had not considered previously, namely the problems associated with the lifestyle of selling. Two out of every five (43.8%) reported that the most important reason to stop was the lifestyle associated with drug selling. In general, what they meant was a combination of their own drug use, psychological and physical problems associated with drug use, the illegal nature of the activity, and the problems dealing with other drug users and other sellers. To illustrate the problems associated with the lifestyle we have selected the case of a 32 year old, black woman who sold pounds for three years with her husband. Both of them were heavy freebasers for a year and a half and experienced myriad physical and psychological problems:

- (I) Okay so at some point you decided to bail out, can you tell me the circumstances of that decision.

- (R) I just got burnt out, you know, and he was using more and more and he messed up a couple of times with, you know, picking up from his connection and that really scared me. We didn't have sex anymore and we stayed inside all the time.
- (I) And how about your use now?
- (R) My use was getting up there too and I started feeling really out of control and it wasn't worth it.
- (I) So when you say you messed up with the dealer you mean he didn't bring the money he or didn't cop or what?
- (R) Well once he didn't have the money together and the other time I don't know what happened but he came back with nothing. It just started feeling too weird. (Case #054)

TABLE 6.2 SELF-REPORT OF MOST IMPORTANT REASON OR REASONS TO STOP SELLING COCAINE - PERCENT REPORTING

"Let's do a summary now, what was the most important reason or reasons that you stopped selling cocaine?"

	Percent Reporting	Rank Order
Dislike lifestyle associated with drug sales	(35) 43.8	1
Criminal Justice Pressures		
Direct CJ Pressure	(9) 11.3%*	9
Indirect CJ Pressure	(25) 31.3	2
Pressures from spouse or lover	(24) 30.0	3
Physical and Psychological Problems Associated with Cocaine Use		
Physical problems	(14) 17.5	4
Psychological problems	(14) 17.5	4
Using too much cocaine	(13) 16.3	5
Problems Selling Drugs		
Selling not profitable	(11) 13.8	7
Lost connection	(10) 12.5	8
Lost credit with connection	(2) 2.5	12
Partner's problems with cocaine use	(4) 5.0	11
Concerns about job and career	(8) 10.0	10
Other	(12) 15.0	6

80 persons mentioned 190 reasons

* The total percent will not equal 100% as most respondents gave more than one answer.

Summary

In addition to the criminal justice pressures to stop selling cocaine there were a variety of other reasons given. Some people were inept and incompetent as sellers and were forced to abandon the occupation when they could not get regular supplies from connections. Other found that they experienced too many physical, psychological, and relationship problems when they abused the drug. When ex-sellers were asked to summarize the most important reason or reasons to stop we learned that two out of five said they had become tired of the lifestyle associated with drug sales.

CHAPTER 7 PROCESSES OF STOPPING SALES

Drift and Conscious Decisions to Stop Sales

Sociologists studying cessation of drug abuse, juvenile delinquency and crime have utilized various terms such as "maturing out" and "drift" to explain the processes of quitting such behaviors. The notion of drift, developed by Matza (1964) was developed in response to problems that he found with the "maturing out" concept as it was used to describe cessation from juvenile delinquency. His notion of cessation states that people do not necessarily "mature out" or make conscious decisions to stop anti-social behaviors, but simply drift away from the behavior. Drift is possible when individuals are on the fence, that is to say they have made no commitments to either conventional or non-conventional lifestyles and as they age they simply drift toward the conventional.

In order to explore the notion of drift we asked three questions:

Was deciding to quit a conscious decision on your part or did it just happen?

Was there a certain day that you decided that you were going to stop selling cocaine?

What was the date?

Roughly two out of every three (65.0%) reported that the decision to stop selling cocaine was a conscious one. Despite the conscious decision only two out of five (42.%) reported that there was a certain day that they decided to quit. Furthermore, when those who said there was a certain day they stopped selling were asked the date they stopped selling more than a quarter (26.5%) could not recall the exact day. These findings suggest that the majority did not necessarily drift away from cocaine sales, but there was some conscious decision making processes involved, however, the decision was not so important as to cause them to remember the exact date.

Occilation

Patricia and Peter Adler's work with marijuana and cocaine smugglers found that most of the sellers they observed tended to move in and out of sales (Adler and Adler, 1983; Adler, 1985). Very often they would stop selling after an arrest or threat of an arrest, but would resume selling drugs shortly thereafter. They called this process occilation, the implication is that drug sellers seldom give up the activity voluntarily and when they do they often resume sales after only a short hiatus.

To explore the notion of occilation we asked all respondents questions about previous attempts to stop selling drugs:

Number of previous attempts,
Reasons to stop,
Reasons to resume sales.

Responses to the first question revealed that the majority of our sample had not occilated in their resolve to stop selling. Three out of four (75.0%) reported that they had not previously attempted to stop selling. Of the remaining quarter who reported that they had attempted previously to stop the median number of previous attempts was 1.75; in other word at least 10 of the 20 people who said they had made previous attempts tried to stop 1 or 2 times before the last time.

TABLE 7.1 SELF-REPORTS ABOUT PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO STOP SELLING COCAINE (N=80)

"Have you ever tried to quit selling drugs before this last time?"

Yes	(20) 25.0%
Range	1 - 24 times
Median times	1.75 times

The reasons given for previous attempts to quit were most frequently the sellers problems with their cocaine abuse. Twenty people reported 34 reasons to quit; and three quarters (75.0%) reported problems associated with cocaine abuse.

The reasons given for resuming sales were most often a need for money; 15 people or 75% offered this reason for resuming sales. The next most mentioned reasons were resumed cocaine use by seller and finding a new source for the drug.

TABLE 7.2 SELF-REPORTED REASONS TO STOP SELLING COCAINE AND REASONS TO RESUME SALES DURING PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS (N=20)

Reasons to Stop	Percentage	Rank	Order
Own problems with drug	(15) 75.0%		1
Spouse/lover's problems with drug	(3) 15.0		2
Fear of arrest	(3) 15.0		2
Arrested	(2) 10.0		3
Robbed	(2) 10.0		4
Other	(9) 45.0		
Reasons to Resume Sales			
Needed Money	(10) 50.0%		1
Began using again	(8) 40.0		2
Got new source	(4) 20.0		3
To satisfy partner's use	(2) 10.0		4
Other	(7) 35.0		

* A good number of the respondents gave more than one response so that percentages will not equal 100%.

Quitting the Last Time

With the exception of those who stopped because of criminal justice pressures, the most recurrent themes were around the problems of the sellers own cocaine use. For a majority of this group stopping sales usually meant that individuals wanted to reduce or stop their cocaine use. For only a small number (4)* this meant going to treatment for their cocaine abuse. By far the majority simply stopped or cut down on their usage without formal assistance. This was not unexpected, findings from an earlier study of the processes of cessation by the study staff indicated that many people could simply stop using cocaine without assistance and experience only minor discomforts (Waldorf et al., 1988; Waldorf et al., 1990). In most instances sellers who quit using cocaine on their own suffered only minor withdrawal symptoms and if they experienced craving it was manageable. The reader should note that many in the sample were very heavy users of cocaine as we reported in Chapter 2, but this heavy use did not seem to impede their ability to stop or control their usage.

Legal work had a positive effect on individual's sellers ability to stop selling cocaine. When sellers worked at legal jobs while they sold they had a less difficulty stopping sales than individuals who did not work or were exclusively sellers. Money was not a problem for legal workers, while those who were

* In most instances treatment experiences, as we reported in Chapter 2, occurred before they stopped selling cocaine.

exclusively sellers had financial problems when they stopped sales.

CHAPTER 8 CORROBORATION

In order to assess the veracity of the sellers we interviewed we asked each person who referred the seller to the project to answer a series of questions about the respondent:

- How long had they known the respondent?
- Did they have contacts with the respondent while he or she was selling cocaine?
- How did they know that the respondent was selling cocaine?
- Was the respondent ever arrested for drug sales or possession?
- Did they stop selling after an arrest for sales or possession etc?

Answers to the first question revealed that the length of time that the corroborator had know the ex-seller ranged from 6 months to 33 years. The median time was 8 years.

Very often the corroborator had known the respondent while he or she was selling cocaine as two-thirds (67.5%) answered "Yes" to that question (See Table 8.1). Knowledge of the sales activities of the respondent was often first hand as 70.4% of the 54 corroborators who said that they knew the respondent while they were selling said it was from direct experience. This answer usually meant that the corroborator had bought from or sold drugs to the respondent.

TABLE 8.1 KNOWLEDGE OF RESPONDENT'S COCAINE SALES - PERCENT REPORTING

	Percent "Yes"
Did you know respondent while he or she was selling cocaine?	(54) 67.5%
I For Those Who Knew Respondent While Selling Cocaine - N=54	
How did you know that the respondent was selling drugs?	
From direct experience	(38) 70.4%
From direct experience of a friend or associate	(9) 16.6
It was common knowledge among our social group	(7) 13.0
II For Those Who Did Not Know the Respondent While Selling Cocaine - N=26	
Heard about it from someone who bought or sold to him or her	(6) 23.1%
Heard about it indirectly from persons in our social group	(6) 23.1
It was common knowledge in our social group	(1) 3.8
Interviewed on Cocaine Cessation Project	(1) 3.8
Other	(12) 46.2

TABLE 8.2 KNOWLEDGE OF ARREST FOR SALES OR POSSESSION AND INFLUENCE ON STOPPING SALES

	Percent Answering
Was _____ (respondent's name) ever arrested for drug sales or possession? N=80	
Yes, drug sales	(10) 12.5%
Yes, drug possession	(9) 11.2
Yes, both	(6) 7.5
No	(46) 57.5
Don't Know	(9) 11.2
Did he/she stop selling drugs after that arrest? N=25	
Yes	(10) 40.0%
No	(11) 44.0
Don't Know	(4) 16.0

For those respondents who were not known by the corroborator during the period when he or she sold drugs the most frequent answers to how they knew that they had sold drugs was "Heard about it from someone who bought or sold drugs to the respondent" and " and "Heard about it indirectly from persons in our social group".

In order to corroborate the respondent's accounts of drug arrests and possible criminal justice pressures to stop selling cocaine we asked each corroborator if the respondent had been arrested for drug sales or possession and if after such arrests the respondent stopped selling. These data appear in Table 8.2 and we learned that 31.3% of the corroborators reported that the respondent had been arrested for sales or possession. This figure is considerably less than respondents' own accounts of all drug arrests as 40% reported that they had been arrested for possession and 19.0% for drug sales as adults. It is, however, similar to respondents' reports about arrests for drug related charges just before they stopped sales - 27.5% of the ex-sellers reported here that they had been arrested just before they quit cocaine sales.

To the last of the corroborator questions presented here we learned that corroborators believed that 10 out of the 25 (40.0%) people who they reported had been arrested for drug related offenses stopped selling after that arrest. We should add that not all of the corroborators had active relations with the ex-seller while he or she was selling cocaine so it could very well be that they were from limited experience of the respondent's arrest history.

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APPENDIX A

Two articles:

"Drifting into Dealing: Becoming a Cocaine Seller." by Sheigla
Murphy, Dan Waldorf and Craig Reinerman.

"Perceived Risks and Criminal Justice Pressures on Cocaine
Sellers." by Dan Waldorf and Sheigla Murphy.

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PERCEIVED RISKS AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE PRESSURES ON COCAINE SELLERS

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Introduction

Despite the efforts of law enforcement agencies cocaine, in both powdered form and as Crack, is readily available to large segments of users in most of the urban centers of the United States. Supplies are so plentiful that the price of a gram has declined in several cities in recent years. In the San Francisco Bay Area the price for a gram has declined over a two year period from \$100 - \$120 to \$60 - \$100, depending upon quality. We have heard of instances when highly diluted cocaine is selling for as little as \$600 an ounce to Street Crack sellers. With the advent of Crack there also seems to have been an increase in the number of persons who are selling the drug, most particularly Street Dealers in urban ghettos. With supplies so plentiful and so many outlets one begins to wonder how drug sellers perceive the risks associated with cocaine sales and how effective criminal justice pressures are on sellers to quit.

This is a report of the findings of an exploratory, descriptive study of the perceived risks associated with cocaine sales and criminal justice pressures to quit reported by ex-cocaine sellers. To date, there have no previous studies of either phenomena for drug sellers, but there has been some discussion of sellers' risks as they relate to prices of drugs by Adler (1985), Redlinger (1975) and Moore (1977).

Sample and Methods

The sample consists of in-depth interviews with 80 exsellers from eight different levels of sales. To be eligible for the study a respondent had to have sold cocaine steadily for at least a year and had to have stopped selling for at least 6 months. We should advise the reader that the levels of sales were established from the units sold rather than the units bought; that is to say if a seller bought quarters or eighths of ounces and regularly sold grams he or she was considered a gram dealer rather than part of an ounce dealer.

Levels of Sales	Number of Completed Interviews
Smugglers	2
Kilograms/Pounds	13
Parts of Kilos and Pounds	6
Ounce Dealers	18
Part of Ounce Dealers	13
Gram Dealers	12
Part of Gram Dealers	11
Crack	5
Total	80

These levels do not necessarily reflect typologies of sales of drug sellers themselves. From our experience, and it may be different from other areas of the country, cocaine sellers in the

San Francisco area identify six different levels of sales:

Smugglers
 Big Dealers
 Dealers
 Sellers (Unspecified)
 Bar Dealers and
 Street Dealers.

In this scheme street dealers usually sell parts of grams, grams and crack (known as hubbas in the Bay Area). Bar dealers usually sell crack, parts of grams or grams of powdered cocaine. Unspecified sellers sell grams and parts of grams, but neither in the street or bars. All three of these types of sellers are persons who are essentially retailers, that is they sell primarily to users rather than other sellers. Dealers and Big Dealers can sell anything from a eighth of an ounce to multiple kilograms, but there is little consensus among the sellers themselves about what constitutes a Dealer and a Big Dealer. Both of these types are wholesalers, in that they sell primarily to other sellers. Smugglers are a different matter; everyone knows that Smugglers bring kilograms into the country from foreign sources. If we were to impose our scheme upon the scheme of drug sellers it would look like this, but again there might be some discrepancies among Big Dealers and Dealers:

Drug Sellers' Typology	Our Typology
Smugglers	Kilograms and Pounds
Big Dealers	Parts of Kilograms and Pounds
Dealers	Ounces
Sellers (Unspecified)	Parts of Ounces
	Grams
	Parts of Grams
Bar Dealers	Crack (Hubba)
	Grams
	Parts of Grams
	Crack (Hubba)
Street Dealers	Parts of Grams
	Crack (Hubba).

Respondents were located for the study by chain referral methods (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981). This is a method used commonly by sociologists and ethnographers to locate hard to find groups and has been used extensively in the drug field (Lindesmith, 1968; Becker 1953; Feldman 1968; Preble and Casey, 1969, Biernacki, 1986). The first of the location chains was initiated in 1974 and 1975. At that time the authors of the study were conducting a short term ethnography of the cocaine use and sales taking place among a friendship group of 32 persons. (Waldorf, Murphy, Reinerman and Joyce, 1977). Two other chains were developed during a second study conducted during 1986-1987,

the Cocaine Cessation Project, and another three chains were developed during the present effort.

In general, the majority of referral chains were developed by former sellers among his or her previous customers and suppliers. In other words, ex-cocaine sellers were recruited, trained as interviewers and instructed to go into the field to locate and interview ex-sellers among the persons they bought and sold cocaine while they were selling. In several instances persons who were interviewed referred the interviewer to other potential interviewees not known to the interviewer in the classic sense of the chain referral method. A last chain was developed by an ex-pimp who had never sold drugs himself, and hardly used them as he was a diabetic. He had good contacts with a number of prostitutes and Black cocaine sellers in the East Bay and was able to interview persons from groups which we otherwise did not have contacts. It should be noted that some of the networks had distinct ethnic make ups. One interviewer knew a group of middle-class Black sellers who served a large group of freebasers in the North Bay; he was not himself Black but had good relations with this group. Another interviewer had contacts with a group of Latino heroin users who sold cocaine and heroin in West Oakland.

Interviews were conducted from two instruments: a quantitative schedule designed to gather quantitative data and a focused interview guide. The focused interview was tape recorded and later transcribed for content analyses. Interviews took from 2 1/2 to 4 hours to complete, but in several instances we conducted longer interviews and second interviews. One woman who is well known to one of the authors was interviewed for 10 hours over three sessions. In some instances information is also available from in-depth interviews conducted from an earlier study of cessation from cocaine use. The data for this report is primarily from tape recorded focused interview.

Characteristics of the Sample

There is no way to tell if the sample is representative of all cocaine sellers as there are no known populations of sellers with which to compare them. Unlike other studies of drug sellers there is less emphasis placed on street sellers (ubiquitous retailers) and more emphasis on wholesalers (persons who sell to other sellers), but the project could not locate as many smugglers as it had planned.

In general, we have endeavored to get a reasonable sex and ethnic mix in the sample. Roughly one in every three (35%) of sample were female sellers and two out of very five (41.2%) were from minority groups. The average age of the respondents was

TABLE 1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SAMPLE - N=80

Age:	Range 18-60 years		
	Mean 37.1		
	Median 35.4		
		Number	Percent
Sex:			
	Male	51	67%
	Female	25	33%
Ethnicity:			
	Black	28	37%
	Latino(a)	4	5%
	White	44	58%
Level of Education:			
	Less than High School Grad	11	13.8%
	High School Graduate	18	22.5%
	Some College	31	38.8%
	B.A. or B.S. Degree	12	15.0%
	Some Graduate	3	3.8%
	Graduate Degree	5	6.3%

37.1 years and the range was 18-60 years. The education level is generally high and we expect that this is an indication of the relatively large numbers of middle class people in the sample.

In general, drug enforcement agencies and the popular media tend to portray drug sales as a violent, no holds barred, competitive world peopled by hardened, street hoodlums who carry automatic rifles and have no qualms about using them. To be sure there are violent people in drug sales (and the authors had some direct experiences with such persons in the present study as well as an earlier study of drug sales (Waldorf, Murphy, Reinerman and Joyce, 1977) but they are only part of the story from perhaps the most visible of drug sellers - street drug sellers from ethnic and working-class ghettos.

There are, as well, other less violent drug sales scenes and many people who eschew violence and sell drugs in a friendly, non-threatening way. For example, within one network we discovered an accountant, an engineer, a stock broker, an office manager, a clerk and a projectionist who all sold cocaine to small networks of users and sellers and did not resort to violence or threats of violence in any way. In fact, the portrayals of the life styles of all these sellers were very

mundane, low key and without violent incident. Of the six persons from this group only one owned a gun and none of them had every used them. The person who owned the gun said that he bought it for his protection when he began to sell parts of ounces, eight balls (eighths of ounces) and quarters, and had some thoughts of being robbed. They were in short, middle-class citizens who held steady jobs, made mortgage payments, and were responsible parents. More often than not most of the sellers from our sample were the antithesis of common portrayals.

Perceived Risks of Drug Sales

In general, the study envisioned that perceived risks associated with drug sales could be categorized into eight groupings:

General Fears of Arrest,
 Fears About Informants,
 Fears About Robbery and Violence,
 Fears Associated with Customers or Suppliers,
 Fears About Police Investigations,
 Fears About Internal Revenue Service Audits,
 Fears About the Possibility that Property Might be
 Confiscations by Police or Other Authorities, and
 Unanticipated Risks.

Each category was explored in the in-depth focused interviews with questions that asked how individuals viewed such risks associated with drug sales, what were their specific experiences of risks, and what actions were taken to minimize risks. We will begin our description with general fears of arrest.

General Fears of Arrest

In general, most persons realized that there was a general possibility that they might be detected and apprehended by the police for drug sales, but it was not an abiding concern of most of our sample of sellers. In fact, most sellers believed that they could minimize this possibility of arrest by restricting their sales to a small group of friends, people who they work with and associates - people who they have known for some time and were known not to be police or persons who would reveal their activities to the police. In short, they believed that they need not fear arrest if they restricted their sales activities to persons they knew and trusted. Here is a typical example of a seller who had little concern about the risks involved in drug sales:

- (I) Okay what did you perceive as the risks involved in sales?
- (R) I didn't think I was at any risk. My biggest risk was when I had to go over and pick up from my dealer. But

I didn't think I was at any risk at all when I was selling.

(I) Do you still think that?

(R) No if I was a neighbor across the street looking at all the business I would have called the cops long ago. So it was very obvious. (Case #035)

Other persons were more cognizant of how to minimize the risks involved as a kilogram and pound dealer explained:

(R) Yeah, well I think the major thing is just keep your network closed, you know. If you've got a network, you only expand it to the people that you know and the people that they know. And if they want to buy for them, and if you could afford to give them a deal so they can go sell to their friends, you know...and in that way they can start their own small network. I think that was the easiest way. Like I had 10 interactive networks going [that he sold to], you know, expanded families type thing.

(I) Any fears of arrests?

(R) No, not really. I was pretty sure of my network. (Case #032)

One way to manage possible risks or to minimize the general possibility of arrest was to establish personal rules about who one would sell cocaine to. For example, an ounce dealer expressed some concerns about traffic in and out of his house to buy cocaine and rules about who he sold to:

(I) So what were the risks from police, I mean did you feel that very much?

(R) No, uh, I worried about like traffic, so most of the time I would deliver the product, you know. I kept decent hours, you know, if somebody wanted to come over late at night I refused, you know, I kept control of it pretty much so I wasn't worried in that sense. It's like the police, the only thing that could happen is like somebody introducing you to somebody and just being a little sloppy or a little greedy. If you deal with the same people, or let someone roll over ...otherwise I think it's really hard for them to legitimately bust you, you know. (Case #010)

Traffic seemed to be an important consideration when sellers dealt out of their home and how the neighbors would respond to a large volume of persons coming to and from a house or apartment. The strategies to deal with traffic were various. Some persons

delivered the drugs themselves rather than have customers come to their home. Some were sure to locate their homes in areas that had high densities and large natural traffic, rather than live on a suburban cul de sac where traffic would be obvious. Other sellers required that buyers act like friends and other visitors and stay for a period, rather than rush in and out. One very outgoing and social pound dealer made it a point of inviting policemen that he knew to come to his house to socialize, feeling that if neighbors saw him socializing with the police that they would never suspect that he was a drug seller.

The rule about restricting sales only to persons known by the seller generally works for wholesalers, but is rather difficult to maintain for street and bar dealers to maintain. Street and bar dealers contact customers in public places and are more likely to take on new customers that they do not know; therefore they are not as cautious as other types of sellers and are perhaps overly anxious to develop new customers and expand their business. Selling cocaine in small units, parts of grams and grams requires a larger number of customers to realize a reasonable profit. If a street or bar seller is ambitious and/or is using his own product too much then he may be less prudent about screening the persons he will sell to. And the less careful you are, the more willing you are to develop new and unknown customers the more likely you are to sell to an undercover narcotics officer.

Fears About Informants

Cocaine sellers usually know that most arrests for drug sales come as the result of information provided to the police by informants. The use of informants by narcotics police has a long and enduring history for perhaps several reasons: drug sales with the exception of street sales is usually clandestine; drug users do not, as a rule, complain to the police about drug sellers; investigations of sellers requires a good deal of time and effort; and most undercover police are easily identified as such.

Fears about informants is a particular concern for heroin users who sell cocaine because of ways the police use heroin addicts to gather information. This was illustrated very well by a heroin addict who sold ounces and parts of ounces for 6 years and was arrested only after he went to treatment for his heroin addiction:

- (R) Like when I did get busted I had a feeling in the beginning [that something was wrong] and then these guys kept calling...
- (I) How did you meet that guy, the fisherman?

- (R) The one guy that I was in treatment with in the hospital.
- (I) He introduced you?
- (R) When he came in the first time, he says I want to come and see you, right, I'm at the bar and they both [two DEA agents] come in and they both look scruffy as hell, they both looked like they just came in, you know, like they both had been fishing in Alaska. And he [the informant] introduces me to the guy and he [the undercover agent] says, "We're fishing in Alaska and I got a chance to make some big money in Alaska and we need some coke," and I said, "Well I don't do it anymore," and he said, "Well can you get me a quarter gram or something so we can snort now?" So I go down to the end of the bar and get him a quarter gram and that in turn was one of the counts [charges] against me.
- (I) Really?
- (R) There were 3 different counts, it was a pound sale that they got me the last time and then I got a quarter of an ounce the next time they came into the bar and I set it up to get him a quarter of an ounce but he brought this guy in and he leaves the scene. Marty, the guy that I knew, and the other guy came.
- (I) So the guy in treatment he is an informant?
- (R) He is a paid informant.
- (I) Right.
- (R) Paid informant, that's all. He wasn't in trouble it's just that he wanted money.
- (I) Right. And so he introduced the D.E.A. to you?
- (R) Right.
- (R) Sure. I mean it's hard when you like somebody and you open up to somebody, I mean you're not thinking of everything your saying is going to be used against you.
- (I) Yeah.
- (R) I mean this guy had his kids over to the house and I met his family you know. (Case #010)

Another woman who was selling parts of grams in a Latino community in Oakland expressed similar concerns about an

informant. In this case it was her sister-in-law, who became angry with her brother who was selling heroin and informed on him to the police. This police activity against her brother was also viewed as a possible threat to herself.

Again street and bar dealers are also subject to this risk more than larger, more clandestine dealers because of their high visibility and their lack of caution.

Fears About Police Investigation

Fears about a possible police investigation were perceived as a regular risk for most of this group of sellers. This usually took one of two forms. This first form had to do with individuals cocaine consumption and was most apparent when individuals were abusing the drug. The second form had to do with actual or possible police observations of individual sellers and the people they were associating with.

In the case of the first form, fears associated with a sellers own cocaine consumption, there is a general paranoia that accompanies regular and/or heavy use which causes many dealers to imagine possible police surveillance and instigates certain cautions. One female dealer who sold parts of pounds for her lover described this form in combination with concerns about traffic:

- (I) And the traffic didn't raise much heat?
- (R) We heard a lot of people say, "Well we know that the cops are watching this house for sure". But sometimes when somebody puts that in your mind that they [the police] can be upstairs...like I would walk through the halls and I would be tweaking out and feel like they were following me upstairs...stupid sick stuff. But it would make you wonder. You would look outside and you would see figures in other houses across the street. And I would think people were watching me through binoculars. I'm sitting there not moving because I'm tweaked out but that figure would just be there not moving too. Like I thought this lamp was a person that just never left and this person always watched us. It's sick. (Case #042).

Eventually this woman became so cautious about concerns with her neighbors, and the fears of being observed by the police that she developed a rather elaborate scheme where a) she did not allow anyone to come to their house for the drug and b) she went to considerable trouble to deposit the drug in an airport locker and then sold the key to the locker to the buyers.

Actual police observation was reported by a Latino smuggler who made regular forays to Mexico to bring back kilograms of

cocaine which was eventually distributed by persons which he called the "Mexican Mafia".

- (I) Do you think that you ever had your phone tapped or they were investigating you at all?
- (R) Yeah. For sure they were investigating me at one point. The last part of the year that I was dealing I'm positive of that. I was stopped more than a few times and they were drug agents that were stopping me.
- (I) Oh really, in your car?
- (R) I think basically because of the association. Like the people that I knew were heavily into it and of course there was always arrests of people like that. You know when they get one person ...
- (I) When you got stopped what would they do to you?
- (R) Just give me a bunch of shit, you know, search me and the vehicle I was in. Feed me a bunch of bullshit.
- (I) And you never had any on you?
- (R) No, they'd always tell me something like, "We're going to get you. We know what you're doing and you know so and so." And I said, "I don't know that person." And they say, "You know so and so." And I say, "No I don't." They'd say, "Well we seen you with him." I said, "Well I don't know that person by that name so I don't know who you're talking about." I said, "I have a lot of friends." So they always, you know, the fact that they were watching other people. (Case #062)

Fears about Confiscations of Property by Police, DEA etc.

In general sellers did not express much concern that police would confiscate their personal property derived from drug sales should they be arrested. Low level sellers did not believe that the police would use that tactic with them because they had so little property that it would not matter to the police. High level sellers knew about the powers of the police to confiscate property and were either careful not to buy property or large conspicuous material items if they could not prove that the purchases came from legal income or did not spend drug money on items that could be confiscated. Only one seller reported that she felt considerable concerns about property appropriation. She was a long time marijuana and cocaine seller who regularly received kilograms and sold pounds and half-pounds to a small network of customers (8 persons). She became concerned about her

property when an old marijuana supplier who she had not done business with for four years was arrested and had all his property confiscated as well as all the property of his parents. Eventually the parents of the accused regained their property, but the seller never did. Her way of handling the risk was to always work at a legal job and speculate on the stock market so that she had some way of verifying any purchases that she and her husband might make.

Fears About the IRS

In general, most sellers who did not work did not file income tax returns and always dealt in cash. None had any problems with the IRS when they returned to work and filed returns. For persons who worked regularly while they sold cocaine it was seldom an issue, they just reported their legal income and forgot their illegal income. Some of the large sellers had legitimate businesses in which they invested cash and had ways to launder illicit drug money to make it appear that they earned the money legally.

Fears About Rip Offs and Violence

When sellers felt comfortable with the persons they were buying or selling cocaine from they had no particular fears about robberies or violence, but if they felt uncomfortable then it was a very real possibility. There was also some concern about customers revealing their activities to thieves who in turn might rob them. This was a particular concern for some women who dealt on their own, without the assistance of a man.

There were only six mentions of robbery, violence or threats of violence and we will illustrate three. The first is a robbery. A forty six year old woman, who had worked as a prostitute for 20 years and sold cocaine for four years reported how she was robbed and both she and her lover were badly beaten by three men.

- (I) Just what happened on that break in?
- (R) I didn't have any drugs in the house. I had some money but I didn't have any drugs and it was about four in the morning and a bunch of people had just left my house and these people must have been waiting outside. And there was a knock on the door and my kids were in the house too. And I guess whoever set me up knew who I was because that's usually what happens but anyway...they came to the door and they had stocking masks on and I opened the door, I was high, I just took a hit off the pipe [freebase pipe]... and there was a knock on the door and I went downstairs and I was really high and the guy knocked on the door and I asked, 'Who is it?' He goes, 'It's me, open the door,'

and I thought it was my son. But that was not my son, my son was in his room asleep. And I opened the door and three of them came in with stocking masks on their face and one of them said, 'Let's blow them away now,' and then the other one said, 'No man, don't do that'. And one beat me so bad that they had to shave my whole head. They knocked my old man out and took his jewelry and they got about \$1,000 in the envelope that I had just laying around but the rest of my money they didn't get. But they got \$1,000 and they pulled a gun on my son and they told him to freeze before they blew his brains out. And I played like I was passed out because I knew if the guy was to pull me outside he was gonna kill me. But when he did that to my son, I didn't care about me anymore. I go, 'Please don't hurt my son' and he goes, 'We know, we won't hurt your kid'. So they left and after that I stopped dealing and I went back to prostitution. And then about a year later I started dealing again and I dealt for about 6 months and then I stopped. (Case #023)

The second illustration is of a woman who dealt multiple kilograms with her lover until he was murdered. She was not exactly sure if he was killed because of his sales activity, but we were advised by an associate of the woman that the police believed her husband's death was drug related.

- (I) Okay let's talk about the circumstances that caused you to quit. Can you give us the story of what happened with your spouse and best as you can and how it is that made you make this particular decision.
- (R) Well he felt that for once we had stacked up all this money...he wanted to have a million dollars, that was his goal. So he felt like once he had a million dollars and 4 or 5 pieces of property then we can decide on some kind of business for both of us to be involved in, either the same business or a different business but where we would never have to work for anybody else. And so we were very close to that amount of money. And I wanted to get married and, you know, and have another kid. He didn't want me to have any kids while he was in that business because you never know what is going to happen. But he was really close to hitting his goal and we had always said that we would quit and get out of the business then. So there was a time when he wouldn't make anymore purchases or do anymore sales and I don't really know why but he was killed shortly before we were gonna get married. So that brought an abrupt halt to everything. I didn't really know people to buy from but I knew other people in the business and some of the customers I could have kept. Because I knew a lot of people selling ounces.

- (I) But basically you do believe that his death was drug connected?
- (R) Yeah, it was either someone jealous because they knew he had a lot of money or maybe they...it could have been that he was robbed and they could have taken a package that he had that I just didn't know about. Or they could have taken the money because when he got killed I didn't have the money and it wasn't found in his place. So, you know, I don't really know what happened to the money. I don't know. He had been telling me that he wasn't transacting anymore business and, you know, there was a time when I tested him because I didn't believe he was really out of the business. So I called him up and I said, 'Hey, you know so and so, it will be simple cut and dry', and I'm talking like a \$10,000 or \$15,000 transaction and a lot of profit for us and he did not do it. I don't know whether he realized I was testing him and he said no or if he was really sincere and was out of the business. But it was either someone robbed him and he lost his life through that or, you know, he had a couple little girl friends who didn't want to see him getting married. And they could have really been angry and feeling like they had been used and they could have set him up for the robbery, you know, and didn't realized he was gonna get killed too. I really don't know. He was the kind of person who kept a lot of protection around those he loved...(Case #049)

Another good illustration of threats of violence was related by a 38 year Black seller who sold pounds of powder and crack to several sellers in San Francisco housing projects. It also illustrates how a gang took over his crack business by use of violence against his network of customers.

- (I) Then how did you decide to stop. What caused you to get out of it?
- (R) Well the thing that really caused me to get out of the business is the fact that...the whole process is being organized and organized crime is moving in. Okay they've got the L.A. Crypts that are up here now.
- (I) The L.A. Crypts.
- (R) Yeah, that's a big gang in L.A. like the Black Stone Rangers in Chicago.
- (R) And they're down in Watts and in Compton [in the Los Angeles area] and they're, you know, 3 or 4000 strong. As a matter of fact, a friend of mine is working for the gang task force in the prison. Because they go to

jail and they get out and they're still running the shit from inside the jail. Now they want a piece of the drug trade. After they knocked out the mob in the 69 Street gang and all of them over in Oakland they got a club called the Out of Control gang now, the OCs. Out of Control Bloods is what is, the OCB's.

- (I) Where are they from?
- (R) Oakland and they've got a branch over here now. But see they're in war with the Crypts and that's why all that shooting is going on over there. The Crypts want to control everything and they don't want the individual entrepreneurs out on the street. They want you to come to them in the morning and get an ounce of rocks and go out there and stay out on the street until you sell it all and then bring back the money.
- (I) And that's it.
- (R) And that's it. They give you an x-amount of money for being out there but it's not like you're making 100% profit. They give you \$70 or \$80 a day to go out there and do it. And that's equivalent to a job, net, you know. Five times \$80 that's \$400 a week.
- (I) So what happened...
- (R) Well I started getting some heat and I started getting people beat up on the street and threatened not to come back out there.
- (I) So someone knew it was your man.
- (R) No, they didn't know it was my man but I mean people were coming back to me saying, 'Hey man, somebody robbed me and took all of my shit,' or 'Somebody told me not to come back out there unless I've got a gun.' And the clientele really started to really decline so that's why I got out of it. And you would have to deal with people that, you know, if you turned your back they would steal the white off of your teeth.
- (I) Your connections were still open.
- (R) Yeah, but if you went to certain corners and their people weren't out there then you would get harassed or possibly even shot at.
- (I) So the scene just got ugly and you decided the hell with it.

(R) Yeah, that's when I decided to get out of it and, you know, the people getting killed and robbed and stabbed and I didn't want that around. And I made a couple of enemies too because people would sit up and start getting high and they would want me to give them credit or give them some or something and it's like I'm sorry. Then, you know, they're like, 'Well this mother fucker is selling coke up in that house,' and before you know it they tell another person and the other person says, 'Yeah well he's selling coke and he's got a bunch of freaky women up there,' and they keep the story on until it snowballs to where it's I'm selling coke and selling women and selling hot cars and apartments and everything else.

(I) So things got weird.

(R) Yeah. (Case #013)

There was a second report of gang activity to take over drug sales by a kilogram/pound dealer who reported that he was approached by a friend of a customer (who vouched for him) about putting together a ten kilogram deal. After he arranged to get the ten kilograms and the transaction was made the customer returned with two others, who were heavily armed, and demanded that he buy back the cocaine, not for the \$100,000 for which he sold it for but \$150,000. Furthermore, they demanded that he deal with them exclusively in the future and made threats that he could not disregard. His response to this threat was to pay them \$150,000, take his family on a long vacation and retire. He was in a position to do this because he had bought several income producing properties and did not need either the trouble or the money from cocaine sales.

Fears About Customers.

Customers of sellers can be a problem for sellers. Very often customers will make unusual demands upon the seller that become irritating - calling at all hours of the day or night, talking about drugs on the telephone, being unable to pay for the drugs that they wish to buy and consume, and as we saw earlier by introducing narcotics police into the network who could pose some threat to the seller.

Freebasers and persons who cannot afford to buy the drugs they are using are particularly problematic. Sellers usually establish rules to deal with some of these issues, but there is a general rule that many dealers lived by, "Do not make your customers mad at you so they would not drop a dime on you." This usually translated into not turning troublesome customers down when they approached them for cocaine, but telling them that you

did not have any cocaine for sale. As one man explained:

- (R) No, not too many deals went bad because we would give more [when customers complained about quality or short weight] ...we didn't want to have any complaints or hassles. We didn't want anybody to snitch on us, you know. (Case #042)

A white, male gram dealer expressed his problems with customers:

- (I) ...What were some of the circumstances that actually made you decide to quit?
- (R) Being woken up in the middle of the night by phone calls from customers who wanted to score. Having trouble collecting money from people who owed it to me. Having that lead to cutting people off and then having arguments with them about that and then being afraid of having them turn me into the police in retaliation. (Case #065)

Freebasing customers could be particularly problematic as a 29 year old female, Black, ounce dealer elucidated:

- (I) And what were the circumstances of you leaving the business?
- (R) Well the people around me, the people who were buying from me, were getting a little bit weird... a lot of people started basing and I didn't want any part of that or feel like I was contributing to that.
- (I) This is '81?
- (R) Yeah.
- (I) So basing was kind of coming around.
- (R) Yeah.
- (I) But it wasn't on the street.
- (R) No.
- (I) How about the friends you were hanging with?
- (R) They started using a lot more too, you know... They wanted more and asking for more and wanting to base and stuff and it just started getting out of control and when it's out of control it's bad and you run more of a risk of getting busted when it's out of control...
- (I) So did you just suddenly say you were going to quit?

(R) It started building up in me and then one day I just said this is it. I think I went and bought some more and paid off the last one and I said this is it. But I didn't tell my connection that or anybody else...Made one more cop and cleaned it out, paid the man and I said that's it for me. (Case #053)

Some sellers have continuing problems from customers and find them extremely troublesome to deal with:

(R) Well as I learned how difficult coke fiends are to deal with, when it come to money and they're reliability and how they will transgress on your life in order to get their powder, and you see people in really bad shape coming to you with nothing, you know, with fantastic stories of how they can pay you later cause something has happened to them, they just sold a screenplay or, you know, all this weird stuff their telling you so you can front them just a few lines of blow, cause they're jones'n [addicted].

(I) They're desperate.

(R) Yeah. And seeing that too often and then having people who were real nice to me when I had blow and when I didn't have any or wouldn't sell to them, have them scream at me and threaten me, and I think well Jeez, I don't want this guy to be picked up by the police....

(I) When they threatened you, what kind of threats were they? That they'd hurt you?

(R) Oh, well no. ummmmm, that was a bit of an exaggeration. I remember this one guy who call me up asking me if I could get him some cocaine or other drug and I said no I can't and he goes, 'You can't or you won't?', was I personally cutting him off, and I really didn't care at the time and I said, 'Well it amounts to the same thing', and kind of hung up on him. And then I felt a feeling of fear, that now this guy is mad at me, I've got this guy who's paranoid on cocaine, now he's going to think I'm part of his problem and he can get even with me by turning me into the cops and I think that was a legitimate fear on my part.

(I) Yeah. Did you have a lot of bad customers?

(R) They're all....yes.

(I) They're all bad?

(R) No, no, they aren't actually all bad customers, no. No, I sold many times without any problems at all.

(I) But there were some bad customers. What did bad customers do?

(R) They would call you at any hour of the night, okay, to see if you had something. They might show up at your door, any hour of the day or night, whether or not the lights were on then knock on the door to see if you just went to bed, maybe you just went to bed, "I was seeing if you just went to bed", it's 3:30.

(I) Yeah, I just went to bed, um-hmmm.

(R) So they're extremely egotistical and uhhhh, and oh just coke fiends. Often they had no money at all, and would have all these stories they could pay you later and sometimes they are friends of yours and you figure you can front them the stuff, then each one of your friends always owes you \$25 for the latest quarter and your out a few \$100.

(I) And that kind of strains relationships too doesn't it?

(R) It strains relationships too. Cause your letting their drug problem, their inability to pay for their drugs put you out. (case #065)

Most sellers try to develop rules in dealing with customers; rules that will provide structure to the transactions much the same way shop keepers have rules about when business will be conducted, who will given credit etc.:

(I) Okay how about rules and hours when someone could call or, you know, who you would sell to. You didn't hustle new customers did you?

(R) No, I only sold to the people that I knew and they knew they weren't suppose to bring anybody to my house, not even parked outside or anything like that.

(I) That's a good rule.

(R) Yeah, and they knew that they shouldn't call me after ten and if they did my machine was usually on.

(I) What time of day did you like to do most of your business?

(R) Early, before I went to work.

(I) So mornings huh?

(R) Yeah. (Case #053)

One gram dealer who had a number of troublesome customers had a particularly good tactic for dealing with them. He sold them very heavily diluted cocaine and they did not return. Upon getting his supply he would organize it into three baggies - his own personal stash which was not cut, a cut supply for good customers, and a very heavily cut supply for customers he wished to stop selling to. The tactic worked every time. Supplies were plentiful and customers would not return to a seller that sold them low quality drugs. His customers where persons who would not come back and demand their money back and the tactic seem to work for non-violent customers, but by no means are all customers non-violent.

Fears About Connections

Some large sellers were potentially violent, but most sellers were not fearful of connections unless they had problems paying for drugs that were being fronted. Again freebasers and persons who injected the drug were particularly vulnerable to threats from connections when they could not make payments for fronted drugs. One ounce dealer, who was also an injector of both heroin and cocaine, told of one incident he had with a old friend who was connected to "the mob" and supplied him with large supplies from Miami.

(I) You didn't feel any risks with the mob?

(R) No, well one time I owed them money. I think I was into them for about 4 or 5 grand and I get a phone call and, uh, they are at the Miami airport... Perry who I would only see at his home in Fort Lauderdale, uh, my old roommate from years that past says me and Frank... are on our way out here. Now I owed him like, I don't know, 4 or 5 thousands and I don't have any money on me and I don't have any coke and they want me to rent them a car and they'll be here in 5 hours right so I get real nervous but at that time I was using a lot of drugs and strung out on heroin.

(I) Uh huh.

(R) So I'm loaded, so I got the car with a credit card and I met them at the airport and we drive like 2 miles outside the airport and Perry tells me to pull over and I go 'Oh shit,' you know, and I am thinking, 'Get in the fuckin trunk,' right and we get out and he slaps me, you know, not hard, you know, 'Hey you fucked up and don't do it again, okay,' and I say, 'Okay.'

- (I) Uh huh.
- (R) And after that they proceeded to give me like 3 or 4 pounds of cocaine and I mean I don't know, I just beat them for like \$4,000 and he slaps me in the face and you do it again I'm going to hurt you, that's what he said, 'If you do it again I'm going to hurt you, now take care of business,' you know, and I was loaded on heroin and the guys give me...

- (I) They are just reminding you. (Case #010)

A second case, a smuggler, told us that he regularly shaved off 5 or 6 ounces from kilograms that he smuggled across the Mexican border. He used these purloined supplies for his own rather outrageous freebasing sessions. Eventually the persons who financed his Mexican forays discovered the shortage and approached him about it. He denied the pilferage, but felt that he was in real danger of being shot or killed. He eventually convinced them that he did do it, but felt that he only got away with it because he was related to one of the major financiers. Eventually when his own use began to get out of control the group simply cut him off from all moneys and supplies.

Unanticipated Risks

To our surprise we found only one person who did not use the product he sold. This man is an ex-convict (and was one of the models of John Irwin's "straight raised youth" in his book The Felon) who has seldom used drugs other than alcohol even though he always had access to them, even in prison. While in San Quentin prison he was the cell mate of an infamous addict (who has gone on to become a well known novelist and movie script writer) who always had heroin and other drugs smuggled into prison, but the respondent never used heroin or cocaine himself. He was literally allergic to cocaine so never had any problems with his own consumption of the drug. He remarked that he was in a perfect position to sell cocaine since he never used it.

Many persons found that their personal use got completely out of control so that it either cut down on the their profits or they had trouble meeting their debts to suppliers who was fronting them supplies. For example: one woman who sold for 10 years and did very well when she only snorted the drug became a compulsive user and an unreliable seller when she began to freebase it:

- (R) ..., let me tell you what happened. When I started freebasing, I started losing money, you know, but the people that I was involved with and I had been involved with the same people for so many years they could not believe that I wasn't capable of doing it anymore. So they kept giving me these amounts of drugs, you know,

half pounds, you know. And then they'd cut it down and I would end up with part of their money and not all of their money. Then they gave me quarter pounds and would come back with hardly no money but, I mean, the average person would have been dead because they would have been killed probably. But by me knowing them since I was like 19 or 20 years old and I had been dealing with them for so long and I'm sure I probably made them a lot of money too as well as for myself...they kept trying it but I kept slipping backwards. After awhile...after I started basing I tried to sell it for about a year after that and I couldn't. I just went so far in debt that (end of side one)

- (I) Okay now let's talk about the circumstances that caused you to make a decision to stop selling? Was it your own cocaine use or did you have some other problems with it or was it fear of arrest or going to drug treatment? What caused you to come to that decision to stop selling cocaine?
- (R) My own use.
- (I) How did your own use cause you to stop?
- (R) Freebasing. When I was using and selling, well, when I was snorting and selling cocaine, you know, I made money and I didn't have any pressure. Because like I said, over the years I had built my clientele to where they were all very close to me. Everything that I did worked out fine, with the exception of that one robbery, that was the only time that ever turned me completely me around because that was near, you know, it could have been...my kid could have wound up with brain damage. That time I stopped for a period of time and I left the area. In my head I didn't quit or say hey, I'm gonna stop doing this. I quit to make a new location and that was just for a short period of time. But in my head to quit selling cocaine completely was when I knew I couldn't handle it anymore and I couldn't make it pay...do you understand? It was costing me too much. Everything I had lost, just everything that I had. I tried to obtain more and the more I would try to climb the farther I would slip back. And it became a problem when I started freebasing cocaine because it gave such a craving that you can't stop. Whatever you have, whatever you're doing, whatever money you've got, you're gonna spend it. I haven't seen anyone do any different either. So I still was at a level...I had gone to a real high level like I was buying \$10,000, you know, in Vegas and whatever...Miami, I was going everywhere. I was buying large quantities of dope,

well, cocaine. Everything sort of worked out fine until someone struck that pipe in my mouth and said try it this way. But I had seen people doing it and some friends of mine, in fact the same guy that introduced me, you know the White boys said, 'Dennie show them this here.' He said, 'I never seen anything like it and whatever money they spend they'll sit and they'll spend...if they've got \$1,000 they'll spend \$1,000. If they've got \$3,000, they're gonna sit there until the \$3,000 is gone.' But I couldn't believe it, you know, it didn't phase me when said that. Well the first time I tried it I didn't like it. The second time I tried it I didn't like it. And then one day someone goes, 'Oh come on try it this way, you've got to try it, you've got to feel what I feel.' So I did it the way they did it and they showed me and I got sprung. (Case #024)

Another 24 year old, student, ounce dealer reported similar problems of being out of control, losing the confidence of his suppliers and physical problems:

- (I) So that's another factor in the whole thing. Your own use was getting pretty outrageous.
- (R) My own use was getting way out of hand and I was real skinny and way under nourished and I couldn't even stay awake anymore because I was....
- (R) Tired all the time.
- (R) Physically fatigued and I couldn't even keep my eyes open.
- (I) It's an exhausting lifestyle.
- (R) So exhausting. I've been more tired from a night of bingeing that I could have ever been from back packing for two weeks and hiking 100 miles a day. That's when my grades dropped in school because I was too tired for school, too tired to do anything. I would spend a lot of time in the shower or trying to suck some food down just to be somewhat nourished.
- (I) In order to do it again.
- (R) Yeah.
- (I) So when you did decide to quit, what did you do? Did you leave the scene or did you get out for awhile?
- (R) Well it also kind of happened the same time when my dealers weren't trusting me anymore. I was getting out

of hand and not paying the debts fast enough and finally I think they got nervous. They were getting bigger and they had other customers so they didn't need me really as much anymore. And so they were kind of giving me the cold shoulder and cutting me out. And they were tired of me scaring them because I was scaring them to death.

(I) By your use?

(R) My use and involving them. Four in the morning, I'm not a real threatening person but just the look in my eyes when I would say, 'I have to get some more right now.' I would scare them enough for them to say, 'Okay just don't bug me anymore tonight,' or they would just give me some so I would go away. I was getting too out of hand. (Case #063)

With only a few exceptions most persons who sold cocaine tended to use it very heavily and with heavy use came various unanticipated physical and psychological problems. There were of course certain variations among users, in the ways that they used the drug, but it was a very common occurrence for sellers to have myriad problems with their own use.

One man who was a very heavy drinker as well as a prodigious user of cocaine reported that he nearly died of peritonitis while he was using and selling cocaine.

(R) Yeah, so I ended up getting real sick and uhhh, having surgery. Cause I pickled my inside.

(I) Liver?

(R) Well I just had a distended liver, I had peritonitis.

(I) Peritonitis that's where....

(R) Where the whole inside....

(I) Oh, you got a big scar there huh?

(R) Pickled. All my inside was pickled, my kidneys and everything. So they had to..., and they said if I drank again, I would die and my liver was going bad and so filtering the coke through your liver where it filters, was tearing up my liver, so I was be bruising really...and, I had hepatitis.

(I) You got hepatitis?

(R) I had hepatitis.

- (I) From what?
- (R) From alcohol. They call it alcohol hepatitis, I don't know if it's A, B, or what it is.
- (I) Oh, I see, hummm.
- (R) So it was medical reasons is why I quit.
- (I) It looked like some knarly surgery, I mean.
- (R) Yeah, I was in for 17 days.
- (I) 17 days, and did they take anything out or.....
- (R) No. They thought it was the gallbladder, opened it up and then all doctor's passed out because of the rotten smell.
- (I) Oh my God! Really?
- (R) Well they got sick yeah. They just cleaned it all up and put me back together and then just told me that, you know. (Case #064)

One young, female pound dealer became anorexic with her heavy use and had to go to the hospital with a urinary infection:

- (R) I was like anorexic. I probably ate 10 times that year or maybe more like 12 times, like once a month. No really, I would not eat. I would maybe eat a bag of potato chips and that would keep me going for 3 days. Then I would sleep and I would wake up and I might have a piece of toast... I would be sick all the time. I would be nauseous, faint.
- (I) Colds?
- (R) I had a constant cough that year and I would always be able to cough up black stuff.
- (I) So no serious illness?
- (R) No, the urinary infection was serious. I got to the point where I couldn't walk and I bleed....I thought I was on my period for a full month and I knew something was going on. I put it off for another week and it was a urinary infection that went into my kidneys and it was in my back and I was bent over...and I was so thin and weak I just had to stay like that until they took me to the hospital. I was too weak to even pull myself up. I was just drained and I had no color. I had

these big black things on my face and they would peel. Oh God...

- (I) And how long were you like this?
- (R) A couple of days. They gave me some medication and I took the medicine and the pain went away in a day. Then I rested the next day and I had some soup and a meal and just went right back to it. I put on 50 pounds since then. (Case 042)

Criminal Justice Pressures

Our exploration of criminal justice pressures to stop selling cocaine were conceived as being of two types - direct and indirect criminal justice pressures. The first was pretty obvious - an arrest for some violation of the law, either drug related or not. Indirect pressures were a little more complicated - arrest of someone from a suppliers network, arrest of someone from a customer network, arrest of a drug selling partner, fears of being investigated by the police and fears of going to prison.

In general, the majority of ex-sellers we interviewed reported that they did not experience any criminal justice pressures to quit, neither direct nor indirect. Forty eight persons or 60% of the 80 respondents reported that they did not experience any criminal pressures to quit. Of the remaining thirty two who reported some pressures, 16 (20%) said that they stopped selling because of some arrest, the majority of which was for sales and possession; and 16 (20%) reported indirect pressures to quit.

Direct Pressures

The most direct criminal justice pressure was as might be expected arrest for sales and possession of cocaine and 6 persons were arrested for sales and possession. Another 4 were arrested for possession of cocaine with intent to sell, one for possession only and another 2 for possession of other illicit drugs.

One kilogram and pound dealer was arrested after being stopped for a traffic violation and the police officer discovered that there was an outstanding warrant for his arrest in Nevada on a conspiracy charge. The respondent hired a well known criminal lawyer and was finally released from the charge when the prosecutor's file was lost. Both the respondent and the interviewer, who has know this man for six years, believed that the attorneys had arranged to have the file stolen by someone in the prosecutor's office. As result of the arrest the respondent lost his customers, they stayed away from him while he was awaiting trial and never did resume sales when the charges were dropped.

Three respondents were arrested for other crimes: one for driving under the influence, another for assault, and a third turned himself into the police for check forgery under the pressure of his live-in girl friend.

Indirect Criminal Justice Pressures

Indirect pressures to stop sales could take several forms as we mentioned earlier. The most common form was arrest of someone from a suppliers' network. A good illustration of this was case of a 40 year old ounce dealer who sold cocaine on and off for six years. In general, she was very careful about restricting her sales to a small group of customers that she knew and trusted but her major connection, who drank very heavily, was not as careful. Just prior to her voluntary retirement two incidents happened.

The first incident involved four thieves masquerading as police who broke into her connection's house, held him, his wife and two children at gun point and stole \$30,000 and approximately a pound of cocaine. Three weeks later police contacted the wife of the connection and told her that they knew that her husband was selling cocaine and asked for their cooperation in identifying the gang. Both agreed to help the police, but could not identify anyone in a police line up. The connection continued to sell despite the protests of his wife.

The second incident occurred one month later. Whenever the connection went out of town she assumed delivery to several of his suppliers in the South Bay. On this occasion she was out of town herself, taking her children to a Girl Scout camping outing, and an associate took over the tasks of delivery. The associate was arrested with several ounces and the respondent believed that had she made the delivery they same thing would have happened to her. She decided that it was time to quit selling shortly thereafter.

A second illustration is the account of a 46 year old pound dealer who regularly traded guns for pounds and kilograms of cocaine. The guns were not military weapons, but rifles and pistols that were eventually smuggled to Mexico by his connection who was said to be part of the "Mexican Mafia".

(I) What were the circumstances of your decision to quit selling?

(R) Well the circumstances is that this whole network seemed to have gotten busted and I haven't heard from any of them in about 13 or 14 months.

(I) So your connection dried up.

One stock-broker seller told an unusual story about his growing concerns about being arrested, a portentous dream he had

that his whole suppliers network was arrested and his subsequent decision to retire from drug sales:

(R) I mean when business got to its highest and best point ... I believe it was the administration policy, the Federal Administration Policy to say that they were really going to go after the smaller dealer type thing and they were really going to bust a lot of these people and continually it was like a wave that moved east to west across the country and you know you'd always get these newspaper reports about this bust and this bust okay, and even in the paper they said that they were coming to S.F. Like they could have put a billboard up on the freeway that said, 'They're coming to S.F.,' and I kept looking at the people that knew I was dealing and I saw, you know, we've been in it for a long time, and people were getting flakier and flakier, and depending on it more and more for their income, and they were taking more chances and selling to strangers, and meeting new people, and like I said the dealer wasn't buttoned down and squared away and secure. He had a card table and the shit was dumped on it like you dump dirt or top soil in your back yard, you know, the whole room was full of that shit. The phone was ringing continually when you were there and I said, 'How many thousands of people know about his shit.' I mean when they sweep it all up am I going to get caught and I didn't want that to happen. I had no intention of ever going to jail, uh, I would have posted bail and gone to France on the next Concorde out. I mean my passport was ready, my credit was ready and you know rather than deal with that I would have been gone, you know. I would have been and expatriate. I would have gone some place where they didn't have an extradition treaty and I would have figured out how to get in over there. But I wasn't going to go back and spend any length of time in confinement just after spending that one night in confinement back when I got drunk in college and I got arrested for the night. I said this place is not for me it's sucks...

(I) Like business was really going great.

(R) I don't remember any significant changes until I started feeling that these people are sloppy. And there is a lot of busts going down, and I suggested to them several times that they cool the activities and let this storm that is obviously coming blow over and we will see how the waters are at that point but everyone else was really into it and so I pretty much pulled the plug on it. And I also had these dreams. I had this dream 3 times it was like the movie, "Little Big Man" where I had certain morality play... but the

bottom line was that I kept dreaming that everybody got caught. And, uh, and the vividness where it took place and what happened and how it went down it was like playing a video tape. It was the same dream three times. Well I had stopped dealing [regularly],... somebody had asked me to pick something up for them and this was a very important guy ...

- (I) You are saying that you stopped dealing already?
- (R) These were the one occasions where I would say, 'Okay at my convenience I will do this for you.' I think I did it once or twice. And one time there was this painting crew at the house next door and they were there painting ...like I went and tested and didn't like it. I think I made 3 trips in 4 days or 5 days and this fuckin crew of painters was there for 5 days and there were about 9 guys. I mean you could have painted a Taj Mahajal in 5 days. And I said, 'I don't like this at all.' I mean they had this van parked out there and nobody had paint on them and they were all standing around and doing their stuff and I don't know what was going on. And they had them filming everybody walking in and I don't know what the hell they were doing but it was weird and it scared me a little bit. And another time I went back, there was a cement truck there. I went back in the morning the my dealer was not there he blew an appointment on me. And I went back later that day and there was the same cement truck, the license plate was the same. The cement pump truck had been there for 8 hours and he would have to be pumping it by the shovel full to be there that long. And nobody rents a cement truck that long, I mean it just didn't make any since...anyway there was two circumstances there that I felt very uncomfortable about and, uh, I was able to cover my going in and out in front of these people because I had luckily met the nurse that lived upstairs and ran into her one day and ran into her roommate the other day and introduced myself and talked and stuff like that in front of these people. And I felt fortunate well there is a sly cover there and maybe they think I'm here to see the nurse on floor 2 instead of dealer on floor 3.
- (I) Uh huh.
- (R) So a couple of weeks later I'm coming back from Tahoe on the behalf of these people that I decided to make an exception for and I phoned and phoned and nobody is there. And, uh, then I picked up the newspaper and there is everybody in a drawing. They picked up so many people they are all being arraigned in a jury box

cause there are so many of them and I said, 'The heats gone down.'

- (I) Your people?
- (R) My people and all of their North Bay connections and all of the lower people in the Haight. Everything blew over and around, and somehow I ducked and I missed it all.
- (I) So your dream came true, everybody got busted but you.
- (R) And they did and they didn't finger me. By that time I'd been out [of it] for a few months and they didn't see me on a weekly basis or any kind a regular basis. I was the drop-in. (Case #004)

Arrest of Customers

Indirect pressures stemming from the arrest of customers was not reported as a reason to stop selling cocaine. When customers were arrested sellers usually denied them all access, refused to take phone calls, refused to sell to them and generally avoided them.

Arrest of Business Partners

Arrest of drug selling partners was viewed as indirect pressure and was reported by two cases. One was a woman who sold ounces and parts of ounces for four years and who at one point financed two lesbian friends to go to South America to smuggle cocaine into the United States. The two eventually became regular and reliable connections for the respondent. This woman's partner (another woman) was arrested for possession of one gram of cocaine was judged to be guilty and served six months in a county jail. During her imprisonment she suffered considerable psychological distress and her hair turned gray during the imprisonment. The respondent thought that the sentence was severe and noting the effect it had upon her partner she decided to stop using and stop selling.

Another woman who sold kilograms and pounds and was closely associated with Columbian smugglers stopped her activities when the DEA arrested 15 persons in her supplier and customer network, one of whom was her brother-in-law. When she was not arrested herself other Columbians in the supply network threatened her and others with violence to make sure that they did not reveal information to the DEA.

Police Investigations

Only one case reported that she stopped selling cocaine because of an imminent police investigation. This woman first

sold marijuana for three years and when the price of marijuana was increasing she and her lover decided to move on to cocaine. Initially, they traded marijuana for cocaine, but eventually they found a good supply for high quality cocaine and began to buy three or four kilograms a month. They sold it to a small group of 8 trusted customers who would buy pounds, half pounds and ounces.

Early in their transition from marijuana to cocaine sales she was arrested by the police for possession of marijuana after a police informant directed narcotic officers to her home with the information that they sold cocaine. The police did not find the cocaine that was hidden there, but they did find several ounces of marijuana. She remained in jail over a weekend, plead guilty to the charge, and was sentenced to a diversion program which she described as a joke. "The counselor regularly asked me to score for him and tried to convince me to give up my marijuana use by utilizing meditation techniques." (Case #001)

Upon being released from jail she and her boyfriend (who she eventually married) moved to a new location and kept selling both drugs but at a reduced rate. Gradually they increased their business and began to make regular money, but she continued to work throughout the whole time that they sold cocaine. During the last year of their cocaine selling career they learned that an old marijuana supplier who lived in Arizona had been arrested by the police and was being prosecuted. Police confiscated the supplier's property and began to arrest other customers of the supplier. Although they had not done business with the old supplier in a number of years they began to feel that they might be being investigated themselves. To avoid possible investigation they moved a second time to a town in another county and were careful not to give out their new address and telephone number to any of their old associates. At the time her husband was using the drug very heavily and experiencing paranoid ideation about the investigation. Both became fearful that the police were imminent and decided to cut back on their sales activity. Six months later after she took on a new more responsible job, separated from her husband they both stopped selling completely.

Fears of Re-arrest or Imprisonment

Sellers who had previous convictions for drug sales and possession and/or were ex-convicts who had a good deal to lose if they were re-arrested had considerable fears about going to or returning to prison. This naturally acted as an indirect pressure on some to stop selling. One ex-convict illustrated this type of indirect pressure very well. He had a long and checkered arrest history from an early age and had spent 10 years in San Quentin and Folsom prisons and had no desire to return. Prior to going to prison he had sold various types of drugs - opiates, cocaine, barbiturates, amphetamines. After serving his last prison term

he built a small but profitable contracting business and managed to change his life considerably. He was a regular user of marijuana and on occasion he used cocaine. When cocaine became more plentiful he undertook selling ounces and parts of ounces to a very small network of friends to finance the his own and his wife's use. He knew his connection very well, she was the best friend of his wife, so had no fears on her part. He never allowed customers to bring any strangers into the house and on one instance when it happened he became livid with the culprit.

In general, he felt he had too much to loose if he were arrested and this acted as continuing indirect pressure on him to limit the scope of his sales activities. Eventually he decided to stop when his connection stopped selling and he did not seek any other sources, even though two others were available to him.

Other Reasons To Stop Selling Drugs

There are of course other pressures exerted on sellers to stop - pressures from family, spouses/lovers, friends and children that can be just as effective, though not as obvious, as criminal justice pressures. There are as well other reasons why drug sellers stop selling. Some are simply inept as sellers, some can not meet the financial responsibilities of fronted supplies, some have severe physical and psychological problems with their own drug abuse. Some do not view drug sales as an enduring career and go onto other legal occupations. These pressures and reasons to quit sales will be part of a second paper that the authors plan to write in the near future.

Summary

The general possibility of arrest for sales is perceived by ex-cocaine sellers as a risk that most sellers can minimize by restricting their selling activities to small networks of persons that they know and trust. Such a possibility was not an abiding concern, but very clearly sellers put themselves at risk when they sold to strangers or persons who were not personally known by the seller. Sellers were generally more concerned about disgruntle customers, informants and possible rip offs and violence than they were of police investigations, possible confiscation of personal property by the police and IRS audits and investigations.

Heavy abuse of their product cause many persons to become generally paranoid about their drug sales and to maintain some caution about customer traffic and possible police surveillance. Abuse also causes many to experience unanticipated physical and psychological problems with the drug which are important factors in their reasons to stop sales.

Criminal justice pressures, either direct or indirect, was not a particularly recurrent factor in this sample's accounts of

their decisions to stop selling cocaine. More than half reported that they felt no criminal justice pressures at all to stop sales. Of those who reported pressures there was near equal percentages of direct and indirect pressures. The most frequently mentioned indirect pressure to stop was an arrest of a member of a supply network.

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DRIFTING INTO DEALING: BECOMING A COCAINE SELLER

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Introduction

Not too long ago the predominant image of the drug seller was an older male reprobate sporting an overcoat with a cornucopia of drugs secreted in his pockets. This proverbial "pusher" targeted his sales pitch at innocent school-age consumers. In fact his mythical place of business was the school yard. Popular media reports and even television and newspaper advertisements for drug treatment programs* have gone a long way in dispelling this myth. There is also a growing body of research on cocaine selling and distribution that has replaced the simplistic stereotype of the pusher with complex empirical evidence about underground economics and deviant career models (see, e.g., Adler, 1985; Grinspoon and Bakalar, 1976; Langer, 1977; Morales, 1986a, 1986b; Plasket and Quillen, 1985; Sanabria 1988; Sanchez and Johnson, 1987; Waldorf et al. 1977; Williams, 1976, 1986; Woodley, 1971)

It is now common knowledge that cocaine sellers are most often users themselves who sell to their peers. In fact, most people who have used cocaine with regularity have at one time or another participated in its sale and/or distribution. Several factors contribute to this widespread user participation in distribution: cocaine's high cost, greater demand than supplies (particularly during the late 1970s and early 1980s); and the propensity of many dealers to restrict sales to small circles of friends.

*For example, Care Unit advertises its treatment programs with photographs of "ordinary folks" who are proclaimed users and sellers of cocaine.

Cocaine's high cost inspired users to become involved in purchasing larger amounts to take advantage of volume discounts, and then sell part of their supply to friends in order to reduce the cost of personal use. The limited supplies of cocaine in the late seventies and early eighties made for a sellers' market, providing possibilities for high profitability. Most dealers who do not sell cocaine on the streets and/or in bars, prefer to sell to small networks friends to avoid arrest. As a consequence many friends became small-time distributors or dealers.

This paper describes the modes and levels of entree into cocaine sales, and discusses the subtle transformation of identity that occurs when a person moves from a user to a dealer.

Sample and Methods

The sample consists of in-depth interviews with 80 ex-sellers from eight different levels of sales. To be eligible for the study these respondents had to have sold cocaine steadily for at least a year and to have stopped selling for at least 6 months. The levels of sales were defined according to the units sold rather than the units bought; if a seller bought quarters or eighths of ounces and regularly sold grams, he or she was considered a gram dealer rather than part-ounce dealer.

Levels of Sales	Number of Completed Interviews
Smugglers	2
Kilograms/Pounds	13
Parts of Kilos and Pounds	6
Ounce Dealers	18
Part-Ounce Dealers	13
Gram Dealers	12
Part-Gram Dealers	11
Crack Dealers	5
Total	80

These levels do not necessarily reflect typologies of sales levels that are used by drug sellers or sellers themselves. Moreover, the social organization of sales may vary in other regions, so the levels or types of dealers we have identified may not be precisely the same elsewhere. Cocaine sellers in the San Francisco area generally speak of six different levels of sales:

- Smugglers
- Big Dealers
- Dealers
- Sellers (Unspecified)
- Bar Dealers
- Street Dealers.

We located and interviewed ex-sellers from the full range of these dealer-identified types or sales levels, but we have added two categories in order to provide more detail.

Respondents were located for the study by the chain referral sampling technique (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981). This is a method commonly used by sociologists and ethnographers to locate hard-to-find groups and has been used extensively in the drug

field (Becker, 1953; Biernacki, 1986; Feldman, 1968; Lindesmith, 1968; Preble and Casey, 1969; Rosenbaum, 1981). The first of our location chains was initiated in 1974 and 1975. At that time the authors of the present study were conducting a short-term ethnography of the cocaine use and sales taking place among a friendship group of 32 persons (Waldorf, Murphy, Reinerman and Joyce, 1977). Two other chains were developed during a second study conducted during 1986-1987, the Cocaine Cessation Project (Macdonald et al., 1988; Murphy et al., 1989; Reinerman et al., 1987; Waldorf et al., 1990) and another three chains were developed during the present effort.

The majority of respondents in the sample were located via referral chains that were developed by former sellers among their previous customers and suppliers. Former cocaine sellers were recruited, trained as interviewers, and instructed to go into the field to locate and interview ex-sellers among the persons with whom they had done business, ex-suppliers and ex-customers. In some instances, interviewees referred interviewers to other potential respondents who were not previously known to the interviewer, as per the classic chain referral method. A final chain was developed by an ex-pimp who had never sold drugs himself, and hardly used them as he was a diabetic. However, he had good contacts with a number of prostitutes and Black cocaine sellers in the East Bay and was able to interview persons from

groups with which we otherwise would not have had contacts.

Although the majority of ex-sellers interviewed were White, some of the networks had distinct ethnic make ups. One interviewer knew a group of middle-class Black sellers who served a large group of freebasers in the North Bay; he was not himself Black but had good relations with this group. Another interviewer had contacts with a small group of Latino heroin users who sold cocaine and heroin in West Oakland.

Two interview instruments were employed: a structured, closed-ended survey schedule designed to gather quantifiable data on all respondents and an open-ended, exploratory interview guide intended to maximize discovery of new and unique types of data. The open-ended interview was tape recorded and later transcribed for content analyses. Interviews took from 2 1/2 to 4 hours to complete, but in several instances we conducted longer interviews and second interviews. One woman who is well known to one of the authors was interviewed for 10 hours over three sessions. In some instances information was also available from in-depth interviews conducted from the aforementioned earlier study of cessation from cocaine use. The data analyzed for this paper was drawn primarily from the tape-recorded focused interviews.

Characteristics of the Sample

There is no way to tell if this sample is representative of all cocaine sellers as there are no known populations of sellers with which to compare them. Unlike other studies of drug sellers

we placed less emphasis on street sellers (ubiquitous retailers) and more emphasis on wholesalers (persons who sell to other sellers). We did attempt, however, to get a reasonable sex and ethnic mix in the sample. Roughly one in three (32.5%) of the dealers in our sample are female and two of five (41.2%) are members of ethnic minority groups.

TABLE 1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SAMPLE - N=80

Age:	Range 18-60 years		
	Mean 37.1		
	Median 35.4		
		Number	Percent
Sex:			
	Male	54	67.5%
	Female	26	32.5%
Ethnicity:			
	Black	28	35.0%
	Latino(a)	4	5.0%
	White	44	58.8%
	Asian	1	1.2%
Level of Education:			
	Less than High School Grad	11	13.8%*
	High School Graduate	18	22.5%
	Some College	31	38.8%
	B.A. or B.S. Degree	12	15.0%
	Some Graduate	3	3.8%
	Graduate Degree	5	6.3%

* Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

The average age of the respondents was 37.1 years and the range was 18-60 years. The education level was generally high and we expect that this is an indication of the relatively large numbers of middle class people in the sample.

What is a Dealer?

Dealers are people who are "fronted" (given drugs to sell with a promise of payment) and/or buy quantities of drugs, and who consistently have drugs to sell for profit. In order to be considered a dealer by users or other sellers a person must: 1) have one or more reliable connections; 2) make regular cocaine purchases in amounts greater than a single gram (usually an eighth of an ounce or greater) to be sold in smaller units; 3) maintain some consistent supplies for sale; and 4) have a network of customers that make purchases on a regular basis. Dealers can operate either part-time and supplement income from a legal job, or full time and be completely dependent on dealing income for their livelihood.

Drifting Into Dealing

One of our most striking findings was the rather average, ordinary character of most of our respondents. In general, without prior knowledge or direct observation of drug sales, few would be able to distinguish our respondents from other, non-dealer citizens. They usually did not make conscious decisions to become cocaine sellers or to embrace deviant or criminal lifestyles. Nor did they jettison conventional values and roles when they became involved in cocaine sales. In many ways their movement into cocaine selling may be likened to Matza's (1964) notion of drift, which he derived from in-depth studies of

delinquents. Essentially, he discovered that delinquents were not self-consciously committed to deviant values, lifestyles, or subcultures, but, on the contrary, were committed to conventional values. In fact, he found that the vast bulk of garden variety delinquency consists of behaviors into which many young people simply drift. Most of the time these youngsters were law-abiding, but when they occasionally did violate laws they used what Sykes and Matza (1957) called "techniques of neutralization", or rationales that were clearly rooted in conventional values. Thus, delinquency was shown to be a more subtle and transient process than had been believed.

Our interviews suggest that a similarly fluid process is involved when people enter the social worlds of cocaine sales. Indeed, when telling their career histories, many of our respondents invoked very conventional, middle-class American values to explain their involvement in dealing (e.g., having children to support, mortgages and rent to pay in a high-cost urban area, difficulty finding available jobs which paid enough to support a family). Similarly, their profits from drug sales were used in "normal" ways -- to buy children's clothes, make house payments, make car payments, remodel a room in one's home. Moreover, like Matza's delinquents, most of our respondents were quite law-abiding, with the obvious exception of their sales of an illicit substance.

When they were not dealing, our respondents engaged in activities that can only be described as mainstream American.

One of our dealers, a single mother of two, dealt small amounts of cocaine to a small circle of friends in part because she had drug-using friends and a good connection, but also because she needed the extra income to pay her mortgage and to support her children. While she sold cocaine, she worked at her full time job, led a Girl Scout troop, volunteered as a teacher of cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) classes for young people, and went to Jazzercise classes. Although this respondent may have been a bit more civic-minded than many others, her case serves to remind us that cocaine sellers do not come from a different gene pool.

Modes Entree into the Cocaine Trade

Throughout the following discussion readers should remember that in reality there is much more movement between positions in cocaine distribution networks than is represented by our necessarily static description of becoming a cocaine dealer. Some people deal for short periods of time and quit only to return several months later at another level of sales. The same person may act as a broker on one deal, sell a quarter gram at a profit to a friend, then pick up an ounce from an associate and pass it on to another dealer in return for some marijuana, all within the same twenty-four hour period.

In our interviews we were able to identify five basic ways in which people begin to sell cocaine. The first is to become a go-between - a seller who starts out by buying only for friends and only later envisions the profit possibilities. The second mode

is to become a stash dealer - a person who sells small amounts (usually grams or parts of grams) in order to be able to better afford their personal cocaine use. The third style, the connoisseur, is characterized by the user's desire to buy higher quality drugs. He/she begins to make wholesale purchases to achieve that purpose and as a consequence has more drugs than needed for personal use, and so sells to close friends. The fourth mode of entree may be called apprenticeship - trainee-style relationships where the novice (often female) lives with an established seller (often male), learns the ropes and shares the dope, and eventually takes over all or part of the experienced dealer's business. Finally, there is product line expansion, wherein dealers start out selling other drugs, usually marijuana, and move into cocaine sales when it becomes available (often through their marijuana connection).

All five of these modes of entree pre-suppose an existing demand for cocaine from people known to the potential dealers. A salesperson selling any line of products needs two things, a group of customers and a product these customers are interested in purchasing. Cocaine sellers are no different, in addition however, their customers must not be associated with law enforcement and must be trustworthy about not revealing illegal activities.

The following is a detailed discussion of these five modes of entree. The first mode of entree, the go-between, is fairly straightforward. The potential seller has good drug connections

and a group of friends who place orders with him/her to purchase drugs. A period of months or even years might go by where slowly the go-between begins to spend more and more time and energy purchasing drugs for friends. Such sellers generally do not make formal decisions to begin dealing; rather, opportunities regularly present themselves and go-betweens gradually take advantage of them. This 30 year-old, Black male who was a powder gram dealer aptly describes a go-between's passage into sales:

Basically first because friends pressured me to get the good coke I could get. I wasn't even making any money off of it. They'd come to me and I'd call up my friend who had gotten pretty big selling a lot of coke. (Case# E-5)

This went on for six months before he began to charge his friends money for it. His connection started fronting (giving him cocaine on consignment) eighth of ounces at a time, and it was then that he began to sell drugs for a profit and became an official dealer.

Another thirty-two year-old, Black male go-between dealer began selling powdered cocaine to snorters in 1978, and by the mid-eighties had begun selling rock cocaine (crack) to smokers. He described the move from go-between to dealer as follows:

Around the time I started indulging [in cocaine] myself, people would come up and say, "God, do you know where I can get some myself?" I would just say, "Sure just give me your money." I would come back and either indulge with them or just give it to them depending on my mood. I think that's how I originally set up my clientele. I just had a certain group of people who would come to me because they felt that I knew the type of people who could get them a real quality product.

And pretty soon I just got tired of, you know, being taken out of situations or being imposed upon....I said that it would be a lot easier to just do it myself. And one time in particular, and I didn't consider myself a dealer or anything, but I had a situation one night where 5 different people called me to try to get cocaine...not from me but it was like, "Do you know where I can get some good cocaine from?" (Case# E-11)

Not all go-between-cum-dealers start out so altruistically. Astute business men and women spot the profit potential early on and immediately realize a profit in portions of the drugs purchased or by tacking on a surcharge to the purchase price. The following illustrates a more profit-motivated move from go-between to formal seller:

Well the first time that I started it was like I knew where to get good stuff.... and I had friends that didn't know where to get good stuff. And I knew where to get them really good stuff and so I would always put a couple of dollars on it, you know, if I got it for \$20 I would sell it to them for \$25 or \$30 or whatever.

It got to be where more and more people were coming to me and I was going to my man more and I would be there 5 or 6 times a day, you know, so he would tell me, 'Here why don't take this, you know, and bring me x-amount of dollars for it.' So that's how it really started. I got fronted and I was doing all the business instead of going to his house all the time because he had other people that were coming to his house and he didn't want the traffic. (Case# E-13)

The stash dealer is a type that has been described in the literature (e.g. Fields, 1985). This forty-one year old woman who sold along with her husband depicts the stash dealer well:

(I) So what was your motivation for the sales?

(R) To help pay for my use because the stuff wasn't cheap and I had the means and the money at the time in order to purchase it, where our friends and stuff didn't have that amount of money without having to sell

something.... Yeah, friendship, it wasn't anything to make money off of, I mean we made a few dollars....(Case# E-7)

The primary motivation to sell for the stash dealer is simply to defray the costs of personal use. However, this motivation is linked to the undoing or escalating cocaine use of many stash dealers. Such sellers usually start out small (selling quarter and half grams) and take their profits in product. Unless they have a high-volume business, that will allow them to escalate their cocaine use and still make profits, the reinforcing nature of cocaine will tempt them to use more of their product than is good for their business.

Many stash dealers are forced out of business fairly early on in their careers because of their inability to "recop" (buy new supplies) due to excessive personal consumption of their product. Stash dealers often want to keep a small number of customers in order to minimize both the "hassle" of late-night phone calls and the risk of police detection, and they do not need many customers since they only want to sell enough to earn free cocaine. Problems arise, however, when their small group of customers do not buy the product promptly. The longer they have the cocaine in their possession, the more opportunities for dealers to use (i.e., for profits to "go up your nose"). The predicament of using rather than selling their product often afflicts high-level "weight dealers" as well, but they

are better able to coast for longer periods of time due to larger business volumes and profit margins. One stash dealer's axiom states this succinctly: "It ain't good to get high on your own supply" (Case# E-57).

The connoisseur's style of entering into sales is motivated by the desire to use top quality drugs. Ironically, this is often associated with health concerns. People who described this mode of entree expressed concerns about the possible dangers of ingesting the various adulterants or cuts commonly used to extend volume and increase profits. User folklore holds that the larger the quantity purchased, the purer the product. This has been substantiated by laboratory analysis of the quality of street drugs (typically lower) as opposed to larger police seizures (typically higher).

The connoisseur type of potential seller begins by buying larger quantities of cocaine than they intend to use in order to maximize purity. Then h/she gives portions of the cocaine to close friends at a good price. As time passes and they all start to use more cocaine the connoisseur begins to make bigger purchases with greater regularity. Financially it begins to make sense to sell for a profit, to make both money and purer drugs for the effort. The following 51 year-old, White business executive described the connoisseur route to dealing as follows:

I think the first reason I started to sell was not to make money or even to pay for my coke because I could afford it. It was to get good coke and not to be snorting a lot of impurities and junk that people were

putting into it by cutting it so much. So I really think that I started to sell it or to get it through wholesale so that I would get the good stuff.

And I guess my first, ... what I did with it in the beginning, because I couldn't use all that I had to buy to get good stuff, I sold it to some of my friends for them to sell it, resale it. (Case# E-16)

Connoisseurs who begin by selling unwanted extra quantities often need to unlearn attitudes when they drift away from being volume buyers looking for quality toward becoming dealers looking for profit. It is typically a subtle shift, but once their primary motivation changes from buying-to-use to buying-to-sell they must begin to think and act like a dealer. This shift occurs when the connoisseur begins to see that the friends with whom they share are in fact customers eager for their high quality cocaine. About the same time, the connoisseur becomes aware of the amount of money that can be made. At this point in the process the connoisseur begins to buy-to-sell, and now profit, as well as top quality cocaine for personal use, are motivating factors. Rather than buying sporadically, they must make more regular buys. Selling becomes a business. In order to be a successful businessman one must have supplies available when people want to buy. If supplies are not available customers will seek out another supplier.

The apprenticeship mode of entree is usually initiated in a personal relationship, the seller is usually the lover or intimate of a dealer. This mode was most often the route of entry of women, although one young man we interviewed learned to

deal from his father. Couples often start out with the man taking most of the responsibility for the business - picking up the product, handling the money, weighing and packaging the dope, etc. The woman begins by acting as an assistant - taking telephone messages, sometimes giving people pre-packaged cocaine and collecting money. Usually as a result of the escalating use of the experienced dealer, the apprentice slowly becomes more and more involved in the business. Some apprentices move out of selling when the relationship ends and others go on to sell on their own. This thirty-two year-old Black woman lived with a pound dealer in Los Angeles in 1982. They were both freebasers who sold to other basers:

(I) Okay at some point you took over. Did you just learn the business and then take over?

(R) I was helping him with like weighing stuff and packaging it and I sort of got to know some of the people that were buying because his own use kept going up. He was getting more out of it, so I just fell into taking care of it partly because I liked having the money and it also gave me more control over the situation, too, for awhile, you know, until we both got too out of it. (Case# E-54)

A number of the sellers we interviewed started out as marijuana salespersons and learned many aspects of the dealers' craft before they ever moved to cocaine. The advantage of beginning with marijuana sales is that the seller has developed selling skills and has an established network of active customers. This expansion of product line was the route of entry for many multiple-ounce and kilo cocaine dealers. The combination of the availability of cocaine through their

marijuana connection and their marijuana customers' interest in purchasing cocaine, led many marijuana sellers to add cocaine to their product line. Cocaine is far less bulky and odorous than marijuana and thus did not present the storage problems of pounds of marijuana. Some dealers discontinued marijuana sales altogether and others merely added cocaine to their line. This description by a White, 47 year-old mother of three grown children explains the expansion-of-product-line mode of entree:

(I) How did you folks [R. and her husband] get started dealing?

(R) The opportunity just fell into our lap. We were already dealing weed and one of our customers got this great coke connection and started us onto dealing his product. We were selling him marijuana and he was selling us cocaine.

(I) So you had a network of weed buyers, right? So you could sell to those...?

(R) There was a shift in the market. Yeah, because weed was becoming harder and more expensive and a bulkier product. The economics of doing a smaller, less bulky and more financially rewarding product like cocaine has a certain financial appeal to the merchant mentality. (Case# E-1)

The following fifty-five year-old Black male ounce dealer, whose customers were primarily in the music business, portrayed the shift to cocaine this way:

(I) How did you move over from mostly working with weed to coke?

(R) Just a natural evolution. You start on weed and the same source became the source for coke.

(I) Could you describe how cocaine came on the scene?

(R) All of a sudden in the late sixties the source (a personal one) came up with coke. I'd never, I'd heard

Billie Holliday sing "I get no kicks from cocaine" and I always wondered about it but it wasn't on the scene, then all of a sudden the music scene, fast lane, it appeared. It appeared through the same source, check this out. I liked it and it was immediately available in volume.(Case# E-22)

Entry Levels

The levels at which a potential dealer's friends/connections are selling will help determine the entry level of sales. If the novice is moving in social scenes where "big dealers" are found then s/he is likely to begin selling ounces or parts of pounds. If his/her friends are selling parts of ounces s/he will begin selling grams and parts of grams. Of course, personal financial situations also influence the level at which dealing begins insofar as capital is required.

It is important to remember that sellers move up and down the cocaine sales ladder, as well as, in and out of the occupation. Some of our sellers were content to remain part of ounce dealers selling between a quarter and a half an ounce a week. Other sellers were more ambitious seeking to become big dealers in order to increase profits. One of our interviewees reported that her atypically well organized sales network had sales quotas, price fixing, and minimum purchase expectations for their clientele. The levels of sales and selling styles of the new dealer's suppliers combined with personal ambitions influenced eventual sales careers.

Another important aspect of beginning to sell cocaine is whether or not the connection is willing to "front" the cocaine

(risk a consignment arrangement) or if the beginner has to buy the drugs. Having to pay "up front" for one's own supplies may serve to slow sales by tying up capital, or even to deter some potential dealers from entering the business. Fronted cocaine allows people with limited financial resources to enter the occupation.

Decisions to front or not to front are based on the connection's evaluation of the new seller's ability to sell the product. This is determined by the connection's evaluation of the potential volume of business the beginning seller can generate based on networks of friends who stand ready to be customers. The connection/fronter also evaluates the trustworthiness of the potential dealer, as well as their own capability of absorbing the loss should the deal "go bad" and the frontee be unable to pay. The judgement of the fronter is crucial, for a mistake can be very costly and there is no legal recourse.

Learning to Deal

In the go-between, stash, and connoisseur modes of entree into cocaine sales novices learn by observing the selling style of active dealers. Such beginning sellers pick up techniques from their connections and ultimately learn by doing. Weighing, packaging, and pricing the product are basic techniques. A scale, preferably of the triple beam type which are accurate to a tenth of a gram, is a necessary tool of the trade. In the last

ten years answering machines, beepers, and even cellular phones have become important tools of the trade as well. Learning how to manage customers, establish selling routines and rules of procedure are all important skills that successful dealers must master. People who get into sales from these first three modes of entree learn these skills by observing their connections and by hands on experience.

The dealers who enter sales through apprenticeship and change of product modes have the advantage of their own or their partner/seller's experience. Active marijuana sellers already have a network of customers, scales, familiarity with metric measures and most importantly a connection to help them with product transition. Apprentices have lived with and/or observed the selling styles of their dealer/mentors and have access to their equipment, connections and customers.

Many sellers learn by making mistakes. Often these are expensive mistakes. They include using too much cocaine, fronting drugs to people who do not pay for them, and putting too much cut on their product so they have a difficult time selling the diluted cocaine. This thirty-two year-old Black male made some errors in judgement that ended up costing him fifteen thousand dollars:

But it was because of my own recklessness that I allowed myself to get into that position. There was a period of where I had a lot of weight that I just took it and just shipped it out to people that I shouldn't have shipped it out to. So whereas I would maybe have 1 or 2 people

that I would say take this and do this for me or something and you can have such and such, I did this with maybe 10 people and a lot of them were women to be exact. I had a lot of women over in my house and I just gave them all an ounce a piece one time....so when maybe 6 of those people didn't come through...there was a severe cramp in my cash flow. This made me go to one of my family members to get the money to recop.(Case# E-11)
Business Sense/People Sense

Lots of people have the money to make the initial buy, a connection to purchase drugs, a reputation for being reliable and a group of friends interested in buying drugs, but still lack the business sense to be a successful dealer. Cocaine selling is, after all, a business and the more of a business orientation a seller has the more likely they will be able to realize a profit, the goal of any business endeavor.

According to our respondents, one of the dealer's principal tasks is to learn to separate business from pleasure. His/her success or failure at making this separation over time will determine their ability to succeed as a dealer and continue to realize profits. Certain business practices were adopted by successful dealers to assist them in making this important distinction. For example, prepackaging both improves quality control and helps keep inventory straight; establishing rules for customers on when they can purchase and at what prices reduces the level of hassle; limiting the amount of fronting can reduce gross sales volume, but it also reduces financial risk and minimizes the amount of debt collection work; and limiting their own personal use keeps profits from disappearing up one's nose or in one's pipe.

Being a keen judge of character was seen as another important component of being a skilled dealer. Judging whether a person could be trusted to return with the money for fronted supplies, convincing people to pay debts that the dealer had no legal mechanisms for collecting, and engendering the trust of a connection when what is at stake is a product often worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, are just a few examples of the kinds of sophisticated interpersonal skills required of a competent dealer.

In her investigative ethnography of upper level dealers Patricia Adler writes, " One of the first requirements for success, whether in drug trafficking, business enterprise broadly, or any life undertaking, is the establishment of a good personal reputation. To make it in the drug world , dealers and smugglers had to generate trust and likeability" (Adler, 1985 p. 100). Adler's general point is well taken, although for some of our cases it did not apply. Thus, we would amend it only slightly: A likeable person with a good reputation could sell a less than high quality product, but an unlikable person, even one with a bad reputation, could still do a considerable amount of business if s/he had an excellent product. This forty-seven year-old White woman who dealt kilos describes her "difficult" husband/partner, "powder keg Paul":

He would be so difficult, you couldn't believe it. Somebody [this difficult] better have a super primo product to make all this shit worthwhileHe's the kind of guy you don't mind buying from because you know you'll get a good product, but he's the kind of guy you

never want to sell to. You even mind buying from him.
He was that difficult.(Case# E-1)

High quality cocaine is always at a premium. Our respondents reported putting up with substantial difficulties from their connections because their product was worth the trouble. As the present authors wrote in 1977:

A friendly and pleasant demeanor or disposition is an asset to the righteous dealer but not an overriding consideration for buyers. If the seller meets the other requirements, he need not be friendly or pleasant to be considered righteous.[p.54]

Conscious Decisions to Sell

As noted earlier, the majority of our sample are middle class, wholesalers. The few street sellers that we interviewed did not drift into sales as did the majority of our sample. Entree into street-level sales was more of a conscious decision to participate in a profit-generating activity. Such sellers sold to strangers as well as friends, and their place of business was more likely to be the street corner rather than in homes or in bars or nightclubs. This woman is a 30 year old Native American ex-prostitute who was a street crack dealer:

I had seen in the past friends that are selling and stuff and I needed extra money so I just one day told one of my friends, you know, if he could help me, you know, show me more or less how it goes. So I just went by what I seen. So I just started selling it.(Case# E-AC 1)

Some higher level dealers also make conscious decisions to sell particularly when faced with limited opportunity structures. Cocaine sales, as an occupation, offers the promise of lavish lifestyles otherwise unattainable to ghetto youth. Dealing also provides an alternative to low paying dead-end jobs typically available to the under educated and under skilled. This fifty-five year old Black man who moved up from grams to ounce sales describes his motivation to sell succinctly:

The chance presented itself to avoid the 9 to 5. (Case# E-22)

Street sellers along with higher level dealers are often already participating in quasi-criminal lifestyles, drug sales are simply added to their other criminal activities. The opportunity to earn enormous profits, live well and set your own work schedule is a powerful enticement to sell. From the sellers' perspective cocaine selling is a reasonable alternative to legal routes to the so-called "good life".

To reiterate most of our sample were not ghetto dwellers and/or economically disadvantaged. But for those who were, there were different motivations and conscious decisions described regarding beginning sales. Popular press descriptions of cocaine sellers are predominantly concerned with what we call street sellers. Although street sellers are the most visible, our data suggest that street sellers represent what might be called the tip of the cocaine dealing iceberg.

From Buyer to Seller: The Transformation of Identity

There occurs in every cocaine dealer's career a transformation of identity from a person who has a good connection for cocaine to a person who is a good connection for cocaine. There is also a change in the meaning of and motivation to begin selling. The relationship between the seller and the customer undergoes a subtle shift from a friend "picking up something for a friend" to a business person conducting a business transaction. In essence, dealing becomes a business and the dealer takes on a professional identity. Everett Hughes (1951), writing about the sociology of work, admonished social scientists to remember that when we look at work,

We need to rid ourselves of any concepts which keep us from seeing that the essential problems of men at work are the same whether they do their work in the laboratories of some famous institution or in the messiest vat of a pickle factory [p.313].

People who began to sell cocaine came to see it as a job - work, just like other kinds of work except for its illegality. For most people selling cocaine did not mean throwing out conventional values and norms. In fact most people had conventional identities that they actively maintained (see Broadhead, 1983). Such identities included that of parent, legally employed worker, neighbor, church goer, and softball player to list just a few. Dealer identities tended not to replace former, "legitimate" identities but were added to a person's repertoire of normal identities and everyday roles.

Like everyone else in modern life, sellers emphasized one identity or another as appropriate to the situation. Biernacki writes "The arrangement of identities must continuously be managed in such a way as to stress some identities at certain points, in particular social worlds and situations, and at the same time to de-emphasize others" (1985, p. 23). The seller must become adept at articulating the proper identity at the proper time. By day one woman dealer was a concerned mother at her daughter's kindergarten field trip, and that same evening she was an astute judge of cocaine quality when picking up an ounce from her connection. Beginning to sell cocaine very rarely entailed terminating other social roles and obligations.

Yet, at some point in each seller's transformation from someone who has a good connection to someone who is a good connection, the neophyte comes to accept the identity of a dealer as a part of his or her self. Customers begin to treat them like a salesman, expecting services such as special off-hour deliveries or reduced rates for volume purchases. When dealers begin to receive profits from selling, they also begin to be thought of by others as dealers and to see themselves as dealers. Selling behavior usually precedes both attitude and identity changes. One 38 year-old woman described this well:

I took over the business and paid all my husband's debts and started to make some money. One day I realized I was a coke dealer...it was scary but the money was good.
(Case# E-75)

Acceptance of the identity brings some expectations and values shared by drug dealers and customers alike. Customers have the expectation that the dealer will have a consistent supply of cocaine for sale. Customers also expect that the dealer will report in a fairly accurate manner the quality of his/her present batch of drugs within the confines of the caveat emptor philosophy that informs virtually all commercial activities in market societies. Buyers do not expect sellers to denigrate their product, but they do not expect the dealer to claim that their product is "excellent" if it is merely "good." Customers assume the dealer will make a profit, but dealers should not be too greedy. A greedy dealer is one who makes what is estimated by the buyer to be excessive profits. Such estimations of excessiveness vary widely among customers and between sellers and buyers. But the fact that virtually all respondents spoke of some unwritten code of fairness suggests that there are moral constraints that exert influence over sellers even in an illicit economy.

For their part, dealers expect that customers will act in a fashion that will minimize their chances of being arrested by being circumspect about revealing dealer status. Dealers want customers to appreciate the risks undertaken by the dealer to provide them with cocaine. Dealers come to feel that such risks deserve profits. After all, the seller is the one who takes the greatest risks; they could conceivably receive a jail sentence

for a sales conviction. As this White 38 year old woman part-
ounce dealer related,

When its all said and done I'm the one behind bars, and
I had better have made some money while I was selling or
why in the hell take the risk." (Case #E-75)

Summary

Most of the people we interviewed in this ex-seller study
drifted into selling. Whether go-between, stash dealer,
connoisseur, apprentice, or people who move from trade in one
illicit substance to another, no conscious decision was made to
abandon conventional life and work styles. People were in the
right place at the right time with a group of friends who enjoyed
cocaine and a known supplier who would front or sell to them.
The level at which the potential dealer's connection was selling
determined the entry levels of sales of the new dealer. But
there was considerable fluidity in and among levels of sales.
Middle person and dealer roles are interchangeable, with one
person performing one task on one sale and the other on another.

Every dealer undergoes a transformation of identity from
a person who has a good connection to a person who is a good
connection. As a person begins to sell drugs and takes on the
dealer identity certain rights (profits) and responsibilities
(maintaining supplies and consistent product description) as well
as some risks (imprisonment) come along with the job.

As Hughes would remind us, sellers work at selling cocaine in much the same fashion as other salespersons: one attempts to reach the right customers with the product they want at the price they are willing to pay. Becoming a dealer is an interactional process: a person begins to sell for a period of time and realizes a profit. After engaging in dealer activities for a time, they begin to be thought of by others and to think of themselves as dealers.

The role of the dealer has within its framework both rights and responsibilities. There are career ladders and career obstacles. There are risks and rewards, and the rationales for dealers' rewards - like the rationale for other forms of reward for investment - are rendered in terms of those risks.

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