

Police Services Study Fact Sheet No. 4

MAJOR CASE SQUADS

by

Nancy Malecek Neubert
Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis
Indiana University

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ACQUISITIONS

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WORKSHOP

Political Theory and Policy Analysis

Department of Political Science
Indiana University
Morgan Hall 121
Bloomington, Indiana 47401
(812) 337-0441

359116
97693

A COMPARISON OF MAJOR CASE SQUADS IN FOUR METROPOLITAN AREAS

The formation of the two-state Kansas City Metropolitan Area Major Case Squad in January 1964 has stimulated law enforcement agencies in other areas to form similar organizations. This fact sheet describes variations in the operations and by-laws of Major Case Squads so that law enforcement officers in other areas who may be considering forming a squad, may more easily review various points others have dealt with. This report is to be studied in conjunction with the other reports on major case squads in Topeka, Des Moines, and St. Louis.

The typical Major Case Squad is a group of highly trained and specialized investigators--personnel of member police departments--who are available to investigate a serious crime when a member department requests their assistance. The agreement among departments is written, but voluntary. The Squad has no full-time employees because all Squad officers and investigators are regularly employed by the member law enforcement agencies.

We will consider each of several aspects of the Major Case Squad's structure and operation in turn.

Membership

Of the four Major Case Squads observed, two are in large metropolitan areas, and two are in what the Census Bureau classifies as single-county Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas. St. Louis and Kansas City squads each have 300 or more investigators on their rosters and incorporate 40 to 50 agencies in six counties. The two smaller areas, Topeka, KS, and Des Moines, IA, each include about a dozen member agencies.

Des Moines's 1970 metropolitan population (Polk County) was 286,000, and Topeka's (Shawnee County) was 155,000.

In Shawnee County, there are only three full-time producers of police services. In addition, two part-time departments provide service to small communities. The Capital Area Major Case Squad was formed when representatives from law enforcement agencies in Shawnee and five surrounding counties met in late 1969 and agreed to organize the Squad. Since the purpose for such a squad is to enable even very small departments to meet the exigencies of a serious crime and continue to provide a normal level of routine services to the citizens of the jurisdiction, one would want to ensure a sufficiently large membership that manpower could be "loaned" without seriously depleting the home agency's personnel. In establishing the Des Moines Major Investigative Team (MIT), the initiators did not seek to go beyond the limits of Polk County, although provision has been made in the by-laws for expansion to include agencies within a 50-miles radius of Des Moines.

If extent of membership is a first consideration, the range of skills found among member investigators is important. The broader the range of specialties, the wider the variety of cases the Squad can effectively handle. The Topeka Squad for instance has included members from state and federal law enforcement agencies--the FBI, the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, Kansas Highway Patrol, and Kansas Bureau of Investigation--as well as officers from local law enforcement agencies. Elsewhere, in Des Moines for example, the Squad includes the County Prosecutor. By-laws for the four Major Case Squads emphasize the importance of maintaining liaison with the Prosecutor during the investigation.

How many agencies may be reasonably included and what different types of agencies are important for any given area? The concept of a police industry may be useful here.

Board of Directors

The four Squads are governed by a Board of Directors. In each case, the Board is vested with overall supervision of the Squad, as well as with policy-making authority and the right to establish operational procedures. The Board of Directors must approve a request before the Squad can enter an investigation. The Directors must also approve the continued operation of the Squad on a case beyond a certain length of time.

The number of directors varies from one Major Case Squad to another. The St. Louis Major Case Squad is directed by 11 elected members. Both Kansas City and Topeka have considerably fewer--four and three, respectively. The MIT of Polk County is the only Squad where the Board of Directors is not elected. But there, specific officeholders are designated the Board of Directors. In addition to the Polk County Sheriff, Polk County Attorney, and President of the Polk County Chiefs of Police Association, the head of the requesting agency joins the Board during the investigation.

A consideration which arose in determining eligible members of at least one Board of Directors concerns the discretion the Board of Directors has to accept or reject a request for criminal investigation. This raises a question of the proper role of the representative of the state's BCI as a member of the Board of Directors, and was sufficient reason for the Des Moines Squad not to name the Director of the Iowa Bureau of Criminal Investigation to the MIT Board of Directors.

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee is a feature of one of the Major Case Squads discussed here--that of Topeka. To quote the by-laws:

The Advisory Committee will act in an advisory capacity while the case is pending to render such assistance and guidance as may be necessary, and will keep informed of the Squad's activities in order to promote cooperation and effective investigation.

The nine members of the Topeka Advisory Committee are appointed. The present members are from diverse law enforcement agencies, including the FBI, Kansas Bureau of Investigation, District Attorney's Office, National Guard, and the Highway Patrol. In Kansas City the Education Officer from the FBI serves as liaison, in an ad hoc advisory capacity. FBI facilities are made available to the Metro Squad.

Training

A provision for the training of new members is found in the by-laws of all four major case squads considered here. Commonly, 48 hours of classroom work are required, with thorough explanation of organizational matters and investigative procedures of the squad as one objective. In Kansas City, the training is accomplished under the auspices of the Metropolitan Chiefs and Sheriffs Association. All four Squad's by-laws also make reference to periodic retraining sessions.

The Major Case Squad of Greater St. Louis has established three-day Annual Retraining Sessions, where a wide range of aspects of criminal investigation are typically covered. In addition, a review of the Squad's organization and structure, previous cases, and an evaluation of the concept may be a part of the program. The Polk County MIT, youngest of the Squads, has a more continuous form of training. Member investigators meet twice a month with the Team's Investigative Supervisor to go over earlier cases from the files of the Iowa Bureau of Criminal Investigation.

Procedures for Accepting a Case

To increase the probability of successful investigation, by-laws of all four Major Case Squads require that the request to the Squad be made as soon as possible after the discovery of a crime, with immediate effort to preserve the crime scene. Generally, the stated limit for consideration of a request is eight hours, although the Board of Directors may decide the circumstances warrant an exception and accept a case presented after that time.

At minimum, one director's approval is required for activation of the squad, although Des Moines requires two, and St. Louis four. Directors' approval is also required on extension of any investigation beyond five days, under the rules for all squads. The saturation-type investigation called for entails 24-hour-a-day work, divided into two 12-hour shifts in everywhere but Topeka.

Role of Requesting Agency's Ranking Officer

Some fundamental differences between Squads arise on the role given the requesting agency's ranking officer under by-laws adopted by the various Squads.

Kansas City's Metro Squad gives the chief of the requesting agency full charge of Squad members. This official may relinquish authority to the Metro Squad when written and accepted by a Director.

The St. Louis Squad limits the authority of the requesting agency's ranking officer to his usual jurisdiction only. He has no authority over personnel assigned to the Major Case Squad investigation, but serves as an advisor. If the chief of the jurisdiction being aided by the Major Case Squad disagrees with the manner in which the investigation is being carried out, he may appeal to the Board of Directors or submit written request for the Squad to leave.

The Des Moines and Topeka Major Case Squads allow the chief of the requesting agency to "retain full responsibility," except where it is relinquished to the Squad. But the agency head, under these two arrangements, does not actually direct the Squad members assigned to assist.

Role of Officer-in-Charge

Specific reference to an Officer-in-Charge of the squad is made in three of the four Squad by-laws. In Kansas City, Des Moines and Topeka, the Officer-in-Charge of the Squad is the person to whom requests for investigative aid are directed. In Des Moines and Topeka, the Officer-in-Charge is "in full charge of Squad (Team) members assigned to assist."

In the St. Louis area, the position "Officer-in-Charge of the area of investigation" is filled, on a nominal basis, by the head of the requesting agency. There is no "Officer-in-Charge of the Squad," this position being filled by a "Squad Commander," and calls requesting the Squad's assistance are taken through the Command Post of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department.

Role of Squad Commander

The St. Louis Squad is headed by a Squad Commander and is the only one of the four examples to include this position. The Squad Commander is in complete charge of a Major Case Squad investigation, with the Squad's Investigative Supervisor as his chief assistant. The head of the requesting agency serves as an advisor.

Jurisdictional Authority

Each squad's statement of purpose includes the following position on the matter of jurisdiction:

We strongly emphasize that no city will assert jurisdiction where none exists, and that this Squad [Team] will not operate at cross purposes with any assisting agency. In view of the fact that some cases comprise a Federal violation as well as a State violation, the use of this Squad will not be extended where such dual jurisdiction exists.

The Major Case Squad of Greater St. Louis has appended this statement with the additional phrase "unless it be by mutual agreement with Federal Authorities" (emphasis added).

During the course of an investigation, each Squad provides its investigators with identification to certify their official capacity within the jurisdiction. In Polk County, a further step has been taken to minimize any problems of jurisdiction. There, the County Sheriff has deputized all members of the MIT, with the understanding that the county-wide powers are to be used in the event of an MIT investigation. Kansas City and St. Louis policy is to always have an officer from the local jurisdiction along when an arrest is made.

Liability and Disability Insurance

Whether an officer assisting another department as a member of the metropolitan Major Case Squad is covered by his home agency's liability and disability insurance or by the assisted jurisdiction's insurance will sometimes be a matter of state law on mutual aid. For example, in Polk County, the home agency's protection follows an officer on an MIT investigation.

Overtime

Overtime policy is explicit in only one set of by-laws--the Capital Area Major Case Squad (Topeka). Shifts there are eight-hours, and any hours worked over that period are to be voluntary. (The by-laws give the home agency discretion in allowing time-off at a later date for normal days-off worked during the course of a Squad investigation.) If circumstances require an officer to work more than eight hours a day, he will be asked to waive overtime, and efforts will be made to use personnel from the host agency for such work. Elsewhere, the overtime policy of the home agency applies to an officer working on a squad investigation.

Other Costs

All other costs involved in the conduct of a squad investigation are generally borne by the host, or requesting, agency. Questions of costs allocation, including meals, are not written policy for any of these Major Case Squads.

Support

Three of the four squads have no source of public or private support, apart from the in-kind services each member department provides. In Topeka, incidental expenses are covered by a donation of 25 cents from each person attending the monthly meeting. The fourth squad, the Major Case Squad of the Greater St. Louis Area, has received federal monies through LEAA in the past two years. The \$5,000-6,000 received covers the

Annual Retraining Session, office supplies, and such expenses as printing new Manuals.

A TABLE COMPARING FOUR SQUADS

| | KANSAS CITY | ST. LOUIS | TOPEKA | DES MOINES |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| MEMBERSHIP | 44 agencies; 325 investigators; 6 counties in 2 states | 50 agencies; 300 investigators; 6 counties in 2 states 3 years employment on dept fr which nominated required; Bd of Directors makes decision | 13 agencies; 45 investigators; 7 counties applicants are nominated by head of home agency; application is reviewed by Board of Directors | 12 agencies; 25 investigators; 1 county; possible future expansion to 50-mile radius of DM |
| BD OF DIRECTORS | yes; 4; 2 ea fr KS & MO; must be head of agency - chf or shr; elected by KC Metropolitan Chiefs & Sheriffs Association | yes; 11; elected | yes; 3; elected | yes; 3 plus requesting agency's chief during a case; Sheriff, Co. Atty, Pres. Chief of Police Assoc. |
| ADVISORY BOARD | None | None | yes; 5-10 members; appointed by Board of Directors for 1 yr terms | None |
| TRAINING | 48 hours, under auspices of Metropolitan Chiefs & Sheriffs Assoc.; provision made for refresher courses | 48 hours, under auspices of Major Case Squad org.; annual retraining sessions | 40 hours, provision made for refresher crs, generally 16-20 hr 2-day sessions on investigative techniques | 48 hours, provision made for refresher courses; presently hold bi-weekly meetings to analyze cases |
| PROCEDURES | Request w/n 8 hours & 1 Directors' approval; 5-day limit w/o Directors' approval for extension; 2 12-hr shifts, 9am-9pm | Request w/n 8 hours and 4 Directors' approval; 5-day limit w/o Directors' approval for extension; 2 12-hour shifts, 9am-9pm | Request w/n 4 hours & 1 Directors' approval; 5-day limit w/o approval for extension; 8-hour shifts | Request w/n 8 hours & 2 Directors' approval 5-day limit w/o approval for extension; 2 12-hour shifts, 9am-9pm |
| REQUESTING AGENCY'S RANKING OFFICER | In full charge of Squad members assigned to assist; may delegate to Squad | Usual jurisdiction only; <u>not</u> over personnel assigned to MCS investigation; may appeal to Bd of Directors; may order discontinuance; advises Squad Commander | "retains full responsibility," but can relinquish it to Squad in writing | "retains full responsibility," but can relinquish it to Team in writing |

A TABLE COMPARING FOUR SQUADS (Cont.)

| | KANSAS CITY | ST. LOUIS | TOPEKA | DES MOINES |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| OFFICER-IN-CHARGE OF SQUAD | Receives request | None (See Squad Commander) | Receives request; in full charge of Squad members assigned to assist | Receives request; in full charge of Squad members assigned to assist |
| SQUAD COMMANDER | None | In complete charge of investigation | None | None |
| JURISDICTION | Won't accept case where both a federal and state violation; local officer | Will accept where both a federal & state charge if there is mutual agreement with federal authorities. local officer along when an arrest is made | Won't accept case where both a federal & state violation; officers paired w/ host agency's personnel | Won't accept a case of both federal & state violation; co. sheriff has deputized MIT investigators |
| LIABILITY & DISABILITY INSURANCE | Home agency continues to provide | Home agency continues to provide | Home agency continues to provide | Home agency continues to provide |
| OVERTIME | Home agencies policy applies | Home agencies policy applies | Hours over 8, voluntary; if required, officers are asked to waive overtime | Home agency's policy applies |
| OTHER COSTS | All borne by requesting agency | All borne by requesting agency | All borne by requesting agency | All borne by requesting agency |
| SUPPORT | None | LEAA grant to cover training, office supplies, etc. | 25¢ donation by members at monthly meetings to | None; possible future grant requests |
| MEETINGS | None | Annual retraining session | Monthly | Bi-weekly, for case analysis |