

'Suicide by cop' phenomenon occurring in over a third of North American shootings involving police

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Pasadena, CA—February 18, 2009—"Suicide by Cop" (SBC) is a suicide method in which a person engages in actual or apparent danger to others in an attempt to get oneself killed or injured by law enforcement. A new study in the *Journal of Forensic Sciences* examined the prevalence of this phenomenon among a large sample of officer-involved shootings.

Results show that SBC occurs at extremely high rates, with 36 percent of all shootings being categorized as SBC. The findings confirm the growing incidence of this method of suicide, with SBC cases more likely to result in the death or injury of the subjects 50 percent of the time.

The study was led by noted police and forensic psychologist Kris Mohandie, Ph.D., who has over nineteen years of experience in the assessment and management of violent behavior. Dr. Mohandie responded on-scene to the O.J. Simpson barricade and assisted the L.A. County District Attorney's prosecution of the stalker of Steven Spielberg. He has appeared in numerous news programs, including CNN and MSNBC, as well as on the Discovery Channel, A & E, and the History Channel addressing issues pertaining to violent behavior.

Using the largest empirical sample of police shootings to examine the issue of SBC, Dr. Mohandie, J. Reid Meloy, Ph.D., A.B.P.P., and Peter I. Collins, M.C.A., M.D., F.R.C.P., examined 707 cases of North American officer-involved shootings from 1998 to 2006. Materials

reviewed included police reports, witness statements, criminal histories on subjects, photographs, videotapes, and external review reports.

SBC was found to occur at a momentous rate among officer-involved shooting cases. The fact that 36 percent of all shootings in the sample could be categorized as SBC underscores the significance of suicidal impulses among those who become involved in shootings and other uses of force with police officers.

The study also verifies that suicidal individuals can in fact threaten, injure, and kill others in their quest to commit suicide. These individuals are quite lethal to themselves, with a 97 percent likelihood of being injured or killed. There was a one in three chance of others being harmed during the incident.

Source: Wiley

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