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**EFFECTS OF NONSTANDARD WORK SCHEDULES ON
MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG LAW ENFORCEMENT
OFFICERS**

Annette Marie Jansen, B.S.

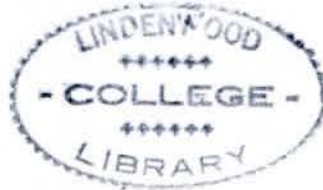
An Abstract Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Lindenwood
University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Art
2000

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a difference in level of marital satisfaction among police officers who worked standard hours (day shift) and those who worked nonstandard hours (afternoon/midnight shifts). Thirty police officers employed during standard hours, and 33 police officers employed during nonstandard hours were administered a demographic questionnaire and the Index of Marital Satisfaction Inventory. Scores were tabulated and it was concluded that there was not a significant difference in marital satisfaction among the two groups ($t = -.483$; $p = .631$).

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A Culminating Project Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
Lindenwood University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Art
2000

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Lastly, to our son, Cole Grant Jansen who was born and died December 7, 2000. We love you and you will never be forgotten.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

More and more professions are expanding the typical eight hour work-day over a twenty-four hour period, and stretching the work-week over seven days a week instead of the usual five. To keep these businesses operational, flexible workers are needed to fill positions at all hours of the day and night.

As the demand increases for more shift workers, so does the examination of the consequences that result from working such nonstandard hours. The prevalence of shift work can be seen in such professions as the medical industry, media, grocery and discount stores, restaurants, fire departments, and law enforcement agencies. As the physical, emotional, and social impacts become more apparent, appropriate coping strategies and other solutions to adaptation need to be implemented to help alleviate some of the negative effects.

Shift work is usually defined as any schedule where the majority of the hours worked fall before 8 a.m., but after 4 p.m. (Presser, 2000). Shift work is more prevalent now than it ever has been. As of 1991, one in five individuals worked nonstandard hours. While single individuals are more likely to be employed as shift workers than those who are married, one in six married employed persons work evening, night, or rotating shifts.

Among dual-income marriages, at least one spouse is a shift worker in one of four cases. If children are present, at least one spouse is a shift worker in one of three cases. It is also estimated that one in three employed Americans work weekends.

Shift work negatively affects individuals in many different ways. To begin with, shift workers generally sleep less and experience more sleep disturbances than those who work during the day (White & Keith, 1990). This consequence appears to be related to the conflict experienced between a shift worker's internal timing mechanism and the strong external time cues of the rest of the world. Most individuals' biological clock is pre-set to sleep when the sun has set, and wake when the sun has risen. Clock time and the light/dark cycles of day and night are opposite with those who work nonstandard hours than those who work during the day (Barton & Folkard, 1991). Shift work also deteriorates an individual's mental and physical well-being (White & Keith, 1990). They tend to have fewer friends, and their opportunities for social interaction may be scarce due to work conflicts. Therefore, shift workers may fall out of step with the natural rhythms of life, and as a result, may experience disrupted family relations.

Shift work can dramatically effect all areas of a person's life, family, and in particular, marital satisfaction. According to a study done on the effects of nonstandard work schedules on marital instability, men who work

fixed midnight shifts, and have been married less than five years with children, are six times more likely to get divorced or separated than those who work days (Presser, 2000). Women who meet the same criteria, are three times more likely to divorce or separate than day workers. These results indicate the significance of a wide-spread dilemma. The divorce rate of Americans is already its all time highest; therefore, adding shift work to the equation only increases the risk. More successful, adaptive solutions need to be offered to those who are faced with these circumstances.

While many professionals are affected by the consequences of shift work, this study focused on its effects among law enforcement officers on marital satisfaction. Police officers are in a unique occupation which imposes a high degree of constant stress on the individuals who choose this profession (Stenmark, DePiano, Wackwitz, Cannon, & Walfish, 1982). The daily stress of being a police officer is compounded by the restraints on social activities, and unusual work schedules. Conflicting work schedules resulting in long hours of separation from their spouses has caused domestic stress and marital deterioration for many officers (Stenmark et al., 1982). Most of the past research completed on police officers has been related to general stress on the job. With this information in mind, it appeared to be important to more thoroughly examine the significant impact these unusual schedules have on a police officer's marriage. Is there a significant link

between nonstandard work schedules and poor marital relations among law enforcement officers? What is being done to adequately compensate these couples for their sacrifices, and what needs to be done to help salvage the marriages that have been damaged from working such difficult hours?

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between law enforcement officers' nonstandard work schedules and their level of marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction was assessed by the utilization of an instrument that measured perceived closeness of the relationship, affection, ability to confide, how well arguments are managed, and overall happiness and comfort. Two groups of law enforcement officers from one police department were surveyed. Those married officers who were shift workers were compared to those married officers who work during the day.

Over the years, Americans have seen this country's economy shift from agrarian to industrial (Hedges & Sekscenski, 1979). The economy has promoted such changes as dual-earner families, and economic and social independence of women and children, which in turn has forced family roles and relationships to be renegotiated. With change comes a period of adaptation. As the economy continues to change, a need for workers to be employed through a twenty-four hour period has become necessary;

therefore, it is expected that a period of adaptation may effect the family system in a negative way.

Statement of Hypothesis

Based on this prior research, it was hypothesized that marital satisfaction would be lower among police officers who worked nonstandard hours than those police officers who worked during the day. The independent variable was the shift worked by each married officer, and the dependent variable was the level of marital satisfaction measured by the Index of Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire.

CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

For many years, workers of numerous professions have held jobs that require individuals to employ evening or night hours. From early times, extension of work hours became necessary for gatekeepers, watchmen, herdsman, policemen, sailors, and soldiers (Kogi, 1985). These hours of work gradually spread to manufacturing industries and public services.

With the beginning of industrialization, working long hours became common in many countries (Kogi, 1985). By the nineteenth century, a two-shift system developed in such fields as blast furnaces, forges, paper mills, and rolling mills, where employees commonly worked two twelve-hour shifts. Soon after, the three-shift system gradually replaced the two-shift system to incorporate a complete twenty-four hour period.

Increased urbanization dramatically influenced the development of shift work, and was frequently found in professions such as food-processing, printing, postal services, broadcasting, transport, health services, security, and entertainment (Kogi, 1985). Shift work accelerated in the 1950s due to economic expansion which leveled off in the 1960s, only to increase again in the 1970s. According to Kogi (1985), studies of industrialized countries estimated between 15 and 30 percent of employed industrial workers engage in shift work.

Shift work developed over the years for numerous reasons. Some of

these reasons include new technological requirements, economic advantages, the need to expand services due to increased urbanization, and social and macroeconomic factors (Kogi, 1985). Technology allows automated machines to continuously operate for economic purposes. The economy has been enhanced by an increase in utilization of capital and profit margins. An increase in business competitiveness is also a direct result from the establishment of shift work. Lastly, shift work also reduces unemployment.

According to Goodrich and Weaver (1998), shift work is defined as “evening or night work, rotating shifts, irregular shifts, split shifts, and extended-duty hours which forces individuals to sleep at times when the body is inclined to wakefulness and to stay awake when the body’s cycle is predisposed towards sleep” (p. 571). Defined more specifically, shift work involves any schedule where the majority of the hours worked fall outside the period of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. (White & Keith, 1990).

Prevalence of Shift Work

It is estimated that one in five employed Americans work evening, night, or rotating shifts (Presser, 2000). Twenty percent of workers in industrialized nations are shift workers employed on a permanent night shift or a rotating schedule (Eastman, 1995). Only about 31.5 percent of employed Americans over the age of 18 work regular hours during the day, between 35 and 40 hours a week, five days a week, Monday through Friday

(Presser, 2000). Roughly two out of five individuals do not work five days a week, Monday through Friday. Those who work less than 35 hours a week are more likely to work irregular hours and weekends than those individuals who are employed full-time.

There also appears to be gender differences in the types of nonstandard hours worked. Females are less likely than males to work fixed midnight shifts or rotating shifts, but are more likely than males to work other nonstandard hours such as evening shifts (Presser, 1995). Females are also more likely to work week-days and fewer than five days a week than males; whereas, males are more likely to work both week-days and weekends.

Effects Associated with Shift Work

An increase in concern over the detrimental effects of shift work is being recognized (Barton & Folkard, 1991). The effects of shift work are often a direct “consequence of the mismatch between the timing system of the shift worker and strong external cues, such as clock time, the light/dark cycle, and knowledge of others’ behavior” (p. 207).

Disturbance of circadian rhythms including the sleep/wake cycle, deteriorated physical and psychological health, and disrupted social and domestic life are all problems associated with working nonstandard hours (Barton, 1994). A shift worker may easily develop circadian rhythm sleep disorder where a subject’s actual sleep pattern and the sleep pattern that is

desired or regarded as societal norm is misaligned (ICSD, 1990). The subject may have difficulty sleeping when desired, needed or expected, resulting in insomnia or excessive sleepiness. However, once sleep onset is achieved, normal duration is usually sustained. Circadian rhythms can affect sleep, hunger, alertness, mood, sexual drive, and nearly every other body function to some degree (Graber & Gouin, 1995). Adaptation of the shift worker to a routine of sleeping during the day and working evening or night shift may depend on the severity of the problems experienced (Barton, 1994).

The brain possesses an area called the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN) that is responsible for circadian rhythms such as the rest and activity cycle (Czeisler, Moore-Ede, & Coleman, 1983). The SCN seems to respond to light and dark cycles of the earth's rotation causing most people to become sleepy at night and awake during the day. Body temperature decreases at night and certain hormones are also released when sleepiness is initiated, making abnormal work hours difficult for some (Rikard, 1997).

The natural biorhythm of a human rests on a twenty-five hour cycle instead of the normal twenty-four hour day that is imposed (Graber & Gouin, 1995), forcing humans to reset their biological clocks an average of one hour each day (Czeisler et al., 1983). This was demonstrated in an experiment done by Weitzman and Czeisler (Coleman, 1986) in the monitoring of volunteers in soundproof rooms where clocks, wristwatches,

windows, radios, televisions and telephones were prohibited. Subjects resided in these rooms anywhere from a month to six months and were paid for their time accordingly.

For the first twenty days, volunteers were told to go to bed at midnight and awake at eight in the morning (Coleman, 1986). They were then allowed to go to bed and awaken anytime they desired thereafter. Technicians took a series of continuous physiological measurements such as blood tests, hormones, temperatures, and brain wave assessments. Researchers discovered that the volunteers fell asleep and awoke an hour later each day until eventually they went around the entire clock. It appeared that the subjects had demonstrated the ability to establish their own internal biological clocks free of environmental cues.

When the circadian rhythm is tampered with due to societal impositions, and physiological and emotional implications, sleep disturbances are created. This is indicative of the shift worker's sleep patterns where insomnia and excessive sleepiness are present (ICSD, 1990). It was not until Edison's invention of the light bulb that the timing of the sleep-work schedules was manipulated to accommodate socioeconomic needs of society (Czeisler et al., 1983).

There are multitudes of documented negative effects from shift work. Common complaints of these individuals include chronic fatigue, sleep disturbances and deprivation, gastrointestinal disturbances,

constipation, impaired performance, speed, and diminished job and public safety. Other complaints include stress, disrupted social life, and an increased risk of depression (Czeisler et al., 1983; Barton & Folkard, 1991; Goodrich & Weaver, 1998).

Research indicated a higher incidence of errors at work in the morning hours between three and five with a decrease in performance of psychomotor tasks just prior to accidents (Czeisler et al., 1983; Barton & Folkard, 1991). Kogi (1985) found that some individuals struggle to keep alert while at work, have difficulty securing enough sleep time, and scheduling free time for activities becomes near impossible. Shift workers tend to have fewer friends, and may experience disrupted family relations (White & Keith, 1990). The friends shift workers do have may also be shift workers (Walker, 1985). Absence from family functions at holidays or anniversaries is yet another disadvantage from working nonstandard schedules.

Bohle and Tilley (1998) noted that working evenings or nights were found to be more lonely, tiring and irritating. Further findings indicated that factors such as social life, sex life, family life, and availability of leisure time were all negatively associated with working nights.

Sleep duration is usually shortened by one to four hours among shift workers, and the sleep obtained is usually perceived as unrefreshing (ICSD, 1990). Many suffer from difficulty falling asleep and awakening, enhancing

symptoms of irritability. Although symptoms may subside after sustaining a particular shift for a week or more, the phase is usually reversed on days off or vacations. Shift work may lead to chronic sleep disturbances, cardiovascular disease, respiratory problems, lower back pain, disrupted eating habits, and drug and alcohol dependency (ICSD, 1990; Czeisler et al., 1983). Evidence also indicated the possibility of a shorter life span among these workers by nearly twenty percent. These symptoms seem to increase with age (ICSD, 1990).

According to Barton (1994), there are two types of circadian personalities. These include individuals who are capable of adjusting their circadian rhythms to their work schedules, and those who lack the ability. The flexibility to sleep at various times of the day, the ability to overcome drowsiness, and possessing a preference for evening or morning activities all play a role in how well an individual will adjust to shift work.

Barton and Folkard (1991) also indicated a discrepancy on absenteeism among night workers. While some studies reported high rates of absenteeism during the initial adjustments to night shift, other studies reported absenteeism to be lower among night workers than day workers. Still other research has indicated absenteeism among night workers depends on when the days off during the week occurred. Higher rates of absences among day workers on the weekends were found than among the night workers. There appeared to be more value placed on the popular times and

days of the week when the majority of the population is off from work; therefore, increasing absenteeism on these particular days. However, according to Barton and Folkard (1991), day shift nurses valued evening and night hours more as time away from work, while night nurses valued having time off during the day and afternoon hours.

Kogi (1985) reported that a study of print shop workers and computer operators in Japan noted decreased social activity before, after and in between night shifts. While some employees would go out in the morning prior to their first night shift of the week, they would usually return home by the middle of the day to rest. Individuals would also usually remain home between two night shifts or only spend a short time away within a short distance. More than 40 percent of the participants in the study engaged in a two to three hour nap prior to going to work which has been found to help decrease night shift fatigue.

Time constraints placed on shift workers may prevent them from engaging in activities at the same time as normal day workers; therefore, often limiting these activities (Walker, 1985). Because shift work, especially midnight shift, is perceived as unnatural, these workers tend to feel isolated and often find participation in special organizations such as political campaigns, civic groups, or parent-teacher associations, near impossible. The community where the shift worker lives and works may not fully integrate them as a productive member.

Sleep disturbances of shift workers are complicated by day-time noises, sunlight, and social activities (Eastman, 1995). Free time is often used to recover what sleep was lost, and it is therefore, no wonder why negative consequences from shift work are often associated with marital problems and other social relationships. Family and social tensions can make shift work more burdensome whose schedules make it difficult to devote time to these priorities (Sleep Disorders, 1994).

Goodrich and Weaver (1998) performed a study to examine if shift workers experience more signs of depression than day workers. There appears to be a possible link between disrupted sleep and the development of depression. It was first noted that shift work may effect females more since they usually have higher levels of depression than males. The study's results revealed that females who worked traditional hours were significantly more depressed than males. However, both male and female shift workers showed equal levels of depression on the Beck Depression Inventory. There also appeared to be higher rates of depression and nervous disorders among those shift workers who were employed in an urban area compared to those in a rural area.

Barton and Folkard (1991) completed a study on the differences between day and night nurses at a psychiatric hospital. The study was based on a range of measures that included satisfaction with a particular shift in relation to free time, actual hours of work, the number and timing of breaks,

level of job interference with their private lives in terms of sleep, fatigue, social and domestic disruption, reported levels of stress, and the value attached to time off from work. While other studies found working nonstandard hours to produce more negative effects than positive effects, this study did not show many significant differences between nurses who worked during the day, and those who worked at night.

The day shift nurses reported more domestic troubles than the night workers (Barton & Folkard, 1991). There also appeared to be no significant differences between the two shifts on problems associated with sleep or social life, and satisfaction with the hours of work. The study indicated that night nurses were more satisfied with the distribution of their free time than day nurses, while the day nurses were more satisfied with the number and timing of their breaks. Higher levels of stress were reported by night nurses than day nurses. Those who were temporarily on night shift reported higher levels of stress than those who were permanently on night shift.

Advantages of Shift Work

Some of the advantages considered by those who choose shift work may include easier manageability of child-care, shift differential pay, easier to pursue higher education, a reduction in supervision, and a preference for particular working hours (Presser, 1995). Shift workers may be able to more intensely pursue a hobby than day workers, or work a second, part-time job (Walker, 1985). They may also have more of an opportunity to complete

errands such as cash a check or visit the hairdresser during the day. According to Barton (1994), some women may actually prefer to work nights in order to share with their husband the responsibility of raising children. Presser (1995) points out that employed fathers actually play a more active role in their children's lives when the mothers are employed. In Bohle and Tilley's study (1998), some describe working nights as a peaceful, less busy environment which allows for greater independence from supervision, and an overall friendlier shift.

In Presser's study (1995), reasons for working nonstandard hours were explored. Approximately, 53,697 individuals were questioned in a nationally representative monthly survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census that primarily estimated the extent of unemployed Americans. A supplemental questionnaire was included inquiring about work schedules. Roughly, 36.1 percent of both males and females that worked nonstandard hours gave voluntary reasons such as better pay, better child-care arrangements, better arrangements for care of other family members, and allowed more time for higher education classes. About 58.7 percent of the same population gave involuntary reasons such as requirement of the job, and inability to find another job.

Attitudes Towards Shift Work

Barton and Folkard's study (1991) revealed that an individual's preference for a particular shift, and whether the shifts were rotating or

permanent effected the results. Those permanent night shift nurses who had voluntarily chosen to work night hours demonstrated fewer health concerns, and gave a more favorable outlook upon shift work than those who had either a rotating shift or who were employed on night shift involuntarily. Barton (1994) also emphasized this same point in that fewer health complaints were reported by permanent night shift workers, and higher rates of domestic disturbances were reported among nurses who worked a rapidly rotating shift. Those who were forced to work a particular shift displayed more symptoms of cardiovascular disease, more domestic and family dissatisfaction, and more sleep disturbances than those who had chosen to work a particular shift. According to Walker (1985), when an individual shows a desire to change shifts, and expresses a negative attitude towards the current shift worked, family chaos seems to heighten.

There are a number of factors that can influence one's adaptation to shift work including the number of hours per shift, the number of night shifts worked in a row, and the direction of rotation in rotating shifts (Goodrich & Weaver, 1998). Age, commitment to work, health, and shift preference are also influential in a successful transition to shift work. Bohle and Tilley (1998) examined attitudes towards particular shifts and the predictors of general unhappiness with shift work. Speed of rotation, frequency of night work, range of personality, behavioral and health factors

including sleep and emotional reactivity, age, and marital status were all found to be significant variables that influence the attitudes of shift workers.

In Bohle and Tilley's study (1998), day time nurses were compared to night time nurses in their attitudes towards shift work. Of those nurses who worked during the night, those between the ages of 31 and 40 were found to have the highest level of satisfaction with their job, and those nurses under age 21, but older than 50 reported the lowest job satisfaction. Barton and Folkard (1991) also discovered a relationship between an individual's age and the shift worked on perceived stress levels. Among night shift workers, those under the age of 30 reported the highest levels of stress, while those over the age of 30 reported the lowest levels of stress

Greater dissatisfaction was also more pronounced among married night nurses, but with varying degrees depending on the number of children living in the household (Barton & Folkard, 1991). The more time night nurses reported engaging in solitary, social, family, and children oriented activities, the greater the satisfaction with their particular shift schedules. Supportive families, co-workers, and supervisors also seemed to increase shift schedule satisfaction.

Effects of Shift Work on Marriage

Walker (1985) described research performed by Mott in 1965 where the effects of shift work on marital happiness and family integration were examined. It was concluded that a two-step effect upon the family is

developed as a result from shift work. Walker cites Mott's summary of this two-step effect as follows:

First of all, the conflict between the hours of work and the times usually given over to certain role behavior seems to result in reports of difficulty and interference with valued activities. Secondly, there seems to be a cumulative effects of these various interferences with role performance leading to some reduction in marital happiness and an even greater reduction in the ability to coordinate family activities and to minimize strain and friction among family members (p. 215).

Research completed by Mott, Mann, McLoughlin, and Warwick (1965) revealed that the shift worker reported more difficulty in spending time with spouse, children, and leading a normal life than those who worked during the day. Among the men surveyed, marital satisfaction was greater among day shift workers than those employed on afternoon, midnight, or rotating shifts. Avoiding family friction and coordinating family activities were also reported as more difficult among shift workers than day workers. However, those individuals on afternoon or rotating shifts who reported lower levels of difficulty coordinating family time consistently demonstrated higher levels of marital satisfaction. Level of difficulty coordinating family time reported by those on midnight shift, did not appear to effect their marital satisfaction.

Shift workers tend to report more frequent irritability due to the sleep deprivation imposed from unusual schedules (Mott, Mann, McLoughlin, & Warwick, 1965; Walker, 1985). The constant adaptation to these shifts forces an individual's temperature cycle and other physiological rhythms to increase, further compounding irritability (Mott et al., 1965). The results from Mott's study demonstrated a relationship between the scores in difficulty of avoiding friction and family success in the minimization of stress.

Roles such as spousal companionship and protector of spouse from harm were less likely to be fulfilled by those who were shift workers (Walker, 1985). They were limited in their ability to provide spouse with diversion and relaxation, understanding, decision-making, and support. Night shift workers may especially be unable to provide protection, companionship, emotional support, or fulfill sexual needs of the spouse. Maintaining close family relations including companionship with their children also can be minimized. Shift workers lack the time to teach their children appropriate skills, control and discipline. Children of shift workers can be negatively effected in both school performance and emotional adjustment. However, Walker (1985) found that shift workers were more likely to participate in household chores than day workers. Disturbed family roles appeared to be related to mental health, specifically self-esteem, anxiety, and conflict pressure.

Walker's study (1985) examined the effects experienced by the wives of husbands who work nonstandard hours. Wives reported more frequent interference in housework because the husbands were either at home in the way or asleep. More nervousness at night was also a common complaint of the wives whose husbands were not home. Feelings of loneliness, difficulty in quieting children while husband slept, inability to go out in the evenings, meal coordination, and irritable husbands were also common complaints experienced by these wives. Wives were also generally disappointed and resentful for losing social times on weekends due to their husband's schedules, and not being able to go out as a couple (Banks, 1980).

Increased tension could also be experienced in a marriage among shift workers where faulty communication exists of marital expectations (Mott et al., 1965). According to Kingston and Nock (1987), husbands and wives both agree that time together talking improves the quality of a marriage. Time together, having fun, and eating meals together are also helpful in keeping a marriage strong. In the sample collected by Kingston and Nock, 3.7 to 3.9 hours in a day were shared by spouses where only one spouse was employed. Where both spouses were employed, spouses spent approximately 3.2 hours together a day – a difference of only a little over 30 minutes. This may suggest that dual-earner couples tend to work harder at sharing time together than single earner couples. Kingston and Nock appropriately pointed out that it is undetermined whether time together

effects marital quality or whether marital quality effects the time spent together by couples.

Sleep disturbances among shift workers appeared to be related to the number of rooms and number of children in a household (Walker, 1985). Among male shift workers where a family had only two rooms, sleep disturbances were found in 55 percent of the cases. Forty-one percent of the cases were found to have sleep disturbances in homes with three rooms, 27 percent in homes with four rooms, and 7.6 percent in homes with five rooms. Twenty-four percent of families with one child experienced disturbed sleep, while 40 percent of families with two children did, and 50 percent of families with five children experienced sleep loss.

Banks' (1980) research did not discover much association between the family work day and marital satisfaction or happiness. However, those who worked night shift appeared to demonstrate more marital problems than those who worked afternoon shift. Participation in religious, political, or recreation affiliations were interfered with in working irregular hours. Bank also felt that the development of roles were disturbed in families with a shift worker.

The most obvious implications is that, since work roles by necessity (and sometimes as well by choice) take precedence, other roles-including those related to family life – are the “losers” in this competition...The further implication is that, when relatively highly

valued roles lose out in the allocation of time, people become dissatisfied with those aspects of their lives and may experience some role strain as they attempt to create an effective balance among their roles (p. 621).

According to Presser (1995), shift work appears to increase the chances of divorce significantly. A decrease in the overall quality of family life has been found among those who work nonstandard hours (Kingston & Nock, 1985). "Temporal differences in employment schedules among spouses contribute to the complexity of home life, yet the many dimensions of this important link remain largely unexplored" (Presser, 1994, p. 348).

White and Keith (1990) examined the effects shift work has on marital quality and stability through a national panel of married males and females. A total of 1668 telephone interviews were completed, and revealed that 27 percent of couples where both spouses worked, one reportedly was a shift worker. More African Americans, and younger individuals were found to be involved in shift work than Caucasians and older individuals. In 15 percent of the cases interviewed, husbands were the only shift workers in the family. Wives were found to be the only shift worker among six percent of the cases, and both spouses were shift workers in three percent of the cases.

Marital quality of the participants was based on the following variables: marital happiness, interaction, disagreements, problems, sexuality,

child-related problems, assessment, and divorce (White & Keith, 1990). Results demonstrated a reduction in marital quality and an increase in probability for divorce among shift workers, but the significance of the effects was relatively small. Results also showed statistical significance of negative effects in many of the other areas as well.

According to Presser (2000), one in six married individuals are shift workers, one in four of dual-earner couples are shift workers, and one in three if children are present. One in three employed Americans work weekends. Presser's intention for the study was to determine the effect of nonstandard work schedules on marital instability. The likelihood of a marriage involving shift workers ending in divorce appeared to depend on the presence of children, the type of nonstandard work schedules, gender of spouse, and the duration of the marriage. Interviews were completed on a large population of both males and females at two different time periods. Division of household labor, absence of sleep, difficulties planning social life, development of a bond between the married couple, length of working nonstandard hours, adaptation of spouse, strength of the marriage based on longevity, and the stress level of those workers with children were all factors analyzed during this study.

Results indicated that husbands were more likely to work nonstandard hours than wives were, but only because wives were less likely to be employed (Presser, 2000). While one-third of the males interviewed

worked weekends, only one-fourth of the women did. Results also revealed that of the couples married less than five years, 41.2 percent of husbands who worked on the midnight shift were dissatisfied with their marriage, and 35.4 percent of wives who worked midnights were dissatisfied. Presser (2000) noted that spouses may actually seek out professions requiring nonstandard hours if their marriage is already unstable, therefore, limiting the time spent with their marriage partner.

Presser (2000) discovered that working midnight or rotating shifts negatively impacted marital stability in those married couples with children, but showed no significant impact on couples without children. Gender and length of marriage were also influential factors on whether or not the marriage could withstand the effects of shift work. The late hours, not the specific days worked was found to be the only factor in impacting marital satisfaction in this study.

Law Enforcement Stress and the Effects on Police Marriages

This study examined the effects of nonstandard schedules among law enforcement officers on marital satisfaction. Police officers have one of the most stressful and dangerous occupations (Anson & Bloom, 1988; More, 1985). Exposure to physical dangers, violence, cruelty, and aggression is high in this profession (More, 1985). Police officers often have to make critical decisions in a short amount of time, and must deal with an indifferent police bureaucracy (Anson & Bloom, 1988; More, 1985). Stress

from being a police officer is further complicated by working inconvenient shifts resulting in restricted social activities, and decreased marital satisfaction (Anson & Bloom, 1988; Stenmark, Depiano, Wackwitz, Cannon, & Walfish, 1982). These stressors experienced by police officers can manifest themselves in physiological disorders and emotional instability resulting in broken marriages, alcoholism, or even suicide.

Police officers are nationally recognized for having the highest divorce rate over any other group of professionals (Stenmark et al., 1982). In large departments, it is not unusual to find police officers under the age of 30 beginning their third marriage (More, 1985). Domestic crises for many officers has been related to the long hours of separation due to conflicting work schedules of both spouses (Stenmark et al., 1982). These erratic work schedules, the necessity to sometimes be available 24 hours a day, along with other job pressures can create discord within a marriage of a police officer.

Suicide rates have also been reported higher for male police officers than males in any other profession (More, 1985). Of 36 professions, police officers have the second highest suicide rate. Aside from reasons such as accessibility and knowledge of a firearm, the psychological effects of continuous exposure to death and public criticism, and inconsistent judicial decisions that negate the importance of police work, suicide among officers

has also been associated with the lack of friendships and broken family ties due to the long and irregular hours required. Once an individual makes the decision to become a police officer, he or she also makes the decision to share priorities between the family and society. Many of the problems experienced both on the job or in the marriage are then crossed over to the other area; therefore, creating marital difficulties and/or ineffective job performance.

According to More (1985), "Unusual working hours, scattered weekends, excessive overtime, court appearances, and the constant presence of a gun in one's everyday life are enough to cause significant stresses and problems in a marital relationship" (p. 266). Irregular work schedules often create extensive family disruption, lack of time spent with children, missed weekends and holidays with the family, resentful spouse towards being left home alone at night, and difficulty in planning social activities with family and friends. Many officers find their energy to be drained while on duty leaving nothing left to cope with the every day problems at home. Police officers may also bring home their suspicious demeanor that is so important in convicting criminals while working. They may find they project that suspiciousness onto their family in a desire to protect them, when instead it can create an environment lacking trust and confidence. The life of a police officer makes it very difficult to live a

“normal” life and may produce a loss of interest in the marriage as the communication begins to break down.

More (1985) also suggested that it is in the law enforcement agency's best interest to help police officers identify and resolve marital discord, for it affects everyone involved – the officer, family, children, and the society in which officers protect. Government and public service occupations have fallen behind other industrial businesses where employee benefits are concerned. Law enforcement is just now beginning to recognize job-related stress, and that marital problems among officers may have a negative effect on job effectiveness. According to More (1985),

Administrators are starting to recognize that the spouse and family are significant contributors to the success or failure in a law enforcement career. Marital and family strife, discord, and unresolved emotional problems affect a police officer's development, motivation, productivity, and effectiveness in ways we are only beginning to appreciate and understand (p. 265).

While shift work among law enforcement officers is only one area that impacts marital satisfaction, it was the focus of this study.

CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participants

The sample was drawn from a population of 103 law enforcement officers at St. Charles City Police Department. Of these police officers, 96 were male, and seven were female. Racially, this population included 100 Caucasians, and three African Americans. According to job title, 70 patrol officers were represented, 24 supervisors (i.e. Chief, Major, Captain, Lieutenant, Sergeant, or Corporal), as well as 13 detectives. Eighty-two officers from this population were married. Fifty-one of these officers worked standard hours, while 52 worked nonstandard hours. Standard hours was defined as work that primarily fell after 4 p.m. but before 8 a.m. The 82 married police officers formed the pool of volunteer subjects for the study. These participants were divided into two groups based on whether or not they worked standard or nonstandard hours.

Of the sample that was drawn from 82 married law enforcement officers, 63 officers volunteered to participate. Table 1 displays the distribution of the population according to demographic variables. Fifty-seven of these participants were males (90.5%), while six were females (9.5%). In terms of racial distribution, sixty-one were Caucasians (96.8%) and two were African Americans (3.2%). Based on job position, forty-four of the participants were patrol officers (69.8%), twelve were supervisors (19.1%), and seven were detectives (11.1%). Thirty-three of the volunteers

worked non-standard hours (52.4%), while the remaining thirty subjects (47.6%) subjects worked standard day hours.

The mean age of all participants was 37.44 years. In terms of educational level nine subjects a high school degree (14.3%), 27 subjects had some college (42.9%), 17 subjects had a four year college degree (26.9%), and 10 subjects had more than a four year degree (15.9%). As for years of service as a commissioned police officer, five participants showed zero to five years of service (7.9%), 28 had six to ten years of service (44.4%), nine had 11 to 15 years of service (14.4%), six had 16 to 20 years of service (9.5%), and 15 had more than 20 years of service (23.8%).

While all participants were married, 22 subjects reportedly had been married between zero and five years (34.9%), 19 had been married between six and ten years (30.2%), six had been married between 11 and 15 years (9.5%), four had been married between 16 and 20 years (6.3%), and 12 had been married for more than 20 years (19.1%). The average number of children was 2.1 for all participants.

As Table 1 indicates, the sample was primarily derived of male patrol officers of Caucasian descent. The majority of participants reported having some college education. It was also shown that those who worked standard hours had served on the police force for more years than those who worked nonstandard hours. Those who worked standard hours also reported longer marriages than those who worked nonstandard hours. Interestingly,

Table 1: Demographic Data of Sample

Demographic Variable		Standard		Nonstandard	
		<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Gender	Male	26	86.7	31	93.9
	Female	4	13.3	2	6.1
Race	Caucasian	29	96.7	32	97.0
	African American	1	3.3	1	3.0
Education	High School	3	10.0	6	18.2
	Some College	14	46.7	13	39.4
	4 years College	8	26.7	9	27.3
	More	5	16.7	5	15.2
Job Position	Patrol Officer	18	60.0	27	81.8
	Patrol Supervisor	1	3.3	4	12.1
	Amin. Supervisor	5	16.7	0	0.0
	Detective	6	20.0	2	6.1
Years of Service	0-5 years	1	3.3	4	12.1
	6-10 years	8	26.7	18	54.5
	11-15 years	6	20.0	4	12.1
	16-20 years	4	13.3	1	3.0
	More	11	36.7	6	18.2
Years on Shift	0-5 years	19	63.3	20	60.6
	6-10 years	8	26.7	12	36.4
	11-15 years	2	6.7	0	0.0
	16-20 years	1	3.3	0	0.0
	More	0	0.0	1	3.0
Preferred Shift	Standard hours	29	96.7	24	72.7
	Nonstandard hours	1	3.3	9	27.3
Years Married	0-5 years	9	30.0	13	39.4
	6-10 years	8	26.7	11	33.3
	11-15 years	1	3.3	6	18.2
	16-20 years	3	10.0	0	0.0
	More	9	30.0	3	9.1
Children	Yes	29	96.7	29	87.9
	No	1	3.3	4	12.1
Age		X = 40.30 SD = 8.16		X = 35.42 SD = 5.84	

participants who worked standard hours generally preferred their schedules; whereas, the majority of participants who worked nonstandard hours would prefer to work standard hours. The mean age for the standard hours group ($M = 40.30$, $SD = 8.16$) was higher than for the nonstandard hours group of participants ($M = 35.42$, $SD = 5.84$)

Instruments

The Index of Marital Satisfaction (IMS, Appendix A) was the instrument utilized to help measure general satisfaction within a marriage. This instrument contained 25 items designed to measure the degree, severity, or magnitude of marital problems as perceived by one partner in a relationship. The instrument measured constructs such as perceived closeness of the relationship, affection, ability to confide, how well arguments were managed, and overall happiness and comfort. Questions were rated on a scale of 1-7, with one being none of the time, and seven designated as all the time.

Actual norms were not available for this particular instrument. However, respondents who have utilized this test include both single and married individuals, clinical and nonclinical populations, high school and college students, and nonstudents. While this instrument has primarily been used with Caucasian respondents, Japanese, Chinese Americans, and limited numbers from other ethnic groups have also been included. Therefore, the

IMS instrument was sufficient for the married population this study intended on examining.

The IMS questionnaire was a self-report instrument that could be easily scored and administered. The IMS was scored by first reverse scoring thirteen specific items out of the twenty-five. The sum of these scores plus the sum of the remaining scores were subtracted by the number of items completed. This figure was multiplied by 100, and then divided by the number of items completed times six. From this, a range of zero to 100 was derived. The higher the score, the more severe the marital problems. Scores above 30 indicated the presence of significant marital discord. Individuals with a score above 70 indicated an extremely high level of stress experienced in the relationship, with a greater chance for violence to occur.

The IMS has excellent internal consistency with a mean alpha of .96, and a low standard error of measurement at 4.00. The instrument also possessed excellent test-retest reliability with a .96 correlation. The IMS has good construct validity, known-groups validity, and construct validity. This instrument has the ability to discriminate between couples known to have marital difficulties, and those who do not.

The Index of Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire appeared to be a sound measuring tool for its intended purpose. The high reliability and validity indicated the strength this instrument possessed. However, this instrument may not have inquired the most appropriate questions suitable for

this study's purpose. It did not appear to ask about quantity or quality of time spouses spent with each other. Marital roles were also not addressed in this particular instrument. These are areas that may effect marital satisfaction in the lives of those who work nonstandard hours.

Procedure

The research design chosen for this particular study was causal-comparative. This design was chosen because two groups differing on the independent variable were compared on the same dependent variable. The independent variable was the shift each married individual was employed. The dependent variable was the level of marital satisfaction reported by each participant. The groups were divided based on whether they worked standard or nonstandard hours. Day hours were defined as the majority of the hours worked fell between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Evening and night hours were defined as the majority of the hours worked fell after 4 p.m., but before 8 a.m.

The sample was selected from one police department consisting of 103 commissioned police officers. Individuals who were not currently married were eliminated from the sample. Those who worked day hours were placed in the one group, and those who worked evening or night hours were placed in the comparison group. Both groups were administered the same instrument and demographic questionnaire on which the groups were compared, along with a cover letter briefly explaining the project (Appendix

B). The demographic profile sheet (Appendix C) inquired about gender, race, age, education, length of marriage, children and how many, length of service, and length employed on the current shift. The sample was selected on a volunteer basis and data was collected anonymously.

Permission from the Chief of Police (Appendix D) was obtained prior to gathering the data. Permission was then asked of each shift supervisor to enter the roll call meetings prior to start of each shift. The questionnaire, along with a demographic profile sheet was administered to all prospective married participant volunteers at St. Charles City Police Department during each roll call meeting prior to the start of each shift. Those who were unable to attend the roll call meetings were individually requested to participate in the study. A brief explanation of the study was stated along with directions on how to complete the questionnaire. Subjects were told to place the questionnaire in an empty envelope upon completion. Each envelope was then collected in a closed box and the questionnaires were not scored until all had been returned from all shifts.

CHAPTER IV RESULTS

Total scores from the Index of Marital Satisfaction Inventory were calculated for both groups of participants. Means and standard deviations were computed. A t-test for independent samples ($\alpha = .05$) was performed. While the mean score was slightly lower among those participants who worked standard hours than those who worked nonstandard hours, the independent t-test revealed the difference to be insignificant (see Table 2).

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviation and t-Tests for the Control and Comparison Groups

Group	n	M	SD	t	p
Standard Hours	30	22.00	14.94	-.483	.631
Nonstandard Hours	33	24.06	18.49	-.488	.627

Therefore, the null hypothesis that those individuals who worked nonstandard hours would have lower marital satisfaction than those who worked standard hours ($H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$; where μ_1 = standard hours and μ_2 = nonstandard hours) was not rejected. There appeared to be no significant differences between the two groups in this sample.

CHAPTER V DISCUSSION

The proposed hypothesis that police officers employed during nonstandard hours would report lower marital satisfaction than officers employed during standard hours was not supported in this study. While the mean score from the IMS inventory was slightly higher among those who worked nonstandard hours than those who worked standard hours, the difference was proven insignificant.

The results found from this study were not consistent with most prior research on this topic. According to White and Keith (1990), shift workers tend to have fewer friends, and may experience disrupted family relations. Bohle and Tilley (1998) also found that working evenings or night shifts contributed to deficits in social life, sex life, family life, and leisure activities. A decrease in the overall quality of family life was found among those who were employed during nonstandard hours in a study conducted by Kingston and Nock (1985).

However, participants in this study may have knowingly understood the requirements of police work prior to choosing this profession, one of which is unusual work schedules. As some prior research has discovered, individuals may prefer shift work to help manage their child-care needs, to receive shift differential pay, to pursue a higher education, or merely have a preference for particular working hours (Presser, 1995). Whatever the case may be, the results produced from this study did not support much of the

research already completed on marital stability and nonstandard work schedules.

There were several reasons that could have contributed to insignificant results. Some of these included too small of a sample size, lack of honesty in completing the questionnaire, and an inappropriate measuring tool utilized for this particular study.

This study was limited by the sample available. It was difficult to compare police officers in administrative positions whose duties were considerably different from that of an officer who patrolled the streets. The perceived stress level itself felt by those officers on the road may have influenced their marital satisfaction in a more negative way than the officers who did not patrol the city. Similarly, detectives' duties differed from patrol officers as well, and may have also impacted the results. Some specialty positions within the patrol division, such as the TACT team, K-9 units, traffic positions, Identification (Forensics) units, and others can be more demanding with little or no compensation. Many officers remain on call twenty-four hours a day, and all of them are required to appear in court both on duty and off duty. The unpredictability of these various types of jobs and schedules within the same police department can also contribute to the level of satisfaction in one's marriage. However, for convenience sake, and in order for the sample size to be sufficient, subjects were chosen from these various job positions from one police department.

Possible sources of sampling bias from this study included the following. Most of the participants were male, therefore, the sample of females chosen for this study may not have accurately represented the female population. Similarly, few African Americans and other races were represented in this sample. There were also more police officers in administrative positions working standard hours than nonstandard hours. This may have caused sampling bias assuming the stress level of those police officers working nonstandard hours on the road was higher, or at the very least, a different type of stress than those police officers working standard hours behind a desk. Sampling bias was also compounded by the use of all participants from one police department, where other factors may have influenced marital satisfaction such as police department morale, monetary compensation, and promotional opportunities. Lastly, the study only examined one party of the marriage in question; therefore, results reflected only one partner's perspective on the level of marital satisfaction. Had the study examined both partners, a much more thorough examination of the perceived marriage could have been acknowledged and evaluated.

Lack of randomization, manipulation, and control factors were all threats to the validity of this research design. It was difficult to establish a cause-effect relationship with a great deal of confidence. It could be that individuals chose particular work hours based on their degree of marital satisfaction, rather than their level of marital satisfaction being a direct result

of the work hours chosen. Perhaps an officer chose to work nonstandard hours to avoid an unpleasant environment at home. A third, unknown factor that was not addressed in the study, such as the stress associated with police officers' duties, or other factors in the marriage, may also have been the true underlying reasons for both the work hours and level of marital satisfaction.

One way to minimize reverse causality as a threat to validity was to determine the order of causality. This was done by asking each subject on the demographic questionnaire for the length of their marriage, and the length employed on a particular shift. Knowing this information may have helped determine which variable caused the other. The only way to be confident that a third factor such as job stress was not the underlying cause for decreased marital satisfaction was to eliminate it. Unfortunately, there was no possible way to eliminate a third factor from the study.

Counseling Interventions

Counselors who work with individuals in law enforcement need to be prepared to wholistically evaluate their clients. Unusual working conditions that require people to work evenings, nights, weekends, and holidays affects multiple areas of one's life, as well as the people that surround them. It can affect their sleep, eating, family time, recreational hobbies, and marriage. Yet, as this study demonstrated, nonstandard schedules are only a part of the entire picture for a law enforcement officer and his or her family.

According to More (1985), programs within a police agency may help bridge the communication gap between the officers and their spouses. Such programs may include orientation for spouses to help clarify an understanding of the many activities required in a police agency, ride along programs “to provide spouses with firsthand observation and knowledge of the law enforcement officer’s occupational role” (More, 1985, p. 270), and programs in firearm usage and safety to introduce spouses to gun usage techniques and safety precautions. While these programs do not directly address the issues associated with working nonstandard hours, they may provide spouses of police officers with a better understanding and appreciation for their occupation. They may also be able to connect with other spouses and form a network of support. These programs should also be supplemented with family and individual counseling services by specialists employed through the agency, or the agency needs to be equipped to refer out to professionals in the community.

Future Research

Future research should expand their sample by recruiting more participants from more than one police agency. Perhaps examining both partners in the marriage would offer an opportunity to compare the perception of marital satisfaction between spouses. However, this would have to be conducted in a controlled setting as to not cause further disruption between marriage partners. Surveying participants from only one

job position may aid in reducing sampling bias, and should be considered in future research. Dividing the groups into three groups of day shift, afternoon shift, and midnight shift may also indicate even further differences. While this study did not produce the results expected, it was encouraging to discover that overall, most police officers at St. Charles City Police Department reported satisfying marital relationships.

APPENDIX A

Fischer, J., & Corcoran, K. (Ed.). (1994). Measures for clinical practice (Vol. 1). New York: The Free Press.

INDEX OF MARITAL SATISFACTION (IMS)

This questionnaire is designed to measure the degree of satisfaction you have with your present marriage. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item as carefully and as accurately as you can by placing a number beside each one as follows:

1 = None of the time 2 = Very rarely 3 = A little of the time 4 = Some of the time

5 = A good part of the time 6 = Most of the time 7 = All of the time

1. ____ My partner is affectionate enough.
2. ____ My partner treats me badly.
3. ____ My partner really cares for me.
4. ____ I feel that I would not choose the same partner if I had it to do over again.
5. ____ I feel that I can trust my partner.
6. ____ I feel that our relationship is breaking up.
7. ____ My partner really doesn't understand me.
8. ____ I feel that our relationship is a good one.
9. ____ Our is a very happy relationship.
10. ____ Our life together is dull.
11. ____ We have a lot of fun together.
12. ____ My partner does not confide in me.
13. ____ Our is a very close relationship.
14. ____ I feel that I cannot rely on my partner.
15. ____ I feel that we do not have enough interests in common.
16. ____ We manage arguments and disagreements very well.
17. ____ We do a good job of managing our finances.
18. ____ I feel that I should never have married my partner.
19. ____ My partner and I get along very well together.
20. ____ Our relationship is very stable.
21. ____ My partner is a real comfort to me.
22. ____ I feel that I no longer care for my partner.
23. ____ I feel that the future looks bright for our relationship.
24. ____ I feel that our relationship is empty.
25. ____ I feel there is no excitement in our relationship.

APPENDIX B

Cover Letter

To all volunteer participants:

As most of you know, I am completing my Masters in Professional Counseling at Lindenwood University. In doing so, I need to gather information for my thesis project in order to graduate this December. I ask that you complete the following questionnaire which should only take a few minutes of your time. To ensure your anonymity, I ask that you place the questionnaire in the attached envelope, and then place the envelope in the box provided. The questionnaire will not be looked at until all have been turned in from all shifts. No individuals will be identified in the final report, and only group data will be presented. Upon completion of this project, the results and thesis in its entirety will be made available to any and all who may be interested. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

APPENDIX C

Demographic Profile Questionnaire

Sex: Male / Female

Race: White / African American / Hispanic / Other

Age: _____

Education Level: High School / Some college / 4 yrs college / More

Job Position: Patrolman / Patrol Supervisor / Adm. Supervisor /
Detective

Years of Service: 0-5 / 6-10 / 11-15 / 16-20 / More

Time of Shift: _____ a.m./p.m. to _____ a.m./p.m. (circle)

Years on Current Shift: 0-5 / 6-10 / 11-15 / 16-20 / More

Is this your Preferred shift?: Yes / No

If not, which shift Would you choose?: Days / Afternoons / Midnights

Primary reason for Shift preference: _____ Increased or decreased duty responsibility
_____ Seniority
_____ Shift preferred based on time of day
_____ Family
_____ Other

Years married: 0-5 / 6-10 / 11-15 / 16-20 / More

Children?: Yes / No

If so, how many?: 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / More

APPENDIX D

Permission from Chief of Police

From: G. Paul Corbin
To: Annette Jansen
Date: 9/12/00 11:12 AM
Subject: Re: Masters Thesis

Permission granted. I would be interested in getting a copy of your results. Please coordinate your efforts to contact the various shifts through Cpt. Amendola, Commander Field Operations Bureau. Good luck on your research. Chief Corbin

>>>Annette Jansen 09/12/00 03:41 AM<<<

Chief Corbin,

I am completing the requirements for my Masters Program in Professional Counseling at Lindenwood University. In doing so, I need to gather data on my thesis project in order to graduate this December. I am conducting a survey on the effects of working nonstandard hours on marital satisfaction among law enforcement officers. I request permission to enter each shift's muster and ask for volunteers to participate, as well as contact others who may not attend these musters.

Participants will need to fill out two relatively short questionnaires. Careful attention will be given to ensure the officers' confidentiality.

Copies of the results and the thesis in its entirety will be made available to any and all who may be interested following its completion. Upon permission granted from you, I shall ask each shift supervisor when the most convenient time would be available for me to plead for volunteers. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at my residence.

Your consideration is greatly appreciated

Annette Jansen

CC: Staff

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