
This Is for Fighting, This Is for Fun: Camerawork and Gunplay in Reality-Based Crime Shows

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Several years ago, I interviewed a Vietnam veteran named Brian Winhover. He had survived three tours of combat duty, but when he tried to tell me how he felt when he was under fire, it took him a while to find the words. Eventually he said, “[you could] call me a piece of ice. . . . You couldn’t impregnate me with anything.”¹ At first I was taken aback—I hadn’t expected a word like “impregnate” to crop up in a war story—but the more we talked, the clearer the psychology of his combat experience became. Winhover had lived out all the confusions embedded in the ubiquitous boot camp chant, “This is my rifle, this [penis] is my gun. One is for killing, one is for fun.”² Killing could be sex, the chant implied, and sex of a very particular kind. For Winhover, as for generations of soldiers before and since, to be a man, to belong to the unit, was to penetrate; to fail at those tasks, to be an enemy to the unit, was to be penetrated like a woman or a homosexual “bottom.” The battlefield was a site of sexualized conflict, one at which it was Winhover’s duty to assert his difference from the enemy by proving it “feminine.” This Winhover did with aplomb: by his own description, he became a mechanical, rifle-like creature in Vietnam, hard and numb. He dedicated his days in the field to killing, to trying to penetrate the bodies of enemy soldiers, to trying to “impregnate” the enemy with his weapon. In short, he became the perfect soldier.

Winhover came home in 1969, yet the psychosexual dynamics that characterized his combat experiences remain very much alive. In fact, they are a defining feature of the now ten-year-old American television genre of “reality-based” crime programs. In these highly popular and resilient shows, viewers encounter a world much like the one Winhover saw in Vietnam, a world in which heavily armed, uniformed men move among impoverished civilians, trying to sort guerrilla-like criminals from the population. They also encounter the psychosexual economy of that realm. In boot camp, Winhover’s drill sergeants trained him to confuse his penis and his rifle and thus to take a physical pleasure in being a soldier. In the far less coercive world of television, and toward a similar end, reality-based crime programs urge viewers to confuse the guns of the police with the

cameras through which they see events. Just as military training has long sought to break down the psychic barriers between killing and sex in the minds of its soldiers, so the visual styles of these programs work to intermingle the processes of seeing and shooting, of knowing and arresting, and of consuming goods and upholding the law. As the producers of reality-based crime programming acknowledge, these shows aim not to be *watched*, but to be *experienced*.³ With the full support and cooperation of the police themselves, the cameramen of reality-based crime programs invite viewers—both male and female—to feel the highly sexualized, hyper-masculine power of the State within their sedentary bodies.⁴

They extend this invitation by carefully equating their own cameras with the guns of the policemen and bounty hunters the cameras depict. After watching ten episodes of each of four of the most popular reality-based crime shows in the United States—*Cops* (1989), *Bounty Hunters* (1996), *America's Most Wanted* (1988), and *LAPD: Life on the Beat* (1995)—I've noticed that guns most frequently appear onscreen in three contexts: as weapons aimed at suspects, as holstered emblems of police authority, and, in advertising trailers especially, as explicit echoes of the cinematic six-shooter. These three incarnations correspond to three televisual devices common to the real-life crime genre: hand-held camera work, computer graphics, and intertextuality. Like aimed pistols, hand-held video cameras grant the viewer a policeman's power to pursue and arrest the suspect, albeit visually. Like holstered weapons, computer graphics make visible an omnipresent power—in this case, the power of TV producers, cooperating state authorities, and the viewer to embed potentially disruptive criminal activity in a body of knowledge. Finally, as symbols manipulated by TV producers, guns link the local realm of the arrest scene to the mythology of the American frontier. In these ways, guns and cameras work together to transform real-life crime programs into a sort of visual boot camp for the TV audience, one in which viewers are subtly coerced into taking pleasure in the feminization and domination of the poor and of people of color by a well-armed, fun-craving masculinized State.

The link between cameras and guns naturally precedes the advent of real-life crime programming (consider the phrase “shooting a movie”), just as the link between weapons and penises preceded the Vietnam War. Yet, in the four programs I will focus on, producers put extraordinary effort into maintaining and naturalizing the gun-camera analogy.

This is true despite the fact that each show features its own unique aesthetics. *Cops* and *Bounty Hunters*, for instance, offer seemingly raw (though in fact heavily edited) video-*verité* accounts of pursuit and capture. Each half-hour episode of *Cops* follows the exploits of police in a single American city, and includes between three and five sequences of police officers in action.⁵ These are preceded by a video-montage title sequence which depicts some of the most dramatic moments from footage already gathered in that city, accompanied by the show's now-infamous reggae theme song (“*Bad boys, bad boys—What'cha gonna do when they come for you?*”). Each action sequence opens with a shot of the policeman centrally involved—a shot in which the officer frequently describes his motives for joining the force—and proceeds to show him respond-

ing to a radio call.⁶ It then depicts the officer pursuing and usually capturing a suspect and concludes with that officer or one of his colleagues commenting laconically on the events that have just unfolded. *Bounty Hunters* follows a similar pattern. Each half-hour episode focuses on the work of one or two teams of bail enforcement agents and includes two to four sequences in which they discuss how to find and capture a particular bail jumper, pursue that person, arrest him, and bring him to jail.⁷

LAPD and *America's Most Wanted* feature a more varied menu of police activities and a correspondingly wider range of televisual devices. As its name suggests, *LAPD* attends exclusively to the activities of the Los Angeles Police Department. In addition to depicting pursuits and arrests, this half-hour show focuses considerable attention on the gathering of evidence. It also often has detectives recount the circumstances of unsolved crimes and ask the viewer for leads. At the end of many episodes, Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan appears on screen to encourage those with an interest in law enforcement to sign up for the force.

America's Most Wanted similarly encourages viewer participation. Hosted by John Walsh, an actor whose son Adam was murdered, the program's hour-long episodes tend to eschew capture sequences in order to introduce an average of three to five unsolved crimes or missing criminals, sometimes through re-enactments, and then ask viewers to assist in bringing the "bad guys" to justice. If they should spot one of these fugitives among their neighbors or can offer other leads, viewers are instructed to call "1-800-CRIMETV." Periodically, the program's producers present updates in which they show viewers how their calls have led to the arrest of fugitives from previous episodes.

With the exception of *America's Most Wanted*, then, each of these programs regularly features several sequences in which law enforcement officials pursue and capture suspects. These pursuits normally culminate in an arrest vignette. In one common form, this vignette depicts a group of policemen or bounty hunters bursting into a house, guns drawn, tackling an often half-naked suspect, and throwing him to the ground. In another form, it consists of a group of officers pointing their pistols at a suspect some feet away, forcing him or her to lie on the ground, face down, and then creeping closer until they loom over the suspect's prone figure. In a third, the arrest vignette features officers fingering their weapons while forcing a suspect to bend forward over the hood of a police cruiser, legs spread in preparation for an imminent frisking (itself often depicted as well).

Monotonously styled and frequently repeated, these vignettes are the equivalents of the "money shot" or "cum shot" in a porn movie: they are moments at which the full masculine potency of the leading character is revealed. These moments differ slightly from their pornographic equivalents, though, in the forms of pleasure they offer. In the conventional, heterosexual cum shot, the camera closes in strategically on the hard body and erect penis of the male performer. It thus offers the viewer at least two possible pleasures: of watching a powerful male control a female and of imagining himself as that male. The cameras of reality-based crime shows, on the other hand, go several steps further in enforcing an identification between the viewer and the protagonist (in this case, a police officer). Repeatedly, cameramen seek out not just the point of view of the officers, but

points of view suggested by their *weapons*. In police cars on the way to crime scenes, camera operators record the dashboard and radio from the waist-level vantage point of a gun belt. At the moment of capture, they point their lenses down at prone suspects like pistols. When those lenses zoom in on key parts of a suspect's body—a pocket, a scarred chest, and, especially often, the buttocks (a place where a weapon or drugs might be hidden and where the suspect might be penetrated sexually)—they draw the viewer toward the suspect along the trajectory of an imaginary bullet. Unlike their counterparts in heterosexual pornography, the cameramen of reality-based crime shows will not simply let their viewers watch. Rather, by conflating camera and pistol, they demand that the viewer personally experience the power of penetration embodied in the weapons of the officers of the State.⁸

This power is highly sexualized, but only in a limited sense. As in much heterosexual pornography, the twinned phallic weapons of camera and gun are used here in order to humiliate and subjugate rather than excite a feminized Other. The pleasure on offer is not a fantasy of congress, but a fantasy of control. And what needs to be controlled is the sexualized agency of the “enemy”—in this case, the poor and people of color. Sometimes, this agency is represented by a weapon, or at least the possibility of one. Virtually every arrest vignette features a police pat-down of a suspect for knives and guns, a search conducted as though the almost-always impoverished suspect could actually have the same access to weapons that the police themselves have. In this way, reality-based crime shows imply that the agency of the “enemy” may be masculine—that is, that it may be able to “penetrate” the bodies of the police on the screen (and by implication, of police and viewers in the off-screen world as well).

More often though (and sometimes simultaneously), these programs suggest that the agency of suspects and their friends and families is symbolically female. When police arrive at a crime scene, cameras quickly record any signs of difference between the police and the citizenry. They peer over the uniformed shoulders of the police and zoom in on unkempt hair, scars and bruises, and tattoos. Likewise, when cameramen follow officers into a home, they focus on disorder, on piles of dishes, unwashed children, unmade beds. In contrast to the officers—who stand erect and uniformed, their bodies often hard with muscles or body armor—the suspects are depicted as unruly, messy, corpulent and disorderly. They are “soft” where the officers are “hard.” Often upset, they appear “hysterical” where the officers appear commanding and “rational.” In these ways, producers imply that the poor are not only undisciplined individuals, but stereotypically feminine as well. Producers here do much the same psychological work as Army drill sergeants: faced with the symbolically masculine potential of those whom they've defined as antagonists to assault policemen and viewers alike, to “penetrate” them so to speak, they assist viewers in labelling these antagonists not as “men,” but as “women” who must themselves be symbolically penetrated by the forces of the State. Like Army recruits, viewers are invited to join the masculine community of these forces and to take pleasure in the domination of a feminized enemy.

That feminized enemy, however, constantly threatens to devour its masculine counterpart. Even weaponless, the poor are dangerous: in episode after episode, the sexualized

entropy of their lives threatens to overwhelm the orderly police. And while this is true for all such suspects, it is especially so for people of color. In keeping with centuries-old American stereotypes, both male and female African Americans are often depicted as having uncontrollable libidos. In an episode of *Cops* set in Kansas City, Kansas, for instance, several white officers pull up to a disturbance in the middle of the night. At the edges of the light cast by the camera team, we can see black figures running here and there, like escaped slaves in some nineteenth century plantation owner's nightmare. Then, a large African American woman rushes to the center of the frame, wielding a pipe. She points out a young black man and accuses him of lifting up her teenage daughter's shirt in front of her. The policemen chase, tackle and arrest the young man, who is clearly intoxicated. Later, a policeman explains: "A lot of the people we deal with out here are on what we call 'water'—that's marijuana dipped in formaldehyde. That gentleman obviously was trying to have sex with a young girl in front of the child's mother. Now it's time to do a lot of paperwork and move on to the next one."⁹ The implied alignment of forces is clear: young black men run wild in the streets looking for sex; young white men work to preserve a chaste world of order and reason. White men work with their minds on "paperwork," whereas young black men are out of their minds on "water."

This episode of *Cops* presents a fairly extreme example, but the principles at work within it run throughout reality-based crime programming. By depicting the poor and people of color as symbolically female, producers of real-life crime programs remind viewers of the pleasures of aligning themselves with a dominant and symbolically male State. Nor are these pleasures merely intellectual: when producers force viewers to look down (and sometimes, seemingly, *out of*) the barrels of police guns, they invite viewers to feel those weapons as extensions of their own bodies.

Alongside this form of camerawork, however, these programs also feature an abundance of computer-generated graphics. At the outset of each arrest sequence on *LAPD*, for instance, an icon appears on the screen, looking much as it might in a Windows computer interface, giving the title of the segment. Subsequent icons introduce the officers involved, describe the type of crime under consideration, and even present a map of the area the officers routinely patrol. *America's Most Wanted* regularly features a graphic drawing of a target zone into which the images of criminals are drawn as if dragged and clicked by a mouse across a screen. It also presents surveillance photographs from stores and banks, photographs which producers manipulate on screen as if they were digitized images on a home computer. Even the comparatively low-tech *Cops* and *Bounty Hunters* present onscreen tags at the start of each segment identifying the time, city, crime at hand, and officer in pursuit.

On one hand, these graphics are the products of a larger change in television style. As television critic John Caldwell has noted, the 1980s saw a shift across the medium "from programs based on rhetorical discourse to ones structured around the concepts of pictorial and stylistic embellishment."¹⁰ Having come into being at the end of the decade, the reality-based crime genre reflects this shift. On the other hand, however, I think we can read the uses of computer graphics as an extension of an already-established conflation of

gun, camera and masculine agency. In much the way that holstered pistols signal an omnipresent power to contain a given situation, so too do computer graphics seem to surround and neutralize dangerous individuals without necessarily assaulting them directly. When the computer *does* assault a suspect, it acts as a pistol might: by tearing apart the body. With the click of an off-screen mouse, producers reduce people to mug shots; that is, they eliminate their bodies and surround the faces that remain with statistics and icons. They take all that is dangerous and original in the criminal and embed it in the seemingly safe, rational world of information. In other words, they dam the flow of “water” with “paperwork.”¹¹

Computer graphics thus extend the camera/gun analogy in two ways: first, by fragmenting the bodies of suspects, they recall the pistol’s ability to violate the boundaries of a human body; secondly, by surrounding the suspect with information, they suggest the power of the police to surround and arrest any individual—a power assured on the scene by weapons. These same visual techniques also work to normalize police activities by linking them to other, seemingly unrelated practices. Drag-and-click graphics, for instance, suggest a link between the pursuit of criminals on television and the pursuit of information on home computers. The penetrating style of camerawork that offers viewers a chance to look through the eyes of a weapon echoes the point of view available in many video and computer games and in broadcast news accounts of contemporary military actions (most notably the 1991 Gulf War, in which Americans delighted in being able to see through the eyes of “smart” bombs).

Extensive use of statistics and of overhead helicopter shots even suggests a resemblance between the televised monitoring of crime and the televised monitoring of sports such as baseball. This is not to say that viewers confuse crime, war and baseball in any conscious sense, but rather to note that to the extent that real-life crime programs share a visual style with other activities, they may also be able to borrow the perceived legitimacy of those activities. That is, to the extent that the viewer watches war or crime on TV as he watches baseball—from high above, from the heights reserved for the owners of luxury boxes, or, in the case of war, from the aerial vantage points usually reserved for government authorities—he may well be inclined to feel that war and the pursuit of criminals are naturally right and rule-bound in the manner of a sport.

Nor are such linkages confined to the predominantly masculine domains of the battlefield, the baseball diamond, or the video game. Real-life crime programs are shown in a highly commercial context and for the purpose of selling ad time, and in many ways, the structure of pursuit and arrest—a structure controlled in the material field through the use of weapons and in the televisual field through the use of cameras and computer graphics—mirrors that of the pursuit and acquisition of consumer goods. With each new crime, the viewer joins the police or the bounty hunters in a process of revealing a need to make an acquisition (in this case, of a suspect), of identifying the target for acquisition, of capturing that target, and finally, of taking that target “home” to jail. In real-life crime programming, the sexualized landscape of crime and its containment soon overlaps the commercial landscape of desire and its satisfaction, and producers know this.

To take one particularly glaring example, the Sam Adams Brewing Company advertises its beer (in California, at least) on *Bounty Hunters*. Their ad features a man drinking a beer who sees another man steal a woman's purse. The beer drinker flicks a bottle cap at the suspect's head and knocks him out cold, thus saving the day—and thus suggesting that the buying of beer and the capturing of suspects might each represent the exercise of a masculine agency.

That agency does not belong to the viewer alone, however, nor even to the law enforcement officials on the TV screen; it belongs to the American nation. In the same way that boot camp taught Brian Winhover not only to be a killer, but to be an American soldier, reality-based crime programs teach their viewers to feel not only the power of individual men within themselves, but the masculine power of the State itself. They do this by referring constantly to the Old West of American myth. The opening of *Bounty Hunters*, for instance, features four men wearing black vests or long range coats with silver badges on their chests. Scruffy, macho, they carry pistols and a rifle. "When the West was won," explains the voice-over, "bounty hunters helped to create law and order. In 1873, federal law gave them the power to enter residences and cross state lines in pursuit of bail jumpers. Today, modern bounty hunters continue to use that power to return fugitives to justice. Their motto: *You can run, but you can't hide.*"

With such references, the America of today, like the Vietnam of yesterday and the Wild West before it, becomes a landscape in which to act out a national drama of justice. In this landscape, the gun symbolizes the link between past and present, and with it the link between the righteousness of American laws and the masculinity of their enforcers. By means of its conflation with the camera, the gun offers viewers a chance to walk alongside the bounty hunters, to undertake a mission on behalf of the nation, a mission to penetrate the dank, dark regions of American society, to "see" the suspect there, to "know" his crimes and thereby to humiliate him. In the slums of the twentieth century, as on the prairies of the nineteenth, those whom the government has identified as wanton and uncivilized "can run, but they can't hide."

But why should Americans and Canadians want to "see" criminals in the first place? And how is it that enough Americans and Canadians want to watch these shows that they should appear, in first-run and serialized episodes, twice a day, every day of the week, in a number of major North American media markets?

In part, the answer is economic: reality-based crime programs typically cost between \$150,000 and \$250,000 per episode to produce, while a typical news magazine program might cost between \$250,000 and \$400,000.¹² Primetime dramas and action adventure programs usually run between \$900,000 and \$1 million per episode.¹³ Thus, even before they take the often substantial revenues from syndication into account, producers know that they need not attract either huge audiences or high-budget advertisements to turn a profit. Moreover, because viewers often perceive these shows as resembling news, programmers see them as effective programs with which to lead into and out of the local evening news or with which to counter-program against other genres, such as sitcoms.¹⁴

Yet, I think these shows remain popular for more historical reasons as well. The first reality-based crime programs, *America's Most Wanted* and *Cops*, emerged in 1988 and 1989 respectively. These years fall toward the end of a nearly decade-long period in which first the Reagan administration and then the Bush administration sought to marginalize the poor and people of color. Under Reagan, this process took the form of cuts in aid to the poor, including \$6.8 billion from the food stamp budget and \$5.2 billion from child nutritional services between 1981 and 1987.¹⁵ During the Bush administration, this process gained particular momentum as part of the "War on Drugs"—a war started under Reagan. In 1989, for instance, drug czar William Bennett implemented the National Drug Control Strategy. Even as it acknowledged that "the typical cocaine user is white, male, a high school graduate employed full time and living in a small metropolitan area or suburb," the Bennett plan devoted some 70% of its resources to law enforcement and focused most of its attention on the inner cities—areas inhabited predominantly by people of color and areas in which full-time employment outside the drug trade can often be hard to find.¹⁶ As Michael Omi and Howard Winant have pointed out, these policies have been accompanied by "a regressive redistribution of income and a decline in real wages [across the country], a significant shift to the ideological right in terms of public discourse, and an increase in the use of coercion on the part of the state."¹⁷ This broader process in turn, they argue, has resulted in the creation of an impoverished, disproportionately dark-skinned Third World inside the United States.

In that sense, then, reality-based crime shows represent the propaganda arm of a multi-tiered American State. Produced with the active assistance of local police departments (and at times national forces such as the F.B.I.), they serve as an ideological reservoir from which politicians and citizens alike can draw justifications of oppressive actions. This is particularly true of *LAPD: Life on the Beat*, a program first aired in 1995, two years after the Los Angeles Riots. As historian Mike Davis has pointed out, the Los Angeles Police Department considered South Central Los Angeles an internal Vietnam throughout the late 1980s. It thought of African American housing projects as "strategic hamlets" and regularly launched "search-and-destroy" missions in the area.¹⁸ The 1992 riots exposed this process on live television. It should be no surprise, then, that the Los Angeles Police Department was eager to join MGM Television in producing a new series about its activities. As Chief of Police Willie L. Williams told a reporter in 1994, "For some time, the Los Angeles Police Department has been searching for a forum that would allow the public to see firsthand the dedication and selfless efforts of the men and women of the L.A.P.D. as they go about serving our community. The reality-based television series *L.A.P.D.* is a window through which the viewer will be able to see the truth of department activities."¹⁹

Yet despite their obvious propaganda function, we must be careful not to read reality-based crime programs only in the light of the services they provide to the State or to the television industry. We need to acknowledge the ways in which these programs deliberately confuse and intermingle several struggles, including the struggle of the State to

justify its policies, the struggle of men and women at times to affirm and at times to tear down systems of racial and sexual distinction, and the struggle of people throughout our society to manage their economic and social anxieties.

We should also continue to examine the ways in which visual technologies and styles translate these sometimes abstract struggles into felt experiences of the body. As Kevin Robins and Les Levidow have written, "War converts fear and anxiety into perceptions of external threat; it then mobilizes defenses against alien and thing-like enemies. In this process, new image and vision technologies can play a central role."²⁰ Over the last two decades, the American government has fought a low-intensity war on the poor. For generations, American society has been plagued by persistent conflicts over racial and gender boundaries. By equating guns and cameras and by sexualizing the work of each, reality-based crime shows not only define the poor and people of color as external threats to their viewers, but engage viewers in a process of defining the poor and people of color as alien and thing-like. As in the military, the "good guys" are "men like us," men who take pleasure in being well-equipped, so to speak, and "hard." The "bad guys" are (symbolically) women or perhaps homosexual males, creatures who deserve to be penetrated and who indeed *must be penetrated* if their threat to the heterosexual male social order is to be contained. In the world of reality-based crime programs, as formerly on the battlefields of Southeast Asia, to be a good American is to be impregnable.

NOTES

¹ Fred Turner, *Echoes of Combat: The Vietnam War in American Memory* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), 76. Brian Winhover is a pseudonym for a veteran who requested anonymity.

² *Ibid.*

³ As John Langley, co-creator of *Cops*, puts it, "What we try to do is capture the experience of being a cop. We put the viewers as close to being a cop as possible, to let them experience what a cop experiences. My ideal segment would have no cuts. We have very few cuts as it is. We try to be as pure as possible and take viewers through the experience from beginning to end." (Quoted in Cynthia Littleton, "True Blue: John Langley helped set the tone for the reality genre with 'Cops,'" *Broadcasting & Cable* [May 20, 1996], 26.)

Ratings have consistently shown that men and women watch reality-based crime programs in similar numbers. For example, a summary of the February, 1997 Nielsen ratings for *LAPD: Life on the Beat* broadcast on KUSI, San Diego, California, shows that in the Monday-Friday 5:30-6:00 PM time slot, an average of 9,000 females and 15,000 males between the ages of 25 and 54 watched the show. Another local station, KNSD, reports similar figures for February, 1996: an average of 7,000 females and 9,000 males watched the show when it was broadcast Monday through Friday from 3:00 to 3:30 PM (Source: Tapscan, Inc.) The broad appeal of these programs is

widely recognized by both producers and advertisers. As Cynthia Littleton has noted, the “broad-based demographics” of these shows have made them very popular with merchants selling such staples as frozen foods (Cynthia Littleton, “Reality Television: Keeping the heat on,” *Broadcasting & Cable* [May 20, 1996], 25.) For a discussion of the economics of reality-based crime programs, see “Special Report: Reality’s Widening Role in the Real World of TV,” *Broadcasting & Cable* (April 12, 1993), 24-38.

5 With one glaring exception: In 1989, *Cops* broadcast a one-hour special on Russian police.

6 And it is almost always a “him”—female police officers appear rarely in these programs.

7 Bail jumpers do include women of course, but on *Bounty Hunters*, males outnumber females approximately 2 to 1.

8 We need to note that the stimulation on offer brings violence and power together in a highly structured way: the viewer is never allowed to see through the “enemy’s” weapons and is never allowed to look back at the officers at work. Much as boot camp limits the range of relationships open to a new recruit, and thus makes it easier and more pleasurable for him to give himself over to membership in the platoon, so the camerawork in these shows limits the range of identifications open to the viewer and makes it easier for him to enjoy an imaginary allegiance with the police.

9 *Cops*, Kansas City, KS; Broadcast XETV, Ch.6, January 17, 1998.

10 John Caldwell, *Televisuality: Style, Crisis, And Authority in American Television* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 233.

11 I’m drawing here on concepts outlined by Klaus Theweleit in *Male Fantasies, Volume 1: Women, Floods, Bodies, History* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). For the Freikorps soldiers Theweleit studied, as I believe for the policemen here, the labeling of an enemy as feminine and the generation of masculinized response to that enemy occur simultaneously. One metaphor which participants have used to describe this process, Theweleit notes, is one of damming a flood.

12 Mike Freeman, “The economics of first-run reality,” *Broadcasting & Cable* (April 12, 1993), 35.

13 Caldwell, *Televisuality*, 289.

14 According to Greg Meidel, president of syndication for Twentieth Television, “All our research says that viewers closely identify *Cops* content with that of similar sorts of law enforcement coverage on newscasts locally. That’s why [*Cops*] has been so compatible as a lead-in or lead-out from local news programming. It looks, feels and tastes like a first-run news program.” (Quoted in Mike Freeman, “Ratings are reality

for off-net," *Broadcasting & Cable* [April 12, 1993], 32.) For a lengthy discussion of reality-based crime shows and programming tactics, see Cynthia Littleton, "Reality matures into 'utility' player," *Broadcasting & Cable* (May 20, 1996).

¹⁵ Michael Z. Letwin, "Report from the Front Line—The Bennett Plan: Street-Level Drug Enforcement in New York City and the Legalization Debate," *Hofstra Law Review*, Vol. 18, No.4 (Spring), 810; cited in Robin Andersen, *Consumer Culture and TV Programming* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 184.

¹⁶ Office of National Drug Control Policy 1989, 4; Quoted in Andersen, *Consumer Culture*, 182.

¹⁷ Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "The L.A. Race Riot and U.S. Politics" in Robert Gooding-Williams, ed., *Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 108.

¹⁸ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 268 and 244; quoted in Caldwell, *Televisuality*, 311.

¹⁹ Quoted in David Tobenkin, "MGM Television follows 'LAPD' into syndication," *Broadcasting & Cable* (August 19, 1994), 20.

²⁰ Kevin Robins and Les Levidow, "Soldier, Cyborg, Citizen," in James Brook and Iain A. Boal, eds., *Resisting The Virtual Life: The Culture and Politics of Information* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1995), 106.