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*Assistant Chief Inspector  
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# HOSTAGE

a

## police approach to a contemporary crisis

This timely volume offers law enforcement personnel a comprehensive overview of hostage/barricade/suicide situations. Designed for police departments of every description, the text presents effective methods of approach to the dynamic, emotionally charged, life-and-death circumstances surrounding hostage abduction. Suggested policy and procedures are detailed for review and adaptation to the resources of the individual agency. Tactical plans, methods of training and necessary equipment are discussed along with the theory and practical applications of proven negotiation techniques. The crucial nature and epidemic proportions of this subject make this authoritative work essential reading for law enforcement personnel everywhere.

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**to a**  
**Contemporary Crisis**



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*By*

**GEORGE F. MAHER**

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## PREFACE

**T**HERE is a definite gap in the training of most law enforcement officers when it comes to the handling of the dynamic, emotionally-charged, and dangerous incidents involving people in crisis. Most agencies devote little, if any, time to the planning for a hostage/barricade/suicide situation, and, when it arises, there is usually chaos.

It would be presumptuous to state that this volume is “*The Training Manual*”; however, it should help the agency or individual officer in devising the necessary scheme of action to cope with the problem. After being in the business of tactical negotiating for about two years and receiving many inquiries on the subject, I wrote an article for a national police magazine on organizing a Hostage Negotiating Team. The article generated many more requests for information and convinced me that there was a need for a training manual that could be used in all agencies, regardless of size.

I do not attempt to give all the answers to the problems and, unlike other recently quoted “experts,” offer no in-depth psychological profile for all persons who take hostages, become snipers, etc. This book should be recognized for what it is: an introduction to the problem for the uninitiated, a basis for further investigation of the subject, an outline for a training program, or a review of accepted techniques and procedures.



## INTRODUCTION

### THE HOSTAGE PROBLEM AND THE POLICE

**T**HERE exists a relatively new problem facing the law enforcement community today that is slowly being recognized as a phenomenon requiring some in-depth consideration within the agency. The idea of taking a hostage to help achieve a particular goal probably started with early man, but it did not accelerate and gain world-wide interest until recent years. Hostages were taken in the past, but never on such a grand scale and not with so much nationwide publicity. What used to be mainly the tool of the terrorist has now become the means for many criminals and emotionally disturbed persons to achieve their desired effect no matter how bizarre it seems. A trapped criminal now has a recognized method of demanding the means to escape and is in some cases allowed to abscond after trading in one or more of the hostages. Emotionally disturbed persons demand all sorts of concessions from society as payment for sparing the life of the person being held. The police department that recognizes the problem for what it is, that is, a dynamic, dangerous occurrence, charged with emotion and considered to be highly newsworthy, is off on the right foot. The department that ignores the problem and figures that "it won't happen here" is in for a rude awakening when it does happen there. I do not advocate the formation of a special unit to deal with the hostage problem in every agency. However, I do recommend that every law enforcement organization, regardless of size, look into the problem, review the policies and procedures of the agencies that have dealt with these situations, and glean from them whatever can be used. If a department can afford the time and manpower, by all means it should train some people in the theory and tactics involved. Most of all, make sure that everyone responding to the scene knows the organization's policies and objectives and what is expected of the individual officer.



As the last pages of this volume are nearing completion, hostage and barricade situations seem to be happening with scheduled regularity across the country: Indianapolis, Indiana, where the media contributed to a circus atmosphere and then criticized law enforcement for not living up to a bargain that anyone with common sense knew could not be kept; New Rochelle, New York, where a crazed mass murderer exhausted the resources of a police department in a few bloody minutes; Warrensville Heights, Ohio, where a man with wild demands invaded the police station and held an officer hostage until the President of the United States became involved in the negotiation; Washington, D.C., where terrorists took and held hostages in a display of anarchy that shocked the American public.

In an attempt to keep a “handle” on these and other, not so newsworthy, incidents, members of the Nassau County Hostage Negotiating Team have been sent to various scenes while in progress and have interviewed officers who have been involved in others. Nothing the Team has discovered has in any way indicated that a change is necessary in the original policies and procedures outlined in this manual.

One thing is recognized, and that is that no firm guidelines can be established for dealing with a quasi-religious group of fanatics bent on large-scale terrorism. Unfortunately, a play-it-by-ear negotiating policy (with plenty of outside help) has to be accepted. I hope that most of the future hostage/barricade situations across the country are generated by the plain, ordinary, run-of-the-mill criminal or emotionally disturbed person so that some small spark kindled in the mind of a police officer, as a result of this book, can result in the saving of a life or freeing of a hostage.

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## Chapter **One** THE POLICE

### APPROACH TO A HOSTAGE SITUATION

**I**T IS 9:30 AM, Wednesday, September 14, in River City. The weather is sunny and warm, the children are all in school, and the early morning shoppers are starting to park along Main Street. An officer in a radio car has just called in and advised his dispatcher that he has completed school crossing duty and has received an O.K. to get some coffee. As he drives down Main Street toward his favorite restaurant, he hears a radio notification that the First National Bank silent alarm has been triggered. The bank is just a block away, so he speeds up and pulls to the curb in front of the building. As he opens the door and starts to exit the car, he sees two men start out of the front door of the bank. Both are wearing ski masks. As they spot him, one pulls a gun from under his jacket and fires a shot which shatters the rear window of the patrol car. The officer ducks behind the rear of the car and is about to return fire when the men duck back into the bank.

The officer keeps low and makes his way to the microphone. He calls his radio dispatcher and asks for immediate assistance, advising that he has been fired upon from the bank.

A Sergeant/Patrol Supervisor arrives on the scene in addition to other patrol units. He announces his location, clears a radio channel for the incident, and advises all units that his vehicle will be the command post for the time being. The Sergeant directs that specific units block traffic on Main Street a block away from either side of the bank. He assigns other units to take positions at the rear and sides of the bank building. A supermarket parking lot a block away is designated as a staging area for any other responding units. Stores across from the bank are evacuated through rear doors, and pedestrian traffic is eliminated.

The Sergeant notifies his dispatcher of the situation, requests hostage negotiators, and the precision firearms teams. Meanwhile,

one of the subjects appears at the front door of the bank and, using a female as a shield, shouts that he will kill all of the bank employees and customers if the police try to enter the building. The Sergeant, using the designated radio frequency, advises all officers that no shots will be fired without orders.

The hostage negotiators arrive at the staging area at about the same time as the precision firearms teams and the Station Commander, a Captain. He confers with the first officer, the Sergeant, the negotiating team, and the sniper team and decides to establish a command post down the block from the bank in a drug store. Emergency equipment — ambulance, tear gas devices, and extra radios are ordered. The members of the firearms team are ordered to position themselves at locations surrounding the bank.

The negotiating team readies its recording equipment and prepares to call the bank by telephone. The Captain, meanwhile, has advised all officers that he is in command, has given the location of his command post, and has re-enforced firearms discipline. He ascertains that an inner and outer perimeter are established and all evacuation is complete and orders a withdrawal of all officers in the inner perimeter as the precision firearms teams take up positions. He designates a media liaison officer and notifies the dispatcher that all press inquiries shall be channeled through this officer at a point on the edge of the outer perimeter. The Captain makes sure that all officers are in clear communication with the command post and requests that the hostage negotiators begin to communicate with the subjects.

It sounds great, doesn't it, all the units of a good-sized department performing their functions according to the book. It has happened this way. Everyone did his job. The bank robbers were captured and the hostages freed unharmed. But, not every agency has the resources of "River City." If your department is smaller, does not have the equipment, or has not begun to plan for such an incident it really is not that important. The basic ideas put forth in this book will still work.

You, the first cop at the scene, may be the "negotiating team." A couple of off-duty officers with hunting rifles may turn out to

be the “precision firearms team.” Your boss, a Sergeant, may run the whole show. The local volunteer fire department may control traffic and establish perimeters. Or, your agency may call for outside help from county, state or federal agencies. Meanwhile, you should have some idea of the best way to approach this type of incident. In this book you will read about the recommended equipment and trained manpower that would be nice to have available. If you have it, use it correctly. But, if you don’t have it, or it is going to take a while to get there, use your own common sense and, in most cases, a successful operation will result.

#### **POLICY**

You are an officer on patrol, and a radio call is received indicating that there is a stick-up in progress at a local bank. When you arrive at the scene, four apparently armed males are spotted in the bank. As you and other officers surround the bank and wait for them to leave, you find that each one of the robbers has taken a female employee and is forcing her to protect him as he exits the bank. Now what do you do? Or, you are called to a bridge; a young girl is in the center of the span threatening to jump. The bridge is about 100 feet over the water and you know that the fall will be fatal to her. Where do you start? Or, perhaps you receive a call to a house in a residential area, and when you arrive you are told by a woman that her son who is secreted in the attic of the home has a loaded rifle. He has threatened to kill himself if anybody starts up the stairs. What is your first move going to be? These situations are not unusual. Police officers throughout the country are expected to deal with this type of activity every day of the week. The officer of a department that is prepared to react professionally in each of the situations has a jump on any department that has no preplanned guidelines, leaving officers to figure out what to do after arrival at the scene. In preparing the personnel of a department for a hostage situation, a threatened suicide situation, or a barricaded, armed subject, there are a number of things that must be considered. One of the prime objectives of the agency must be the issuance of a clear policy/procedure to all members of the department. An agency policy that is given out



once and forgotten has little value, and a written policy that is only distributed with the hope that most of the men will read it is also less than adequate. The ideal method is to issue a policy which is supported by the top-line management and administrative officers of the department. These officers, after being thoroughly familiarized with it by actually taking part in the formation of many of the items that make up the policy/procedure involved, will usually get the idea across to the rest of the department. The policy must not only cover what is expected of the first officer at the scene, but also the first supervising officer and the overall commander of the operation. The doctrine of the department in regard to vital questions must be clearly understood: Is the hostage's life of prime importance? Do we let the criminal escape in a trade-off for a hostage? Do we make concessions and promises that will not be kept? Policy questions such as these, plus the tactical approach to the situation, should be covered, with some special emphasis on media relationship. If the concept of negotiation is to be introduced, a policy/procedure that will fit the resources of the agency and be accepted by not only the members of the agency but also the general public is a necessary first step.\*

#### **POLICE RESPONSE TO A HOSTAGE/BARRICADE/SUICIDE SITUATION**

The traditional police response to an incident in which a subject is "holed up" in a building, possibly firing into the street, or holding a hostage is usually counter fire with eventual assault. This is commonly done with or without chemical agents such as tear gas, and much noise, confusion, property damage, and sometimes injury or death result. In recent years, many departments have developed Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams which cut down on the confusion to some degree and, in addition to just ineffective counter fire by semi-trained officers, now react with selective sniper fire by experts (if they can see the subject). However, few departments in the past ever seriously attempted to contain and negotiate with the subject or subjects involved. Until

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\*See Appendix I for sample policy.

the Munich Olympic tragedy and other incidents throughout the world brought the hostage problem to the forefront and some agencies proved the value of actual down-to-earth negotiations, little was done in law enforcement circles to recognize and prepare for the problem. We all know the dangers involved in assaults. Unless there is a well-trained unit possessing the necessary equipment, with which they are thoroughly familiar, an assault on a building held by an armed subject can result in serious injury or death to the officers involved. Counter fire, in most cases, has proven to be not only ineffective, but highly dangerous. There are cases in which police officers have been wounded by the inaccurate, unnecessary counter fire of brother officers. This is not to say that in all cases an assault on the premises where a subject is barricaded or holding a hostage is out of the question. An assault team should always be available to back up the negotiators. If negotiations should break down and the hostages are in imminent danger of physical harm, there may be nothing left but an assault on the building. Selective sniper fire, a recent innovation, is of value. However, most small and medium size agencies have not been able to expend the man-hours involved in the necessary continuing practice. If the officers involved are not thoroughly trained, sniper fire can be highly dangerous to persons in the vicinity of the target. This capability should be used only as a last resort and when there is no other choice but to kill the subject involved. Naturally, it should only be done upon the command of the ranking officer at the scene, and all officers participating, particularly the negotiators, should have full knowledge of what is to happen. Any time authorized shots are to be fired, all officers at the scene must be alerted.

Chemical agents can be extremely hazardous to all occupants of the building where the subject is contained. Most of the common police-use chemical agents start fires. Many others are so potent that, when used in a closed room, they can actually result in the incapacitation or death of all the occupants of the room. Tear gas should not be considered unless the necessary back-up equipment is on the scene, such as gas masks, oxygen, and immediately available fire equipment. A less violent containment

and negotiation technique should always be tried. Assault, sniper fire, and chemical agents can also be used after an attempt has been made to negotiate with the subject. The most important thing most officers can do at the scene is to *slow down*. Do not take action just for the sake of doing something. Attempt to calm any officer who is excited enough to react violently to what he believes is a hazardous situation. Think before acting; there is no rush, and time is usually on the side of the police. Some of these situations have lasted for days, even weeks. Sometimes initial thoughtless acts taken by the police first at the scene will hamper initial negotiations and may be very difficult to explain in any future negotiations. We can always escalate a situation, but it is very difficult to de-escalate. Once violent reaction to a subject has taken place, it is extremely difficult to get the idea across that we are on the path of nonviolence. Again, slow down!

#### **SIMILARITY OF APPROACH**

Most of the basic “street psychology” used to deal with a hostage situation can be used with a person attempting suicide or a subject barricaded alone in a building. Many times the holder of a hostage or a barricaded subject is involved in a bizarre attempt at suicide. Often the hostage holder is an emotionally disturbed person who, with or without the hostages, would possibly be in the same or a similar situation. The basic police approach to most situations should start out generally in the same tack. Surprisingly, many subjects are eager to capitulate and make the police look good, if the right approach is taken from the start. It is commonly accepted that if the person is yelling, even cursing the police, he can be talked to. The jumper probably would have jumped already, the hostages would be dead, and the barricaded person would have killed himself or others if the subject had a firm course of action planned. Police should not hesitate in using whatever expertise they have in crisis intervention, family disturbances, and generally dealing with excited persons when dealing with a hostage/barricade/suicide situation.

### **THE USE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE**

There are many pros and cons on the subject of using professional psychiatrists or psychologists at the scene of an attempted suicide, hostage, or barricade (SHB) situation. However, the use of a professional psychologist in the training of a negotiating team is beyond question. Many clinical psychologists and psychiatrists may jump at the chance to become involved as a consultant to a police department engaged in this type of activity. However, many of these same professional people at the scene of a situation may not be of significant value in dealing with the subject. The identification and confrontation of a strange psychologist or a psychiatrist to the subject, who does not believe he has a mental problem, may turn him off and negate successful negotiations. He may be looking for a symbol of authority, such as a police officer, and would not welcome a doctor of any type. Indeed, most psychiatrists and psychologists will admit that they are not as effective in dealing with people in crisis situations as most police officers are. They say that it may take them months to size up a patient, find out exactly what is bothering him, and diagnose his condition before treating him; police officers usually react rapidly to crisis situations and are expected to deal with emotionally disturbed people in minutes. If the agency has available a psychologist or a psychiatrist who is thoroughly familiar with police policy and philosophy and knows what is expected of him at the scene, the depth of his involvement is something for the department to evaluate.

### **TYPES OF HOSTAGE SITUATIONS**

For clarity we shall call the person who takes a hostage the "holder." There are four basic situations that the police are called upon to deal with. The first involves the criminal. We often become involved with the criminal when he is escaping from a crime, is confronted by the police, and takes a hostage to facilitate his escape. The second type, and the most common situation, involves the mentally disturbed person. He becomes a holder for many reasons. Various types of stress and anxiety pro-

duce reactions that are sometimes impossible to predict. Third, we have the unorganized group. These involve the typical jail riot or the unorganized crowd involved in a civil disturbance. The fourth, and fortunately the least common in the United States, is the radical or revolutionary organized group that takes one or more hostages to further its political aims.

Of the four types, the criminal is usually the easiest holder to deal with. He is accustomed to the police and we are used to him. He usually can predict what the police will do, and he knows what to expect if and when he is captured. He is aware of police limitations and relates to police actions. He usually understands how far the police can go in acquiescing to his demands. Most important, he also knows the effect on his status if the hostage is killed or injured. In most cases, all he wants to do is get away from where he is. However, he very often can be convinced that the best course of action is to simply give up.

On the other hand, the mentally disturbed person is usually the most difficult to deal with. If our easy-to-get-along-with criminal turns out to be a mental problem, the entire situation changes. The emotionally disturbed person can get himself into what may be a disguised suicide attempt, but he may be the type of individual who, although he wants to commit suicide, wants you to help him along. Most psychologists would agree that if the holder of a hostage, or the barricaded subject, is calm, cool, and collected; much less excited than you are; and seems to be enjoying himself, be careful. This is the type of person who will probably kill and usually is extremely difficult or impossible to negotiate with.

The third problem, the unorganized group who, for example, may be involved in a spontaneous riot and taking of hostages, is easier to deal with than the organized group provided rapid action is taken. Once a leader is chosen and a course of action accepted, this group becomes very difficult. Most jail procedures recommend rapid reaction to a disturbance, and their policies could limit concessions and in-depth negotiations for the release of hostages. The rule in most jails is that no prisoner will be allowed to escape from the institution because he is holding a jail

employee as a hostage. Correction officers are aware of these rules and must be willing to live with them when applying for their jobs. Accordingly, seldom will a police hostage negotiating team be called in to deal with a jail riot or an attempted escape by inmates holding hostages. There are, however, "holding pens" or temporary detention facilities in many court houses, police stations, etc. where the possibility exists of police being called upon to deal with a group of prisoners holding hostages. It is generally believed that immediate action is the best action. These prisoners usually may be handled in the same way that any holder is handled who becomes such as a result of criminal activity. In many cases escape is not the prime demand made by the holders of correctional institution hostages. As a result, much of the negotiation would have to be handled by the officials of the correctional institution involved, who can intelligently deal with the demands laid down by the holders.

Dealing with an organized terrorist group by most local police agencies would be extremely difficult without outside assistance. Individuals who make up these groups, usually not common in the United States, are sometimes willing to die for their cause and take any and all hostages with them. The confrontation may be the result of months of planning, and all the alternatives and arguments put forth by the negotiators will have been considered and predicted by the group. A confrontation by police with such a group would be an unusual situation, and, for the most part, the political demands of the group probably would be above any concessions offered by local police. These groups usually do not want to talk to the police but would like a high-ranking official or representative of the media present at the scene to deal with them. Publicity is their bread and butter, and the more notoriety the incident can get, the better off they think their cause becomes. Our society will not permit dealing with terrorist groups in the way that they are handled in many foreign countries. Some Middle Eastern countries will not recognize that the life of a hostage is of primary importance so that, when hostages are taken, very often they are considered to be expendable and may be killed along with the holders during an assault. This is not gen-

erally acceptable in the United States, and terrorist groups are aware of it, so that it is not unreasonable to assume that there will be an increase in terrorist activities in our urban areas. Intelligence files should be kept on any militant quasi-terrorist group forming in the jurisdiction covered by the agency so that if the group becomes active and causes an incident, at least they can be identified and an attempt made to deal with them effectively from the point of view of negotiation.

No matter what type of hostage or barricade incident is being dealt with, the criminal, mentally disturbed person, or jail or terrorist group, the speedy development of intelligence and background information about the holder or holders is of primary importance. Usually no effective negotiation can take place without information about the subject. If the agency is fortunate enough to have a negotiating team call out procedure that will allow the response of four to five team members to each incident, the gathering of background information becomes somewhat easier. Members of the trained negotiating team who are assigned to gather intelligence will usually obtain more in-depth background information that can be used effectively in negotiation than officers who do not have negotiations in mind. Be careful of uncritical reliance on information received from relatives. There have been cases where a father and mother of a subject will paint a rosy picture about their misunderstood son, but when the estranged wife is interviewed, a totally different idea of the person being dealt with is evident. It is very difficult to make a judgment as to who to believe. Information regarding a hostage is also important, particularly if the hostage has any physical condition that will be aggravated by the situation he or she is now involved in. It is recommended that during negotiation little obvious attention be paid to the hostage by the negotiators. This is so that the importance of the hostage is not amplified in the eyes of the holder and also so that the hostage does not take the stage away from his captor. Be careful during a prolonged incident that the hostage does not shift sides, that is, become involved and sympathetic to the goals of the holder. This is not that uncommon, and there have been incidents where female hostages have be-

come emotionally involved with the holder, probably due to a deep-seated feeling of thankfulness to the captor for not exercising the life and death power he has over the hostage during the time of confinement.

### **THEORY OF NEGOTIATION**

The basic theory of negotiation for a hostage is simple. Try not to give anything without getting something in return. That is, negotiate for everything possible. Give up food, drink, cigarettes, comfort, etc. only for some concession on the part of the holder, such as the release of one or more of the hostages, removing a gun from the head of a hostage, allowing a doctor to treat the injured hostage, and so on. Never, never set a time limit on negotiation. Again, slow down! Time is on the side of the negotiator. In most cases, if there was going to be any injury to a hostage, it would have taken place already. The longer a hostage is held by the holder, the more difficult it becomes for the holder to kill or injure the hostage. The longer you talk and the longer you negotiate, the lower the anxiety level of the holder becomes. Police have offered food, drink, sex, money, and escape in hostage situations which have resulted in the surrender of the holder and release of the hostages. No demand is too bizarre to be accepted for consideration, even though the demand may be completely impossible to provide. Again, slow down! Don't rush a situation. Prepare for a long siege and take the necessary steps to tactically deal with the prolonged situation. The negotiation technique used in a suicide or barricade situation is similar. Concessions can be made on both sides with complete abandonment of the subject's suicidal plan as the final goal. Remember, most people want to be talked to and will welcome a problem-solving path out of their dilemma if it is put to them in a sympathetic, understanding approach.

### **THE ROLE OF THE NEGOTIATOR**

As soon as some background information is received about the holder and the scene is tactically ready for continuous negotiations, an attempt should be made to communicate with the sub-



ject. As a negotiator, you should first introduce yourself and, if asked, admit that you are a police officer. Keep your rank to yourself. If you introduce yourself as a Chief of Police, you will not have available the ploy of checking with superiors on demands made by the holder. If the first contact is to be made by telephone or bullhorn, make sure that the holder gets the name of someone he can deal with. Do not get caught in an obvious lie, and do not make concessions that the holder will know you are not authorized to make. Do not make promises too readily. Advise him that you will have to talk it over with superiors, although he may demand that the superiors do the negotiation if you keep referring everything "up the ladder." You can, however, make minor concessions yourself. Make sure that you sound sincere. Many people, particularly those who are mentally disturbed, can read insincerity or outright lies into your tone of voice. Make concessions, but don't become a pawn. Don't let the holder lead you around. Don't give up everything. If face-to-face negotiation finally takes place, be careful about body language and facial expressions. This also can be read by a sensitive person as a signal that you are lying or that you are attempting to gain control of the situation by subterfuge and eventual violence. If he does not use profanity, do not use it yourself. Aim for the transference of thoughts between you and the holder. If you can finally "read" him, associate yourself with his problem and, if he believes you are sincerely attempting to help him, the situation will be much easier to handle.

Be careful about using relatives and friends. The main reason the man may be involved in his situation is possibly due to his wife. When she is brought to the scene, it may set him off and produce a violent end to the incident. The same holds true of members of the clergy, psychiatrists and psychologists, and other relatives. Make sure that you know what the subject's feeling is about those people before you allow them to get anywhere near him or even let him know that they are in the vicinity. Many holders will ask for a member of the press to act as an intermediary, but an attempt should be made to talk him out of this

demand. There may be situations where he will only talk to the media; however, keep in mind that the goals of the media are usually altogether different from the aims of the police. Most police agencies will admit to unhappy experiences in dealing with hostage situations where the media are involved. If a law enforcement agency is forced into having an intermediary deal with the hostage, make sure that a member of the negotiating team can overhear all of the conversations and guide the intermediary along the accepted lines of negotiation. Other than in-person negotiation, the telephone is the next best method of communication. However, dealing with a person on the telephone is difficult, while effective negotiation by bullhorn is next to impossible. No holder can relate to a loudspeaker, and traditionally all that comes out of a police bullhorn is a threatening monologue. For the same reason, do not use a loud bullhorn for giving orders to officers at the scene while negotiations are being attempted or are in progress. Make sure that liaison is maintained with members of the precision firearms or SWAT teams. Keep in mind that a gun or any other weapon is nonnegotiable. If this stipulation is strongly made to any request by the holder at the outset, the police should be on better grounds. The police should never volunteer to take the place of the hostage. A police hostage results in emotional response by other police and could result in overreaction and the taking of unnecessary risks. A police hostage may also be in much greater danger than most other hostages. The holder has a built-in focal point for his frustrations when he holds a life and death power over a symbol of authority. Generally, a stranger being held as a hostage is in much less danger than a police officer, friend or relative, or other symbol of authority. The role of the negotiator during the period of time that he is effectively dealing with the subject in a crisis situation should be recognized by the agency as being of prime importance. He should be backed up by all the available resources of the department and should guide the tactical approach to the incident. His assessment of the subject should set the tone of the police activity at the scene. If an overt police presence is needed or a low-key