Police work as entertainment

Does the presence of the camera change the way police work?

Understanding the neglected perspective and role of police officers in the social construction of police images and visual programs of officers from the New South Wales Police Force.

An internal study of officer participation and perception of performance in factual programs for commercial television.
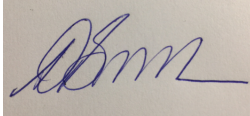
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Statement of Originality

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

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Acknowledgments

Abstract

Despite vast research into police factual documentaries, little is known about the participant experience, especially how police themselves regard the construction of their visual images. More recently, questions have been raised about the performance of police as actors in observational documentaries and whether they take different police action or make different operational decisions when being filmed for fly-on-the-wall productions. Several critical incidents have occurred in the United States (US) while police were being filmed for crime shows, prompting people to ask: Does the presence of the camera change the way police work?

As an officer of the NSW Police Force (NSWPF) and coordinator of the Film & Television Unit, I had insider access to conduct this research with police officers who had participated in the making of factual documentaries for the organisation. This enquiry represents the first study of its kind, in that all police officers were asked about their personal experiences of being filmed at work and having their images broadcast on prime-time television.

The results were interesting and differed from information previously delivered by other researchers. My study shows that police do not change the way they work when in the presence of film crews. Of note was that the thoughts and opinions of officers from the NSWPF no longer correlated with those of officers who had undertaken similar studies in the US. NSWPF officers were not regular viewers of crime shows and those shows played no role in their desire to become police officers.

Although police observational documentaries were found to accurately represent the role and function of police, officers believed that crime shows did not provide viewers with an accurate portrayal of the types of work undertaken by police.

The overall view was that police duties had moved from making arrests to more of a role of community engagement. The outcome of the study suggests reviewing the format of police observational documentaries to better reflect the role and function of police in today's society and not simply portray police work as entertainment.

Contents

List of Abbreviations

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
AFTRS	Australian Film Television & Radio School
CST	Constable
FTVU	Film & Television Unit
GDs	General Duties
HWP	Highway Patrol
LSC	Leading Senior Constable
NSW	New South Wales
NSWPF	New South Wales Police Force
PAB	Public Affairs Branch
PFS	Police Filming Supervisor
RBT	Random Breath Test
SBS	Special Broadcasting Service
SC	Senior Constable
SGT	Sergeant
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
VICPOL	Victoria Police
VKG	NSWPF Radio Operations

For mum … Thank you for believing I could.

Chapter 1: Introduction to Police Work as Entertainment

This research seeks to understand the neglected perspective and role of police officers in the social construction of police images and visual programs of officers from the New South Wales Police Force[1] (NSWPF) in Australia. This inquiry was undertaken by asking police officers who have been the subjects of commercial filming productions about their experiences of being filmed at work. As an 'insider', the author was in a unique position to talk to police officers about their participation and seek their thoughts and opinions about viewing themselves on prime-time television. Nash (2009) stated that 'almost nothing is known about how the participant experiences the process of documentary production and screening' (p. 6). Although similar studies have been conducted involving both factual and fictional police television representations, it is believed that this is the first time in which the views of police officers, as active participants of factual police productions, have been the single subject of a study of their mediated selves.

As part of a study of reality television programs,[2] social researcher Nicole Maurantonio (2012) discussed an accidental shooting by police in the US who were being filmed for factual reality television show *The First 48*. She highlighted a number of questions that circulated in the media as a result of the incident. The aim of the present thesis was drawn from Chapman and Saulny's (2010) article for *The New York Times*, which said, 'the incident is raising a larger question in this age of reality TV: Does the presence of TV crews affect how well police officers do their jobs?'

The author of this thesis decided to undertake research to answer the question posed by others. The NSWPF is one of only a handful of police organisations that operate a film and television unit (FTVU), and the author is the police filming supervisor (PFS) of that unit and has direct contact with both police and television producers. This made

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[1] New South Wales (NSW) is a state in Australia. The capital city of NSW is Sydney. According to the 2019–2020 NSW Police Annual Report, the NSW Police Force has more than 21,000 employees operating from 432 police stations.

[2] Maurantonio conducted a series of one-on-one interviews and a focus group with members of the New York Police Department. She argued that cop shows occupy an intermediate space located between the daily experiences of the job and the television programs that are supposed to fit squarely within the realm of fiction. Maurantonio suggested that the boundaries of this intermediate space have become increasingly blurred, leading to a fragmented reading of programs by police and a challenge to their power in a physical and symbolic sense. However, few studies have taken on the question of how police officers interact with mediated representations of themselves.

access to the participants easy because the author is an 'insider' and personally known to almost every subject officer. This professional relationship allowed the author to make contact with those officers and elicit the information and documentation required for this research—something that 'outsiders' would have great difficulty obtaining.

In a slight variation to the question posed in *The New York Times* article, the question presented by this study is: *'Does the presence of the camera change the way police work?'* This thesis explores the answers to this and other questions by asking police officers who have participated in factual television productions about their experiences of being filmed for commercial television while performing operational duty. This work represents an internal study of officer participation. It is believed to be the first of its kind in this area, and although this research represents a small pilot study, it provides valuable insights for others in this field of work. It should be noted that television drama and non-factual police shows were not considered in this body of work because the police officers represented on those shows are actors and not real police officers. Many studies (Hallett & Powell, 1995; Maurantonio 2012) have previously been undertaken to ask police what they thought of their actor counterparts and the on-camera duties undertaken by them. However, it is important to note that actors play a role and are not faced with the same real-life situations that real police officers are confronted with. The role of an actor is therefore not comparable with that of real police officers who are filmed for factual television productions.

In undertaking this body of work, the author reviewed the involvement, participation, thoughts and opinions of officers from the NSWPF who actively participated in the filming of police observational programs for commercial television productions between 2014 and 2018. Social researchers of police reality television programs (Hallett & Powell, 1995; Maurantonio 2012) have previously provided their views regarding the construction and presentation of police observational documentaries. Many researchers suggest that it would be noteworthy to seek out the perspective of police officers because they are active participants in factual television productions. This thesis provides input from officers regarding their personal perspectives of being filmed at work, thereby helping to fill the gap in this area of research.

Since 2014, the NSWPF has participated in many television productions. The work presented in this study reflects officer participation in the four major productions,

which are *The Force, RBT* (Random Breath Testing), *Motorbike Cops* and *Beach Cops*. For clarity, observational documentaries are also referred to as 'factual documentaries' and 'fly-on-the-wall productions'. Less commonly used, but also appearing in this document, is the term 'cop shows'. Regardless of the terminology used, they all fall within the genre of reality television.

When undertaking research in this field of study, researchers use a variety of words to express the term 'police officer', and this study uses these words interchangeably, including 'cops', 'officers', 'police', 'investigators' and 'detectives'.

This thesis makes an informal empirical contribution to this body of work by making observations regarding Reiner's (2010) 'cop culture' and noting the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism. The results of this study show that police often learn from other officers both on the job and on the screen. This observation highlights an area for further exploration—that is, to conduct a similar study with police recruits to identify the level of observational learning adopted from viewing similar types of police productions and the bearing it may have on their training and subsequent probationary period.

Professional Context of the Candidate

The author is a current serving, operational police officer within the NSWPF. She has 31 years of service and holds the rank of sergeant. Having worked in several front-line units performing operational duties in many and varied positions, it was in 2014, when she transferred to the Public Affairs Branch (PAB), that interest in this doctoral study first took hold. Taking on a select position as a PFS saw the author expand her policing skills to include media representation of police officers in commercial television productions. In this role, she is responsible for networking, engaging, arranging, facilitating and legally reviewing all commercial television and film productions contracted by the NSWPF, as well as supervising, coaching, mentoring and providing expert operational advice to on-camera police officers engaged in television productions. The role was specifically designed to provide expert operational advice and function as a conduit between police and television production personnel. It is a niche role in which contemporary operational experience is of paramount importance.

Having performed full-time duties as a PFS for more than six years, the author has written several working documents for adoption and compliance by the organisation, including a policy document, risk assessments, induction programs for film crews and several operational guidelines. She has devised annual training for key personnel in this field of work and continues to expand and grow the role and the product of the NSWPF both internally and externally. Her interest in commercial television has allowed the subject area to grow and develop. She has provided briefings to visiting overseas police, contributed to the development of Acts of Law (body-worn video), and lectured to masters' students at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS) and employees of Screen Australia on the role of police in television productions. The author has developed a network of key policing personnel in neighbouring jurisdictions and continues to provide advice and training and conduct face-to-face meetings with those staff as a way of sharing expertise and experience as the lead police agency in this field within Australia. The completion of this thesis will help ensure that the author and the NSWPF maintain expertise in this exclusive and defined field of work.

Aim

To assess whether police officers work differently when being filmed for a factual television program by exploring how officers play their part in constructing the social reality of policing programs and their interaction with other key participants.

Context

The research undertaken for this body of work was derived from observational discoveries as well as conducting quantitative and qualitative research. To obtain an unbiased and collective viewpoint, every NSW police officer who had participated in at least one filming session for a police reality television production between 2014 and 2018 was invited to participate in an anonymous survey. More than 400 officers were sent a survey consisting of a range of multiple-choice questions, with additional space provided for optional comments and feedback. Of the 136 completed surveys returned, many contained additional comments that provided valuable supplementary information that was used in the interpretation of the results. Additionally, 20 semi-structured one-on-one interviews, averaging one hour each, were undertaken. The

author requested interviews with officers who had been filmed for the *Beach Cops* production and subsequently appeared on television. Additionally, three senior production staff were consulted along with the manager of the Corporate Communications Unit, who had overarching responsibility for the productions on behalf of the NSWPF.

This thesis also outlines the commercial aspect of the NSWPF capitalising on the growth of factual television productions. It shows how other police organisations can easily adopt a similar approach by charging a fee for service in return for an almost all-access pass that allows the media to gain valuable insights into the back-of-house operations of policing in the state. The NSWPF arranges, manages and legally reviews the entire operation while ensuring that the television crew has complete access to officers and accessibility to jobs in a safe working environment to capture important moments in policing operations. It is important for the reader to understand the commercial approach to the filming process in the NSWPF in the context of analysis of the returned surveys. For example, police officers often comment that factual police productions rarely screen robust or protracted investigations; as a result, their work looks easy in comparison with other international productions or drama shows. However, interviews with television executives provide a reasonable explanation for this; essentially, it depends on what is allowable during prime-time viewing slots. Other contributing factors include the type of production made, the allocated budget, the filming timetable, the expectation of viewer ratings, the scope of selling the product internationally and the premise of the actual production. These are all important points to consider when evaluating the data collected for this study.

Rationale, Methodology and Research Design

The rationale was to explore police officer participation in factual documentaries within the NSWPF. The participant survey was designed to tease out officers' thoughts, feelings and beliefs about being filmed for commercial television while at work. It further examines how their participation affects their family, friends and career. Although the survey was designed to extract certain information to answer the thesis question, the responses will also provide benefits to the police organisation in other ways. For example, a common misconception is that officers may be recognised outside of work and therefore decline to participate in filming projects. However, the

survey response shows that few officers have been recognised outside of work. A key goal is to identify a criteria to use as a guide for selecting a 'model officer' who will assist in filming duties on camera. After obtaining important feedback from television producers and editors regarding the qualities that make a police officer suitable for filming purposes, the completed surveys were used as a tool to identify the qualities that are required in a model officer for film production and as a basis to formulate the criteria required to select appropriate model officers as participants in factual police programs. Charts and graphs depicting the collated information are presented in Chapter 5.

Overall Limitations

The author identified several limitations of this study. First, the study only considers police factual productions made for commercial television and excludes productions made for publicly owned television networks. This is due to established agreements that exempt the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)[3] and Special Broadcasting Service[4] (SBS) from full rights of veto, thus affecting the types of productions the NSWPF would otherwise engage in. In essence, the rules that are applied to the ABC and SBS differ greatly to the rules applied to commercial television productions. As a result of the lack of veto, the NSWPF tends to reserve this engagement to only include documentary-style productions where risks pertaining to content may be managed from the outset.

Additionally, the conversion of data from quantitative surveys has its own limitations. Some questions asked participants about their thoughts and feelings regarding their television appearance; however, a number of respondents did not actually appear on television. Other respondents omitted answering some questions, which means that the

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[3] The ABC is Australia's national broadcaster and was founded in 1929. It is currently principally funded by direct grants from the Australian Government, but it is expressly independent of the government and politics. The ABC plays a leading role in journalistic independence and is fundamental in the history of broadcasting in Australia. Modelled on the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) in the United Kingdom, it was originally financed by consumer licence fees on broadcasting receivers. It is owned by the Australian Government. (ABC.net.au)
[4] SBS is a hybrid-funded Australian public broadcasting radio, online and television network. It operates four television channels, and its stated purpose is 'to provide multilingual and multicultural radio and television services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society'. It is owned by the Australian Government. (SBS.com.au)

answers cannot provide a 100% holistic view of the survey answers. Therefore, the survey was limited to the responses provided by the sample group.

Another limitation pertains to the interviewed officers. Although four major productions were considered in this study, only police who participated in the *Beach Cops* program were included in the interview process. This decision was made to ensure that those who were interviewed could draw upon similar filming experiences, and it was considered the best way to approach the study at the time. In hindsight, it may have been better to interview a handful of officers from each production to gain a more holistic view. It is important to note how the *Beach Cops* production may differ from other police productions due to affluent demographics and the beachside location in which it was filmed and how those demographics may, in itself, have created a difference in the results of the findings of this study when compared to other areas within the State of NSW. A common characteristic of police observational documentaries is that they are generally filmed in low socio-economic areas, where crime statistics are generally higher and the community members are either blue collar workers or unemployed. The *Beach Cops* production was filmed in the Sydney beachside suburb of Manly; an area where residents enjoy vistas of Sydney Harbour, the beach or ocean from their multi-million dollar homes. A vastly different lifestyle from the people living on struggle street, an hour away. It is further noted in chapter 6, that this unusual filming environment may have contributed to the findings of this study, noting that research collected from an area more typical to police observational documentaries may have delivered a different result.

Outline of the Study/Summary of Chapters

The background, settings and history of television are widely documented both in print and electronic forms. Many studies have been undertaken on police observational documentaries, police perceptions and the unreality of reality television. However, few studies have sought officers' opinions regarding the mediated representations of themselves. Chapter 2 examines some of the relevant literature on this topic, including police legitimacy, and how the merging of information and entertainment leads to ill-informed views of the role of police in modern society. Chapter 3 continues with the second half of the literature review and examines information obtained from online sources. Case studies are presented to outline what we know about police filming

productions and processes, as well as their successes and failures. Mostly interpreted from online newspaper articles, it is important to acknowledge and recognise where past productions have failed, because failure can have a long-lasting negative effect on the community and the local police jurisdiction. Noting these failures helps to mitigate the risk of future productions and protect all participants. It is not sufficient to simply provide an all-access pass to film crews; rather, to create successful observational documentaries, it is important to identify problem areas and learn from past mistakes to prevent them from happening again. Additionally, having confidence and trust in a film crew is not sufficient; productions need to be risk assessed and with a legally binding contract to protect officers and the community. A case study explored in Chapter 3 provides an outline of the first observational documentary undertaken by the NSWPF, called *Cop it Sweet*, which was filmed in 1991. The production negatively affected the NSWPF and heavily damaged the organisation's good reputation and branding image. This production is used to highlight how things can go bitterly wrong and how the NSWPF's motto of 'police and community working together' was ripped apart overnight. It took many years for trust to be re-established with the community.

Chapter 4 explores the methodology used for this pilot study. Interpreting the completed surveys allowed the author to discover the essential criteria required when selecting police as actors for factual television production. Combining history and research with studies in factual television helps establish what is already known about television production and what is not known or documented with police media agencies' FTVUs. The outcome may be used to develop new strategies or highlight deficiencies and inconsistencies in the process. The outcome is a best practice guide for the NSWPF FTVU, and its concepts are available for wider adoption by other Australian Government departments and police jurisdictions. For the purpose of this study, 'actors' are not singularly the police but represent all stakeholders and participants in these types of shows. They include the network, producers, police and lawyers, each with self-serving interests in terms of the financial, legal, policing and broadcasting aspects of the production. One cannot work alone; the production is a collaboration, and everyone plays a role in authorising and endorsing the end product.

Chapter 5 presents the data and information gathered during the qualitative and quantitative study. It includes the presentation of several charts and graphs where statistical information was drawn from the data collection surveys. Much of this

information was then supported in lengthy one-on-one interviews conducted with 20 officers who had participated in filming. Several findings and recommendations resulted from this study, and they are presented in Chapter 6, along with the answer to the original research question. Although the thesis question was set to acquire a simple 'yes' or 'no' response, the collective data were not so edifying. The overall collection of results suggests that police do not change the way they do their work when in the presence of cameras, and they do not perform their work differently when being filmed at work. However, all officers claimed that they ensured they presented themselves in a professional manner on camera, and they described the importance of their personal presentation and articulation when being filmed. The staff responses were overwhelmingly positive and similar. Few officers rated the filming process as negative or impactful upon their career. Most officers would happily participate in the process again; however, the greater majority of participants thought the actual content put to air did not fairly represent the daily workload of frontline police. A number of recommendations are drawn from the findings of this study and presented in Chapter 6. A significant outcome of this study suggests that police agencies and production companies should consider changing the format of police factual documentaries to more closely align with police duties that are routinely undertaken by officers in today's society.

Maurantonio (2012) stated that police are 'one of the most understudied populations when addressing questions of media influence, yet by examining police, we may gain insight, not only into the question of how meaning is made, but also how meaning is made when the subjects of representation are the viewers themselves' (p. 6). This pilot research study introduces the subject area by providing insights and opinions from frontline officers detailing their first-hand experience of being filmed at work and later watching themselves on television. It explores the subject of risk mitigation and highlights its importance and value in making a successful collaborative production.

Conclusion

Television has the power to influence people of all ages and nations. It is important that police agencies recognise this fact and use this technology as a way of reaching, educating and imprinting the minds of viewers. The effects of television can last a lifetime, so it is important that the key messages are correct. Maurantonio's (2012)

work on the issue of police legitimacy suggests television shows simultaneously create false expectations of police capabilities. This pilot study answers that question by asking police officers as participants/actors of factual television productions about their experience of being filmed for commercial television while performing operational duty.

The literature review in Chapter 2 provides a summary of the known material on this subject. Although this study is believed to be the first of its kind, there is some information available that has been used to highlight noteworthy aspects of observational documentaries. The chapter contains information which verifies the information provided by the officers in this study. In turn, that information assisted in the creation of the recommendations resulting from this study. A major finding was that the current format of police documentaries no longer factually represent police work or crime in the community. The literature review uncovers where some factual documentaries have failed in their representation of police, crime and justice. It showcases the need for police film units to coordinate all aspects of filming within policing jurisdictions.

Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical framework used to support the research for this thesis, although this is explored in greater detail in Chapter 4. It also demonstrates the availability of information on the social deconstruction of cop shows in both genres of reality and drama, and it provides supporting information on the perceived gap in, and lack of information from, officer-led and officer participation in observational documentaries. With the absence of this information, the true value of police agency support of, and assistance to, these types of programs cannot be measured.

Chapter 2: The Visual Construction of Police on Prime-time Television

The literature review for this thesis has been separated into two parts. This chapter will review what is known about the subject by exploring texts and previous studies and examining the construction of reality television programs for policing, as well as the perceptions of police. The review of the literature shows a distinct lack of research in the area of officers' perceptions of themselves as they appear in television programs. It includes citations by researchers who noted that officers had been the subject of little prior research in this area, and the studies that had been undertaken were about fictional crime shows seeking officers' views about the performance of 'actors' in those programs. Maurantonio (2012) noted this as a missed opportunity and suggested that 'by examining police, we may gain an insight not only into the question of how meaning is made, but also how meaning is made when the subjects of representation are the viewers themselves' (p. 6). Hallett and Powell (1995) presented a study on the effect of the *Cops* program on participant officers in Nashville, Tennessee. It is thought to be the first research undertaken with police officers as actors in factual programs; however, the study was small, consisted of only six questions about the factuality of their media portrayal, and was conducted more than 30 years ago, preceding the 'boom' period of crime television shows. Doyle (2003) conducted a relevant study of police reality television programs and suggested that 'the presence of TV cameras might alter criminal justice situations' (p. 6). Additionally, Lee and McGovern (2012, 2014) provided the most contemporaneous and up-to-date research on police television. They introduced *simulated policing* in the relationship between police, the media and the public, although they too recognised a distinct lack of research into police attitudes of themselves on television. Many researchers have recognised the lack of this type of research and observed that a study of police officers' mediated selves in factual television shows would be beneficial. This research study, although small and only a pilot study, explores how officers feel about seeing themselves on prime-time television. It delves into the thoughts of their mediated selves and teases out how they believe their involvement would or could change community behaviour.

The theoretical framework for this study was established by adopting the interpretive approach and exploring theories involving the presentation of self and the role of

stakeholders in understanding the symbolic construction of the policing world. It delves into the topics of ethics and blurring in this style of program and explores the theories and concepts presented in visual criminology. It also touches upon the affective disposition theory (ADT), as well as the apparent myth of the CSI effect. The second part of the literature review is presented in Chapter 3. It explores online articles that address where police documentaries have failed to meet their mark. Several case studies are presented to explore reported successes and failures within the genre and how they may affect the construction of new police factual productions. These elements make vital contributions to this study.

Maurantonio (2012) questioned whether 'television shows simultaneously create false expectations of police capabilities' (p. 17). She interviewed officers regarding the performance of actors in police crime shows. Of major interest to this study, Maurantonio (2012) mentioned questions raised by others regarding factual police documentaries and asked: 'Does the presence of TV crews affect how well police officers do their job?' (p. 6). She suggested this as an area for wider research. Having identified the gap in the research, this thesis examines the police participant experience and researches officers' opinions of watching themselves on television, although as other scholars have noted, police, as viewers of crime shows, tend to be highly critical, and the research gathered for this thesis supports this view.

Exploring Social Theories in the Construction of Police Observational Programs

The theoretical framework in the construction of reality television programs on policing requires many ingredients. This section explores what those ingredients are and how they operate to achieve a positive result. This requires the identification of stakeholders and participants and how their parts function. The section examines the ideas presented by Erving Goffman (1959) in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, and the value of police recognising these important features within themselves. It explores the social construction of reality and the importance of reflecting on one's capacity, and it examines the symbolic features that are ever present in policing. Described broadly as the interpretive approach and deeply rooted in the old Chicago School of Sociology, I identify the roles of actors (police officers) and stakeholders and how their symbolic worlds are constructed and linked to one another. Additionally,

this section explores Reiner's (2010) analysis of cop culture; applying his understanding of how police officers view the social world and their role within it to this study.

Berger and Luckmann's (1966) exploration of social theories suggests that the reality of everyday life is real, and that knowledge guides our conduct in everyday life. In their concept of social construction, they suggested that people create mental representations of each other's actions and conform to each other's standards of behaviour. These actions then become embedded in society and thus become reality. The social construction of everyday life is no more evident than in police and community relations. This social construction requires a human perspective in order to operate, and that perspective is constructed by society. The social construction of reality operating within police factual documentaries allows the viewer to 'visit other realities', as suggested by Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 25). The ethical dilemma of watching people during vulnerable times and reflecting on the realities of others allows us to either conform to rules set by a higher authority or become embedded in the fabric of society. Either way, a by-product of observational documentaries is their educational value to viewers; they allow viewers to reflect on their own realities, including their own social construction of everyday reality. Observational documentaries focus on real-life events and situations and present a *version* of reality. Although factual documentaries are said to be a reflection of the truth, they are all carefully constructed and edited. A mixture of techniques is used to create a sense of realism, and while it is a form of reality, it is at times a heavily mediated view of the world presented to viewers—a deliberate, edited construction of reality. Carlson (1985) suggested that because police are always shown as effective crime fighters in observational documentaries, the public may develop unrealistic expectations of police performance.

Goffman (1959) discussed the presentation and control one may have regarding others. He suggested that control and conformity in a situation may be achieved by influencing others through the presentation of self in terms of both presence and communication—a type of 'impression management'. He observed that:

> *this control is achieved largely by influencing the definition of the*
> *situation which the others come to formulate, and he can influence*
> *this definition by expressing himself in such a way as to give them*

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the kind of impression that will lead them to act voluntarily in accordance with his own plan. (p. 15)

The self-reflective exercise shows that police officers as actors in observational documentaries largely view themselves in this way. The body of research for this study shows that the interaction between police officers is what Goffman (1959, p. 21) described as a 'temporary agreement' whereby both parties extend professional courtesy in contact and verbal exchanges. Interestingly, Goffman described this interaction as *modus vivendi* (way of life). In this thesis, probing questions in one-on-one interviews with subject officers concluded that officers as filming participants overwhelmingly felt that they <u>did not</u> act differently in the presence of the film crew, therefore supporting Goffman's views. However, even though the observed behaviours proved differently, officers went to great lengths to describe themselves as the same person both on and off camera, explicitly describing their actions as routine responses in their daily working life. Goffman described this routine response as part of their 'performance', suggesting that the *performer* (participant police officer) undertakes the same routine duties so regularly that they develop a social relationship whereby their actions and responses to everyday work are delivered the same way to the same types of audiences. Goffman (1959) also described the presentation of self as a 'front', noting that 'different routines may employ the same front' (p. 37). Interestingly, Berger and Luckmann (1966) referred to this as *habitualisation*, whereby 'any action repeated frequently becomes cast into a pattern' (p. 53). They suggested that in this society, which we created, we repeat our behaviours because they work or have effect—a surprisingly accurate analogy of the daily operations of a general duties police officer. This viewpoint reinforces the officers' perspective and is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Goffman talked about false 'fronts' being contrived performances—an area further explored with the police officers. However, the analysis suggests that realistic performances by officers were a natural expression of themselves and unintentionally performed by the participant officers. Overall, there is agreement with Goffman (1959) that the role of a police officer may be defined as a performer, whose everyday job is to put on a theatrical performance. Of greater interest is the applicable mode to which performance is presented by Goffman (1959): 'Among members of the team we find that familiarity prevails, solidarity is likely to develop, and that secrets that could give

the show away are shared and kept' (p. 231)—an accurate description of the role undertaken by police.

Police observational documentaries focus on real-life events and therefore present a version of reality; however, commonalities of cop culture are visible within factual television programs made in Australia. This is because cultures are shaped by our environments and networks. Skolnick (1966 cited in Reiner) stated that 'cop culture offers a patterned set of understandings that helps officers cope with the pressures and tensions confronting police' (p. 118). Reiner suggested that cop culture is adaptable, and that it is not the cop but the situation that dictates how the cop will respond. In a study of police—particularly those appearing on camera—it is important to recognise the unique role of police officers. Like other occupations, it is dangerous and presents risks, but as Crank (2004, cited in Reiner, 2010) stated, 'what makes policing different is the unpredictable encounters with other people' (p. 119), reminding us that coping with violence is a recurring feature in police culture. However, noteworthy to this study is the acknowledgement by participant police regarding cop culture's sense of mission or, as Reiner (2010) put it, a 'feeling that policing is not just a job but a way of life' (p. 119). In the present study, almost all participants in the one-on-one interviews agreed with this sentiment and, without prompting, disclosed that they thought their visual representations presented policing as fun and exciting, which are also qualities that Reiner offered in his version of cop culture.

The concept of cop culture recognises that people who become police officers tend to behave and act in similar ways. There is an acknowledgment of slight variation due to external beliefs; however, in the main, street police tend to all work and perform duties in a similar way. The ideology of cop culture is explored in greater detail in Chapter 5, where the interviews with police officers clearly correlate with Reiner's study on the subject.

Symbolic Interactionism

The theoretical framework explored for this research is based on the old Chicago School's 'Symbolic Interactionism' approach, whereby a one-on-one observations may explain the individual in society and their interaction with others, thereby creating social order and change. The interpretation is that signs and symbols develop shared

meanings, and when linked up with stakeholders, such as in police officers, signs and symbols are found to be a regular part of policing. American television shows frequently use codes in verbal exchanges between officers, with a number directly relating to a form of work, law or offence, or even a tactical application. Codes between officers provide a form of safety and security when undertaking policework, as well as an element of surprise to both the target person and the audience. NSW police use codes and symbols as a way of interacting with each other. However, unlike their American counterparts, they do not use numerical coding; instead, they use acronyms and slang. During the one-on-one interviews, police officer participants in this study identified their extensive use of codes and acknowledged that the coded language was part of their policing life and conversational style. The officers recognised that codes routinely formed part of their communication both on and off duty, and they believed that the codes were so entrenched within them that they had become part of the officers' permanent vernacular.

Symbolic interactionism includes the use of symbols in its lens to analyse the social construction of reality. In addition to gestures, police officers use other tools as symbols, including police equipment, adornments, accoutrements and the uniform itself. These send out many different types of non-verbal messages to those who see them, and those receivers may adjust their behaviour accordingly. Over the past decade, police have had to contend with alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour after dark in Manly, NSW, which is a unique beachside location and easily accessible to Sydney's central business district. A high influx of tourists enjoys the beach, sun and sand on summer days, and the night creates a vortex of young people who are already fuelled with alcohol and suffering the effects of the Australian sun. 'Glassing's', assaults, public urination and other types of anti-social behaviour are a regular occurrence and on the rise. Using the symbolic interactionism theory, the author, a police officer working in the area at the time, attempted to reduce this behaviour by parking marked police vehicles in strategic locations. This gave the appearance that police officers were in the area, thereby allowing the public to regulate their own behaviour. The police car parked at the taxi rank reduced assaults, and the cars parked immediately outside the main pubs reduced the incidence of public urination and affray. Naturally, other more intensive laws were initiated to reduce major assaults; however, the strategic use of police equipment continues to be effective

and is a good example of how this theory has successfully operated in the field. Both the observation period and qualitative interviews detected the use of symbolic interactionism and are explored further in Chapter 5.

Visual Criminology in Policing Programs for Television

There is an obvious correlation between factual television representations of police and those of visual criminology. Over the past decade, television programs in NSW (and around the world) have screened a multitude of documentaries depicting the role of police and the work they do. These representations have proven to be extremely popular, and their visual representations have served to frame public opinion. Criminologist Ray Surette (1992) suggested that:

> *people use knowledge they obtain from the media to construct a*
> *picture of the world, an image of reality on which they base their*
> *actions. This process, sometimes called 'the social construction of*
> *reality', is particularly important in the realm of crime, justice,*
> *and the media.* (p. 1)

Crime and criminals and their capture and punishment are heavily represented in the media and are often played out for the viewer via factual television programs. The images allow the viewer to establish boundaries for what they believe is acceptable and what is not; what is right and what is wrong; and who is good and who is bad, while evaluating the fairness of law and order delivered by the officers. They are often the lead news story each evening; in the words of Lord Northcliffe,[5] 'if it bleeds, it leads'. Rafter and Brown (2011) believed that crime and punishment dominate the media so much that the visual construction of the images is heavily edited. The media's structured presentation of the visual, coupled with eye-catching headlines, serves to enhance, and at times steer the viewer towards, a certain train of thought (of perhaps guilt), rather than providing a matter-of-fact view of what is. Nevertheless, factual documentaries have many benefits that are not shared by still images. A powerful image and a bold headline on the front page of a newspaper will immediately steer the reader towards one school of thought for that image. In contrast, the media opportunities presented by factual television, in all its spectacle, will show the viewer

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[5] Alfred Charles Hamsworth, 1st Viscount Northcliffe, was a British newspaper and publishing magnate. As owner of the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror*, he was an early developer of popular journalism, and he exercised vast influence over British popular opinion during the Edwardian era. The phrase is coined to Northcliffe; however, no direct confirmation can be located.

what happened before and after the event. The inclusion of this information almost always suggests a different story, allowing the viewer to determine their own viewpoint with an unbiased presentation of the facts. The visual plays an important role in the study of criminology; understanding the power of the image and how it affects society is necessary for all key stakeholders responsible for the accurate presentation of that image. As Jeff Ferrell et al. (2008, p. 2) wrote, 'there can be no other option but the development of a thoroughgoing *visual* criminology', and the '*story* of crime is told as much today through the visual image as through the written word'.

Factual television is, for the most part, a visual spectacle of crime and its control by public authority. In policing, it is a montage of swift action, technology, resources and capabilities of police who, at times, are dealing with difficult members of society who wish to challenge the rule of law. Unfortunately, the construction of these images and their presentation to the viewer can also tell a different story. The obvious requirement of made-for-television factual crime shows is the need for stories to feature some type of crime, criminal and victim. There is generally no dialogue provided to the viewer regarding crime statistics in the area being recorded. Research by the Australian Bureau of Crime Statistics consistently shows that crime rates for various types of crimes are decreasing in NSW; however, factual documentaries continue to feature crime aplenty, convincing the viewer that crime continues to be a problem in the featured community. Additionally, police are almost always shown as competent professionals who are punctual when called, thorough and caring in their investigations, and tenacious in solving all crimes, with offenders gallantly pursued and subsequently arrested. Oliver (1994) reported that reality television overrepresents the proportion of crimes that are solved, suggesting that other police departments would be envious of the clearance rates reported. These depictions further contribute to the *unreality* of reality television.

Nevertheless, crime shows, with their powerful display of action as it happens, seek to draw in the viewer by relying on their judgment as a moral spectator of crime and punishment and their unwitting need to see more—simply put, their voyeurism of the spectacle (Brown, 2009; Young, 2005). Visual criminology creates a world for the viewer that is not new but is uninhabited in the world they usually operate within. As this new world opens, it seeks to engage the viewer and challenge their ideas of what

is right and wrong in a given situation while having no bearing on their moral compass. Some may simply watch the spectacle as it unfolds, being guided by the narrator. Others may immerse themselves in the situation, putting their police hat on and challenge the police officers as if they were actually on the scene. Fetveit (1999) suggested that 'the audio-visual evidence is as much as the story' (p. 794). These types of shows draw a host of ideas and comments from viewers, as seen on productions like *Gogglebox*,[6] and they open up new conversations and connections about problems that are not normally faced by the viewer but that may affect them. And although the shows do not always choose a side, as if to support the cops or crooks, the visual imagery is engaging, eye opening and at times morally challenging, leaving viewers fascinated, disheartened or angry. Carrabine (2012) stated that, 'as images of crime, harm and punishment proliferate across old and new media, there is a growing recognition that criminology needs to rethink its relations with the ascendant power of spectacle' (p. 463). With this in mind, there is the creation of wonderment in the validity of *police work as entertainment*, questioning the viewer's consumption of such programs as entertainment, or is it simply voyeurism?

Policework, as presented on television, usually ensures that the visual representation of police on television tends to be overly magnified in its delivery of the spectacle in order to dramatize the incident. Kaplan and LaChance (2017) stated that these types of programs fit better into the scope of crimesploitation, 'a kind of reality television program depicting, detecting, prosecuting and punishing criminal behaviour' (p. 1). They suggested that the difference between factual programs and crimesploitation lies in how the programs are delivered. Although both may be regarded as voyeuristic, factual programs aim to educate the viewer and steer them away from a life in crime, whereas crimesploitation programs thrive on exploiting the subject and their self-destructive behaviour. And while these types of television programs mostly feed off the vulnerable and make a spectacle of their conduct, they satisfy the audience's desire to witness taboo behaviour.

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[6] The concept of *Gogglebox Australia* is based on the 2013 British reality show *Gogglebox*, in which people watch and comment on the week's popular television shows and films in their own homes. Producers choose 10 households that feature 'a cross-section of modern Australian society, from larrikins to gays, from migrant families to battlers, yuppies and empty-nesters', to discuss the shows. The cast is filmed with remote-controlled cameras, while the crew stay out of their way in other parts of the house.

It is interesting to note the incongruences between what is 'real' and what is 'imagined' in the visual imagery of television when crime images fail to represent what is known about the crime story presented; however, these types of programs contribute to public dialogue on crime in the area showcased. Factual media representations of policing are crucial and, for many viewers, probably the sole influence in shaping their perceptions and opinions about criminality, community safety and criminal justice. For the most part, television representations of policing are the most prominent source of information for the public concerning law and order. More recently there has been a blurring of the boundaries between these three media depictions of policing (criminality, community safety and criminal justice). Others have argued that reality television police shows are so heavily constructed that they are merely an authorised representation of the police. For example, Greer (2001) suggested that the 'situations are contrived, and the protagonists are handpicked' (p. 2). Regardless, factual policing programs are available in abundance and continue to be a source of entertainment and education for viewers.

Previous Research into Police Representations in Factual Programs

Observational documentaries about police undertaking police work have grown in popularity over the past 30 years, with the public keen to look behind the scenes to learn how police perform their jobs. These documentaries help to educate the community and serve as visual lessons of behaviour to viewers, as documented by researchers (Doyle, 2003; Hill, 2005; Manning, 1998; Maurantonio, 2012; Mawby, 2007; Newburn, 2008; Perlmutter, 2000). However, the author is not aware of any current research that is seeking the perspective of police officers regarding their involvement in the making of these types of programs. The closest resemblance to this study is a pilot study undertaken by Hallett and Powell (1995) that involved police participants of the first series of *Cops*; however, the study focused on the portrayals of police work rather than self-perceptions of performance as captured in this study. Over the past 40 years, a number of studies have been undertaken with a focus on police crime shows. Notably, Arcuri (1977) surveyed police attitudes towards police dramas, Oliver (1994) studied police and public representations on the television program *Cops*; Perlmutter (2000) examined police attitudes towards the visual and how they believed they were depicted on television, Doyle (2003) discussed how crime shows are shaped by police agencies, O'Sullivan (2005) studied perceptions of police among

those considering the profession, Hill (2007) reviewed the relationship with factual television products, Huey (2010) studied the purported CSI effect and Cummins et al. (2014) researched police performance on television by interviewing retired officers in Canada. There have been a great many more studies about police, perceptions, police media and police reality television productions. The works of these authors are interesting and provide insights into police attitudes, although some published works and their ideologies may be challenged in terms of their accuracy and relevance in today's society.

The research which is most closely represented by this body of work is a study undertaken by Hallett and Powell (1995) titled *Backstage with 'Cops': The dramaturgical reification of police subculture in American crime 'info-tainment'*. The study began in 1989, when the hit television show *Cops* started filming in Nashville, Tennessee. The authors focused on 'the meanings programs have with actor/police officers in the reality TV show' (p. 102). Their work provides an introductory view on this subject area, although it falls short of eliciting deep and meaningful contributions from the participants. In any case, the study is of interest to this work and is relevant in terms of providing a comparative study. However, given that the research was undertaken with the first cohort of police/actor participants some 30 years ago, their views would almost certainly have changed since then as a result of the differences in today's society and the effect of technology on policing.

Media images of police often tell a very different story to the actual circumstances of a situation, whereas a rolling camera can capture the beginning, middle and end of an entire police interaction. Published research supports the notion that the public have an appetite for, and personal interest in, observational documentaries about policing. This provides an avenue for further exploration in terms of the entertainment value of watching people's behaviour when they are under pressure or in times of stress, as well as commenting on police actions and behaviours.

Many studies have been undertaken on the topics of police and media as well as crime and justice; however, little is known about stakeholder participation in crime television (Beierle & Cayford, 2002; Blackstock et al., 2007; Brody, 2003; Stephenson, 2019; Webler, 1999). This opinion is supported by Nash (2009), who stated that 'almost nothing is known about how the participant experiences the process of documentary

production and screening' (p. 6). Previous studies have focused on evaluating community perceptions and depictions of crime as well as studying the effectiveness of 'actors' playing the role of police rather than researching the primary participants— that is, the police officers who were filmed for the production (Dick, 2011; Lee & McGovern, 2006; Maurantonio, 2012; Soulliere, 2004). It may be the case that this gap in literature could be attributed to lack of accessibility. Outsiders would have difficulty gaining authorisation to complete this type of research in a policing organisation without supervision from an insider. Additionally, in the NSWPF, non-commissioned police officers are not authorised corporate spokespersons and therefore cannot comment on their work practices. As an insider and the PFS responsible for the construction and promotion of police filming in NSW, access was not a challenge in this body of research; access was easy and organisational approval was endorsed.

Authors who have used or produced documents as secondary sources on this topic have contributed to the subject area by raising thought-provoking views. Gaynor (2012) raised the issue of the inhibiting processes by which police media branch officials interfered in the author's documentary-making process. Further, the detailed and complex deed of agreements (contracts) added to the complexity of their filming process, making it significantly more difficult. These views have been expressed in several other research documents (Gaynor, 2012; Hill, 2005; Nash, 2009; Nichols, 1991). Eschholza et al. (2002) observed that crime shows are 'a particular social construct of reality that almost exclusively emphasises the positive aspects of law enforcement' (p. 330). Hill (2005) explained that in Australia:

> *the rise of reality TV came at a time when networks were looking*
> *for a quick fix solution to economic problems within their industry.*
> *Increased costs in the production of drama, sitcom and comedy*
> *ensured unscripted, popular factual programming became a viable*
> *economic option during the 1990s.* (p. 39)

Gerbner and Gross (1976, p. 26) stated that the 'television world is not a window on reflection of the world but a world in itself', and discussed the increased blurring of the world versus reality, suggesting that 'the perception as projected by TV becomes the reality'. The effect of these programs is of critical importance because they are 'perceived as realistic by most viewers' (Oliver & Armstrong, 1998, p. 30). Therefore,

it is imperative that police leadership teams understand how observational documentaries influence public attitudes towards policing (Dowler, 2003, pp. 109–112; Prosise & Johnson, 2004, p. 73).

These shows act as an information classroom for the viewer. In most crime shows, the police officer assumes the role of a social worker, therapist, prosecutor, judge and jury all rolled into one (Doyle, 1998, pp. 100–101; Surette cited in Prosise & Johnson, 2004, p. 75). Soulliere (2004, p. 230) confirmed this view and suggested that these shows 'serve as an informal learning environment for potential police officers' and act to orientate them into the world of policing'. Researchers further suggested that police academies, in their course design, should consider the effect of reality television on recruits and their perceptions of police work. This is an important point to consider and is worthy of further exploration. Gaynor (2012) found that 'there is an identifiable gap in practitioner led, practitioner-oriented research into this central issue' (p. 10). Jermyn (2007) observed the necessity of continuing to revisit and reflect on the way media represents crime, 'further questioning our seemingly inescapable and enduring fascination with crime stories and their resonance in our lives' (p. 179). In response to Jermyn (2007), this study elicits from police their perspectives, willingness to participate, attitudes and beliefs that they are making a difference, and views of how they feel when they reflect on the finished product and read social media comments about their work performance.

One of the biggest dilemmas that crime television faces is the constant questioning of moral issues in regard to viewing people during tough, somewhat personal, times. Biressi and Nunn (2005) noted that 'new reality genres of crime and emergency services programming since the 1990's blur the boundaries between the public and private sphere, amalgamating the primary aims to both inform and entertain' (pp. 120–121). In his book discussing reality television, Bill Nichols (1994) observed that 'any firm sense of boundary which such shows attempt to uphold between fact and fiction, narrative and exposition, storytelling and reporting, inevitably blurs' (p. 43). Others refer to crime television as 'public hangings' (Erikson, 1966; Garland, 1991) or 'public shaming and public spectacles of punishment' (Pratt, 2007 cited in Podvoiskis, 2012, p. 105). This is more commonly referred to as 'trial by media', which refers to making a spectacle from someone else's low point—that is, it is the naming, shaming and

identification of persons who are awaiting court. The issue of *sub-judice*[7] is now often part of police contractual agreements with producers. This means that, in the collaboration of factual productions, nothing can be aired until all court matters are finalised and appeals periods concluded.

Given that most people have little contact with police in their daily lives, researchers have suggested that the community gains its knowledge on the subject and frames its view on issues of crime, law and order, and social control from the media rather than personal experience (Chibnall, 1977; Hogg & Brown, 1998), but it relies on secondary sources to feed its desire and thirst for this knowledge. The work of police is, in many cases, secretive. It needs to be in order to stay one step ahead of offenders. Meyrowitz (1985, p. 68) found that 'television has lifted the old veils of secrecy' by allowing television crews to observe this world, however it can never be assumed that the doors are wide open. Police methodology, identification of suspects and the work of highly specialised police and their duties should never be disclosed on television; to do so would negate all of the hard work that has been conducted to establish those secret ways of doing business. As Cooke and Sturgess (2009) observed, the police force is in a privileged position when it comes to the ownership and dissemination of crime information. However, the increased interest in policing and crime issues has led to increased public scrutiny of those officers, and it has become more common for police authority to be questioned (Edwards, 2005). This is not just about police legitimacy; it is important for police organisations to always portray police in a good light while at the same time protecting their brand. Fishman and Cavender (1998) made a strong and insistent point about crime shows when they suggested that 'crime shows violate

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[7] The term sub-judice means 'under judicial consideration'. The sub-judice rule is part of the law relating to contempt of court. The rule governs what public statements can be made about ongoing legal proceedings before, principally, the courts.

The sub-judice rule may be breached by public statements that risk prejudging matters or issues that are before the courts. It is the concept of prejudging that is central to the rule. Examples of breaches of the sub-judice rule include statements urging the court to reach a particular result in a matter, comments on the strength or weakness of a party's case or particular issue, or comments on witnesses or evidence in a case. The sub-judice rule does not prohibit fair and accurate reporting of the factual content of ongoing judicial proceedings by the media, as long as the report does not usurp the court's role by prejudging the case or its legal issues. In addition to the sub-judice rule, there may be other limitations on what can be said about a legal proceeding. Further, courts can issue publication bans that limit what can be published about a particular matter. Whether any particular statement raises sub-judice concerns depends on the nature of the statement, the case involved and other circumstances. Members of the media should therefore consult with their legal counsel for advice on what may and may not be said about ongoing legal proceedings.

journalistic traditions and are more fiction than reality' (p. 11). They said that, unlike most forms of media, crime shows support police by always showing police in a positive and engaging way instead of striking a balance between highlighting good police work and exposing its failures. However, what Fishman and Cavender failed to recognise is the collaboration of the filming engagement. One cannot happen without the other, and the police ensure that they have full rights to veto or override any negative portrayals of the police. Why would any public authority willingly agree to air its dirty laundry?

Of the little research available regarding police factual documentaries, all of the information has been written from behind the camera; that is, from the view of a person with media in mind. There has been no identifiable academic research or information on this topic written from the perspective of a police officer or police participant. Therefore, existing research on this topic is limited to views from an external perspective. The study undertaken for this body of work focuses on the police officer as an active participant and includes an internal study of NSWPF operations in factual documentaries.

The Construction of Reality Television

Those researching factual crime shows often report that the era started in 1989 with the US reality production of *Cops*. Although the show was not the first of its kind, it created a new style of presenting true-to-life police factual documentaries. It has been a highly rated and very popular production. The earliest known factual crime series was an American program called *Confession*; however, it only ran for six months in 1957. The first episode featured a story about a transvestite, which was not well received by its 1950s conservative viewing audience during its prime-time slot on Sunday evenings. Almost 10 years later, a German program called *Aktenzeicem XY*, which translates to *Case XY*, was first screened. It enjoyed a massive audience of more than 20 million people in Europe when it aired, thereby setting a benchmark for broadcasters to further explore crime and policing in both fact and fictional genres. It is incredible to acknowledge that now, 50 years later, the strength of audience appetite for police television shows remains high, and *Aktenzeicem XY* continues to be made and screened in Germany and abroad.

Australian television guides show that factual documentaries appear almost daily during prime time. There has been a massive shift over the past 30 years from doco-soaps or drama series about police to factual documentaries. The essence of factual television is to deliver key messages and educate the viewer. Doyle (2003) stated that these 'TV shows do more than simply record criminal justice, but rather it reshapes it' (p. 4). They encourage the viewer to talk about the subject, and while the delivery may contain some form of entertainment, the purpose is to instil key messages. As observed by numerous researchers (Doyle, 1998; Prosise & Johnson, 2004; Soulliere, 2004), since the 1980s, the evolution of crime-based reality television has surreptitiously immersed itself into our viewing program, and it continues to enjoy immense popularity and development around the world. In NSW, police factual documentaries are screened across every free-to-air television channel.

Cavender and Fishman (1998, pp. 5–7) traced the history of reality crime shows, stating that 'the days of crime reality TV had arrived, and it has never looked back'. Hill (2005) found that within Australia, 'the rise of reality TV came at a time when networks were looking for a quick fix solution to economic problems within their industry. Increased costs in the production of drama, sitcom and comedy ensured unscripted, popular factual programming became a viable economic option during the 1990s' (p. 39). Factual crime shows are inexpensive to make and extremely popular, often drawing reasonably high ratings for their time slots. What makes them attractive to networks is their production costs, which are about $100,000 per episode compared with approximately $800,000 for cooking shows such as Australia's highest-rating production, *MasterChef*.[8] Overall, factual crime shows are easy 'fillers' for networks because they require little promotion but still draw a good share of viewership, with above average ratings recorded in NSW. They can be adapted to any time slot and are easily aired either on their own or back to back. Another advantage is that episodes can be aired individually, as there is no need to tie them in with other episodes. For

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[8] *MasterChef Australia* series 6 (2014) consisted of 60 episodes. Network 10 reportedly paid the production company (Shine) $50 million per series in a three-series deal. Other incentives accompanied this deal, such as a $50,000 bonus for each episode that reached more than 1.5 million viewers. Of the 60 episodes, only the grand finale was watched by more than that number. Interestingly, only the first three series of the show recorded significant ratings. Network 10 made the deal in 2011 to air the show, which suggests that negotiations were in place during series 3. The grand finale of series 2 attracted almost 6 million viewers—a number generally unheard of on Australian television given that the country's entire population was approximately 20 million at the time. Wikipedia shows that it was the fourth highest rated show of all time in Australia.

these reasons, they are often used during inclement weather periods of live sporting coverage. Television is not merely a product to provide the consumer with entertainment—it is big business and its business is to make money. One important piece of information that is released daily is television ratings, which are an important factor in addressing the rise and dominance of productions on this topic. High ratings allow networks to charge higher costs for advertising time slots. In addition, funds gained from selling the shows internationally is an equally important 'selling point' to gain police agency participation in these types of productions. The content is generally rated G (general) or PG (parental guidance), thereby allowing all family members to watch, and the programs are unisex and easily viewed, enjoyed and commented upon by family members of all ages. These 'comments' are what police agencies seek in their 'return on investment'. An essential dividend of police agencies is that the programs must serve to send some type of educational message to viewers. If families watching the programs participate in active commentary, as shown in the reality program *Gogglebox*, then the police organisation will have achieved what it set out to do.

A notable difference between reality television and crime documentaries is that crime shows tend to be produced and screened in segments, which is a matter-of-fact way of showing a sequence of events, although the events are not necessarily filmed in that sequence. This is a way of broadcasting a show as being 'real life', when in fact many of the sequences may have been filmed later. The entire crime event is condensed into a few moments. Andersen (1994) stated that crime shows are depicted as events rather than a progression of events, and 'we are relieved of the burden of knowing what has come before or what will come after' (p. 8). As described by Skolnick and McCoy (1984) police crime shows 'have to show the smoke coming out of the gun and the lady screaming' (p. 537). These plots add to the entertainment value of police television and provoke various emotive responses from viewers. Some may argue that they are highly edited and fail to record the protracted nature of police work, such as the endless hours of paperwork. However, Reiner (1985) pointed out that crime television often masks the reality of policing by portraying police as active crime fighters, whereas they generally perform routine work. One needs to accept the omission as part of the presentation of television, where producers strive to maintain viewers' attention with interesting storylines while at the same time fitting 3–5 events

into a 30-minute episode. The reality is that crime is not resolved as quickly as it is in movies, and it is impossible to screen the many hours of work involved in police investigations. Thus, it must be accepted that some editing takes place; however, the editing does not change the outcome of the police investigation; rather, it simply speeds up the story for the purpose of entertainment and to showcase policework on television.

The increase in the number of crime shows can be attributed to technology such as the deployment of closed-circuit television (CCTV) in the 1980s. This surveillance culture feeds into the everyday person's appetite for *police work as entertainment*. An offshoot of crime shows is what Hill (2005, p. 8) called 'reality clip show formats'. She explained that savvy producers, seeking to make shows on a limited budget, use CCTV combined with voiceovers to make an entire show, such as productions about the world's worst drivers. Made in a similar vein to the original reality television format of *Candid Camera*, with the exception of having to pay hosts and play to an audience, the entire show is created in post-production. These types of programs present as a complete montage of basic entertainment: they are undated, unscripted, can easily fill any time slot, and can be sold internationally.

Television not only entertains but is also educational. This is the point of difference between the genres of reality television[9] and observational/factual documentaries. Ratings-driven reality television programs aim to entertain the viewer with their constantly rolling cameras focused on people in forced and sometimes unrealistic situations. In contrast, observational/factual documentaries set out to educate the viewer, although as Carrabine (2008) pointed out, 'this distinction is often blurred' (p. 99). Mawby (2007) observed that police agency representatives often play an active role in their portrayals, and contemporary police television shows focus on stories that more closely align with modern society, thereby keeping the viewer entertained.

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[9] Reality television is a genre of television programming that documents purportedly unscripted real-life situations, often starring unknown individuals rather than professional actors. Reality television came to prominence in the late 1990s and early 2000s with the global successes of *Survivor*, *Idol* and *Big Brother*. Some genres of television programming that predate the reality television boom are retroactively labelled reality television, including hidden camera shows, talent search shows, documentary series about ordinary people, high-concept game shows, home improvement shows and court shows featuring real-life cases. Documentaries, television news, sports television, talk shows and traditional game shows are generally not classified as reality television.

For the most part, police work is mundane, routine and unexciting, which is quite a contrast to what is shown in crime shows, where police are shown as dynamic, capable crime solvers. Palmer (2003) said that 'there is a clear distinction between what the crime reality TV projects as public image of the police and the reality of police work' (p. 24). However, viewers need to accept that police observational documentaries only capture a moment in policing. Given that programs generally run for only 30 minutes—less when ad breaks are included—producers want to make the most exciting production possible for the viewer. Unsurprisingly, a study by Regoli and Hewitt (1996) and quoted in Soulliere (2004, p. 224) indicated that in the production *Cops*, 75% of the crimes that police responded to were reported via calls to 911; however, it was later discovered that most crimes are detected by police during routine patrols and proactive work—a feature not commonly screened on the show because it is too time-consuming and boring to watch.

However, it would be remiss to suggest that in productions with police agencies, and where a contractual agreement is in place, including full rights to veto, anything less than the best police work would be approved for the final cut. Dovey (2000, p. 98) called this 'Hollywood editing', which is when all crimes are solved or resolved, police appear to be professional and respectable crime fighters, the community is made to feel safe and its police force is effective and proficient. In support of this view, Prosise and Johnson (2004) suggested that factual crime shows 'tend to exaggerate the proportion of offences that result in arrest' (p. 74). Their study of six reality crime shows suggested that, collectively, the police had an average arrest rate of 60%, whereas official data released by those that collect and assess crime statistics placed the arrest rate at 18%. That said, it must be remembered that the objective of television is primarily to entertain; therefore, it should not come as a surprise that the entertainment factor in a crime show involves making an arrest.

The effect of these types of programs is of critical importance because they need to be 'perceived as realistic by most viewers' (Oliver & Armstrong, 1998, p. 30). For that to occur, it is imperative that police leaders understand how observational documentaries influence public attitudes towards policing (Dowler, 2003, pp. 109–112; Prosise & Johnson, 2004, p. 73). Police agencies can use the educational medium of television as a way of displaying their capabilities and responsiveness to major crime, such as emergency management and terrorism, as well as showcasing routine

policework. Gerbner and Gross (1976, p. 26) stated that the 'television world is not a window on reflection of the world but a world in itself', and discussed the increased blurring of the world versus reality and suggested that 'the perception as projected by TV becomes the reality'. However, Hayward and Presdee (2010) observed that, 'given the ascendant position of the image/visual in contemporary culture … it is increasingly important that all are familiar with the various ways in which crime and the story of crime is imaged, constructed, and framed within modern society' (p. 9). This is an important point in the construction of factual television, because although production formats may change, one thing that police film agencies can be certain of is the continued developing interest in *police work as television entertainment*. An empirical study by Lam (cited in Robson & Silbey, 2012) found that 'television writers and producers are constantly accommodating the demands of the various stakeholders as the production moves forward' (p. 64). Therefore, police agencies must accept that there is a role for television within their agencies and, as such, both organisations should continue to negotiate and defend their boundaries in collaborating on the production of reality/crime television.

The images of police constructed for factual television in NSW have always represented a homogenous team— 'an abstract form of heroic consistency' (Fishman, 1999, p. 273)—in which the crime fighter is interchangeable, being a member of a team and not an individual. This construction is deliberately formed to ensure that individual officers do not become 'characters' or the 'talent' of the program. The collaborative success of factual documentaries in NSW is in part contributable to this form of presentation, ensuring that police work and its success or failure is, in the eyes of the viewer, an organisational approach. Mason (2002) stated that crime shows 'constructs a trope equating policing with crime fighting, so prevalent an image in reality police shows' (p. 5). However, in debunking this theory, the NSWPF has, in the past decade, moved away from presenting cop shows as a show of force to presenting police as being community-minded, which is a more fitting adaptation of the spirit of Australia. Andersen (1994) talked more of the media's collusion, suggesting that a reality police show 'are actually little more than products of the media's over reliance on the entertainment value of the law enforcement establishment' (p. 9). Moreover, he suggested that they fail to take a critical view of the work of police on the streets and that, over time, these constructed images have

changed enormously, reflecting our modern society with its views and perceptions of police and policework, particularly in NSW. Andersen's view is evidenced in today's COVID-19 world, where the Black Lives Matter movement has heavily influenced our thoughts and beliefs, challenging the rule of law and the value of public authority. In the US, in direct response to these widespread challenges to authority, the producers of police factual programs have been reassessing the presentation of their productions. As a consequence, *Cops*,[10] the longest-running police factual program on television, was cancelled and withdrawn from further screening, as was another newer production, *Live PD*.[11] The axing of both of these major police productions will undoubtedly lead to debates in academia; however, factual television products are representative of the community, and if the viewers do not like or support the product, they simply will not watch.

The achievement of crime television often comes at a price; the manipulation and distortion of reality are boundaries that producers often encroach on. They overstep the mark to 'keep it real'—a 'must have' inclusion in any collaborative project with police media. Mistaking kindness for weakness is a perpetual failure of producers who collaborate with police. Where police show any sign of weakness, producers will often manipulate words and discussions into a factual informal verbal agreement that potentially allows them to construct shows into what they perceive as a better version of the actual event. This displacement or departure from the real sequence of events often sets the course for rigorous debate. However, a well-formed, well-built and continual reaffirmation of a professional partnership between both parties ensures that this never takes place. Collaboration is the key to both organisations achieving their corporate objectives. Police agencies that fail to establish good lines of communication and an understanding of what each agency wants to achieve may simply view the clients as deceitful and thus not trustworthy. This lack of collaboration will work against them and lead to a lack of results. The producers of *Crimewatch UK* attributed

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[10] Popular series *Cops*, which ran for 32 seasons, was abruptly axed amid the Black Lives Matter protests. Paramount Network, the channel behind the show, announced the news in a statement: 'Cops is not on the Paramount Network and we don't have any current or future plans for it to return'.
[11] US police observational *Live PD*, which screens in Australia on 9RUSH, was axed by the A&E network after four seasons. The series followed police officers in the course of their patrols, via live video feeds from multiple law enforcement agencies throughout the US. Episodes were recently pulled following the killing of George Floyd in Minnesota, but A&E has now cancelled the series outright. A&E said in a statement: 'This is a critical time in our nation's history, and we have made the decision to cease production on *Live PD*'.

their success to their dedicated, professional and longstanding working relationship with the police (Thompson, 2002 cited in Jermyn, 2007.) They said that others have tried setting up similar programs and failed. In NSW, Lyndal Marks, the Executive Producer and Head of Network 7's factual department reflected on her involvement in factual productions. When interviewed for this research in 2019 she said:

> *I cannot express how important it is that we have a strong relationship with the police, especially the Film and TV Unit. It's crucial for us to get the access we need and the only way to have ongoing access is to develop and maintain the Film and TV Unit's trust. This will not only allow us to produce an interesting show, but it will also foster strong relations with officers both in the field and in the office. There are times when we don't agree on aspects of the production but that's healthy when you have a respectful relationship and both parties are prepared to be malleable. If the producers and crew don't have a good working relationship with the police and the Film and TV Unit, then the show as a whole will suffer, the smooth running of the show and the production schedule will be compromised, and any future production will be difficult to navigate. It's important to work through issues and come to a mutually beneficial agreement.*

A crime series, produced for factual television should be delivered via the information it contains, however more recently, a hybrid version of programming has moved those types of crime productions closer to reality television through the inclusion of characters, cliff-hangers and climaxes in the program delivery. In Australia, the *RBT* program uses this approach to retain the viewer. As noted by Thompson (2002 cited in Jermyn 2007), 'if it isn't entertaining enough, people won't watch'. However, Jermyn (2007) pointedly suggested that there are no signs of reality television abating, and she wondered whether the genre would 'hold any water in the contemporary landscape of television in the 21st century' (p. 172).

As discussed earlier, police media agencies are largely responsible for constructing favourable images of police. Until recently, all formats of police factual documentaries showcased police conducting proactive duties, which in turn created an image that police are effective and efficient investigators of crime (Christensen, Schmidt and Henderson, 1982). The integration of this strategy into factual television programs reinforces that image by showcasing a strong, traditional approach to law and order. Selby and Cowdery (1995) noted that, as television programs become more sophisticated, prime-time policing programs will continue to display some distortions

and blurring, although there is an expectation that portrayals of policework will become closer to reality.

It is important to recognise from the outset that the NSWPF PAB oversees a wide range of media and marketing obligations. The NSWPF is one of the largest police forces in the English-speaking world, with more than 20,000 employees[12] in more than 400 police stations spread over an area that is three times larger than the United Kingdom (UK). This vastness makes the organisation unique and allows the creation of police positions that are not otherwise available in smaller police agencies. The role of the PFS in the FTVU is one such position. The commercial arrangements that police have with production companies can provide a lucrative income stream for police agencies. As a result of the 'fee for service'[13] approach to commercial productions, the unit collects revenue of well over $600,000[14] each year for involvement in film and television productions. This consultancy-style arrangement enables the police agencies that have adopted this approach to influence the final product. As Jiggins (2007, cited in Lee & McGovern, 2014, p. 146) noted, 'police departments worldwide dedicate considerable resources to managing their relationship with the media in order to generate positive publicity, and thus the partnering of police in these observational documentaries is just another way in which police are expanding their repertoire of proactive, positive media activities'. This is a unique commercial venture and is perhaps an interesting concept that other government agencies—not just police—could learn from and adapt to suit their needs.

The commercial business of police media agencies today is real crime, which is presented using all forms of multimedia, including in-house and external collaboration, in the making of factual television programs. These programs are usually presented in a documentary style and shadow police doing routine police work to capture police business as it happens. Doyle (2003) determined that 'there has been little previous research … towards broadcasting live crime and policing' (p. 30). This feeds into the fact that it is accepted that most people will never personally encounter

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[12] This relates only to the state of NSW. Australia has a combined total of more than 70,000 police officers spread throughout the eight police states and territories, with each state operating a single police force.
[13] Rates are set by the NSW Government as a cost recovery fee for government services provided and are subject to annual increases in accordance with the consumer price index.
[14] Revenue fluctuates according to the amount of filming productions being undertaken. The dollar amount shown is in Australian dollars.

a police interaction in their lifetime, and therefore their perception of police and police work will be solely derived from their views and ideology of watching police television shows (Alpert & Dunham, 1997 cited in Soulliere 2004, p. 225). Gerbner and Gross (1976) said 'the more television we watch, the more we believe the world to be like that portrayed on television' (p. 173). Unfortunately, some of those depictions, usually delivered in fictional-type productions, are not always factually correct.

Affective Disposition Theory

It is a fact that crime shows always depict victims and offenders in specific ways. The police are always the heroes and the offenders are always bad and guilty. Dovey (2000, p. 10) described this as 'unreality TV' because, in real life, police are not always the affective crime fighters that television programs would have viewers believe. Sometimes, as described with the adaptation of the ADT, viewers side with the villain. The success of crime shows can be explained with the help of the disposition theory developed by Zillmann and Cantor in 1972. They suggested that media entertainment programs portray good characters as heroes or winners and bad characters as villains or losers, and the viewer's support of either character contributes to their enjoyment of the televised entertainment. In police factual documentaries, police are almost always seen to be the good guys; therefore, this positive association with police gives support to police agencies to continue their collaboration in the making of such programs. As noted by several researchers (e.g., Graber, 1980; Oliver, 1994; Kooistra, Mohony and Westervelt, 1998; Fishman, 1999), 'media coverage of police and policing activities tends to be overwhelmingly pro-police and deceptively positive' (Soulliere, 2004, p. 217). In NSW, a program called *RBT* is regularly screened on Channel 9, a free-to-air network. The show's principle is to detect, catch and convict drink drivers. The effect of alcohol on people who appear in the show tends to add to the viewer's enjoyment. The driver often provides the viewer with a back story, which may be an emotional appeal for leniency. In these circumstances, the ADT may swing in favour of the bad character and, as the digital display that will project the blood alcohol reading quickly ticks over in the corner of the screen, the viewer suddenly and unexpectedly finds themselves calling in favour of the villain, willing them to pass the test. This is all part of the enjoyment of television, as identified in the six principles of the ADT: enjoyment, emotional response, feelings about characters, disposition

towards characters, seeking justice and individual difference based on past experience (Raney, 2006).

As previously claimed, entertainment and information are inter-related in factual productions. Producers are keen to find and insert 'characters' into police factual documentaries, and then to keep using the same characters regularly in the production. Police officers, by nature, tend to be robust, stanch observers who appear to be inflexible when upholding their lawful duties; however, this may have changed in today's society as a result of the social element of human nature creeping in and creating more character-driven personalities within policing. This has created an opportunity for producers to seek out officers who display character and personality, thereby making the program more entertaining. The ADT suggests that viewers have a direct association with characters, and regardless of whether they are good or bad characters, the correlation remains.

In 1996, Zillmann presented another model of the ADT that asserted seven connections that a viewer makes with an on-screen character. They are perception, moral judgment of the situation, affective disposition, apprehension, assessment, response and moral judgment of the outcome. This model represents a good opportunity for police media units to evaluate viewer response to police action, as it can pinpoint where connections are gained and lost in support of police action. It is not directly tied to police perception, but is associated with the evaluation of police work and its link with entertainment in the presentation of factual television programs.

Public Perceptions of Police

Little research has previously been conducted on the topic of police as active participants in television shows, or on any area of police factual documentaries. In fact, Stephenson (2015) advised that 'there is no published research that specifically focuses on this topic' (p. 1). To support the assessment that it is difficult to find research pertaining to police observational documentaries, Gaynor (2012) stated that 'there is little extant literature dealing explicitly with the topic of how a filmmaker assesses the constituent elements of access implicit when working in the observational and participatory modes' (p. 12). Nash (2009) expressed a similar view, suggesting that 'almost nothing is known about how the participant experiences the process of

documentary production and screening' (p. 6). Stephenson (2015) noted that, 'in previous studies (Palmer, 1998; Perlmutter, 2000), exploring police officer attitudes to police in cop shows, demonstrates a tendency to focus on and criticise inaccuracies relating to procedure and technologies' (p. 1). The main problem with these studies is that they pertain to crime shows in general—most likely fictional representations—and not factual programs in particular. It is accepted that there will always be a level of inaccuracy in drama and fictional shows because getting technique right is not a priority for the storyline, whereas factual documentaries have an onus of responsibility to ensure that all depictions are factually correct. Leishman and Mason (2003) noted that with the increased professionalisation of police media officials, agencies like the NSWPF now employ staff who can provide expert operational advice to producers, therefore contributing to a more accurate portrayal of police in factual documentaries. Some policing jurisdictions in Australia, and certainly in NSW, provide this assistance in a 'fee for service' capacity; thus, there is a return on investment to the taxpayer.

The plethora of information available about public perceptions of police television shows is wide and all-encompassing. Researchers agree that these television shows, regardless of genre, create a sense of false expectations among viewers. These expectations were further evidenced when police themselves failed to realise the actual capacity of police. Perlmutter (2000) showed that even police as viewers had these same expectations of their colleagues and the capabilities that could be delivered in day-to-day police work. This later became known as the 'CSI effect',[15] whereby the magic of television creates false expectations of police investigations, especially in regard to forensic evidence, testing and technology.

Huey (2010) suggested that while many studies have been undertaken about cop shows and public perceptions of police officers based on television portrayals, no such research has been undertaken via an empirical study on how police view themselves on television and whether they believe it has any effect on public perceptions. The lack of available material on this subject therefore supports the uniqueness of the study area

[15] The CSI effect refers to the television show *CSI*, which is a fictional production based on court cases whereby forensic science capabilities are the major factor assisting investigators in solving major crimes. The show became so popular in Australia that it influenced school leavers to study forensic science and apply for highly sought-after positions in police forensic units. Additionally, a drawcard for the production was its ability to convince the viewer that the science used on television was real; even police as viewers of the production believed that all forensic units had the same capacity to solve crimes in the same way. This was coined the 'CSI effect'.

chosen for this thesis. It is equally important to recognise that the manner in which police are depicted in factual television has major implications for police and public relations. Portrayals of police in factual documentaries are almost always positive. Police engagement in the positive perception of police and police work is an effective public relation's strategy. It is this positive image that police organisations are keen to overexpose, while at the same time delivering educational messages to the community, such as warnings about anti-social behaviour and the consequences of their actions.

As other researchers have commented, the media does not just play a reporting role, but also collaborates in the making of television. Television executives play a crucial role in shaping how the public understands police work. The more that people talk about these shows, the more that police believe that the public is thinking about crime. A recent example can be seen in NSW, Australia, where the number of drivers caught drink driving is decreasing, even though the number of drivers being tested is increasing. The increased programming of crime television brought about a new appetite for the public to see behind the front counter of police work. It lifted the veil of secrecy, and the more the public watched these programs, the more their fascination grew. Of particular interest is the growth in public participation—that is, a desire to be a participant in a crime show. In Australia, the Channel 9 series *RBT* (Random Breath Testing) is one such example, with people playing to the cameras, seeking an audience and actively participating on camera. The viewer's voyeurism relates not just to the police at work, but also the entertainment value in watching the interaction between the public and the police. These carefully constructed images of drink drivers are purposefully chosen to provide entertainment to the viewer. An additional attraction of this show to consumers is that they may identify someone they know; thus, it provides a personal connection or attachment to a program. Participants in the Channel 10 series *Gogglebox*[16] expressed dissatisfaction with the *RBT* show in regard to the disproportionate rates of conviction and disparities in punishments for the same or equal offences. As discussed earlier, these public comments encourage people to talk and think, which in turn brings about changes to laws, attitudes and perceptions. These

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[16] The concept of *Gogglebox Australia* is based on the 2013 British reality show *Gogglebox*, in which people watch and comment on the week's popular television shows and films in their own homes. Producers chose 10 households, featuring 'a cross-section of modern Australian society, from larrikins to gays, from migrant families to battlers, yuppies and empty-nesters', to discuss the shows. The cast are filmed with remote-controlled cameras, which are operated by the crew in other parts of the house (Wikipedia).

types of public comments serve as free educational messages that are delivered to the public via this type of programming. Another example of how police achieve results is via collaboration.

Skolnick and McCoy (1984) explained that police are expected to derive their authority from public confidence, and therefore 'the public will hold police accountable for its actions' (pp. 523–528). Further, the police media play a crucial role in initiating media management for a range of policing issues to ensure the police organisation is credible and legitimate. Other researchers in this field have suggested that a reciprocal relationship exists between news media personnel and the police. Many have suggested that police and the media engage in a mutually beneficial relationship in which the media needs the police to provide them with reliable sources of crime information in a timely manner, while police have a vested interest in maintaining a positive public image and require active assistance from media outlets to disseminate information (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1989; Fishman, 1981; Hall et al., 1978). A 2014 study by Lee and McGovern into public perceptions within the NSWPF focused on their participation in observational documentaries. They aimed to establish whether viewers had a more positive perception of police than those who did not watch the programs. The results were extensive but conclusive, and indicated that the public viewed the police as honest, trustworthy and hardworking, noting that the work of police was tough. Viewers thought the constructed images represented an accurate version of policing, and the researchers noted that observational documentaries provide agencies with the opportunity to appear organised, transparent and procedurally and ethically fair and human. In a final summary, they acknowledged that although the police maintained full rights to veto any negative images captured during filming, the formal review process was rarely enacted, suggesting that the cooperative processes undertaken in the making of these productions was a collaborative and mutually beneficial experience.

Stephenson (2015) explained that the body of research exploring police attitudes to their mediated selves is not large, and much of it is not particularly instructive in regard to the direction of influence of police performance. Maurantonio (2012) observed that police themselves are 'one of the most understudied populations when addressing questions of media influence' (p. 6). One of the earliest examples is a view offered in a study by Arcuri (1977), who suggested that the value of researching the topic lies in

the comments offered by the participants rather than survey data provided in reply to the fixed response questions. The research conducted for this study was no different. That said, few researchers have purposefully explored their thoughts on television's role in legitimating the mythology of the police.

The genre of reality television has been researched at great length. Khitrov's (2015) study of public perceptions of police television shows identified many inaccuracies in the depiction of police and police work, thereby creating a view that some so-called police observational documentaries were, in fact, a hybrid version of reality television. Fishman (1998) found that factual television has a way of influencing the way the audience views themselves and society. He stated that 'stories have a tremendous potential to reinforce a moral communities' internal solidarity' (Fishman, 1998, p. 283).

The Presence of Blurring in Factual Television Programs

One of the biggest dilemmas related to factual documentaries is the moral issues that are raised when viewing people during tough, somewhat personal, times. With more crime shows on television—particularly unfavourable representations of people—the ability to obtain consent is increasingly difficult. To combat this, producers appear to be increasingly adopting the capacity to blur participants. Biressi and Nunn (2005) noted that 'new reality genres of crime and emergency services programming since the 1990's blur the boundaries between the public and private sphere, amalgamating the primary aims to both inform and entertain' (pp. 120–121).

Similarly, Fishman and Cavender (1998) recognised that 'television reality programs are especially hard to categorise because they blur the line between news and entertainment: some even blur the line between fact and fiction' (p. 3). Jermyn (2007, p. 178) explained that reality television has increasingly blurred the boundaries. The reality television audience sees the genre as continually under construction and negotiation, and this is most evident in real crime television.

The blurring of the lines between information and entertainment is often seen as a way to boost ratings. Infotainment is exciting, interesting and fun, whereas information may be boring. As noted by Fishman and Cavender (1998), 'television reality programs are especially hard to categorise because they blur the line between news

and entertainment' (p. 3). With the continued steady rise in the number of factual programs, the blurred lines are increasingly obvious and can probably be attributed to seeking a boost in ratings, or as a way of making similar types of shows different— again, for the purpose of seeking an increase in ratings.

Dovey (2000), Corner (2001) and Jermyn (2007) agreed that in the genre of reality television, there continues to be a blurring of the traditional format and generic distinctions within the function of the genre. They identified the blurring of the boundaries to be most evident in real crime television.

The Question of Ethics in Television Viewing

One common issue debated in many online discussions regarding police observational documentaries regards the ethics of watching people's private lives on television. Hill (2005, p. 133) briefly touched on aspects of privacy issues in the making of factual documentaries but offered little discussion beyond commenting on those who were willing participants versus the public's right to know. Garland (1991) referred to crime television as 'public hangings'. This refers to the naming, shaming and identification of persons who are still awaiting court. The issue of *sub-judice* is now often part of police contractual agreements with producers. This means that, in the collaboration of factual productions, nothing can be aired until all court matters are finalised and appeals periods concluded.

With the ever-changing format of reality television and the endless supply of products that fit within the subgenre, it may be time for a more complex investigation into the ethics of screening private trauma for public viewing. Piper (2006) stated that 'a vigorous exchange of academic views on the "radical" moral implications of reality TV might yet enlarge this debate beyond its present boundaries' (p. 138). It is an interesting viewpoint for contention, as factual documentaries often show people during vulnerable times, which further adds to the viewer's voyeurism. Further, with the continued reinvention of the reality television format, many areas that were previously considered taboo have now been screened on television. This raises the question of whether there is a place for ethics in this format or whether it is simply the case that moral and taste boundaries are now unclear. Nash (2009) noted that 'as a fuller picture of the relationship between filmmaker and participant emerges, we will

begin to have a stronger foundation on which to base ethical codes and principles for documentary practice' (p. 10).

The CSI Effect

In the early 2000s, crime shows were plentiful on television. Some were reality television programs, while others were dramas, miniseries, factual documentaries, movies and true crime shows. A 2006 Neilson rating of the US market found that five of the 10 most watched television programs in one week were a type of crime show. This showed that more than 100 million viewers watched a crime show in that particular week.

The influence of police-style television shows on viewers is most evident in the US forensic investigation show *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*. At its height, the show reached a worldwide audience of 83.9 million viewers,[17] making it the most watched program on the planet. The show commanded substantial revenue: a 30-second commercial was reported to cost approximately US$262,600.[18] In contrast, statistics show that the average cost of the same commercial in 2019 during the same prime-time slot was around US$100,000.[19] CSI turned the otherwise boring examination of forensic evidence into a 'sexy' occupation, and the producers later created spin-off television products. The program was so popular that it was written about in a *Time* article on 'how science solves crimes' (Kluger, 2002). Kluger raised the possibility that television shows like *CSI* were having an effect on, and casting doubt within, courtrooms. The article suggested that viewers of a crime show had an expectation that actual scientific police had access to the same forensic technology that was being used to solve crimes in these television shows. As a direct result of the article, the term 'CSI effect' was picked up and used extensively by the mass media to question public perceptions of crime scene evidence and forensic testing capability and admissibility,

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[15] According to ratings firm Eurodata TV Worldwide, which listed the highest ratings worldwide for 2007, *CSI: Las Vegas* drew 83.9 million viewers, beating sequel show *CSI: Miami* and *House* as the world's most popular television drama series (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2008). *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* first screened on television in the US on 6 October 2000 and soon after became the most popular show on television in the US. (The Olympic Games were being held in Sydney at that time, and television ratings for Australia show that it was the highest-rated event of the time. The *CSI* show boomed in Australia when it screened in 2002.)

[18] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CSI:_Crime_Scene_Investigation

[19] In 2019, a 30-second commercial to be aired during TV programming in the US cost an average of US$104,700, down by roughly US$20,000 compared with 2014.
https://www.statista.com/statistics/302200/primetime-tv-cost-commercial-usa/

along with the effect of the production on its global audience, both as viewers and jurors. The CSI effect has been widely reported, with some suggesting that (some) jurors had an expectation that every crime was examined in detail (as is done on the show), and that forensic evidence and forensic technology was readily available for all crimes and in all regions throughout the world. Conversely, those in the legal profession believed that a direct result of the CSI effect was the belief that jurors would not convict defendants, or would find them not guilty, in the absence of forensic evidence. Many researchers seem to agree that these types of reality crime programs create unrealistic expectations of forensic capability in the mind of the viewer. Podlas (2006) suggested that trying to prove or disprove the existence of the CSI effect enabled other unintended consequences of the research to come to the forefront, such as underestimating the ability of jurors to distinguish made-up images from reality. However, the producers of the show freely admitted to creating machines and computers that were colourful and that emitted strange sounds to make the show more interesting. This is the unreality of reality television whereby, in less than an hour, viewers are taken from crime to capture.

There is plausible evidence to support the theory that people accept forensic evidence as legitimate based on their 'expert opinion' of what they have learnt from crime television shows. However, other studies have debunked this theory. Criminologists Sheldon et al. (2006) conducted numerous studies on the CSI effect with a focus on different outcomes, such as whether the program influenced the juror (as a viewer of the program) to accept or dismiss scientific evidence, conviction propensity due to forensic evidence, the juror's 'expert opinion' of forensic capability as a program viewer, and whether conviction rates changed in the absence of forensic evidence. In the study, they surveyed more than 1,000 jurors pre- and post-jury duty. An outcome of the study suggested that CSI viewers had higher expectations and demands for scientific examinations of evidence based on the crime type. Additionally, the authors found that jurors were more likely to find the defendant guilty if the victims and witnesses gave evidence in court, except in rape cases. One constant stood out for the researchers: that the more frequently jurors watched a crime program, the more accurate they understood the program to be. This suggests that television was becoming the reality, and this became the case for both the public and for police as viewers of the program.

It has been suggested that during the 1950s and 1960s, similar concerns were raised with the *Perry Mason* show in regard to how Mason, as a defence attorney, could always draw out confessions during courtroom proceedings. In the 1990s, some professed that *LA Law* glamorised the legal profession, and others asserted that talk show hosts like Oprah Winfrey influenced people to become sympathisers to certain causes.

Regardless of whether the CSI effect exists, one thing is clear: these types of shows affect public perceptions of police. As evidenced in the study for this thesis on factual crime shows, police strongly expressed dissatisfaction in the way their work was portrayed on television. Similarly, Jones (2003, p.3) reminds us 'what television presents isn't always true to life'. The reality genre of programming is to make television shows interesting even in observational documentaries there is a clear omission of the mundane and routine police work to ensure viewers are never bored. The reality of police factual productions is that they are first and foremost a television show made for entertainment, and with short time slots, productions are unlikely to show the banal work police more regularly perform.

What has become clearer is the positive effect these crime shows have had on forensic recruitment. The NSWPF saw its government of the day provide a large amount of funding to increase forensic capability. This enabled the NSWPF to build new forensic labs equipped with the latest technology and employ dozens of highly skilled scientists and doctors, most of whom were female and seeking to be like their television role models/*CSI* counterparts. Although the trend continues today, 20 years after *CSI* and other crime shows burst onto our television screens, the increase in robotic technology has decreased the recruitment of people.

In summary, although the CSI effect has been widely researched and discussed, its existence remains inconclusive. There is evidence to suggest that it may occasionally exist in some people, but more widely, it cannot be proven as fact. Of the many studies undertaken in this field, there is a suggestion that the viewer has become more educated in the type of testing of forensic evidence; however, there can be no claim that viewing crime shows like CSI has a negative effect on jury verdicts (Tyler, 2006).

Conclusion

It is an irrefutable truth that most people gain their knowledge about policing from some form of media (Dowler, 2003). For many people, the media shapes their beliefs, attitudes and perceptions. Researchers have explained that the majority of public knowledge about crime and justice is derived from the media (Dowler, 2003; Roberts, 1992; Surette, 1998); thus, the audience has an expectation that their contact with the media will be truthful, honest and factual. Whether the person uses traditional, entertainment or social media,[20] all forms of media have a place in our life and, although public interest in crime is high, public knowledge is low. Therefore, the media will continue to play an important role as it teaches people of all ages about various issues. Television viewers who lack first-hand experience (Oliver & Armstrong, 1998; Leishman & Mason, 2003; Reiner, 1992; Surette, 1992) tune in to crime shows not only for entertainment, but also to fill a knowledge gap.

Maurantonio (2012) described police as 'one of the most understudied populations when addressing questions of media influence' (p. 6). This literature review highlighted this gap in available research on police and their mediated selves in observational documentaries. Past research into crime on television has focused on content, viewers' perceptions and decoding consumers' thoughts on specific programs. Many studies have previously been undertaken involving police officers and their perceptions of other police or actors on television; however, no single study is thought to have been undertaken that directly involves police officers who were filmed in the workplace for a factual production and interviewed regarding their presentation on television.

This chapter outlined the benefits of using the constructionist theory for this body of research. It explored Goffman's framework of presentation of self and how it is easily transferable to the role of the police officer, highlighting the 'fronts' created by officers and the routines they undertake in their duties by adopting pre-established patterns of performance. Of particular interest to this study, and reflected in the analysis of the results in Chapter 5, was that Goffman (1959) identified a *modus vivendi*—a way of

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[20] Traditional media includes radio, television and newspapers. Entertainment media includes a range of crime-related shows, such as factual, reality and documentary television shows, but it does not include the drama genre. Social media includes the internet and online socials.

life that officers in this study nominated as features both within themselves and within their police colleagues. This chapter touched on previous studies outlining the similarities and adaptability of their philosophies to the study of the social construction of police reality television programs. Importantly, the literature review revealed that considerable research has been undertaken in the area of *police work as entertainment*, but no prior studies have directly involved police as actor participants as a self-reflection exercise of their on-camera performance. This literature review revealed that much of the research conducted in this space is now out of date and not congruent with today's movement in police reality television programs, highlighting the need for new and updated studies to be undertaken.

The next chapter presents the second part of the literature review. It explores information captured from online sources—primarily from newspaper articles that recorded pertinent information relating to failures in factual documentaries. The chapter will explore four different police-style productions and discuss each program and what went wrong. Collectively, it will show that police factual documentaries cannot proceed without support from participant officers and the local community. There appears to be no available literature regarding problems arising from the making of police factual documentaries, or success stories. The case studies presented in the next chapter are derived from information obtained from online news sources. The case studies presented do not show police in a good light, and they raise the question of why police chiefs would allow film crews to accompany police on a 'ride-along'. However, there is much to learn from these stories of misadventure, including the ability to reassess current practices. These incidents build a report that, when combined with the findings arising from this study, sets out a number of recommendations on how to reformat police observational documentaries to better reflect crime and the community.

Chapter 3: Cop Shows and the Construction of Policing in Multimedia

The previous chapter explored the literature in the field of police reality television productions and their social constructions. It discussed visual criminology in media representations of police in factual programs and highlighted the theories arising from them. It concluded that no literature could be located on the topic of this research, thereby reinforcing the author's view that this study of police officers' personal views of their mediated selves in observational documentaries is the first of its kind. This chapter will explore online literature regarding police factual programs. These are important reports and documents that highlight problems identified with these types of television productions. Although newspaper reports are secondary sources of information, they often contain first-hand information that, upon further research, can be clarified and confirmed for accuracy. These are important areas to address because they are the genesis for this study.

Over the past 30 years, many new police observational documentaries have been produced for television, both in Australia and abroad, and screened to a worldwide viewing audience. However, not all of these shows have been successful, and there are many newspaper and online articles documenting how some of these productions have failed, as well as their negative effects on local communities. There are many lessons to be learned from where these productions went wrong. This chapter will present four factual policing programs as case studies of programs where major production issues arose, and it will discuss how police forces can learn from past mistakes and avoid them in the future.

Cops—US Production Series

Cops began filming its reality-style television show in the US in 1989. It was not the first police factual documentary, but it was the first of its kind for the reality television format. Using a construct called *cinéma vérité*, the production was filmed in a different style than previous, similar shows. The *Cops* production used the actor/officer to tell the story and therefore did not have a narrator or voiceover. True *cinéma vérité* does not require editing, and it uses hidden cameras as a way of capturing the actuality of a situation without first seeking consent. Most police factual documentaries are made

this way, although many rely on a narrator. *Cops* did not use hidden cameras; instead, the camera operator and sound engineer were clearly present on the scene, and filming is permissible in public places without consent. The legalities of filming are more complex in relation to the recording of private conversations and the publishing of people's images, both of which require consent. Thus, it is presumed that the participants gave their consent. Former reality television producer Dan Taberski (2019) researched the *Cops* production series and noted that:

> *one of our earliest discoveries was the remarkable level of control the police have over the content of the show. This arrangement is detailed in legal agreements between the producers and the police. In exchange for giving 'Cops' cameras access, the Police Department is provided episodes ahead of time to make 'any changes they deem necessary', according to the document.*

Given that the police department has the capacity to edit the production, the show does not really meet with the formula of *cinéma vérité* as the producers would lead us to believe. Thus, it is not very different to all of the other factual crimes shows currently being produced.

After its creation in 1989, *Cops* became popular with viewers. It was screened at a time when new types of programs were needed in the industry. A writers' strike stopped the production of many of the usual shows, and the creation of *Cops* filled the void. As previously acknowledged, factual documentaries are quick, easy and cheap to make and may be used as fillers in any timeslot. The pilot was made in Florida, and the production later moved to other cities in the US as requests from police departments wanting to participate made their way to the production house. The show was seen as a way to improve community relations and repair the damage to the brand caused by other types of policing problems that had occurred, such as the 1991 brutal assault by police upon Rodney King in LA. Several police departments in the US signed up for the show, believing it was a way to improve their image within the community it served. However, more recently, other police jurisdictions, such as Spokane, Washington; Kalamazoo, Michigan (Devereaux, 2019); and Ingham County, Michigan (Kedziorek, 2019), voted to cancel the planned filming of the show. The sheriff of Ingham County stated that many community members 'expressed concerns with memorializing someone's worst day for entertainment purposes' (Kedziorek, 2019). Police factual documentaries are regularly touted to showcase policing;

however, although the *Cops* production regularly screens arrests, search warrants and takedowns, it does not actually show the community relations side of policing.

Regardless of how popular the production has been since its inception; one event stands out as a major flaw in how the show is produced. That incident was catalyst for this doctoral study.

On 26 August 2014, Mr Bryce Dion, the sound recordist on *Cops*, was fatally shot by police during the filming of the show. The film crew were following police from Omaha, Nebraska, when they responded to an armed robbery in progress at Wendy's, a fast-food outlet. This single event caused the author to reflect on current work practices while questioning why a film crew was allowed so close to the action.

Langley Productions, the company that owns, makes and produces *Cops*, has a filming agreement in which they seek a formal arrangement with local mayors to film their production in a particular city in the US for a period of three months from the execution date on the agreement. On this occasion, the agreement was signed by the Mayor of Omaha on 22 May 2014. Of added note is that the filming agreement expired several days before Mr Dion was killed. The agreement is three pages in length and covers five areas: Terms of Agreement, Access, Producers' Obligations, Department Review and Indemnification Insurance. At best, the document appears to be very general in nature. It omits vital information and significantly lacks legal detail. It omits dates, background checks, privacy information, consents and acknowledgement of relevant rules of law and policies that are required to be observed during the filming and production of such events. In addition, it provides no supporting risk assessments. The contract essentially indicates that the city gives Langley Productions full access to the police building and employees for up to three months. On a positive note, it gives the police the right to review the episodes; surprisingly, it states 'that in a case where an arrest has been made, LP shall not air any part of the investigation before the criminal suspect has had his/her preliminary hearing'. This is interesting because almost every incident captured on *Cops* is an arrest. Additionally, no reference is made to what is legally permissible. It is evident that the contract was written on behalf of Langley Productions and is a template document provided to all police departments or cities to sign to authorise their participation in the show. The document affords little protection to either party and is void of specific and detailed information regarding requirements

to be observed by the production company. A robust document protects all parties, although it may also inhibit the film-maker and constrain their movements and ability to film and publish anything they want. Producers are not keen to sign up to such stringent rules but, as shown above, when things go wrong, they go very wrong.

Contracts made by the NSWPF make specific reference to the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act* and the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act* in terms of capturing and publishing any personal information disclosed to police or held on the police computer system—for example, information relative to a person having an infectious disease. Additionally, the NSWPF contract places obligations on the company as a reminder of what it may legally film and what it may not film, and provides information regarding consent and the filming of children (aged under 16) and young persons (aged 16–18). Further, the contract discusses the formal review process, police rights to footage for legal purposes, acknowledgement of participation in credits, use of the footage by the NSWPF for educational purposes, access to confidential information, dispute resolution, termination of contract, fees and expenses, governing laws and adherence to police policies. The contract is 19 pages long and is accompanied by a risk assessment and a 32-page policy document outlining the film crew's obligations. This is a robust document to ensure the protection of all parties, including the community and those who are arrested. In comparison, and to prevent sub-judice, unlike the *Cops* production, no productions made with the NSWPF can be screened on television until the entire court matter has been finalised and the 28-day appeal period has concluded; to do so could jeopardise the matter before the court and may sway a jury member in their decision-making.

Returning now to the incident involving the sound engineer, given the absence of risk assessments and policy guidelines, the agreement essentially allowed the film crew to accompany the police to any incident they attended. In the absence of a PFS for direction, the film crew followed the police everywhere to ensure they never missed a beat. In this instance, they knew they were going to an armed robbery. The store had front and side floor-to-ceiling glass windows that allowed a clear view inside, and the officers were wearing microphones. There was no need for the cameraman or sound engineer to enter the store, or for them to be present inside the crime scene, especially when an armed offender was still there. They could have easily filmed from outside the store, and the sound would still have recorded effectively. In fact, not only would

it have been safer to do so, but the cameraman would have captured the entire incident. Instead, after entering the restaurant, he immediately took cover under a dining room table as police and the offender began to exchange fire. This resulted in very little activity being captured on camera. The sound engineer was not moving at the same pace as everyone else because of his bulky equipment. As a result, as the offender ran towards the door to escape, the sound engineer arrived to enter the store at the same time; consequently, he was accidentally shot by police and died from his injuries. The offender was also shot and killed. Had the sound engineer stayed outside the boundary walls of the shop, he would almost certainly have captured the sound and would most likely still be alive today.

It is easy to review an incident after the fact and provide critical analysis; however, the work practices undertaken by *Cops* employees placed them in an unnecessarily risky situation that could have been avoided by changing how they worked and regularly conducting risk assessments based on regular events they attended. After this incident, the US Department of Labor evaluated the show's production practices, with surprising results. In a document[21] dated 13 February 2015, an investigator identified only six work practices that required some type of remedial action. To ensure the reader has a full understanding of the inadequacy of this assessment, each recommendation is outlined below:

- Instruct and train employees on how to orient their bodies so their ballistic vests provide maximum protection when they come under fire.
- Instruct and train employees on how to take cover in situations where gunfire is occurring or can be reasonably anticipated to occur.
- Instruct and train employees on how to film and record from a distance in situations where gunfire is occurring or can be reasonably anticipated to occur.
- Instruct and train employees to stay behind police officers, and if an employee gets out of position, they must retreat to a place of safety rather than attempting to regain a position to film or record sound.
- Instruct and train employees not to accompany law enforcement into crime scenes when the camera crew know in advance that there is a likelihood that

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[21] Available at:
https://www.osha.gov/ooc/citations/Langley_Productions_992449_0213_15.pdf

gunfire will be exchanged, including scenes of armed robbery or where suspects are brandishing, or are reported to be brandishing, weapons.

- Remove bonus incentives that may encourage employees to take risks to obtain attention-grabbing or action-packed stories.

What immediately becomes apparent is a lack of risk assessment. There appears to be no set standards requiring compliance by the film crew and, given that they are not accompanied by a PFS, the production of *Cops* appears, at best, to be ad-hoc and a type of 'make it up as it happens' work environment.

The *Cops* production is the longest-running crime reality show on television and is very popular, having achieved international success. However, the major incident described above proves that their work practices require a significant overhaul. It is not sufficient to boast how popular a show is if employees die in the making of *police work as entertainment.*

The First 48—US Production Series

The premise of *The First 48* program was for production crews to follow police as they responded to and investigated a reported homicide. Filming began in 2004, and the show was initially made in Memphis, where, according to the Memphis Crime Commission, homicide rates were approximately 16 per 100,000 people in the population—significantly higher than the US average of 5 per 100,000 people. The solved rate of homicides in Memphis was around 44%, which was good (statistically) for the program because only solved murders were put to air. Four years later, the City of Memphis discontinued its filming agreement for two main reasons: the perceived negative effect on tourism and the town generally, as the production's only aspect was that of murder; and the detectives were suffering filming fatigue and needed a break. These reasons are very common negative aspects of factual programs. As noted in this chapter, where programs focus only on one area, the production is at risk of community rejection, and this should be a risk mitigation strategy built into the pre-production of any crime show. *The First 48* prided itself on showcasing the tenacity of detectives in solving murders. The obvious problems identified with the show are that it is only filmed in one city (Memphis), it only filmed the most serious type of crime (murder) and one episode was screened every week. This naturally imparted to the viewer that

Memphis is not a safe place. The show became a problem for the city, which was concerned about the negative effect the program might have on the city's image and, in turn, on tourism. Memphis is a well-known tourist destination and the home of the blues, Elvis Presley, Beale Street and barbeque-style food. It is a drawcard for tourists both locally and abroad, and compromising the income that tourists bring to the area could have a major economic effect on the town. In 2008, the city withdrew its support for the program and discontinued filming.

The show relocated to Miami, Florida, and again had problems. A double murder took place in November 2009, and the police investigation was filmed for the show. Taiwan Smart, a suspect, was arrested and detained by police, despite there being no available evidence to tie him to the murder, other than his version of events putting him at the scene. Smart was determined to prove his innocence and managed to do so by undertaking a polygraph test and nominating an inmate who had apparently confessed to the crime. Smart's lawyer claimed that detectives merely wanted to make an arrest so they could look good on *The First 48*. The charges were dropped and Smart was released from prison after being incarcerated for 19 months. He was awarded US$1.3 million in damages, although further litigation is pending against the police and the television crew for allegedly illegally filming a crime scene. Other online articles[22]

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[22] 'On November 18, 2009, 21-year-old Taiwan Smart of Miami was charged with two counts of second-degree murder of his two roommates in Little Haiti. His story aired later as an episode titled "Inside Job". Evidence later established that police made important mistakes in their investigation. Additionally, *The First 48* misrepresented a key witness' statement on the program. Smart was released in June 2011 and has since sued the city of Miami for false imprisonment. The episode, which originally aired on July 15, 2010, continues to air without correction. In 2014, the city of Miami announced that it would be ending its contract with A&E, ending any future productions of *The First 48*. On May 16, 2010, 7-year-old Aiyana Jones of Detroit was shot and killed during a "special weapons and tactics" (SWAT) raid that was recorded by *The First 48* cameras. Detroit SWAT unit raided the duplex while searching for a homicide suspect. On October 5, 2011, prosecutors charged the Detroit police officer with the involuntary manslaughter of Jones. Allison Howard, an A&E Television Network camera operator filming that night, was charged with perjury and obstruction of justice after lying under oath. She pleaded no contest to obstruction of justice and was sentenced to two years of probation. On December 16, 2015, Shawn Peterson pled guilty to manslaughter for the triple murder of his ex-girlfriend, Christine George, her son, Leonard and her daughter, Trisa in the Gentilly neighbourhood of New Orleans. Peterson's defence attorneys argued that producers from *The First 48* withheld video evidence that could have exonerated their client. A judge rejected the motion but conceded that the show did complicate the case. In 2016, the city of New Orleans announced that it would be ending its contract with A&E, ending any future productions of *The First 48* or *Nightwatch,* another A&E show set in New Orleans. The show's unprecedented access to police departments has generated some controversy because such access is not typically given to traditional local news media. Moreover, the show has been criticized for putting witnesses in danger by revealing their faces and their voices on a nationally televised program and for not being sensitive to what might happen to them in the form of retaliation. In response to such criticism, witnesses often ask producers to have their faces blurred out and voices changed or to speak off camera'. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_First_48

have criticised the police for agreeing to participate in the production because it explains the *modus operandi* of police investigations to the viewer. As previously discussed in the literature review, the 'backstage' area of policing opens others to a world they may never have seen before, and this includes criminals. Critics claim that too much can be learnt from viewing these programs, making it more difficult to catch criminals and convict them in court. Unlike the theory surrounding the CSI effect, where jurors are thought to become influenced by police programs, agreements between police and producers need to contain risk-mitigating strategies to protect themselves, their work and the community via strong contractual agreements that give police departments full rights to veto. A handful of other major issues have arisen from this film production, including the accidental shooting death of a 7-year-old child in Detroit.[23] After filming in Miami concluded, the team moved to Detroit. In 2010, the film crew followed a SWAT team attempting to arrest a murder suspect. Police threw a 'flash-bang grenade' into the front window of the premises before making entry into the house. Upon entry, one officer accidently discharged his firearm, killing a child who was asleep on the lounge at the time. The suspect was not arrested because police entered the wrong house; the suspect apparently resided in the upstairs section of the building. The officer was charged, and there have been lengthy court proceedings against him, the film producers and the city. A newspaper report about the incident said, 'that incident highlighted concerns about whether TV cameras influence police behavior, perhaps encouraging showboating'. Of relevance to this study is a question asked by the *New York Times*:[24] 'Does the presence of TV crews affect how well police officers do their jobs?' These matters highlight a common thread and raise the question of whether police 'act up' to the camera to make their story look good for television. In another story filmed for *The First 48*, a person charged with murder was before the court. During her ruling, the presiding judge questioned the capacity of police to do

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[23] 'Detroit—The house where Aiyana Stanley-Jones lived on the East Side here is quiet now, a makeshift memorial of teddy bears and balloons on the porch where the police lobbed a stun grenade through the front window last Sunday. They were looking for a 34-year-old homicide suspect. But Aiyana, 7, asleep for the night on a sofa under the window, died from a bullet to the neck. The Detroit police were being shadowed by a camera crew from a reality television show, "The First 48", on the A&E cable network'. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/22/us/22detroit.html

[24] 'Beyond Detroit, the incident is raising a larger question in this age of reality television: Does the presence of TV crews affect how well police officers do their jobs? "Those cameras can influence the behaviour of what's already a very dangerous and unpredictable job", said Brian Willingham, a laid-off Flint, Mich., police officer and author of "Soul of a Black Cop"'. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/22/us/22detroit.html

their jobs without being influenced by the presence of television cameras.[25] The judge highlighted comments made in the testimony of a Miami detective, who admitted that his 'participation in the television show required him to "play act" and create false scenes for the purpose of entertainment'. The background research for this study asks this question of police/actors in factual productions, and there is somewhat of an agreement among those surveyed. Although they did not admit to acting for the camera, they agreed that they tried their best to deliver a good story for television.

Another more serious and critical issue is that of 'sub-judice'—that is, allowing due process for matters before the court and providing a fair trial for those involved. Other researchers have provided commentary on this matter and raised concerns regarding the screening of major investigations on television before matters have been adjudicated by the courts:

> *Episodes air before convictions are secured, and defence attorneys now argue the entertainment show is trampling on defendants' constitutional rights. While the show explicitly states defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty, the access and what is aired on national TV prior to trial raises serious questions about the show's presence in the Port City. 'Some of what they hear may not be admissible in court. Some of what they hear may not be relevant at all to the case', said defence attorney Jason Darley. 'If people make up their minds beforehand, it can be problematic.*[26]

Producers have defended their actions by explaining that courts ensure that jury members are carefully selected, and those who watched the episode concerned are asked not to sit. However, one would question whether this is a sufficient screening process. How does the televised screening of a murder investigation affect the judicial process? What processes are undertaken to protect witnesses? What benefits, if any, are provided to the police or the community in screening an entire murder investigation before the matter has been heard and determined by the court? These questions would

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[25] 'Last year (2012), Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Yvonne Colodny threw out a police statement by Andrew Cummings, charged in 2008 with murdering his lover inside an Upper Eastside condo. After viewing The First 48 episode, Colodny ruled that Cummings had been "illegally detained" before waiving his right to remain silent. The judge was concerned after hearing the testimony of Miami Detective Fernando Bosch, who admitted that his "participation in the television show required him to 'play act' and create false scenes for the purpose of entertainment", according to her ruling'. Available at: https://www.miamiherald.com/entertainment/article1951671.html

[26] On 9th January 2020, a First 48 episode featured Frederick Knight, Jr. 18 days before he was set to go on trial in Mobile for murder. The show makes it appear the case is airtight. Attorney Chase Dearman represents Knight and has major issues with how his client was portrayed on national television. Available at: https://mynbc15.com/news/reality-check/innocent-until-proven-guiltyor-not

preclude this production from being made in NSW, highlighting the fact that the city officials who authorised the production of the program neglected to consider that police investigators are not always right.

Today, media has emerged as an almighty and knowledgeable institution. It is a powerful medium of communication between the world and the public, but has increasingly assumed the role of a watchdog of the interests of the people. That said, *The First 48* enjoyed massive viewer ratings; at its height, 2.4 million viewers tuned in, making it, at one point, the most popular factual program on US television. The high ratings would undoubtedly have been reflected in the sale of the show both domestically and internationally. Interestingly, but not uncommon in reality television, the producers did not pay a 'fee for service' to the city or the police department, and although they had a contract, it was not a financial one.

999: What's Your Emergency—UK Production Series

This UK-based production series began filming in 2011 in Blackpool, a popular beachside tourist town. The premise was to showcase emergency service workers as they tackled anti-social behaviour in the area. The episodes featured Blackpool after dark, with workers responding to overdoses and general bad behaviour. It did not highlight the area as a tourist destination, but instead focused heavily on alcohol-related crime. Suffice it to say, it did not favourably represent the community or the tourism for which it is well known. The show was criticised by the leader of the Blackpool Council because it was seen to be damaging the reputation of the resort area. Consequently, after holding discussions with council, police and local community members, the filming contract was withdrawn. Additionally, community leaders were angered when the production was scheduled to air immediately before the town's major tourism event, the Illumination Festival, was to begin. The festival is a drawcard for tourism in Blackpool, which relies heavily on the tourist trade. Another similar crime show, called *The Detectives*, also filmed an episode in the area, and only delved into major crime investigations. The producers of the program received backlash from the community when they proposed screening an episode featuring a Blackpool murder investigation immediately before Easter, another high tourist time for Blackpool. Prominent local business owners felt that it would deter families from holidaying in the area.

This highlights the necessity for all stakeholders involved in community filming programs to assess how a crime show may affect community relations in the area. Producers cannot think only of themselves and how they might make a crime show that focuses on the negative aspects of a town without giving due consideration to the after-effects of the production. While it could be perceived as interesting to the viewer and factual in its presentation, the damage that these types of productions can cause to a community (albeit unintentional) may be difficult to repair and, as shown here, without the full cooperation of all key players, the agreement may be withdrawn at any time.

Local police work is fundamentally a community relations role. It is important that police immerse themselves in the local community and be active participants in the development of the area. This can be done as much as an on-duty officer as it is done off duty. It is important for local police to know where and when crime occurs, just as it is important to know the local criminals. This sentiment is reflected in one of the Peelian principles: *The police are the community; the community are the police.*

The police will do everything in their power to protect their interests and will continue to present themselves as 'effective crime fighters and protectors of the community' (Christensen et al., 1982, pp. 228, 236). As shown in this case study example, it is imperative that the police and community work cohesively together and for the community. Police executives need to think more outwardly when committing to reality television projects; it is not just about media management—it is crucial for the community they police long after the project has finished.

Cop it Sweet—Australian Production Series

Made in 1992, this was the first factual production that the NSW Police Service engaged in to showcase the work of general duties police officers. Unfortunately, the representations of the police officers in this factual documentary were not good, and this in turn created a legacy of bad publicity and reputational damage that continued for many years.

The *Cop it Sweet* production was made for screening on ABC television, the national broadcast network. Central to the production was filming undertaken with general duties police officers in Redfern, a notorious suburb of Sydney. The residents of

Redfern were people of Aboriginal origin and socially disadvantaged people who occupied the many public housing high-rise estates. It was well known for crime and contained many 'no-go zones', and even some streets where police were not welcome.

Police who were featured on the show were representative of the culture of that time. This by no means excuses the behaviour of the on-camera officers; however, it illustrates what white Caucasian police officers were like in the early 1990s. They were offensive, rude, racist and hypocritical, which was counter to the behaviour expected of officers and their oath of office.

The production *Cop it Sweet* was the first time the NSWPF had partnered with a documentary-maker to film general duties police as they went about their working day. Unfortunately, hindsight shows that, while a senior commander gave approval for the production to take place, he may have neglected to anticipate the fallout that might occur. Therefore, no form of risk assessment took place before approval was given. The show had a disastrous effect on the NSWPF when it screened on television. It showed examples of differential and racist police targeting Aboriginal people in Redfern. The good reputation previously held by the NSWPF was immediately crushed, creating what we now know to be immense damage to public confidence in policing, which would take years to repair. While the new approach to a 'ride-along' has not been without its problems,[27] the potential for negative effects can be identified and managed from the outset.

The production managed to feature everything that goes against showcasing policework and that is regularly featured in police productions these days. *Cop it Sweet* serves as a visual reminder of neglected community relations and a failure of police media collaboration in the production process.

Many academics (Chan, 1997; Lee & McGovern, 2014) have conducted research and provided commentary on the program. It is important to acknowledge that much of what many constitute as problematic with the production was actually a reflection of the Australian culture at the time, as well as the well-entrenched culture within the NSWPF, neither of which is acceptable behaviour today. It was 11 years before the

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[27] NSWPF senior commanders were unimpressed with the amount of police methodology disclosed during the screening of the ABC *Drug Lords* program. As a consequence, local filming procedures were overhauled to exclude film crews' access during the police methodology process.

NSWPF would enter into another filming process. In the preceding years, the NSWPF dealt with its cultural problems, faced a Royal Commission into police corruption and established an FTVU for formalising guidelines and protocols for all participants to follow. Since that time, the FTVU has cooperated in the making of hundreds of productions, with only very minor infractions occurring. Having specialised police working within the unit allowed the team to become subject experts in their field to ensure productions are made without incident. Film crews did not ride in police cars like they did on *Cops*, because to do so would be a breach of the Safe Driver Policy. All film crew members were obligated to submit to background checks, and only those without incident were allowed to participate. Importantly, protocols were established in the formal review process to give the NSWPF full rights to veto, along with time periods with which to be provided final cuts for approval. Every NSW police officer who appeared on camera was sent a rough cut for review and comment, allowing them to actively participate in their own critique. None of these opportunities were available when *Cop it Sweet* was made and, if there was a contract in place allowing these types of vetting procedures to be conducted, then the program almost certainly would not have seen the light of day.

The partnering of police organisations with production companies and television networks represents a significant shift from those earlier days. The benefits of actively participating in the development and promotion of the police image cannot be understated. As demonstrated earlier, police agencies can vet, change and remove any image that they believe does not portray them in a good light. Viewers may not know that the reality of reality television is actually a construction of images; however, as demonstrated in these case studies, capturing policing via live (fly-on-the-wall) television presents too much risk.

Reality Television—Police Factual Documentaries

The complexity of studying film and television in police agencies is that one must acknowledge that the police are in the business of law enforcement. However, it is necessary to recognise that the public has a thirst to know what police do. Many in law enforcement have come to embrace multimedia and acknowledge the benefits it brings to policing; however, barriers still exist when it comes to infringing on the police operational environment.

As previously discussed, research shows that the general population has very little engagement with police and relies on the media to supply that information. We all share an understanding when we are all armed with the same information, and it is then that the public perception of police and policing may be assessed with more accuracy. Producers cannot simply show people what police do—they need to have an understanding of the task and why it is performed. Only then can police and the media set out to educate society. That said, these shows do not always depict the reality of the situation. While the show may be factually correct in that it contains information regarding policing activities, the final cut represents little reality of the actual police shift. This is due to the intrusive supervision of the 'actors' and heavy redaction of the rough cuts by police lawyers and the participants in formal review teams within police agencies.

As entertainment, Australian police shows have done quite well. Contemporary police television productions focus on stories that have a 'real-world' orientation to hold the viewer's interest via the plots, characters and situations. While the role of the media is important, its presence has a godlike role among television audiences, and it is important to recognise this fact. Media consumption can have both positive and negative effects on public perceptions of police effectiveness. Armed with this knowledge, police agencies can capitalise on this medium and essentially shape attitudes by influencing the media to provide a favourable view of police, policing activities and their engagement with the community. However, as Andersen (1994) noted, crime reality shows tend to focus on the 'grittier details of street life' (p. 8).

Factual police programs must be produced with a beginning, middle and an end, commonly known as the resolve. As Soulliere (2004, p. 216) observed, crime shows have an emphasis on the initial stages of the arrest, which she termed the 'front end'. However, this depiction is hardly avoidable when camera crews follow police during their shift. It is highly likely that film crews capture an arrest because they are usually present during the filming; however, they are equally absent in the following months or years as the investigation and court matter unfolds.

While reality television formats may change, one thing that police film agencies can be certain of is the continued developing interest in police work as television entertainment. Thus, police agencies must accept that there is a role for television in

their agencies, and both organisations should continue to negotiate and defend their boundaries in collaborating on the production of reality/crime television. An empirical study by Lam (cited in Robson & Silbey, 2012) found 'that television writers and producers are constantly … accommodating the demands of the various stakeholders as the production moves forward' (p. 64).

The author is uniquely placed within the policing field, having hands-on experience with police who participate in filming projects. This allowed her to tap into a range of research methods, such as qualitative and quantitative research, to collect as much information as is available to answer questions, which researchers have not been positioned to do previously. Nash (2009) explained that 'as a fuller picture of the relationship between filmmaker and participant emerges, we will begin to have a stronger foundation on which to base ethical codes and principles for documentary practice' (p. 10). In contrast to Australian programs, the presenters of *Crimewatch UK* commented that an 'enduring problem has been to ensure that our professional relationship with the police does not become so embracing that it puts in jeopardy the independence of the BBC' (Ross & Cook, 1987, cited in Schlesinger and Tumber, 1994, p. 115). They further explained that the BBC remained in charge of the show, and police were merely seen as guests. Their view of themselves did not go unnoticed. Woffinden (1989, cited in Jermyn, 2007) suggested that 'if a creditable organisation like the BBC will play these games, it gives the police a status and credibility that is phenomenal' (p. 33).

It is perhaps time for police agencies to reengineer their return on investment and start performing their own critical analysis of the shows they choose to collaborate on. It is more than just ratings and money at stake; it is the public purse, and the public deserves to be educated—not just entertained. Skolnick and McCoy (1984, p. 544) went further, suggesting that the media should be encouraged to engage in a careful analysis and review of trends and policies related to reality television programs. Certainly, an advantage to showcasing police factual television is that, with cooperation from police, the productions deliver factual events direct to the public, thereby allowing them to shape views and form opinions of police work.

Relationships: Police and the Media

The background, settings and history of television are widely documented both in print and electronic forms. Authors who have engaged in either using or producing documents as secondary sources on the topic of police and media relations have equally contributed to the subject area by raising thought-provoking views. Gaynor (2012, p. 12) raised the issue of 'the inhibiting processes by which police media branch officials interfere in their documentary making process', and stressed that the detailed and complex deed of agreements (contracts) added to the complexity of the filming process, making it significantly more difficult. These views have been expressed in several other research documents (Gaynor, 2012; Hill, 2005, 2007; Nash, 2009; Nichols, 1991). All of these subject areas are explored further in this chapter.

Central to the genre of policing reality programming is the relationship between police and production companies (Mason, 2002; Mawby, 2007 cited in Lee & McGovern, 2014, p. 148). There are many benefits for both parties. Lee and McGovern (2014) noted that police agencies are now desirous of being involved in the making of factual documentaries. Many police organisations now acknowledge the benefits of making factual television productions and willingly provide assistance to production companies in the making of these types of shows. Previously, police organisations were concerned about letting the public know too much about police work; however, modern collaborations have shown that these concerns may be overcome through the adoption of legal agreements setting out the obligations of both parties as stakeholders.

In any study of the police–television relationship, it is important for police agencies to establish what the benefits are to those production companies and associated networks. When the *Cops* program first started, police forces offered massive cooperation to seek self-promotion in the media (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1989 cited in Doyle, 2003, p. 31; Schlesinger & Tumber, 1994). Since that time, we have seen the continued rise of factual television. These productions are cheap to make, provide timeless quality and continue to be popular with the public. It is this fly-on-the-wall genre that continues to draw an audience.

Police shows are always under construction, and this is a new problem faced by producers working with crime shows. Producers often set about negotiating the way

to achieve their goal, but this new genre instils moral codes and legal parameters to work within.

Producers always pitch or sell their shows to police organisations under the guise that it will showcase great policing; however, it is perhaps time to consider a more robust return on investment by ensuring that these shows focus their attention on an educational setting, with a strong influence on material that educates the viewer. Participants of this study suggest that these types of shows should focus on engaging the viewer with stronger content, thereby allowing the viewer to perform some type of critical analysis. However, crime shows are usually pitched to the police media agency as a way of showcasing great police work. We have seen how these shows have a positive effect on how the public view police; however, it appears that police organisations are missing out on their fair share of the financial cut given their input into the creation of these productions.

Of course, when all is said and done, the aim of these shows is to make money. However, it is interesting to note that winning the ratings is less important than 'stealing' them from shows that are not expected to be beaten. This serves to lower their attractiveness via lower ratings. Thus, while the objective is to make money, there is also an aim to secure ratings because ratings attract advertising, which in turn generates dollars. We should not kid ourselves: the priority for producers is not to showcase great police work; simply put, it is business. It is cheap television, and police agencies worldwide are a catalyst for production agencies and a way for them to make quick money without any real effort. While we know that this voyeuristic type of television will not be popular forever, its continued growth over the past 30 years suggests that it is here to stay for a while.

Police organisations have a responsibility to ensure they protect their brand and people by always maintaining a positive image of their workforce. Police factual productions play a major role in ensuring that this positive image is continually rolled out. As Christensen et al. (1982) explained, 'the police will do everything in their power to protect their interests and will continue to present themselves as crime fighters and protectors of the community' (pp. 228–236). In actuality, factual programs are made from hundreds of hours of footage (rushes) that are edited to represent the finest version of events. This ensures that police look great, productive and efficient, and that

the show itself is entertaining and informative—a perfect collaboration of police and production working together to achieve a common goal.

Observing the Law

It is important for producers to remember that police work will always remain a priority. We must never allow the production to interfere with police work. There must always be rules to be followed, and the production must never cross the line of mistaking friendship as a partnership. For example, for a search warrant that is to be executed on private property, any filming collaboration does not extend any rights to the film crew to enter the private property; to do so may render the search illegal, not to mention the obvious breach of privacy. An example of breaching this trust and the law is outlined below.

In *Berger v Hamann*, CNN, pursuant to its agreement with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), accompanied government agents during a search for poisoned wildlife on the ranch of the suspect, Paul Berger. Both the government and the CNN agents used concealed audio and video devices during the operation. The tapes were shown in the CNN program *Earth Matters and Network Earth*. Berger filed a case against both CNN and the USFWS on the grounds of the Fourth Amendment and violation of federal wiretap laws. The appeals court dubbed CNN and the government agents as 'joint actors' and held them liable for the violation of Berger's rights. Much worse, and of greater relevance to the producer and the police, was the following remark of the court about the USFWS: 'the government officers planned and executed the search in a manner designed to enhance its entertainment rather than its law enforcement value' (Kirtley, 2000, p. 147).

An overarching responsibility of the media is to acquire information and content lawfully. In 1997, a US ABC Network program used a hidden camera to obtain footage inside a department store. As a consequence of airing the program, the store owners took the ABC Network to court and won. The judge said that 'the media must stay within the ambit of the law … the media has a right to bring news but must watch what they do and how they do it' (Kirtley, 2000, p. 153).

Winch (2000) revealed that the courts are increasingly frowning on the use of concealed devices and falsehoods, misrepresentations and trespass to capture

sensational footage. They recognise that such footage is linked more closely to Neilson ratings than to concern for public health. Hight (2001, p. 390) stated that reality television audiences are 'unthinking voyeurs, unwitting dupes of commercialist broadcasters in danger of mistaking reality TV programs for reality'.

Consent

Seeking consent can be the most difficult aspect of filming with police. The various legal methods for obtaining consent can be difficult to grasp, and knowing when a conversation is private or general banter is equally difficult to understand. What is in and what is out, in terms of the final cut, can lead to debates between police lawyers and production companies.

In Australia, factual crime shows are generally made with the understanding that, if something is filmed in a public place, it is fair game. However, it is interesting to read of a successful prosecution in the US against a production called *On Scene: Emergency Response* (Dolan, 1998). A production company that was filming in collaboration with a helicopter company that responded to emergencies filmed, produced and screened the rescue of a woman who was trapped in a car at a crash scene. The victim sued the production company, citing an invasion of privacy, but she lost in court. The matter was later won on appeal, with the judge ruling that 'the last thing an injured victim should have to worry about while being pried from her wrecked car is that a television producer may be recording everything she says to medical personnel for the possible edification and entertainment of casual viewers' (Dolan, 1998).

The general practice of filming in a public place no longer applies when filming police interactions, and this very fine line of approval needs to be observed by film-makers. Fishman and Cavender (1998, p. 11) made a strong and compelling point about crime shows, suggesting that they violate journalistic traditions and are more fiction than reality. They said that, unlike most forms of media, they support police by always showing police in a positive and engaging way instead of striking a balance between highlighting good police work and exposing its failures. However, Fishman and Cavender (1998) failed to recognise the collaboration of the filming engagement. One cannot happen without the other, and the police ensure that they have full rights to veto

or override any negative portrayals of the police. Why would any public authority willingly agree to air its dirty laundry?

Police Media Management

Gaynor (2012) discussed the inhibiting processes through which police media branch officials interfere in the documentary-making process, noting that the detailed and complex deed of agreements (contracts) added to the complexity of the filming process and made it significantly more difficult to collaborate with police filming projects. These views have been expressed by a number of researchers (Gaynor, 2012; Hill, 2005, 2007; Nash, 2009; Nichols, 1991); however, the converse argument is less detailed and is expressed in ways that trivialise the viewpoint. For example:

> *Gaynor (2012) states 'the filmmaker was aware that Victoria Police had the right to review the program at various stages in the editing process. This was to ensure that the program delivered what was proposed to them and to check for any elements that may affect police security or legal proceedings. Victoria Police did not have editorial control in terms of the narrative structure' (p. 29).*

Working closely with police when making police documentaries gives the production team access to information and conversations that they would not normally be privy to. Boundaries are pushed when they record information that serves to entertain or sensationalise the story they want to tell, believing that because they have recorded the conversation, they can use it. However, savvy police are quick to spot these legal errors, bring them to attention and advise that they should be deleted. Producers see this as editorial content; however, these situations, which have become more commonplace in film-making, are quite simply a beach of privacy law. Fortunately, most large police agencies are equipped with a legal team; for example, the NSWPF is staffed with specialist film and television lawyers who are uniquely placed to review productions for legal compliance.

Factual documentaries are always presented in a way that showcases effective policing. These shows generally undergo 'Hollywood editing' (Dovey, 2000, p. 98), whereby most crimes are solved and most suspects are apprehended in the same episode. These shows also tend to exaggerate the proportion of offences that result in

arrest, which conveys the impression that police are more effective than official statistics demonstrate.

Fly-on-the-wall, observational factual documentaries are a sub-genre of what is more commonly known as reality television. However, reality television is different in its purpose to entertain because it allows producers to manipulate the setting to garner a certain response from participants. For example, on *Big Brother*, if ratings decline or viewers make negative comments on social media, the producers can change the environment to drive up ratings. The main purpose of reality programs is to entertain, whereas factual documentaries aim to educate the viewer.

Many police organisations do not have a separate FTVU and therefore cannot capitalise on this specialist field. There are many benefits for police organisations in collaborating in a factual documentary series, and having people equipped with specialist skills to undertake this function will benefit all stakeholders and result in an informative, educational and entertaining program that showcases policing.

Factual Representations and the Police Image

The NSWPF has a standing direction that prohibits the filming and subsequent screening of methodology in any filming collaboration. As Mertens (2007) observed, the criminals 'are getting an education on what not to do by watching TV' (p. 55). It is important and difficult for police to always remain one step ahead of criminals. One common misconception is that offenders are entitled to one phone call while in custody. This is most likely an 'Americanism' derived from fictional comedies, soaps and doco-dramas. It is a necessary plot device for any crime show and bears no resemblance to reality; simply put, it is a factually incorrect representation for Australia. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) pointed out, 'representations of policing are not always mere entertainment, that they do have an impact on the sensibilities of the public—and that even in a commercially driven world, there is still room for well- researched thoughtful drama that triggers debate rather than closes it down' (p. 27). However, Meyrowitz (1985) stated that an important way that television can bring about change is to show consumers what was previously unseen, and that this new style of genre on television today 'has lifted many of the old veils of secrecy' (p. 68).

The work of police is in many cases secretive to ensure they stay one step ahead of the 'bad guys'. It can never be assumed that access is wide open to television crews. The secrecy pertaining to police methodology, suspects and highly specialised police and their duties can never be disclosed on television. To do so would render useless all of the hard work that has been conducted to establish those secret ways of doing business. As Cooke and Sturgess (2009) explained, police media units are in a unique position regarding the dissemination of crime information. Media units can decide on the exact timing of the release of the information they hold.

This is an image-boosting investment for police (Mawby, 2007; Reiner, 2000) and meets with parts of the NSWPF's Media Policy to:

- deter criminal activity by increasing the perception of detection
- create discussion in the community and/or among criminals during investigations
- highlight good policework
- increase police visibility
- reassure the community and reduce the fear of crime
- provide transparency and maintain community faith in policing.

Meeting these principles assists in promoting the business of police and builds trust and confidence in the community. However, most people in society rarely have any direct contact with police. This, in turn, makes the world of policing seem secretive and makes people more curious about what police do. This world opens up when cameras delve into areas of policing that are usually restricted. This is evident in the ongoing broadcasting worldwide of new and varied police television shows revealing what police do and what goes on inside police stations, including many of the other specialist areas of police work. What viewers do not see are the many laborious hours of computer work, files, telephone calls and paperwork. These parts of observational documentaries are edited out because they fail to entertain and therefore fail to inform the viewer of the actual practices of police work. These 'false expectations' have been commented on by many researchers in this area of study (Arcuri, 1977; Colbran, 2011; Hill, 2005; Reiner, 1994; Stephenson, 2015). Although touted as the real thing, what is shown in a half-hour program is actually carved and edited out of hundreds of hours of footage.

It is an incontrovertible fact that people derive most of their knowledge about the world from media. Therefore, the media plays an important role in providing information, generating awareness, influencing beliefs and shaping the attitudes and perceptions of the public. According to Fishman (1999), 'reality TV stories have a tremendous potential to reinforce a moral communities internal solidarity' (pp. 283–284). They influence the way audiences view themselves and society.

Media agencies are often the sole conduit of communications between the police and the community. Most people spend their entire lives having no direct contact with the police; therefore, they obtain information about crime and develop an understanding of law enforcement only by reading about police activities in newspapers and magazines and seeing depictions of police on television and in the movies. Eschholza et al. (2002, p. 329) contended that 'media is an important socialising agent, especially with regard to the criminal justice system, as it is the primary, if not the only source of contact citizens has with the system'.

Mawby (2007) discussed that police media agencies are heavily involved in how police and their role are portrayed on television. Public perception is the key to achieving success in communities; therefore, police are expected to derive their authority from the confidence the public has in them, and from their accountability to citizens through the rule of law. Edwards (2005) observed that greater public interest in policing issues has led to closer public scrutiny of those in authority; thus, it is becoming more common for police authority to be questioned. This is not just about police legitimacy; it is equally important to always try to portray police in a positive light and protect the brand, although as Greer (2001) pointed out, 'it is always the case that although people who volunteer for reality shows may be exhibitionists, someone who is careful to remain unwatched is pulling their strings' (p. 1).

Mason (2002) argued that reality cop shows are just another constructed representation of the police; however, as demonstrated by these case studies, it is important for police agencies to not only manage their image, but also put forward factual representations of policing, thereby legitimising their work and allowing community confidence to flourish, and this is done in a collaborative process.

Conclusion

Factual police television productions and some police jurisdictions claim that participation in these types of productions will build community relations and favourably contribute to rebuilding their image after it has been damaged. However, more recently, some police agencies have withdrawn from participating in filming due to a lack of community support. A sheriff from Ingham County, Michigan said:

> *I pride myself and the Sheriff's Office on the relationships we have built and continue to build in the community. For example, we spend a ton of time, sometimes entire shifts, responding to overdoses, people with mental health issues, and the criminality associated with both. Although still tough on crime, the volume of proactive work we have done in assisting those with addiction, mental health and criminal issues is quite impressive, both in patrol and corrections. In the end, after careful review, inviting 'Cops' to come to Ingham County seems to be a step in the wrong direction.*

Factual crime shows have been enormously popular around the world. They have done much to show the public what happens behind the scenes when they catch the bad guys, and they generally portray police officers as effective guardians of the community. However, they have also created false perceptions of police effectiveness due to constant screenings of arrests, car chases and drug busts. In doing so, they have created a false image of crime statistics and, conversely, arrest statistics. Together, they have created a distorted view of the reality of police work. The distinction between reality and what is projected in media is becoming increasingly blurred. Gerbner and Gross (1976) remind us that eventually, the perception as projected by television becomes the reality. That said, cop shows will not just disappear, so the questions to be answered are: How can cop shows be reinvented to capture the actuality and factuality of police work? Is there a way that the business of policing can be presented so that it truly reflects the work of police and, at the same time, still make them interesting enough so that people will watch? With the recent cancellations of prime-time crime shows and police jurisdictions withdrawing from filming projects, the challenge for producers will be to reinvent crime shows so they more closely represent police, police work and the community.

The next chapter will detail the research methodology and methods used in capturing the details of this study. It will detail how the participants were recruited and the rationale for the study. Using social theories from Goffman (1959), Berger and Luckmann (1966) and Reiner (2010) to support the mixed methods approach adopted for this study, the chapter will explain how police officers and their work fit within the social construction of reality as presented in the literature review. The chapter will outline how the research data were collected and collated, and how they were converted to create a model officer for police film and television projects. The analysis and findings are presented later in this thesis.

Chapter 4: Research Design

Introduction

The previous chapter presented an exploration of known literature. It provided an overview of relevant and similar studies and, importantly, it explained how the topic of this study came about. Given the recency of television and the novel genre of reality television, it was important to include relevant online articles to further highlight why this study is important in this field of work, and how it contributes to, and builds upon, previous research.

This chapter introduces the research design and methodology used for this study, and describes how it guided the data collection and analysis, and how it supports the contribution of theory. First, the research rationale is outlined, stating the aim and providing additional context of how this study was underpinned by the theoretical framework of social constructionism. Following this, the strategies and tools used to undertake the qualitative and quantitative research are described. Participants are then characterised, describing who they are and how they were recruited. This sampling strategy and description of the participants is important because their construct supports the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism that was adopted for this body of work. The detailed make-up of the participants also assists in the presentation of the data and the construction of the *model officer* resulting from this study. This is relevant to *police work as entertainment* and may be used as an initial formula to assist in film and television officer recruitment for on-camera appearance. Using interpretivism and adopting Goffman's (1959) ideas in the *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* and Berger and Luckmann's (1966) *Social Construction of Reality*, the data captured was grouped for likeness. Finally, the data collected, was converted and measured, with ethical considerations adopted for this process applied. The results and their analysis are presented in Chapter 5.

It is important to remember that this research represents a small pilot study and introduction to this topic area. The results of the research indicate that a wider study may deliver different results. This research is based on a 32% response rate from surveys and interviews with 20 officers who participated in the *Beach Cops* program. A wider study might incorporate interviews with officers from each of the four major

productions filmed with the NSWPF, as well as a recirculation of surveys to encourage greater take-up. Therefore, the results from the study can only be interpreted from the information provided by those who participated in this enquiry.

Research Rationale

This research seeks to understand the neglected perspective and role of police officers in the social construction of police images and visual programs of officers from the NSWPF by asking officers: 'Does the presence of the camera change the way police work?' What may appear at first glance to be a direct question became a complex and difficult question to answer for both the participants and the researcher. The one-on-one officer interviews provided different answers to those provided in the surveys and were again different to the information gathered from observational research by the author. The answer was not a simple 'yes' or 'no', as each officer explained, in great detail, their construction of police work and their decision-making analysis, both of which supported their version of an answer.

Research for this study began with a review of the work undertaken by Maurantonio (2012, p. 1), who wrote about the construction of police work in terms of police representation on television in both fact and fictional form. In her opening paragraph, she explained that 'few studies have taken on the question of how police officers interact with mediated representations of themselves'. The body of work undertaken by the author builds on the work undertaken by Maurantonio; however, the present study only focuses on police as actors/participants of factual programs, and therefore only reviews their television appearances in police observational documentaries. Maurantonio highlighted an interesting and relevant question raised by a team of newspaper journalists in *The New York Times*. In response to a fatal shooting during the police factual documentary series *The First 48*,[28] Chapman and Saulny (2010, p. 6) asked: 'Does the presence of TV crews affect how well police officers do their jobs?' Later, Doyle (2003) speculated that 'the presence of TV cameras might alter criminal justice situations' (p. 6). These questions are all similar in nature and have remained unanswered until now.

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[28] On 16 May 2010, Aiyana Jones, 7 years old, was fatally shot by police during a botched police raid that was being filmed for the observational documentary series *The First 48*.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is the symbolic interactionist theory. Policing, by its very nature, is very much based on the community, communication and symbols, which are all necessary ingredients in framing this theory within the role and work undertaken by police and their interaction with the community. Drawn from the Chicago School of Sociology and conceived by George Mead, this philosophy was the best way to tease out the thoughts, beliefs and opinions regarding the experiences of police officers who had participated in factual television programs. In the symbolic interactionist theory, the world around us is viewed as a social construction produced by the social interactions of its participants. It is based on communication—the exchange of meaning through language and symbols. Blumer (1969, p. 6) stated that the 'root images' of symbolic interactionism depict human groups or societies, social interaction, objects, the human being as an actor, human action and the interconnection of lines of action. Symbolic interactionism is an excellent theoretical framework for use in this study of police operating in their workplace. The correlation is due to its direct relevance to police duties, the officers' presentation and communication (both internally and externally) and the relationship between police officers and the community. The application of this theory to this study enabled the identification of consistent patterns of behaviour among participants. Interviewed officers collectively viewed their role as that of a teacher and educator, preferring to right wrongs rather than punish poor choices. This perspective directly correlates with theorists Herman and Reynolds (1994), who noted that this perspective sees people as being active in shaping the social world. Another connection to this approach is the repeated face-to-face interactions. These patterns of behaviour are an instinctive and regularly repeated function among first-response officers.

Police officers tend to do the same or similar work daily; therefore, the group participating in this study expressed a similar understanding of their work and their role in society. This supporting and collective view adds weight to this study and provides evidence to reinforce the value and testament of the theory. The background information given by each participant provided additional support to the symbolic interactionist theory. Strong themes emerged from the data collected and allowed for connections within the study. There was a distinct correlation between the theory and

the adoption of interpretivism based on the police participants' experiences of and reasons for being a police officer, and how they undertake their daily duties.

The world in which police officers operate is very much built on symbols, which are present on officers' uniforms and in adornments worn on those uniforms, in hand gestures used by police to communicate messages (e.g. traffic officers) and in codes used by police when communicating with others. They are most often used in acronym form to shorten lengthy exchanges. These are ideals instilled within police and unknowingly adopted by them in their communication. This research study used qualitative methods to observe these signs, symbols and codes. The interpretivist approach allowed for the deductive assessment of the information arising from the thematic analysis.

Research Aim

To assess whether police officers work differently when being filmed for a factual television program by exploring how officers play their part in constructing the social reality of policing programs and their interaction with other key participants.

Research Objectives

To achieve a complete review, the SMART principle was applied (Doran, 1981) to this research to ensure the study was:

Specific: I only included officers from the NSWPF who had actively participated in filming a factual reality program for television.

Measurable: I circulated surveys with targeted questions to ensure the results could be converted to data.

Achievable: I only interviewed officers who participated in the *Beach Cops* program. If officers from other programs had been included in the interview process, it may have resulted in a very different set of answers, which would have made it difficult to construct and adjudicate the results.

Realistic: As the PFS responsible for all police escorts while filming was in progress, I have personal knowledge of all filming participants and therefore have access to their

personal data. I was able to contact them regarding participation in both the surveys and interviews.

Timely: The process for capturing the data for this research study was prolonged, ongoing recognising that officers work six-week rosters. The timing allocated to the return of the surveys was spread over two six-week roster periods to ensure that data for those on leave could be back-captured. Interviews were conducted in the workplace during work hours in periods selected as generally quieter times.

Research Tasks

1. Create a quantitative survey and information sheet in consultation with supervisor.
2. Seek ethics approval from London Metropolitan University.
3. Seek approval from NSW Police Research Unit to circulate the survey.
4. Send the survey to all NSWPF officers who were film and television participants between 2014 and 2018.
5. Collate returned surveys and create a data collection plan.
6. Write questions for the one-on-one interviews and prepare a consent form.
7. Identify interviewees and invite them to participate in an interview session.
8. Conduct quantitative surveys: Identify 20 officers to participate in a one-hour face-to-face interview. The interview will further explore the answers to the survey questions and will seek to gauge the officer's feelings, which cannot be properly articulated in short surveys.
9. Use information holdings within the NSWPF FTVU to identify all police officers who participated in filming projects between 2014 and 2018. Use the findings to form a data collection plan and create statistical charts of gender, age, police experience/years of work and registered number in order to formulate a 'model officer'.
10. Identify and invite three external production editors to participate in a face-to-face interview. The editors will be chosen based on their work on major police productions. Editors have access to the 'rushes'—that is, the unedited footage from production. In the interview, seek the editors' beliefs regarding police officers as actors. This qualitative method may lead to the discovery of previously unknown information for the research.

11. Interview the manager of the NSWPF Corporate Communications Unit and seek the organisation's view of these types of programs, their return on investment, and future role and benefits for policing.

12. Having established the opinion of the police participants and editors on what qualities make a police officer suitable for filming purposes, coupled with the data collection plan, provide a construct of a 'model officer' for police film production. This will assist both police and production agencies in the preparation and selection of officers for participation in future programs.

13. Analyse the data collected from the qualitative and quantitative studies and formulate an answer to the research question posed. The adoption of different research approaches allows for a detailed analysis of the data with supporting evidence.

Participants of the Research Study

The only perspective sought from police officers for this study was from officers who were active participants in a NSWPF police filming program. Seeking feedback from only those officers who were active participants in a factual television production ensured that the results of the study moved from being a police perspective to one where more accurate and detailed responses were provided by officers, as it was based on their direct experience as a filming participant. Of note, the study did not include civil servants. To achieve a high participation rate, only police officers who had worked on programs filmed by the author were the target subjects for this study. Therefore, only police officers who had participated in police filming programs from mid 2014 to 2018 were asked to participate.

The researcher identified 429 officers during the period 2014–2018 and mailed a hard copy survey to each officer. The participants included a large team of police from the Region Enforcement Squad. The author attended their office at change-over and waited while the officers completed the survey. These officers were regular filming participants and spent very little time in their office; therefore, the best way to elicit responses from those officers was to attend in person and wait while they completed the documents.

Other participants in the study included three executive producers and the manager of the NSWPF Corporate Communications Unit. Interviews with these participants provided additional relevant information and supported the observational findings. Each producer was collectively responsible for one of the major productions that the NSWPF was actively involved in filming; therefore, their considered thoughts provided valuable contributions to this study. The NSWPF manager had an overarching responsibility for all external productions made during that time, and his contribution was an essential element in confirming the value of this research to the organisation, both now and into the future. A detailed analysis of all interviewees and their contributions is provided in the next chapter.

Research Limitations

The first limitation identified was a lack of previous research on this topic. There was a significant amount of information regarding police, police and the media, reality television and studies involving police, seeking their opinions of police themed, fact and fictional, television programs, however much of that information was not relatable to this study. One study involved police as participants (Hallett & Powell, 1995); however, the information obtained by the researchers was not applicable to the present study because it was undertaken before 1995 and only sought views from police about their actual work being portrayed on television. The authors collated information from 21 surveys and 16 interviews with police. Of note, the study related to the US production of *Cops*, and although the show was filmed in many states, the study only involved officers from Nashville because the researchers claimed that they had 'a well-established working relationship … and that several of the officers have been our students' (Hallett & Powell, 1995, p. 109).

The second limitation identified related to the sample selection. This study included sampling from police officers in NSW who had participated in any of the four major factual film productions.[29] However, after collecting and analysing the results, it may have been more prudent to only select officer representation from one production as the information obtained would reflect the views of officers who had undertaken the

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[29] The NSWPF collaborated on four major factual filming productions, which are represented in this research: *The Force* (Channel 7), *RBT* (Screentime), *Motorbike Cops* (Channel 7) and *Beach Cops* (Channel 7).

same or similar filming experience. Although all of the data were still useful for this research, as outlined, a more precise evaluation could have been conducted if all participants in the study were also participants of the same production. Additionally, the surveys were completed by a small sample of officers representing each of the four major productions; however, the interviewed officers were only drawn from the *Beach Cops* production. A larger selection of interviewed officers across all productions could have delivered a more robust analysis of the information collected, as it may have provided greater breadth and depth of the representative sample. Conversely, if officers selected for this study were all only drawn from a pool of participants from one program, the outcome of the study may have been more accurate and reliable and a true reflection of that particular production, and not NSW Police officers as a whole.

The third limitation related to the rise of social media—in particular, its use via mobile devices. Social media coupled with mobile phone technology has contributed to attitudinal changes in society. Police officers are cognisant that they may be filmed and uploaded to social media at any time, and this has had a positive effect on the way officers conduct their duties. More recently, although not discussed in this study, is the rollout of body-worn video (BWV) as a tool for police officers to activate and record their work at certain times.[30] The fact that officers now wear this instrument on their uniform has also contributed to changes in the way police work. Similarly, highway patrol vehicles are fitted with in-car video (ICV), another tool that assists police in the execution of their duty. Like BWV, legislation prevents the recorded material from being used for entertainment purposes. The same images may be captured for production purposes; however, the cameras and equipment must be provided by the production company.

Another issue identified from the outset was that the author held a senior police position and had previously been a sergeant supervisor to many of the police participants. This was identified as a potential barrier to collecting open and honest feedback from the participants. This position of power many have inhibited officers from being truthful in their responses only telling the author good points and not declaring adverse issues.

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[30] In NSW, legislation prohibits the use of BWV for entertainment purposes. For this reason, BWV was not explored in the body of research for this study.

Finally, it would be remiss not to acknowledge personal biases. As a police officer and PFS, the author entered this study with already-formed views and opinions of most of the questions asked. Much of this was gained from 31 years of experience as a police officer, and other views were formed during the period of observational research. After assessing the results from the returned surveys, preconceived thoughts were readjusted and interview questions reframed to show open-mindedness and willingness to accept new and different information. Brown (1996) used the term 'insider–insider' to describe researchers who conduct research in their own organisation. As discussed later in this chapter, being an insider comes with its own challenges. This was evident during the interview process, when the author had to ensure that officers were given the freedom to speak and did not direct the interview towards desired outcomes.

Research Methodology and Methods Employed

As discussed earlier, research shows that few studies have been conducted to determine what police think of themselves on television, and more specifically, regarding the research question posed. Thus, the projected research took the form of a new investigation, although it may also be viewed as an extension of existing research as conducted by Hallett and Powell (1995) and Maurantonio (2012) and discussed in the literature review. To satisfy the objectives of this thesis, it was decided that a mixed methods research approach would give strength to this study. The use of various methods ensured that the research results were both measurable and achievable, supported in explanation via participants' personal contributions.

The literature review discussed interpretivist criminology—how individuals shape society and how that approach is reflected in police work and observed in factual documentaries. Similarly, social constructivism examines the participants in their world—that is, observing the officers and how they construct their world of policing. It is an observational exercise and not, as Crotty (1998, p. 42) asserted, a self-reflective one. Adopting interpretivism for this study was vitally important and allowed a balanced view of police as actors/participants in factual television programs.

The initial research for this study began with the observation of police officers as actors and participants in the daily performance of their duties. Watching and observing police go about their daily duties in their immediate terrain meant an unbiased and

unfabricated performance. This provided the perfect backdrop for this field of study—namely, observing officers working and interacting with others, both known to them and unknown, in a way that was unscripted and unguided, and that allowed them to perform in their natural setting. Officers undertaking filming duties for commercial television productions were explicitly informed of the process and gave their consent to the production process. Quite often, officers became so comfortable with the production crew that they forgot they were being filmed and appeared complacent, although the cameras mounted in the police vehicle often served as a visual reminder of the recording. Additionally, officers were fitted with a body-worn microphone, and this served as implicit consent for the production company. The officers participating in the filming process were informally observed over a two-year period, supporting Creswell's (2003) notion that collecting observational data is best undertaken 'by studying a group of people in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time' (p. 14).

After time, it became clear to the researcher that officers did, in fact, work differently when in the presence of the television camera. The observed behaviours, provided a clearer direction for this study and helped to shape the questions presented in the participant surveys, although some survey answers contradicted themselves and others provided limited or no answers in reply to questions asked.
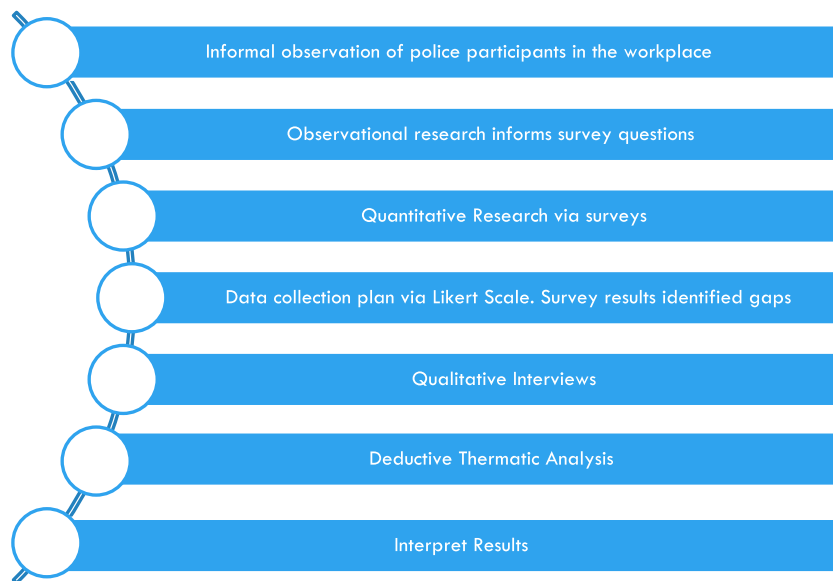
Analysis of the collected data from surveys led to the identification of gaps and areas that required further exploration and clarification. This was undertaken during the participant interviews and required the development of additional questions to be added to the semi-structured interviews to elicit the required information and close the gaps in the study area. The interview style adopted in the process was one-on-one. This created an informal setting in the individual officer's workplace and was usually conducted in a private interview room. Although the conversation was recorded, the interviews were private and the officers appeared at ease and candid in their discussions. Honest and open conversations were encouraged; officers did not appear to supress their thoughts or refrain from discussing negative aspects of their experiences. Interestingly, of the 20 police officers interviewed, 18 offered similar stories of their experiences. The work of social theorists Goffman (1959) and Berger and Luckmann (1966) became apparent in the officer interviews. The development of stories and their lives as police officers gave support to both theories, further suggesting a human link to the social construction of reality and Reiner's (2010) cop

culture. Of note, two officers (one male, one female) provided very different views of both their policing and filming experiences. Although this may suggest that they do not fit the 'mould' or 'model' of police officers, as presented by social theorists Berger and Luckmann, the answers they provided in the semi-structured interview allowed for further questioning, explanation and clarification, thus providing additional evidence to support their opinions. One striking similarity between these two officers was that they considered policing a *job* and not a *career*, which was a very different view to all of the other interviewees. Reiner (2010) stated 'that policing is not just a job but a way of life' (p. 119), or as Goffman (1959, p. 21) put it, a '*modus vivendi*'. This suggests that cop culture is not present among all officers—certainly not the two highlighted here.

Mixed Methods Approach

To comprehensively and conclusively answer the research question, it was important to undertake a mixed methods approach to provide both breadth and depth to the study. This enabled contradictory information to be clarified when it was discovered in the surveys. This style of approach to research allowed for the overlapping of information via quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews and informal observational research.

Given that each research method has different strengths, consideration was given to how each method could contribute to the overall goal. The quantitative surveys served a worthy purpose for eliciting the statistical information required for the model officer interpretation; however, other survey information proved inconclusive when attempting to draw out sensory information such as feelings. For this reason, it was important to conduct additional research with the police officer participants via qualitative interviews. When the data from both approaches were combined, a more holistic view of the study emerged. The following graph represents the process undertaken for the research study.

Informal observation of police participants in the workplace

Observational research informs survey questions

Quantitative Research via surveys

Data collection plan via Likert Scale. Survey results identified gaps

Qualitative Interviews

Deductive Thermatic Analysis

Interpret Results

Survey

The survey was designed by the author to obtain enough information to be informative towards the research questions and simple enough to encourage maximum returns. Based on the Likert scale, each question was set out on one A4 page and appeared simplistic enough to generate participation. The top of the sheet allowed officers to insert generic personal information such as rank, length of service, gender and number of filming engagements. The bottom of the sheet allowed for additional comments, which many returned surveys provided.

Of the 429 surveys mailed internally to approximately 300 different police stations/locations throughout NSW, 136 recipients responded to and returned the survey. Thus, the survey return rate equated to 32%, which, according to a comparison study of online surveys to paper based surveys indicates that this study falls within the average response rate for this type of survey. Nulty (2008, p. 303) referenced a number of sources to determine an average response rate for research surveys. The below graph indicates the average response rate of eight different types of surveys in a research project.

Comparisons of response rates to paper-based and online surveys.

Who	Paper Based	On-line	Difference
Cook et al. (2000)	55.6	-	-16
Baruch (1999)	-	39.6	
Dommeyer et al. (2004)	75	43	-32
Ballantne (2005)	55	47	-8
Ogier (2005)	65	30	-35
Nair et al. (2005)	56	31	-31
Griffith University (2005)	57	20	-37
Sweep (2006)*	56	23	-33
Watt et al. (2005)	32.6	33.3	<1
Overall	**56**	**33**	**-23**

*(T. Sweep, pers. comm.)

As noted by other researchers (Biersdorff, 2009; Fan & Yan, 2010), determining the average survey response can be a difficult and complex process that, in turn, may never be resolved. Visser et al. (1996) suggested that the return rate varies according to the type of research project, and that representativeness is more important. In this study, surveys were circulated to all participants of police television projects. Although the response rate was lower than expected, the responses formed a collective view of all participants. In contrast, for the interviews, the respondents were all drawn from the same program; therefore, they were more likely to provide similar responses as a result of their similar experiences.

Another important factor to consider was the number of surveys circulated. A statistic of averages may achieve an unrealistic outcome depending on the actual number of responses and not the statistical response. This was because a high response rate from a small number of surveys circulated is better than a low rate of return from a large sample base, although wide-ranging surveys are likely to produce a greater depth and breadth of information for analysis.

In this study, the author chose to circulate surveys via mail as a deliberate and intentional way of potentially gaining a greater return. Surveys are regularly sent via

email within the NSWPF and, in turn, employees are reluctant to participate in online surveys.[31] This may be due to the amount of information already received in their inbox, their distrust in online surveys remaining confidential, or because online surveys generally do not provide the reader with upfront information on how many questions are in the survey and how long it will take to complete. In contrast, because we live in an online society, regular mail appears to be a thing of the past. Receiving a tangible mail item now invokes a sense of mystery and, once opened, the reader can immediately see the type of survey and content. They can judge for themselves the time commitment involved and determine whether they will assist with or discard the survey. The survey was accompanied by the mandatory information sheet and a handwritten cover letter—again, as a way of deliberately encouraging the receiver to review and complete the survey.

The author was satisfied to achieve a return rate of 32% (136 responses), which is close to the suggested average for a social science study. The amount of information obtained in this study provides a holistic albeit generalised view of officers' perceptions in the areas surveyed. Every officer who participated in police factual filming projects between 2014 and 2018 was invited to participate in the survey. Therefore, the results were determined to be a true representation of officers' thoughts and opinions on police factual documentaries. Thus, it can be said that this study is a true and accurate reflection of the opinions of the NSWPF's participation in factual documentaries.

Research Interviews

All officers who participated in the interviews were volunteers. They were given information forms that outlined the purpose of the study and how the information

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[31] In recent years, the NSWPF circulated a number of surveys to all staff, with each survey gaining significantly different response rates. The 2017 People Matter survey was sent via email to each staff member and achieved a response rate of 27%, whereas the same survey circulated in 2018 to a generic whole-of-organisation email address called 'Nemesis Messages' achieved a take-up rate of only 17%. It is thought that many staff members ignore Nemesis Messages and set up their work email inbox to send Nemesis Messages straight to the bin or junk mail folder. The chief statistician for the NSWPF explained that employment surveys generally only achieve a good response rate if there is some type of 'buy-in' for participants. The example provided related to surveys circulated by the police union. A 2012 survey regarding salaries achieved a response rate of over 50%, and a 2014 survey regarding female police uniforms achieved a response rate of 40%. The statistician further explained that response rates to surveys circulated within the NSWPF are dependent on many things, including how the survey is followed up (e.g., reminders to complete), how the survey is designed and marketed, who it is sent to, the timing of the survey, and the survey content.

would be collected, stored, used and discarded. Additionally, officers were advised that if the thesis used any of their direct quotes or information, they would be given a pseudonym, and the information would only be used by the researcher for the purpose of this study. Each interviewee was given a consent form to sign. A copy of the consent form can be found in Annexure A.

It appears that no recent studies have examined officers' perceptions or attitudes towards their televisual representations, and given the rate at which police reality television productions have been produced and screened over the past 10 years, it is likely that officers' attitudes will have substantially changed since prior research was conducted. The most recent Australian contribution to this field of study was published in 2012, which suggests that the data previously collected would now be outdated.

The interview setting was informal, although the questions posed were semi-structured to provide some direction in the questions posed. This allowed the interviewee to freely converse with the researcher. The author's personal–professional relationship with the participants allowed for this informal setting; participants were at ease and felt that they were in a safe environment to speak their mind. They could express themselves without fear of condemnation or reprisal. The research questions were grouped and asked in a specific order. By asking personal questions first, I was able to establish a setting, and during this time I engaged with the interviewees by explaining previous research and why the questions were relevant to this study. Reiner (2010) stated that people who become police officers stay in that occupation for life because they feel a need to serve the community. Other social researchers (Hallett & Powell, 1995; Lee & McGovern, 2006; Reiner, 2010) have suggested that police officers are highly critical of their performance and the performance of other police officers who appear on camera, although they added that factual representation is more important. Researchers who have studied police television representations (Doyle, 2003; Hallett & Powell, 1995; Maurantonio, 2012), both factual and fictional, have suggested that people are influenced to become cops after connecting with a television representation of an officer. According to Goffman (1959), Berger and Luckmann (1966) and Reiner (2010), we learn our 'style' from reviewing our behaviour and learning from others.

The quantitative surveys were circulated first. Once the data were collated, areas that required further clarification were highlighted. Questions were established from the

missing data and assessed for relevance and efficacy, or as Creswell (1998) suggested, to determine whether they were 'fit for purpose'. The following questions were used as a basis for the semi-formal interview process.

The Interview Questions

1. How old are you?
2. What is your length of service?
3. How old were you when you joined?
4. What made you want to be a police officer?
5. How long do you think you will stay working as a police officer?
6. Did any police TV shows encourage you to become a police officer?
7. Do you watch police factual TV programs?
8. What is your favourite and why?
9. Which episode to you remember as your favourite?
10. What did you like about it?
11. Has police TV influenced your policing style? How so?
12. Do you think police TV is a good recruitment and training tool? Why?
13. What do you think concerns most police about participating in police TV?
14. Do you feel that police TV is a true representation of policing?
15. Do you think your colleagues are judgemental of your participation on *Beach Cops*?
16. Do you feel any of your colleagues have the opportunity to participate on *Beach Cops*?
17. Do you feel your participation may adversely affect your career prospects?
18. In general, what most concerns you about participating in police TV?
19. What do you think other police feel about police TV shows?
20. Do you feel that police TV is a true representation of policing?
21. Did you ever feel you needed to perform for the camera?
22. How closely did *Beach Cops* reflect your role as a cop?
23. Police TV often depicts the good versus the bad. Did you feel that was the case with *Beach Cops*?
24. How do you feel about factual television being described as 'unreal TV'?
25. If we made the show again, would you participate?
26. Do you think that the NSWPF benefits from police TV?

27. Do you think the NSWPF should make more police TV–type products?
28. Do you think the community is more educated about police work because of *Beach Cops*?
29. Do police have cop talk or codes?

Sampling Strategy—Data Collection

The initial strategy was to prepare and circulate questionnaires to all police officers who had participated in a police filming observational documentary between 2014 and 2018. This was to ensure a breadth of spread of the survey, anticipating the return rate would be low. The survey consisted of approximately 30 questions that were designed to elicit enough information to answer the set question and retrieve statistical data that would be used to create the 'model officer' for police filming purposes. The returned surveys indicated that officers representing all three major filming productions had agreed to participate. This was good because it provided a range of responses from police given the range of experiences they had during their time filming; however, some responses were too varied, meaning that data could not positively be interpreted. In hindsight, it would have been better to survey participants from only one program, such as *Beach Cops*, which would have provided a better interpretation of the results. Having said that, the data collected from the surveys were useful and, importantly, it all came from police officers who had first-hand experience in police factual documentaries. Overall, this was the most important viewpoint to gain for this study.

It was more difficult and time-consuming to identify and commit to interviewing 20 police officers. Three major factual productions[32] were filmed during this time, and it was anticipated that participants would be included from each production. A number of officers from the *Beach Cops* series were contacted directly via SMS or email and happily volunteered to participate in the interview process. After interviewing a handful of officers who had participated in the *Beach Cops* production, it became apparent that a story was developing from those officers, as they had similar policing experiences. It became apparent that the inclusion of one-on-one interviews with officers participating in other programs could shape the results differently, as those officers had undertaken different types of policing and police work, and given that the

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[32] The major filming productions with NSWPF in 2014 were *The Force*, *RBT* and *Beach Cops*.

other factual programs were different to the presentation of *Beach Cops*, their views and experiences could potentially provide a range of opposing responses. Therefore, the 20 officers interviewed for this study were drawn from the active participant pool of the *Beach Cops* program.

Beach Cops was filmed in an area that is local to the authors' home, which made it convenient to attend the police station to conduct interviews. Additionally, as the PFS working full time on the *Beach Cops* program, and having previously worked as an officer in the same Command; therefore, the author had a closer relationship with the participant officers than with the officers who appeared in other programs. This gave the author greater confidence that the required interviews could be conducted due to having already developed a relationship with those officers, making it easier for both parties to engage in thoughtful conversation where questions could be asked and honest and truthful answers in given reply. It was initially expected that the interview sessions would last approximately 30 minutes; however, officers have a personal connection to the police filming process, and their subsequent appearance on prime-time television made them very willing to discuss, elaborate and fully explain their answers. This provided additional significant detail to the data for analysis, but it took considerably longer, with most interviews lasting one hour or more.

Ethical Considerations

As previously highlighted, the author was found to be in a privileged position to take on this research because she was already performing daily duties as the PFS and had an established rapport with, and access to, the research participants. Brown (1996, p. 180) called this 'insider–insider', whereby police officers are also police researchers. This position gave the author special access to what Goffman (1959, p. 114) described as the 'backstage area'. This position provided an all-access pass by the research participants to become an active participant in their world—a position granted due to holding a similar position within the same police setting. Manning (2014, p. 532) described this backstage area as 'secretive, complex and violent'—a place where the researcher can observe police behaviour. This paradigm provided exclusive and unfettered access to view and collect the required data. Insights by the author from the information collected may be beneficial to other non-police researchers who have not been able to access this backstage area. The insider–insider position described by

Brown (1996, p. 180) asserted that its status and position in police practitioner empirical studies place the researcher in an advanced position to view and collect factual behavioural information. Although this is indeed correct, being an insider comes with added complexities in the use and delivery of the information collected. While police participants are afforded anonymity, the insider officer needs to be careful that the disclosure of information—particularly negative information—cannot be traced to the officer involved. Additionally, the insider officer will remain an insider at the conclusion of the study; therefore, negative comments or criticisms that appear in the final document may negatively affect the insider's ongoing relationships. Therefore, it can be concluded that the insider–insider role is both advantageous and disadvantageous.

Another ethical consideration to safeguard participants involved obtaining informed consent. Fleming and Zegwaard (2018) argued that the foundation of ethical research is 'informed consent'. This was conducted in all three stages of the research: observational, survey and interviews. During the observational stage, a briefing session was held at the start of each police shift, as is always done by the PFS for *Beach Cops*. Officers were fitted with concealed microphones, and one was installed in the police vehicle. Officers provided informed consent after being advised of the recording devices. They were also provided with a brief overview of their obligations under the *Surveillance Devices Act*, which requires officers to tell each person they interact with that their conversations are being recorded. At times, especially during emergencies or when officers are dealing with difficult people, informed consent is not possible. On these occasions, informed consent becomes implied consent due to the presence of the camera crew. Sometimes, members of the public do not give their consent; the cameras can still record the images of the police interaction (if it is in a public place); however, the law does not allow for the recording and publishing of the conversation. There are exceptions to that rule—the most common one is that, if participants in the conversation start yelling and can easily be overheard by others, the conversation is no longer considered private and may be recorded and published.

When the survey was circulated to participants, each survey contained an information sheet (see Annexure B). This document advised the participant of the researchers personal contact details as well as the contact details of the study supervisors. It provided a description and purpose of the study, what is sought from participants, what

will happen with the information provided, the benefits gained from the study, assurance of anonymity and perceived or identified risks. Participants were advised that the study was voluntary and that they could skip any questions that they preferred not to answer. There was no space in the survey for officers to provide their names, as names were not important.

As highlighted previously, the surveys provided some statistical information that was conducive to this study. Many officers provided written comments, indicting that they wanted to provide more information than could be provided in a Likert-scale survey. At this point, a data collection plan was constructed from the comments and a list of approximately 22 questions was compiled where further clarification was sought.

All officers from the *Beach Cops* program were sent an email that sought volunteers for a one-on-one interview. An information sheet and a consent form was provided, seeking their implied consent to be interviewed. Many officers made contact and offered to be part of the study. Three officers requested further information. Once the officers were reassured that the information was solely for this doctoral study and information would not be divulged to the NSWPF, they were happy to provide consent, although one officer declined to participate. It was disappointing that the officer chose not to participate, as he had been a constant, active and willing participant in the filming process for three years. Participating in the study was entirely voluntary; no one was coerced to participate—it was simply a case of 'yes' or 'no'. Prior to conducting each interview, an outline of the study was explained with each participant along with why the information was needed. Officers were genuinely interested in the study and wanted to know more about the information that had been collected. Some wanted to read the final analysis. This showed that the participants took an interest in what was being done as it would reflect on them and the future of film and television products within the organisation. Each officer gave informed consent by signing the consent form, and again acknowledged their consent to participate in the recorded interview sessions. Officers were explicitly advised that the session would be audio recorded on a recording device and downloaded onto a hard drive, and that the information obtained would only be used for the doctoral study. The hard drive would be stored in the authors home safe, and the recordings would be destroyed at the conclusion of the education period. All participants were advised that their identity would remain anonymous in the thesis, and they would be given a pseudonym. No

officer names or personal details would be disclosed in the final document, even if they chose to be. This study refers to officers 1 to 20, as there were 20 officers interviewed.

As an NSW police officer interviewing other NSW police officers in the course of their duties, consideration was given to remaining impartial and seeking answers as any other researcher would. This was a nod to Brown's (1996, p. 180) idea of the insider–insider. The difficulty faced, was anticipating answers from the participants. This took restraint and constant reinforcement to facilitate a discussion, not answer questions. It was important to ensure that a logical sequence of questions was provided to allow the conversation to flow, rather than conducting a Q&A-type interview. This was an opportunity for officers to vent and fully explain themselves. Some of the questions had already been asked in the surveys; however, this general discussion with the participants allowed them to deliver more information. This was particularly important where survey data were not conclusive or robust. Of the 20 officers interviewed, 18 provided a similar narrative, and the other two officers provided accounts that were similar to each other but very different from the bulk of the group.

Police interviews were held at the convenience of the participant when the author was not on duty. Apart from buying participants a coffee and gifting them a personalised pen, no inducements were offered. The collection of research for this study underwent a comprehensive review process by the London Metropolitan University and the NSWPF. Copies of their approvals are provided in Annexure C.

Risk Assessment

Based on the ethical considerations outlined above, a risk assessment was undertaken to establish and formalise the risks associated with undertaking this study. The Australian Risk Assessment Standards Guidelines AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018 were used as a template and basis for the assessment. Considerations for the perceived risks were undertaken for both the researcher and the respondents. The identified/potential perceived hazards identified were:

- the potential for the researcher to become over-familiar with an officer or situation
- the possability that the researcher may lead the participant in discussions
- psychological harm to participants in recalling difficult events
- physical injury to the reseracher due to fatigue
- stress and anxiety due to disclosure of certain information
- risk of physical threat
- psychological stress.

The risks were measured in terms of their likelihood of occurring, and a risk rating was subsequently applied. Control measures were then put in place to reduce the level of risk, and again measured against the consequences should any area of risk be breached. Remaining hazards were further explored, and perceived risks were managed or avoided. These elements were scored and given a risk rating ratio; risks that were assessed with perceived hazards were also identified and documented. The overall risk assessment score was **<u>LOW</u>**. The interpretation of the results indicated that, although an event was not expected to occur, there was a slight possibility that it could occur. Consequently, no injuries to participants were expected. A copy of the risk assessment is located in Annexure D.

Conversion of Data

The mixed methods approach was used to collect data obtained in the surveys and interviews. The application of data conversion was different for each of the research methods. The study began with informal chats with participants, either alone or in groups. This method was deployed in a way that would guide a more formal research process. As an insider–insider researcher, the author was unknowingly adopting this data collection method as a way of professional development in the PFS role. Rough notes were taken as a way of informing the direction of the research study.

The survey was designed using the Likert-scale method of construction in which a set of closed questions were delivered, allowing responders to choose from a variety of predetermined answers. The questions were based around their feelings of participating in the factual television productions, and participants were able to provide free, frank, unbiased and anonymous responses. Completion of the survey was

voluntary. The first part of the questionnaire asked non-identifiable personal information about the respondents, such as gender, age and length of service. This non-specific information was important to the study because it helped shape what types of attributes make up the average filming participant. The information was formulated into a statistical collection that, when tabled, provided an image of a police filming participant, which is later referred to in defining the 'model officer' (a copy of the survey is provided in Annexure E).

Each interview was electronically recorded. Given the protracted nature of each interview, it was not possible to transcribe each conversation; however, important information raised by the interviewees was highlighted and tabled into an Excel spreadsheet. Given that personal experiences relating to specific jobs were filmed and aired on the *Beach Cops* production, the collection of recorded results from the interviews could not be included in this thesis; to do so would breach the privacy of the participants. Instead, non-identifiable quotes are included in the conversion of data in Chapter 5 and are again discussed in the findings in Chapter 6. The omission of these data was not considered significant and did not change the outcome or net results. Most of the information collected during the interviews was incorporated into this research, with direct quotes included for accurate referencing.

Conclusion

The intention of this research was to study an area in which little research has been undertaken—namely, the inside story of police agencies and their work to allow the production of reality television. Most research in this area relates to the viewers' perspectives, beliefs, behaviours and attitudes. This study draws from police their perspectives, willingness to participate and views of how they feel reflecting on the finished product and reading social media comments regarding their work performance and appearance on prime-time television.

Similar to previous studies undertaken about police visual representations in crime shows, this study also adopted the mixed methods approach, which proved to be the most reliable way of gathering suitable, informative evidence that would provide enough information to satisfactorily answer the questions of this study. It is likely that the same information could have been extracted from the qualitative interviews, but it

would have been too time-consuming if the same sample size was used. Conversely, if the information had been extracted from the 20 participants in this study, the sample size would likely have been too small to gauge an accurate and informative response.

Given that this study relied on police as filming participants in their workplace, the application of the Social Constructionism Theory as the theoretical framework allowed for the interpretation of the police officers' experiences as insiders viewing their world from within. This world view gave significant meaning to the communication methods used by police and their appearance in their uniforms equipped with their adornments and tools of trade, which, when incorporated with the mixed methods study, resulted in patterns of behaviour that allowed for deductive interpretivism.

Overall, the mode of the study design was well suited to this particular research project; however, as discussed, it presented some problems that, when identified, led to the deployment of other research methods. The next chapter presents the collected data, followed by a short discussion and interpretation of the research question. The mixed methods approach was invaluable in conclusively answering the question and many of the other questions contained within this study. The data analysis proves that when framing a closed question, a closed response is not necessarily a true indication of a correct reply. Additionally, the application of the theoretical framework required a holistic investigation of the police participants to elicit enough information for the study. A series of coloured scales and graphs are used to assist with easy interpretation of the information collected. The data analysis, findings and recommendations are presented in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5: Presentation and Analysis of Data

This study is unique because of what will be gained from the analysis of the material. Maurantonio (2012) discussed the representation of police officers in television productions, noting that 'police are one of the most understudied populations when addressing questions of media influence' (p. 6). Her work drew on the mediated representations of police in both fact and fictional form and, in doing so, highlighted an important question posed by Chapman and Saulny (2010, para. 6): 'Does the presence of TV crews affect how well police officers do their jobs?' Maurantonio examined police and the importance of media influence, suggesting that 'we may gain an insight not only into the question of how meaning is made but also how meaning is made when the subjects of representation are the viewers themselves' (p. 6).

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the neglected roles and perspectives of police and their visual representations in factual documentaries. As outlined in the previous chapter, research undertaken for the study used the Symbolic Interactionism Theory, which was adopted because the micro-level approach was identified as the best way to extract information from participants during face-to-face interviews. A mixed methods approach was undertaken so that all perspectives of officer performance and opinions could be examined. When interviewing officers during the research phase, the conversations were designed in consideration of the theories and approaches of the Social Constructionism Theory, thereby ensuring that robust analysis could be conducted using the information obtained. This chapter will present a collective review of the research undertaken, the information obtained and the interpretation of the data. The research was undertaken using a variety of methods to extract as much information as possible from the questions asked. Much of the data collected was formulated into graphs for easy analysis and is presented in this chapter. The findings and recommendations are presented in Chapter 6.

The Research

The research collected for this body of work aimed to answer the question: 'Does the presence of the camera change the way police work?' As an insider and operational police officer, a preconceived idea was that it would be natural to work differently when in the presence of a camera. As discussed previously in this thesis, journalists

have drawn the same hypothesis regarding police officers and their responses when they are being filmed for a factual documentary. The core of this study is therefore a deductive analysis of the data collected in observational research, survey responses and one-on-one interviews.

Research for this project began by undertaking informal observations of the participant officers who were being filmed for a police documentary made for television. As the PFS for all commercially made products involving officers from the NSWPF, the author was in a uniquely placed as the PFS position involved watching, listening to and interacting with officers in the making of factual documentaries. It is important to recognise that these observations were undertaken as a way of researching the subject officers, how they interacted with their colleagues and the community. It consisted of general conversations while working and filming, and these conversations guided the direction of this study, its methods and approaches. Officers who were filmed for the *Beach Cops* program were part of this and, as such, they were advised of the method of study, and why it was being done. From time to time, officers were asked questions regarding the filming process and their opinions were sought regarding how they thought the television show might be perceived. Officers were very forthcoming in their conversations, which were both important to this study and personally interesting in this field of work. These were informal conversations that more closely resembled a general chat.

At the time, *Beach Cops*[33] was a new observational documentary to be screened on prime-time television, and the officers understood the importance of the program and how they might be perceived by the community, viewers and their colleagues. All participant officers were nervous, and for good reason: they wanted to do a good job

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[33] *Beach Cops* was produced on a shoestring budget to capture the beach lifestyle of one of Sydney's famous tourist locations. It intentionally only captured short engagements with people, which could immediately be put to air to prevent delays in productions. Due to the short production schedule and turnaround time for screening on television, complex and protracted jobs involving arrests were not filmed. Legal deeds prevent any arrest or investigation being screened until the court matters have been finalised and the 28-day appeal period has passed. Additionally, *Beach Cops* was set for prime-time, midweek viewing in a PG time slot. This prevented the screening of matters such as deaths, drug overdoses and suicides. Domestic violence continues to be a perennial problem in society. It remains a serious issue to combat and address. The presentation of domestic violence incidents, even with consent, carries too many risks for all parties involved and is therefore excluded from police observational documentaries of this nature in NSW. All police officers participating in the filming of factual documentaries are advised of the types of police work that are not filmed or included in factual documentaries.

and be seen as professional and competent by others. As such, they were keen to talk through what they would do at each job, and to seek reassurance from me that what they did and the decisions they made were correct. Competence and factuality seemed to be of great importance to the officers. They were more concerned with being seen to know their laws, police powers, policy and the requirements of them, rather than being seen to simply arrest people, which is a common occurrence in television shows such as *Cops*.

The period of observation of officers guided this research and allowed the author to make notes and use what was being seen and heard to form opinions and ideas of how the research should progress. As a police officer, the author had a preconceived opinion that officers acted differently when in the presence of cameras; however, the observational period proved less conclusive. Early evidence suggested that some officers 'acted' in front of the camera, telling jokes or 'war stories'[34] to perhaps come across well on camera. It was also seen to be a coping mechanism adopted by nervous officers. However, once the mode changed to policing involving formal interaction with the public, it appeared that the officers' demeanour also changed to be more professional. This was interpreted as 'switching on' and 'switching off', whereby officers regularly changed their manner depending on the situation and what standards of behaviour they felt were warranted. This switching on and switching off was also detected when officers returned to the police car or police station—areas and places they deemed private and away from members of the public. Hendy (2018, p. 9) used the terms 'switching on' and 'switching off' to describe how insider–insider researchers switch between being a police officer and being a researcher of police officers within their organisation; however, in this study the term is used to describe how officers modified their behaviour on camera and when having conversations with colleagues or, as Goffman (1959, p. 114) described it, 'front stage' and 'backstage'. Officers' behaviour changed to jovial, informal and relaxed when they were 'backstage'. The rewording of the original question set for this study, provided a benefit in understanding interpretations when drawing conclusions. The observational research proved that, without the capacity to ask additional questions or clarify situations, the net results of the evidence gathered could not truly provide a balanced

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[34] War stories are common among police and usually involve an element of embellishment to a real-life story or a situation that the officer has been faced with on the job.

review of the study. It further highlighted the need to undertake additional evidence-gathering and assisted in highlighting questions that required answering. At this point, the research moved to a mixed methods approach, and a survey was constructed.

Survey

A survey based on the Likert scale was constructed for the main data collection for this research. The value of this type of survey is that it obtains data relating to the degree to which the question being asked relates to the participant. This design is advantageous because it enables emotional attitudinal questions to be measured via a degree of rating, thereby allowing a similarity report to be obtained for use during the interview questions. All of the research types in this study were designed to elicit the opinions, thoughts, beliefs and perceptions of police officers as active participants on the *Beach Cops* factual television program.

Like the interviews, completion of the survey was voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any time. Surveys are routinely circulated within the NSWPF, and the challenge was to ensure the questions were easy to interpret and the questionnaire was short enough to encourage a significant response rate that would be beneficial to the study. The survey was designed with personal data collection questions at the beginning. This personal approach was seen as a way of drawing in respondents. It contained 22 questions that required brief consideration and selection from a set of predetermined answers. Most questions were feelings-based, which, when collated, provided a good overview of officer participation. Space was provided at the end for police to make comments if they wished, and many did. The comments provided valuable feedback regarding the film process (Annexure F presents the additional comments made by the research participants.) The Likert-type scale proved to be an ideal way to survey officers because it provided an opportunity, under anonymity, to detail negative experiences. As an insider–insider conducting this research, it was considered unlikely that the participating officers would express their negative views in an interview, especially given that the researcher was also responsible for all filming productions within the organisation. However, negative feedback is important because it provides opportunities to learn, and this was the first time the officers had been asked about their active participation in filming projects within the workplace.

Every officer who had participated in filming for commercial purposes in the preceding few years (n=429) was sent a hard copy survey via the NSWPF internal mail. Almost 32% of those officers returned the completed survey (n=136).

Overall Survey Statistics

Surveys	Sent	Returned
All productions	353	101
Beach Cops	76	35
Total	429	136

Surveys	Total sent	Total returned	Rate
Total	429	136	31.70%

Survey Return Rate

Program filmed for
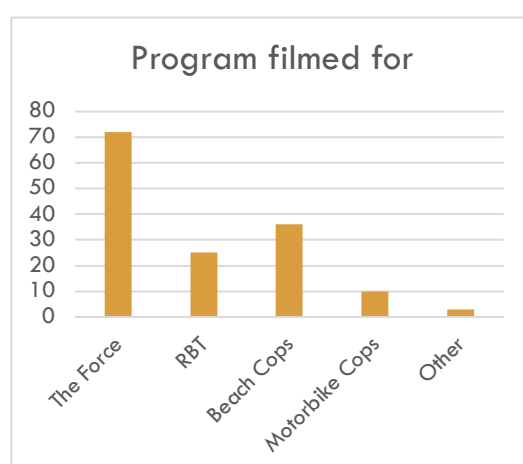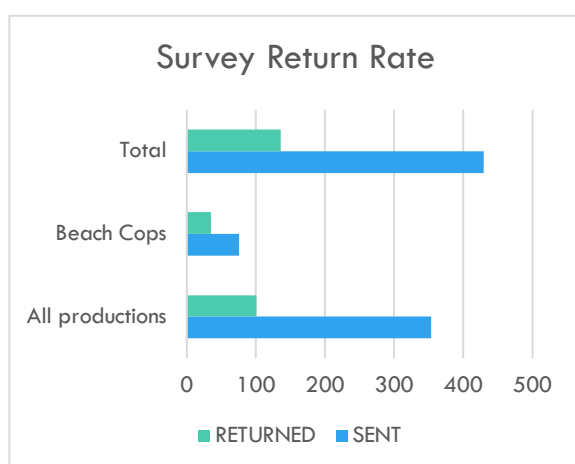
Survey Representativeness

Although the survey response rate was slightly lower than expected, the collection of returned surveys provided a depth of coverage from all four major productions being filmed with the NSWPF. It should be noted that some officers participated in multiple productions and therefore had a variety of experiences to draw upon when completing the survey. For example, almost every officer who was filmed for *Motorbike Cops* was also filmed for *RBT* because both productions used officers from the Highway Patrol Command. Additionally, several of those officers were filmed for *The Force* because some officers from the Highway Patrol Command were filmed undertaking duties related to detecting drug couriers on our major highways.

Survey Non-response

As discussed in the previous chapter, the return rate of the surveys was considered acceptable, although a higher rate was expected. It may be considered that the return rate may reflect the value that officers place on these types of filming programs. The rate of return of participant officers from *Motorbike Cops* and *Beach Cops* productions reflected around 50% of the participants' returns. This higher rate of return may be attributed to several factors: both shows were the latest productions undertaken and rated very well on television, and the strong professional relationship the author has with participants of those productions. Those officers were aware that the author was completing university research on factual documentaries; therefore, they may have felt a greater connection to assist in those studies.

The Force and *RBT* are older productions made in collaboration with the NSWPF. The majority of police who participated in filming *RBT* did so very unwillingly. Given that the show was made by a production company and not directly by a network (like the other shows), there was a greater push by producers to capture stories; therefore, there was a degree of pressure placed on officers to detect drink drivers. Highway patrol officers have a number of road-related priorities to target during their shifts, and given that *RBT* was an observational documentary, officers advised that they felt pressure to only target drink drivers during their shifts. This created a wedge between police and the production staff that could not be repaired, and the collaborative production was cancelled in NSW. In contrast, police who participated in *The Force* were generally specialist police, undercover operatives and detectives. The show generally captured larger or more serious or complex crimes; it was an opportunity for those officers to showcase their investigative work and bring criminals to justice. Filming with officers on *The Force* was usually captured over only one or two shifts. There was little opportunity to establish a personal connection with those officers. Additionally, the production ceased to be made prior to the commencement of this thesis; thus, there wasn't an opportunity to fully explain the research to staff, as well as the importance of their input. This may help explain the representativeness of participants from each of the four major productions in this research study.

The findings in this study provide a general overview of each question asked. A number of assumptions were made from the information provided in the surveys and

were clarified with other officers in the interviews. It was important for the research to draw upon the mixed methods approach and not just rely upon the statistical survey results gathered. Doing so may have led to incorrect conclusions as a result of perhaps overgeneralising the survey information.

There was a concern that respondents would simply choose the middle box for each question to complete the survey quickly; however, the allotment of questions and their placement within the survey was designed to prevent this from occurring. As the questions were feelings-based, they were designed to extract personal and individual responses, thereby allowing the respondent to take ownership of their answers. Of the 22 questions posed, several preconceived answers were expected, which would provide validation of the information previously collected. For example, many officers had previously declined to be part of the filming process, citing that they would be recognised outside of work or that they were considering a career in undercover work and therefore could not participate in any filming productions. This became a common trend in the filming process and inhibited production. Participation was voluntary—officers only participated if they gave express consent. Thus, it became important to verify with participants if they were recognised outside of the workplace so that future participants could be more reliably informed (regarding off-duty recognition) rather than making decisions on baseless information. The below graph overwhelmingly proves that officers are rarely identified outside of the workplace. It is important to note that the N/A responses are from officers who participated in filming but never made the final cut for television.

Have you been recognised outside of work because of your appearance on TV?
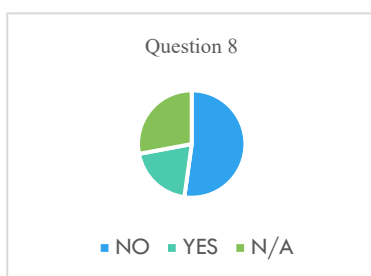
| No	Yes	N/A
71	27	38

Given that most officers were not identified outside of work, it was still concerning that a reasonable proportion of officers indicated that they had been identified. In hindsight, had this question been posed differently, it may have elicited a truer

response. This question was added to the list of questions to be posed for the interviews because it was important to correctly verify the question. To ensure the question was answered correctly by the respondents, they needed to understand the purpose of the question, which was to determine whether they had been recognised by <u>strangers</u> outside of work due to their television appearance. Of the 20 officers interviewed, only one indicated that they had been recognised by a stranger outside of the workplace. The rest of the officers said that only friends and family who personally knew them recognised them when the program screened on television. The validity of cross-checking information and conducting further research proved to be effective and was more reliable when clarified with officers. The main question was then reworded and asked 'Do you feel participating in the show may adversely affect your career prospects?' All officers overwhelmingly said no. Interestingly, one officer commented, *'It could restrict you if you wanted to do undercover, although I had a beard then and I don't now, so I already look different'.* Another officer said, *'Maybe if you want to go into UC work, but after a few years, everyone forgets about it; although there are re-runs'.*

The surveys proved to be a powerful tool to elicit critical information about officer participation; however, like the observational research undertaken, the survey results could not conclusively answer the main question of this study. The following question is an example of how an answer to a question could be manipulated either way to change or persuade the results. When asked whether officers worked differently when in the presence of the camera, the tabled results suggest that n=52 (no) and n=28 (yes); however, if the results are interpreted slightly differently, the results could be n=52 (no) and n=63 (yes). The net result and answer depended on how the respondent interpreted the question. The ability to redress questions and confirm or validate an answer would have provided a result of n=87 (no) and n=28 (yes). Given the statistical results of the survey, as well as the ability to view the statistics in a variety of ways, as shown above, it was important to clarify what officers gave meaning and weight to the worded rating of 'sometimes'.

Don't know	No	Sometimes	Yes
2	52	35	28

87

63
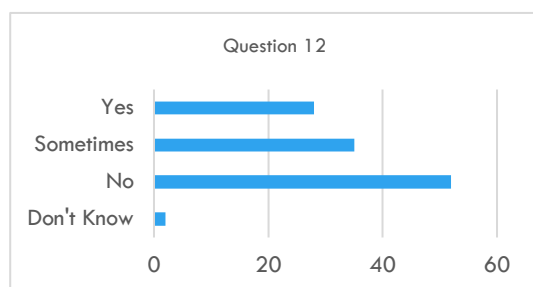
Question 12

The question raised above was vitally important to this study because it was directly linked to the main question posed for this body of work. The interviews provided an opportunity for the officers to analyse the question. One officer said, *'Yes a little bit, in that I did jobs more thoroughly and I was more articulate'*, while another stated, *'Yes, because we didn't go to domestics. We actively looked for the jobs which would be stories for you'*. Another officer observed: *'Nope, everything was exactly the same. I was careful on camera, but not different'*. The interviews allowed the officers to express themselves, and it became apparent that the true answer to the question of 'Do you feel that you conducted your work differently due to the presence of the camera?' was 'no'. An officer explained it in this way: *'Overall no. I have a conversation with someone and you forget about the cameras. I think nothing is different other than we explain our work and why we are taking certain action on camera'*. One officer said, *'No. We are just aware of what we say but we would do everything the same way'*, while another noted, *'You tend to forget the cameras are there although I was careful of what I said and how I looked. I didn't want to make an idiot of myself'*. Goffman (1959) observed 'that when an individual appears before others he will have many motives for trying to control the impression they receive of the situation' (p. 26).

Therefore, the outcome of this question revealed that officers did not work differently due to the presence of the camera. Upon following this up, it appears that many officers agreed with the question, as they did modify their behaviour when in the presence of the camera. After discussing the question at length and analysing the officers'

responses, it was clear that the officers occasionally performed their policing duties differently, modifying their on-camera behaviour when being filmed at work. However, they all advised that they presented themselves differently on camera both in terms of their appearance and in how they articulated themselves.

The following question was the main question raised for this thesis, and the results were overwhelmingly conclusive.

There was concern regarding the large number of officers who thought they did (or sometimes did) work differently with the presence of the camera, with a large number of the respondents agreeing with the question. For this reason, the question was again asked during the interviews. Each of the 20 officers who were interviewed answered the question with a definitive 'no'. Another explanation was, *'Nothing changed in terms of what I did*. One officer said, *'No, the end goal was the same'*, and another said, *'No, I don't think so. I was just conscious of what I said and how I said it'*. This question proved the importance of the mixed methods approach to this research. The ability to clarify questions provided an opportunity for officers to fully explain themselves.

Do you think your colleagues criticised your performance?

| Don't know	No	Sometimes	Yes
21	70	33	9

It is the job of the PFS to locate officers who are willing to participate in filming. It is often difficult to find those officers because, often, more senior officers advise against participation for a variety of reasons, most of which are opinion-based and not factually correct. For this reason, it was important to learn from participants what their colleagues thought of the production and what banter may have taken place in the police station. Most of the comments made by the interviewed officers were positive. A common description was, *'The general consensus was 50/50, they either liked it or hated it and thought we shouldn't be making these types of shows'*. Another officer

said, *'It was only friendly banter'*. However, I feel it was best summed up by this officer, who said, *'You will always have the knockers; you either want to be on it or you don't'*.

Manning (1978) argued that 'the policeman's self is an amalgam of evaluations made by the many audiences before whom he, as a social actor, must perform: his peers, his family, his immediate supervisors, and the higher administrators' (p. 10).

<u>In general, do you feel that police factual productions are a true representation of policing?</u>

Police film participants are advocates for the ongoing production process within the NSWPF. Without willing participants, there would be no show. Officers need to understand their role in the process, including how and why police organisations agree to participate in publicly televising and displaying their work on prime-time television. Some more general questions about filming police factual documentaries were asked in the surveys and again during the interviews. Once again, responses varied significantly between the surveys and the interviews. The below table suggests that most police did not view the shows as an accurate portrayal of police work, although they agreed that sometimes it was an accurate portrayal.
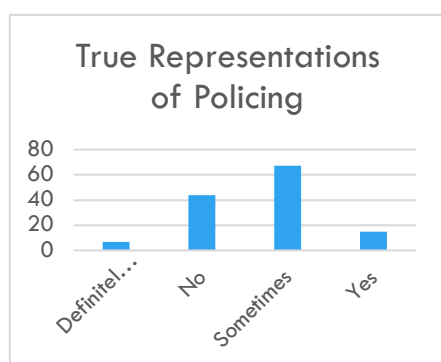
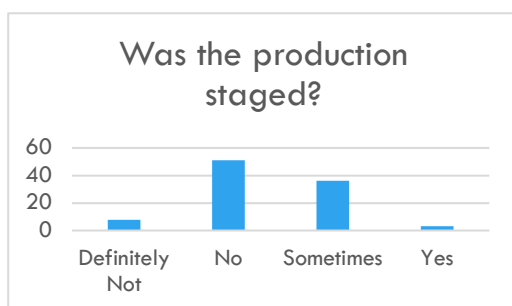| Definitely not	No	Sometimes	Yes
7	44	67	15
51		82	

Once the officers were interviewed, the answers became clearer. Every officer interviewed spoke for some time on this topic, clearly explaining themselves as if to take ownership of their participation. It was evident that a 'yes' or 'no' answer would not effectively answer this question. In the interviews, one officer said, *'Absolutely. People think all we do is give out tickets, but these types of shows, show how many warnings we give people'*. Another stated, *'Yes, but you don't see the paperwork. Obviously, there are stories that can't be shown because they are too gruesome and*

some families won't give consent'. Another officer said, *'No, because it didn't show all the domestics and self-harm incidents we go too. It did reflect the customer service side of our show. The saturation of our work is mental health and it's not shown on TV. It's every shift. Also, you don't see the boring paperwork side of things'.* Officers seemed to have the same opinions, which were best summed up by this officer's comment: *'It is as true as you can make it because you can only film certain jobs. I feel there is a lot that isn't covered due to privacy, like domestics, deceased, mental health, concerns for welfare and drug-type jobs. If you guys could film that then it would have been a more accurate representation of policing'.*

It is often suggested that reality television is scripted, guided and staged. Police factual productions have generally been seen as fly-on-the-wall types of documentaries. However, because they fall within the category of reality television, it was important to confirm the participants' perspective of how the production was produced by asking a series of related questions. Hallett and Powell (1995) stated that there is 'an increasing need on the part of organisations to control their public image through the media' and 'in particular to manage their presentation of self' (p. 105).

How do you feel about factual television being described as 'unreal TV'?

This question proved to be another area where the survey answers differed from those of the officers participating in the interviews. The answer to the closed question strongly indicated that officers felt that what was shown on television was an accurate portrayal of their work; however, it was concerning that a large number of officers felt that the production *was*, or *sometimes was*, staged. It was suspected that the 'yes' and 'sometimes' answers reflected the type of work undertaken by the officers during the filming process. As an insider, the author had first-hand knowledge and experience as to why the officers may have provided these answers; therefore, in order to tease out these beliefs the author needed to conduct a further exploration to clarify why the officers may have felt this way. The answer provided by all 20 interviewed officers was a definitive 'no'. They further described in great detail that police factual productions are real, accurate and a true reflection of the events recorded.

Definitely not	No	Sometimes	Yes
8	51	36	3

The nature and type of productions filmed with police need to tell a story, and each story needs to have a beginning, middle and an end. It was often the case, during the filming of police observational documentary *The Force*, that police investigators took action during what would become the middle part of the story. An example of this is a search warrant, where the initial stages of intelligence-gathering are not routinely filmed. When this occurred, the film crew would be required to set up the story by recreating the beginning. At these times, the officers' performance was that of actors and was staged for the cameras, sometimes months after the original incident. It was important that, in the interview process, officers were spoken to about these re-creations, because it was felt that this recreations did not contribute to the version of 'unreal TV' presented by other researchers. An officer said, *'No way, you couldn't fake anything we did on that show. It was practically live TV, but ok, it was edited for TV, but all the jobs are real'.* Another stated, *'Viewers get a broken-down version of what's happened but it's the truth; it's what happened. I think everyone did what they would normally do regardless of the cameras'.* And another said, *'No there is nothing significant that appears to change the story. It is very realistic with real jobs, real people and real situations. You never know what jobs you are going to be called to; you just can't make that stuff up. It's very real'.* One officer noted, *'It is basically what we do. It is recording an actual event that is happening but you just don't see all the paperwork and computer work we do afterwards'.* Many similar comments were made by the interviewed officers, and there was little variation between all of the interviewees.

Another topic discussed with officers during the interview process was in regard to the perceived benefits to the NSWPF as a result of participating in crime-type, made-for-television productions. Two similar questions relating to this topic were asked in the survey and then again during the interviews.

Do you think that the NSW Police Force benefits from factual police TV?

As an insider–insider, the author was aware that the NSWPF charged for participation in commercial services; therefore, an obvious benefit would be recouping that fee for service. Interestingly, not one of the interviewed officers mentioned a financial incentive as a benefit; instead, they focused on community relations, instilling educational messages, promoting police work and portraying police as human. One comment was: *'Yes, it improves community interaction and having that trust, allowing them to interact with police like reporting crime becomes easier for them. They have a level of trust with us because they have seen us on TV. It gives people an insight into what we do'.* Another officer said: *'Yes it portrays us as humans and we are just like anyone else. It humanises us. We have a joke and a laugh like other people do in their jobs. Some people just see us as a uniform. I think these shows break down barriers and make us approachable. Shows us as fun and as serious. It did good things'.* Another stated, *'Yes, it shows the police side of the work, not the five seconds that a passer-by sees'.* Lastly, *'I think it's good that the community get to see what we have to deal with. The public gets a real idea of what policing is'.*
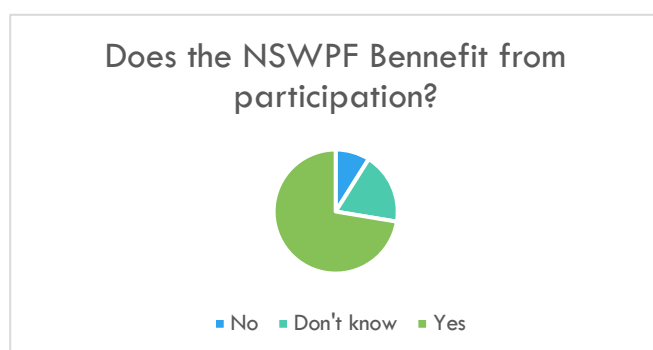
No	Don't know	Yes
12	25	97

Do you think the viewer learns something about police work from watching an episode of a police factual production?
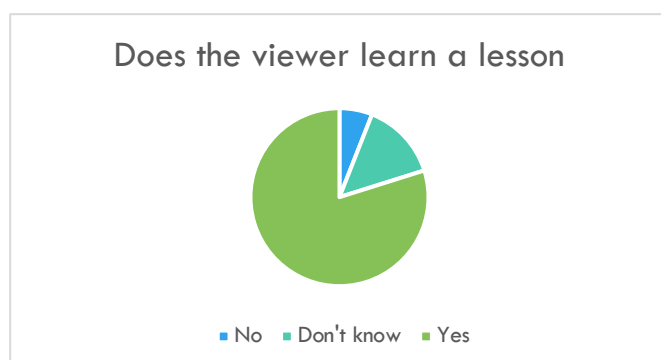
No	Don't know	Yes
8	19	107

Interviewed officers responded with a variety of answers; notably, every officer believed that factual documentaries delivered some type of learning experience to the viewer. Comments suggested that viewers learn about police work, the human side of police officers, the consequences of poor decisions and the harsh realities of policing. Responses to this question were framed similarly to the previous question. Cavender and Fishman (1998) argued that 'reality programming blends information and entertainment' (p. 12), and that officers are aware that they can shape the views and ideology of policing. Thus, they should take advantage of the situation by carefully constructing their words when providing on-camera delivery of information to viewers to explain their actions.

The survey was a good way to collect important and necessary information for this research study. The answers allowed the author to gain a better understanding of what police thought of their participation in the filming process. A clear benefit was the anonymity of respondents, which allowed them to include negative experiences in their responses. This new information was welcomed, although it was statistical score-based information drawn from the Likert-scale questionnaire. There was an obvious shortfall in detailed and descriptive information, which signalled a requirement to conduct more information gathering. For that reason, one-on-one interviews were also part of the research process.

Interviews

The one-on-one interview process proved to be a valuable tool in gathering information about the personal experiences of officers who were filmed. The ability to clarify information provided in surveys enabled the officers to express themselves freely without being judged by others. The initial consideration was to conduct interviews in small focus groups; however, one-on-one interviews were considered more personal and allowed officers to deliver a more detailed experience. Having applied ethical considerations to the process, it was decided that to prevent officers from feeling intimidated by others, or simply agreeing with other officers in an open forum, conducting private interviews would be more beneficial for the participants and the efficacy of the study results.

The interview process began with obtaining verbal and written consent from the interviewee. Each candidate was provided with an overview of the research process, along with an outline of the information sought and how it was going to be used. Permission was obtained from each participant to record the interview, and an explanation was provided regarding the measures that were in place to ensure the secure storage of their information. The interviewees were given the authors personal contact details and advised that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

The questions were set out in a specific order. The initial questions were about the interviewees' personal background and contributed to building the 'model officer', which is detailed later in this chapter. These open-ended questions allowed the officers to open up and discuss their personal family backgrounds and reasons for wanting to become a police officer. It was an ideal way to start engaging with the officers, and it also explains why each interview was significantly protracted. That said, it was important that the participants felt comfortable; the more they talked, the more information was obtained. It should be noted that the 20 interviewed officers were given a number between one and 20. Any references and quotes they provided are referenced as their interview number. Their name and interview number remain confidential. Each interview began with a generic question.

<u>Tell me about your experience of being filmed at work.</u>

The comments made by the officers were overwhelmingly positive. The first officer (3) interviewed said, *'Loved it; absolutely loved it. I was apprehensive at first. I didn't know what to expect at first but right from the get-go, it helped having a great crew one who was an ex-cop. I thought it was great; people responded well and the community seemed to like it; they tell me they saw me on TV; they call me Hollywood. I had a great time and I thought it was unreal'.* Another officer (5) said, *'It's funny seeing yourself on TV. It was nice, my family and friends liked it and they were interested in my day-to-day activities and what goes on behind the scenes. It was a nice experience'.* Other officers stated, *'I didn't mind it; it turned out better than I thought it would (11). I enjoyed it, it was something different'*, and *'It was fine. I didn't have a problem and it didn't affect anything or how I worked. Others said it would be fun so I put my hand up (14). Everyone has a camera now anyway'.* Manning (1978, cited in Hallett and Powell, 1995, p. 107) explained that 'the policeman judges himself

against the ideal policeman as described in police occupational lore and imagery. What a good policeman does is the omnipresent standard'. Therefore, officers have a notion that they must live up to this self-imposed standard, whatever that may be.

Every officer interviewed described their experience as fun and positive; no one said they hated it or described any bad experiences. There may have been two reasons for this:

1. Officers who did not agree with the filming process probably did not participate in any filming, which was undertaken voluntarily.
2. Officers who participated but did not like the process may not have completed a survey or responded to requests seeking volunteers for participation in the interviews.

As the PFS, the author was aware that many officers were not supportive of the filming process and therefore did not participate in any productions. For this reason, it is more than likely that the officers who were interviewed were advocates for police film productions. An open and honest answer about their experiences was provided in this way: *'I didn't mind it; it was a bit of fun. It did impact our work especially when trying to deal with drunk people in The Corso.[35] They were interfering with us and trying to get on camera, but the people we were interacting with may not have wanted to be on camera which made our job harder. When we weren't on The Corso, we had the opposite with people who didn't want to be on camera getting aggressive'* (8).

The factuality of police factual documentaries was described earlier in this chapter; however, it was apparent that research would benefit from asking participants if they thought that *Beach Cops* was a true representation of their police officer role. All interviewed officers believed that everything published on the program accurately reflected their work as police officers; however, they reiterated that it would be a closer depiction if it included the *'big jobs'*. Comments included, *'I felt it showed exactly what we do. It's not made up; it is what it is'* (14), *'100%'* (15), *'What was shown was pretty accurate'* (17) and *'It's the same, it's real'* (4).

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[35] The Corso is a street in Manly, NSW. It runs from Manly Wharf on Sydney Harbour to Manly Beach. It is mostly a pedestrian walkway flanked by shops, cafes and pubs. It is a policing hot-spot for the Northern Beach Police and frequently appeared in the police factual documentary *Beach Cops*.

All officers described their experience similarly and, despite requesting officers not to refrain from mentioning bad experiences, they seemed to only have positive recollections of their filming participation. Listening to and accepting negative feedback from police participants was important for this research; additionally, it would help in the professional development of the PFS role and to improve the filming process within the organisation.

The interviews proved to be important in confirming the data gathered in the surveys and confirming information with clarifying questions. The interviews also created opportunities to ask questions that were not asked in the survey. It is important to note that the questionnaires were designed at the beginning of the research process and, as new information came to light, more questions were asked of the participants. The survey asked several questions relating to how officers policed with the presence of a film crew; however, the actual question of the study was not directly asked. In designing the survey, it was felt that such a direct question was unlikely to draw an accurate result and therefore would not be beneficial to this study. Instead, similarly worded questions were asked in the questionnaire, and the direct question that forms the main body of work for this thesis was asked during the interview process. Gathering the information in this way meant that participants could fully explain their answers, thereby confirming their reasoning.

Does the presence of the camera change the way police work?

For clarity, the research question was directly asked of the interviewed officers. All 20 respondents answered 'no'. One officer (18) said, *'At the end of the day we still have a job to do and we do our job to the fullest and get the same result in the end'*. Another (5) stated, *'I tried to be more articulate, but I still worked the same'*. Another officer (7) said, *'I noticed some mannerisms of myself. I noticed I slouched a lot. And I noticed I said "At the end of the day" quite a lot. You definitely judge yourself'*. A comment from a more senior participant officer (9) was, *'No, but I was surprised at how good some of the youngsters were and how they presented themselves on camera'*. One officer (18) provided a good summary: *'Self-awareness was the key; so, I would change the way I conduct myself'*. Another participant (11) said, *'No, but I thought some did a good job and handled themselves well'*. Lastly, an officer (17) said, *'No way. Policing is so different; you never know what is going to happen next'*.

Does the presence of the camera change the way police work?
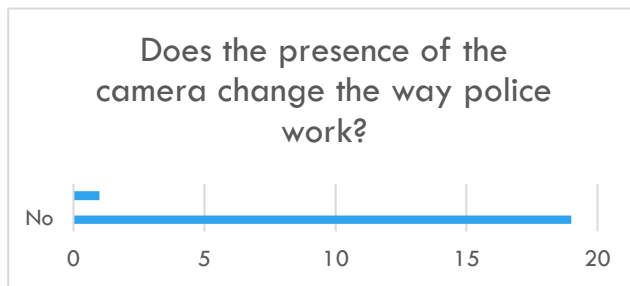
No	Yes
19	1

Another preconceived area of concern raised in the surveys related to performance. Some officers declined filming participation, believing their performance would be adversely judged by their work colleagues. Goffman (1959) suggested that 'one set of individuals will be concerned with testing the unapparent characteristics and qualities of work accomplishments is another set of individuals, and this other set will be concerned with giving the impression that their work embodies these hidden attributes' (p. 233). Goffman described this as part of his 'dramaturgical perspective', whereby the art of impression management is adopted to convey capability. There was concern with the large number of officers who felt their performance was criticised by their colleagues. This question was added to the interviews to determine what others were saying and how that feedback affected the participants.

Is there anything that disappointed you about *Beach Cops*?

Most officers made a short comment that they were happy with the production but disappointed that it did not show the more serious jobs that police on the Northern Beaches attend. One officer (7) said, *'It's just that they didn't show the big jobs. There was a broad range of policing that isn't shown on TV and the community's perception of what police do can be guided by those shows. And so, the seriousness of what we do isn't well known to the public'.* Another (14) said, *'Some police from other PACs would criticise us saying we are not very busy and always by the beach but our demographics are different and we are busy in a different way to other Commands. The other thing is the types of jobs we do most often are mental health, domestics and deceased and none of those are shown on* Beach Cops. *I understand why they can't be shown, but because those jobs are left out, it doesn't truly reflect the work we do and gives the viewers a different impression of what policing is like on the Northern Beaches'.* Similarly, an officer (15) said, *'The feedback I got was that all we seem to*

do is drink coffee and drive by the beach all day because it doesn't look like we do any real police work. That wasn't our fault, the show couldn't show all the big stuff'.

<u>Can anyone participate in *Beach Cops*?</u>

As a PFS for the NSWPF, viewers of the show and other police often ask how officers are selected to be filmed for the show. One commonly asked question was: Do you search the ranks for good-looking police? In their view, officers who participated in the show looked appealing. Although the author knew this was not the case, the question was included during the interview process as a way of closing the loop on officer participation. Every officer interviewed was asked if participation was open to any and all police, and they conclusively answered 'yes'. Some added comments like, *'Everyone had the opportunity to do it' (7).* Another said, *'Yes, although some didn't want to, but I see that as a missed opportunity (14). Others had concerns they would cop some flack'.* Additionally, an officer stated, *'Yes, everyone who put their hand up got to have a go' (11).*

<u>The career police officer: It is true that people who become cops stay cops forever</u>

Goffman's approach to the interpretivist theory suggests that front and backstage performances by individuals are a way of life adopted by police. A discussion took place with interviewed officers regarding each individual's background, traits and career progression. The outcomes of those discussions and the modelling from the survey data collected are presented below.

A significant factor for consideration relative to this theory and its application to policing is the way police speak or, more commonly referred to as 'cop talk'. As an insider and veteran police officer, this was a difficult question to discuss, because social theorists suggest that the way police speak and act is integrated into the human side of the officer, and therefore 'cop talk' becomes part of everyday life. It was important to recognise the difference between language that was specific to police officers and language used in everyday conversation by the public. Not surprisingly, all interviewed officers agreed that police have their own language and use it as a way of communicating messages in a secret or encrypted format. One officer (14) said, *'It is how we communicate with one another. We know what we are saying to each other; it's ours. We can talk in front of others and they won't know what we are talking*

about'. Others explained that they talk using a variety of acronyms. They suggested that many junior officers who use them regularly probably do not even know what they mean. Another officer (12) said, *'It's good because punters have no idea what we are talking about, which can be helpful especially if I am talking to someone we don't know and I ask my officer-sider to do a CNI.*[36] *Even other government organisations have no idea what we are talking about in fact sheets for court, for example, DVs (domestic violence) and PINOPs' (person in need of protection)*. All officers who were interviewed talked about the use of police language being used in acronym form. Unlike their US counterparts, police in NSW do not use numbers when responding to jobs; instead, they use an acronym. For example, 10-4[37] is simply 'copy' in NSW. One officer (15) said, *'I use the word "copy" so much that it has become part of my everyday vernacular. When my wife asked me to do something, my reply is usually "copy"'*.

A thematic deductive analysis was used as an approach to draw out themes and patterns from the interviewees. During the interviews, we discussed policing styles and influences. Goffman (1959) observed that impression management is unconsciously undertaken by 'performers' or, in this case, police officers. Goffman (1959) said that 'individuals often foster the impression that the routine they are presently performing is their only routine or at least their most essential one' (p. 56). During the interview process, officers were given an opportunity to freely discuss their performance. They were highly critical of themselves at this time, suggesting things like *'needing to have their teeth fixed' (2), 'need to express themselves better'(18)* and *'need to lose weight' (6)*. Senior members made several comments about junior staff— mostly about their ability—and were surprised at how well the officers presented themselves on camera and how professional they were when dealing with difficult people. Goffman (1959) explained that 'the performance of an individual in a front region may be seen as an effort to give the appearance that his activity in the region maintains and embodies certain standards' (p. 110). Being critical of oneself can be considered normal in everyday life, and Reiner (2010) suggested that 'cultures develop as people respond in various meaningful ways to their predicament as constituted by the network of relations they find themselves in' (p. 116). Reiner described police

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[36] CNI is short for criminal names index. Every person registered on the police system has a CNI.
[37] Police 10 codes can be located at https://copradar.com/tencodes/

officers as blue-collar workers in middle-class society who value rules and common decency; they are chiefly representatives of the community. A review of the interviewed officers' backgrounds reflected this sentiment, showing them to be tradespeople, sportspeople and many others who had a variety of casual jobs before becoming police officers. Reiner further described the police force as a type of paramilitary organisation, whereby officers enjoy working with rules, support discipline, generally have a conservative outlook on life and live with high standards of behaviour, thereby supporting the moral and ethical codes they have sworn to uphold. Reiner's observations remain valid today and are reflected in the results of this study.

Almost all officers who were interviewed explained that their reason for becoming a police officer was based on the value of the position within the community and stated that they had always wanted to be a cop. Berger and Luckmann (1966) suggested that 'identity is formed by social processes and has a dialectical relationship with society' (p. 194). Some officers described how they had delayed their application to gain some life skills rather than joining straight out of school, while others said they had an interest in criminology or the military. Only one officer (18) advised that he *really didn't know what to do'* after leaving school, and he thought that becoming a police officer would be good because it provided different career path opportunities. This discussion led to a conversation about what influenced officers to join the police force. Most interviewees nominated a friend or relative who was a police officer and a role model for them growing up, and several others described an experience with police that influenced them to join the force. Reiner (2010) claimed that policing was a way of life, and that people who became police officers stayed in the occupation for their entire career, despite having the ability to be more financially successful in other occupations. When the interviewed officers were asked about their career longevity, they all gave the same answer— *'forever'*—providing full support to Reiner's claim.

It was important that this research explore the participant officers' connection to police factual documentaries. In association with the original research question, and following on from statements made by judges and journalists regarding suspected overzealous police performances when being filmed in the workplace, officers were asked if they regularly watched police factual documentaries such as *Cops*, and if those types of productions influenced their policing style. Every officer interviewed stated

that they were aware of and had watched a variety of those police-style shows; however, not one officer said they were a regular viewer of any police factual documentary. All officers stated that they had watched the episodes of *Beach Cops* and enjoyed watching the reruns when shown. Many officers nominated fictional police productions—particularly the Australian production of *Blue Heelers*—as a regularly viewed television show. These results are particularly interesting because producers of factual documentaries often sell their idea to make police television shows as a way of helping police organisations to actively recruit officers. This was also highlighted in the literature review, whereby several police organisations provided policing services for free, believing that the net gain would be an increase in recruitment and a positive public relations strategy. Thus, when the officers were asked if police television shows influenced their decision to become a cop, it was not surprising that all officers answered 'no'. Even those who watched police television shows explained that their desire to become a police officer was not due to television characters or role models, and had no effect on their decision to join the NSWPF. Maurantonio (2012) drew a similar comparison with an officer interviewed in her study, saying, 'a TV show doesn't make you want to become this job. It's something you're born with. It's something you're definitely born with … It's something you've wanted to do since you were a young kid' (p. 11).

Senior Constable David Gilligan and Nicole Townsend were both regular participants on Beach Cops *and possess all the internal qualities, traits and attributes held by officers who support being filmed in the workplace. Images: Courtesy Channel 7.*

Although the interviews were conducted individually, many of the officers described their experiences in similar ways. When asked what viewers might think of policing after watching television shows like *Beach Cops*, almost all officers described their work as *'fun'* and said that the public see the *'human side of policing'*. One officer (3)

said, *'It shows us as real; we are not stuntmen, we are real people, with real emotions'.* Another officer (11) stated, *'Lots of people want to be cops and* Beach Cops *shows the everyday work of a police officer on the Northern Beaches'*. However, some officers had a different view: *'I was disappointed that* Beach Cops *didn't show all the different types of jobs we do, we go to a lot of domestics and a lot of mental health jobs which are long and protracted and often don't have a good outcome' (2)*; *'There are quite a lot of self-harm jobs and suicides and I understand you can't show that on TV' (12)*; *'You had one story of police delivering a death message, but it didn't truly reflect how much of that type of work we do' (2)*; and *'We go to so many domestics, every shift we go to domestics (13). I wish there was a way we could show the public how often police go to these jobs and how long these jobs take us. It really is the one job we do the most but, because it wasn't on* Beach Cops*, people don't know that'*. One officer (7) said, *'The reality of policing is not all the fun stuff; there is a broad range of policing not shown on TV. I was really proud of myself; I have confidence in my abilities … I wasn't acting'*. Reiner (2010, p. 120) obtained similar comments from officers, who described policing in the eyes of others as a mission that was 'fun, challenging and exciting', conceding that people often overlooked 'the mundane reality of everyday policing, which is boring, messy, petty, trivial and venal'. In this study, an officer (10) said, *'Unfortunately the show only captures a small part of what we do; it shows the feel-good stories. It is real but it also captured some of the clowns who acted up to the cameras which were inhibiting when we were trying to do our work'*. However, one officer (8) was not as supportive of the filming experience: *'I felt the film crew interfered with me doing my job. I had to tell them to leave. I had to pick and choose my jobs to elicit stories, but not focus on jobs that were lockups because they probably couldn't be shown on TV'*. Another officer (9) said, *'I policed differently when I was being filmed. I was always careful of what I said and how I said it'*.

The interviews were initially conducted as an addendum to the information collected from the surveys; however, the information gathered from the interviews was highly detailed and provided a personal account of the filming process of each officer. The survey data collected were thorough and were able to be converted to statistics and used to create the model officer; however, the information provided from the interviews turned out to be more helpful. Only the officers who were filmed for *Beach Cops* were interviewed; therefore, the information they provided only accounts for

participation in that production. The information delivered in this pilot study may prompt others to conduct a wider study in this area.

Signs and Symbols

Berger and Luckmann (1966) explained that the social construction of reality includes communication via the use of signs and symbols. A variety of signs and symbols can be used to identify police, such as a pistol, handcuffs, uniform, stripes/rank, cap, badge, car, police station, baton, OC (oleoresin capsicum)/pepper spray, taser and radio; however, all of these can also be attributed to other occupations or organisations.
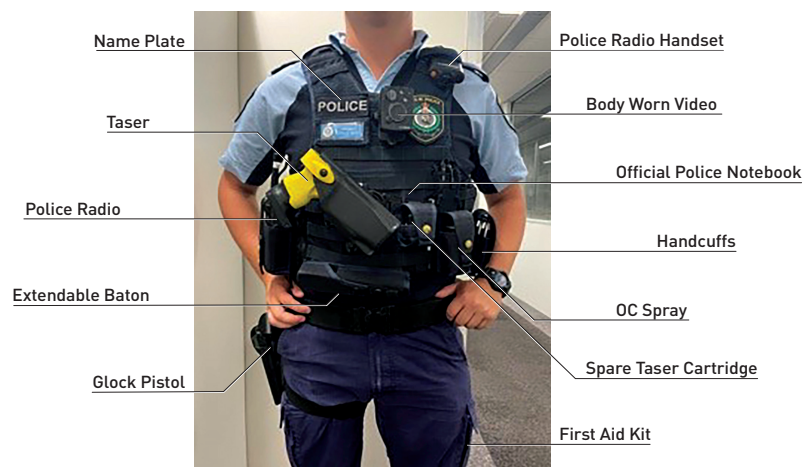
The uniform and weapons worn by officers of the NSWPF.
Image captured by the author February 2021

However, there are two symbols associated with the police that, when sighted, conjure up the image of a police officer in one's mind. The chequered band and the blue revolving light are the most broadly recognised police signs adopted by police organisations worldwide.

Images captured by the author February 2021

Like the Nike swoosh and the golden arches of McDonalds, the blue revolving light is instantly recognised as a sign that police are nearby. More recently, the single blue revolving light has been replaced with alternate flashing red and blue lights. Regardless of the change, the single blue light remains a sign in terms of the validity of Berger and Luckmann's theory.

The chequered band is another international sign of policing. Chief Constable Sillitoe of Glasgow introduced the Sillitoe Tartan in the UK in the 1930s to set police apart from other service organisations. Although it can differ in the number of rows (usually three but sometimes two or four) and also in colour, the chequered band has been adopted by many police organisations, particularly in Commonwealth nations such as Australia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands and Fiji. Even when it appears without the word 'Police', as on crime scene tape, it signifies the presence of police. Although it is not widely used in the US, it is acknowledged as an international sign of policing and needs no further explanation as to its meaning.

Model Officer

Skolnick (1966 cited in Reiner, 2010, p. 118) pioneered the 'working personality' of a police officer. In a theme similar to that of Reiner's study, some of the data collected for this project was used to create a 'model officer', which describes the personal attributes that separate officers who are more likely to participate in filming programs from those who refrain from, or who venomously decline, participation. This analysis can be likened to Reiner's *Cop Culture* (2010, p. 119), whereby he deduced the role of policing and suggested that police officers highly value their sense of community, want to protect others, consider themselves 'good guys' and go to work with like-minded people who share the same beliefs.

Part of the desired outcomes for this research was to identify all of the elements that are needed to create a model officer. The aim of this was to use the model officer as a guide to assist the PFS to easily identify and recruit officers who were more likely to voluntarily participate in filming projects. Before the research was undertaken, it was concluded that in the NSWPF, officers who had a registered number[38] of 44000 or

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[38] The term 'registered number' is used in the NSWPF to describe what is more commonly known as an 'employee number'.

higher were more likely to agree to participate, and officers with a registered number between 35000 and 44000 would highly consider participation, leaving one to conclude that an officer with a registered number below 35000 would be the most unlikely to provide consent to actively participate in on-camera documentaries. The reasoning behind this theory is that more experienced officers (those with lower numbers) were generally older and did not grow up in a world of technology or reality television. They tend to be more self-aware of their abilities and critical of those who choose to participate. Older officers are more likely to work in specialist areas and feel that these types of reality television shows are silly and unnecessary. They are largely concerned about being judged by others and recognised for their television performance. Another significant reason behind their veto is the dismal failure of the first factual documentary by the NSWPF, *Cop it Sweet*, as explained in Chapter 3. The damage done by that program still exists today, 25 years after the fact. It is important to recognise that a critical factor in the model officer is shared trust between the participant officer and the PFS. The data gathered for the design of the model officer were taken from the surveys. The first part of the survey asked for non-identifiable personal information, and these details largely created the model. As an insider–insider, the author already knew the participant officers' registered numbers because these numbers are allocated to individual employees and are used via internal email to communicate with each other. Personal details such as officer's names were known, however those details were not asked in the survey because the results were anonymous and the collection of names was not required and would serve no purpose in the data collection plan. For the same reason, registered numbers could not be requested on the survey because they would identify the respondents. Therefore, a variety of generic questions was asked, so that the answers would provide enough information, although it also required some investigative work, which was easily undertaken as an insider–insider for this research project. It is important to remember that the survey was circulated in 2018, and the responses need to be measured in that period.

The structure of the model officer consisted of the data collected below. A précis of the design is:

- male
- senior constable
- nine years' service
- born in 1983 (35 years of age)
- joined the police force around 2009
- 26 years of age when joining the police force
- participated in three or more filming shifts.

These characteristics apply to NSW police officers; however, they could easily be applied to other police forces due to their generic nature of transferability. The data collection plan is as follows.
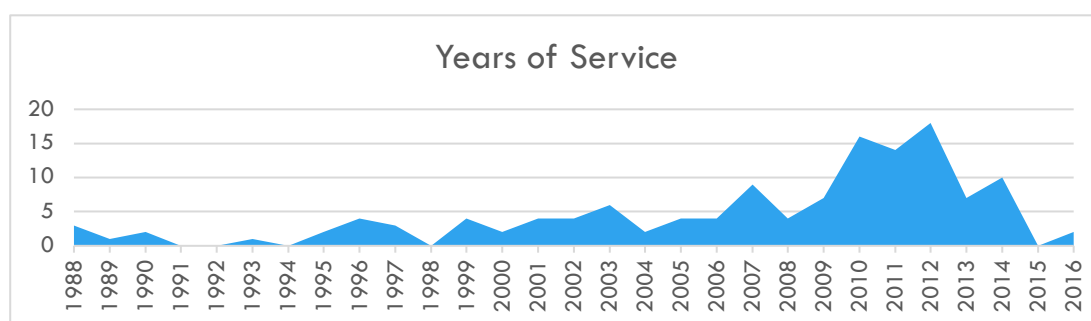
What is your rank?
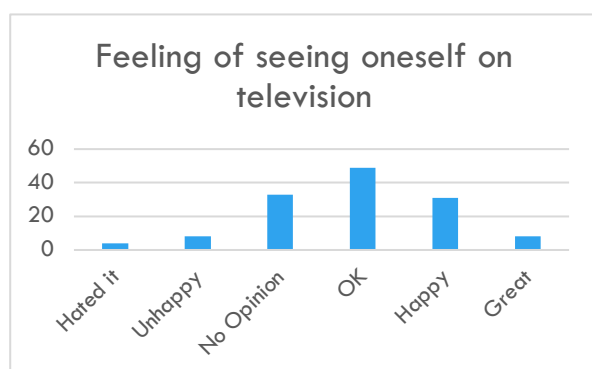
Chart Title
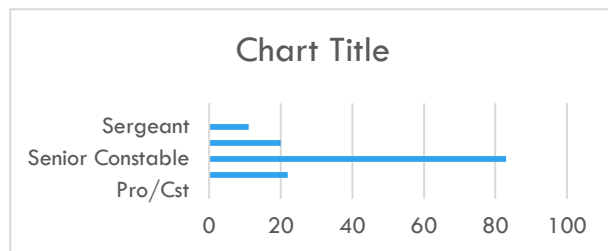
What is your year of birth?

Year of Birth
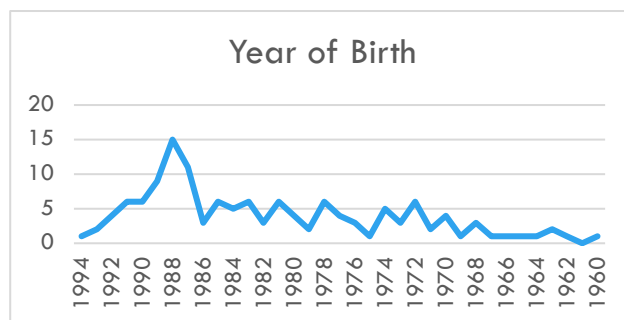
What is your gender?
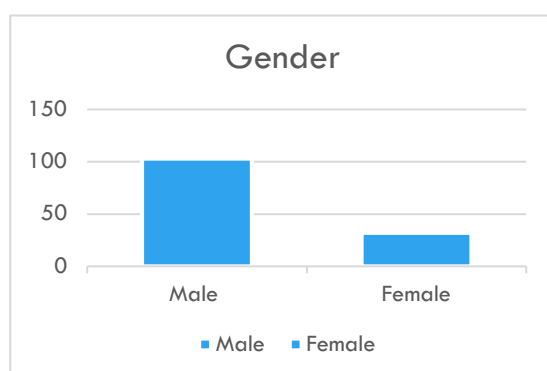
When did you graduate from the Police Academy?

How did you feel about seeing yourself on television?

Conclusion

This chapter provided an account of all data collected for this study. It showed how adopting a mixed methods approach to gathering information was not only necessary to fill the gaps in the information required, but also provided an opportunity to clarify misinformation, which may have delivered a very different outcome had the participants not also been subjected to the interview process. In essence, the interviews provided definitive and conclusive information. That said, the data collected from the

surveys was also very important. The surveys were far-reaching, which meant that a more holistic or greater depth of information was received. The survey information returned important statistics, which assisted in the creation of the model officer. This useful formula can be adopted by counterparts in other Australian jurisdictions to guide and assist them in selecting the right staff when making factual documentaries.

The value of the information presented in this chapter can be used and converted by others to answer questions that are not specifically related to this study, such as how police television shows may affect or assist in recruitment. As discussed in Chapter 2, the CSI effect was believed to have aided the recruitment of female staff into crime scene and forensic roles. Television producers have always pitched their shows as identifying recruitment as a major return on investment for participation.

The mixed methods approach to the data collection proved to be invaluable for the insider–insider research. Although it also highlighted limitations in the data collection when preconceived opinions and conclusions may be present. The discussion regarding insider–insider research demonstrated that barriers to form new opinions potentially to control the direction of research was possible, although it could also falsify the net results.

It is important to recognise that this study represents a pilot study in this area of research. The survey information collected was good, although a larger representative sample might have changed the results in some areas. Additionally, the decision to only interview officers from one factual program was made to restrict a plethora of information from being gathered; however, it now appears that a wider collection of information might have delivered different viewpoints for the questions discussed. Participant officers from the *Beach Cops* production often provided similar answers to the questions. A larger study involving officers from a variety of productions may be more conclusive.

Interestingly, and not purposely sought as part of this research, were the continual comments made by officers suggesting that police factual documentaries such as *Beach Cops* had misrepresented their capabilities by deliberately not including larger, more serious, types of police work in the production series. Officers clearly stated: *'it didn't show the big jobs we attended'*. These 'big jobs' included incidents of domestic

violence, mental health/concerns for welfare and suicides, which officers regarded as core work routinely undertaken by them. These jobs are clearly community-related and require officers' empathy, far from the general police style of 'locking 'em up'. This has perhaps been a shift since Reiner's (2010, p. 121) study of *Cop Culture*, where 'locking up crooks' was seen 'winning'.

Turning to the original question: Does the presence of the camera change the way police work? The informal period of observing officers appear to answer affirmatively; however, as an insider–insider, it was recognised that the officers should provide details of their assumptions, as they were the active participants being judged. The survey responses were varied and, when interpreted, inconclusive. As this question was critical to the outcome of the study, it required greater discussion during one-on-one interviews, with the collective results requiring in-depth analysis. Interestingly, and a lesson learned in this study, was that a closed question will not necessarily deliver an accurate response. Analysis of the answers provided in the interviews showed that the answer was neither 'yes' or 'no'. Officers were perplexed by the question and careful not to implicate themselves either way. They provided reasoning for their answer, which ultimately determined that, yes, they did work differently due to the presence of the camera, but only in terms of being more articulate and presenting themselves better. Their police work and actions taken were not affected by the presence of the camera crew. This important distinction was thoroughly explicated by each officer.

Despite all the data gathered for this study, it is noteworthy to report that police officers themselves fit within Goffman's analytical context of presenting themselves as a dramaturgical performers. Goffman's theory is directly applicable to police officers; once they don their uniform, they are seen to put on a performance, albeit unintentional, officers tend to act differently or as described by Goffman 1959, p. 77 '(an) individuals unselfconscious response to the facts of his situation'. This may be part of impression management or may simply be part of a role subconsciously adopted by officers as they perform their role of a uniformed officer. Yet this is perhaps a performance not recognised by individual officers as noted by Berger and Luckmann (1966 p. 33) where 'everyday life presents itself as a reality interpreted by men'.

Having now presented the data and provided statistical responses and analysis of the answers given to each question, the following chapter provides an interpretation of the results and explores the thesis question in greater detail.

Chapter 6: A Different Future Suggested for Police Factual Documentaries

The previous chapter presented the information and data gathered while researching this thesis. It uncovered a statistical analysis of the survey responses that aided in creating the model officer and, in doing so, presented evidence to support the questions and hypotheses raised. Importantly, the chapter outlined why a mixed methods approach to this research was important and necessary to reach conclusions from the information gathered. Many graphs and charts were presented to support the information obtained, and they showed how the interview process was required to tease out thoughts and more issues about the original question set for this research. Of note were the limitations of being an insider–insider in this research. The true benefit of being an insider was in gaining access to police officers; however, it came with the added complexity of deep-rooted preconceived thinking regarding the hypothesis that police did, perhaps, work differently when in the camera's presence. This was overcome by adopting a structure for the mixed methods approach to encompass a full-circle investigation of the thesis question. The chapter presented a complete list of the survey results, which will allow others, who are not insiders, to extract contemporary information for use in other similar policing studies, such as how police factual documentaries might affect police recruitment.

This chapter will discuss the analysed information and place it into context with support from the theoretical framework. It explores how the initial question set for this body of work required restructuring and clarification with interviewees to articulate the results and interpret their meaning. Having now undertaken that additional work, there is confidence that the information presented within this study is reliable, accurate, meaningful and methodical. This chapter will now present the research findings and detail suggested directions for future research.

This study is the first of its kind in this area and is therefore considered a pilot study. Although numerous studies of factual television programs have been previously undertaken, this is thought to be the first time that police officers who were participants in observational documentaries have been consulted about their perspectives regarding the construction of their visual images. This neglected angle was explored with a small sample of police officers from the NSWPF. It is noted that a larger sample size might

have delivered a different statistical analysis; however, the issue is how to gain a larger sample size. Since 2014, fewer than 500 officers have participated in filming for a police documentary in NSW. Of those, there would be a significant number of staff whose images did not appear on television. There would also be a number of officers who probably did not enjoy their filming experience, and who would therefore be unlikely to volunteer to take part in a wider study on this topic. Given these issues, it may be prudent to include another jurisdiction in a larger study, such as Victoria Police, who also operate an FTVU and conduct filming duties in a similar way. The point is that this study has identified that the officers who took part in this enquiry provided very different viewpoints to similar, and somewhat older, studies previously undertaken in the US. A broader Australian study incorporating a more statistically representative sample size may validate the modern perspective of police officers regarding the construction of their visual images and how they are represented on television.

A note of importance to this study, is the demographic sample represented in the *Beach Cops* program. As noted in chapter 5, officers from the Northern Beaches Police Area Command were interviewed about their performance and appearance in the *Beach Cops* production. Despite initial observations suggesting that police do work differently when being filmed in the workplace, the majority of officers interviewed felt that they did not change the way they work when being filmed. It is necessary to recognise that the findings of this study may not truly reflect all policing environments in NSW and may just simply be a reflection of policing on the Northern Beaches. A similar study undertaken in a lower socio-economic area of Sydney may have delivered a different result.

How Does Television Relate to Theory?

Drawing from the theoretical framework and interpretivist approach, the information unearthed from participants in this study had a direct correlation to Berger and Luckmann's (1966) Social Construction of Reality, which highlighted several areas that are directly applicable to the structure of the role of a police officer and their place in society, as well as the signs and symbols that represent the role. This theory focuses on relationships among individuals, communication and exchange of meaning. Theorists Herman and Reynolds (1994) noted that this perspective views people as

active in shaping the social world. Meyrowitz (1985) applied new meaning to Goffman's theory of interpersonal interactions by suggesting that media—in particular television, and in this case reality television—uses the 'back region' to construct new images and create a new meaning in areas that were otherwise restricted, out of bounds or off-limits. He suggested that this blurring of the line between what is public and private has created a type of voyeurism in viewers—something that print media could never deliver. Whitehead (2015, para. 3) noted that 'studies suggest that those who watch reality TV shows tend to view what they watch as the "norm", thus those who watch shows characterised by lying, aggression and meanness not only come to see such behaviour as acceptable but find it entertaining'. For this reason, coupled with the lessons learned from the failed experience of the television production *Cop it Sweet*, the NSWPF now employ a full-time PFS to work alongside camera crews and producers. This collaboration ensures professionalism and realness in producing police factual documentaries, thereby ensuring the show is not simply regarded as *police work as entertainment*!

Goffman's assessment of the front region and back region would still carry weight today, albeit somewhat varied in today's society. Meyrowitz (1985) observed that 'what was once part of the backstage area of life is now presented as news today' (cited in Doyle, 2003, p. 16). Studies have suggested that the more reality television people watch, the more difficult it becomes to distinguish between real and carefully constructed television. Brown (2017) supported this view by suggesting that 'gap studies should focus on disparities between what is real and what is imagined' (p. 6). Police officer participants in this research signalled their need to ensure that viewers learn from these police factual productions. It is perhaps time to re-evaluate if viewers do, in fact, register those educational messages. If there is no return on investment to police jurisdictions then, simply put, the productions would be nothing more than police work as entertainment.

The theory of social interactionism fits perfectly with police officers and the construction of visual images on television. Police are social operatives in society and create a social world within their community via continued daily interactions. The lived experiences of officers shape their role and understanding of how they fit within the community, thereby allowing new police to learn from more experienced officers. Commentators in this area, have suggested that police view factual productions as a

way to learn from others. However, the interviewed officers advised that they rarely watched these types of programs and took little notice of how others dealt with their policing duties. This may be attributed to differences between participants of this study and others studies undertaken with officers in the US. This study has highlighted policing in both countries are vastly different. It is perhaps time to rethink the types of police factual productions that are made for television. With the social interactionism theory supported by individual officers' views, it may be time that factual police productions were more representative of policing duties. Rather than the continual loop of crime, kicking in doors and making dramatic arrests, one might ask if there is a place for community policing, whereby police and public interactions are more reflective of their daily duties. This format would go a long way to overcoming racial issues raised by the Black Lives Matter movement and may be of greater factual significance to the viewer. Interestingly, some officers suggested a new format of *Country Cops*, which, would fit perfectly in this scenario. It is worth consideration by television producers who are looking for a new angle in pitching and producing police factual documentaries.

Another matter arising from this research concerns the public shaming that results from police factual productions. This may go hand-in-hand with the voyeurism aspects that these types of productions unintentionally create. For example, community members have previously expressed a love of watching *RBT* to see if anyone they know is arrested for drink driving and, conversely, expressing complete assurance that they would never drive after drinking alcohol for fear of their image being publicly displayed and admonished on television. For police agencies, this way of thinking suggests that educational messages have been successfully delivered and received by viewers. However, has it simply created new meaning in the voyeurism the production creates? Further, are these types of shows a way of extracting subterranean values for all to see? What we know is that police factual productions produce reactions in people. Although most people willingly, and at times unwillingly, conform to society's rules, it is the role of the police officer to register peoples' perceptions and negotiate a way forward.

Finally, it would be remiss not to discuss issues surrounding consent; specifically, in regard to gaining authorisation from people who appear as subjects in police factual documentaries. This doctorate did not explore the participation of non-police as actors

in factual productions; however, it touched on issues surrounding consent. As explained earlier, the rules regarding the publishing and recording of someone varies between states in Australia, and likely in other parts of the world. The general rule of thumb is that images captured of adults in a public place can be published without consent; however, those rules change for the recording of someone's voice and conversations—particularly private conversations. This becomes questionable when people are recorded having conversations with police inside police buildings and police vehicles when officers are fitted with recording devices and cars have television cameras installed inside them. If it is a legal requirement to gain consent before those conversations take place, one would question the legal application of consent being lawfully obtained. Additionally, police factual programs often feature drunk and drug-affected persons, which raises a new question: Is obtaining consent from those people legally permissible? These issues have been raised as areas of concern within the *Cops* production, and they have been publicly raised by non-supporters of the program to highlight the avenues taken to exploit people on television for entertainment purposes. Research for this thesis did not uncover any significant body of research undertaken for this purpose; therefore, there is a need for a more complex and robust analysis of consent requirements for police factual television—particularly for non-police participants.

Police factual productions seek to show the viewer how police operate and contribute to society rather than portraying images of control and the misuse of power. These productions have a responsibility to tell a story about crime, criminals, police and the community. How those images are constructed and framed will determine the place and authority that police have in society, and whether the show is nothing more than *police work as entertainment* to its viewers.

Précis of Findings

1. Policing has shifted from lock-ups to community-focused policing.
2. Police do not work differently when being filmed in the workplace.
3. Being an insider–insider researcher comes with limitations; however, there are benefits in terms of gaining access to people.
4. Insiders have preconceived thoughts of the research hypothesis.
5. Police were more concerned with their personal presentation and how they articulated themselves on camera.
6. Factual documentaries filmed with the NSWPF are accurate depictions of what was filmed and are not heavily edited programs, as others have suggested.
7. Officers of the NSWPF are not regular viewers of crimes shows on television.
8. Officers were not influenced to join the police force after watching crime shows.
9. If the same study was conducted in a lower socio-economic area of Sydney, the results may be vastly different.

Does the Presence of the Camera Change the Way Police Work?

This research began with the hypothesis that the presence of television cameras might alter criminal justice situations. Some journalists speculated this after incidents occurred while police were being filmed for factual crime shows. A judge even surmised that this might have been the case, directly questioning a police officer in court who had accidentally shot and killed a young girl while filming the police observational documentary *The First 24*. The question has been raised several times by others; however, it does not appear to have been explored in any detail. The author was in a unique position to conduct this research, as an insider–insider. Coupled with being the officer in charge of all police filming productions within the NSWPF, this position aided to comprehensively conduct this research and obtain answers for those who had previously raised the issue. The question set for this research was: 'Does the presence of the camera change the way police work?' It was soon evident that the keyword in the question posed was 'work', and it was important to establish what it meant to police film participants in this context. The term 'work' was the word that defined the meaning of the sentence because it was the actioning part of the question that needed to be characterised. Having explored with officers several similar

questions worded differently, it became apparent that the only way officers 'worked' differently when in the presence of a film crew was in the way they presented themselves on camera. As one officer put it, *'I didn't want to make an idiot of myself'*.

Having started the observational period of research in 2016, when the *Beach Cops* program was initially filmed, the initial hypothesis concluded that police did work differently when film crews were present. This theory was based on observations of officers over a two-year period, when a selection of police both known and unknown to the author were filmed for the show. Officers began participating in the production professionally and diligently, always appearing careful about what they did and what they said when on camera. After two years of observations, the same officers appeared to become complacent, indifferent to the camera's presence and more routine in going about their duties. It was initially concluded that the officers worked differently when in the camera's presence; however, later that hypothesis changed, as it became unclear whether they were working differently or simply presenting themselves differently on camera.

From the outset, there was an intention to include a participant survey in this research study. Several questions were included in the survey to aid this research and assist with other questions raised by colleagues. They were designed to assist in work-related aspects of the authors film and television coordination role. The main question posed in this study was:

Do you feel that you conducted your work differently due to the presence of the camera? The results were clear: No=52, Yes=28, although an additional 35 respondents suggested that they worked differently at times (recorded as 'sometimes' in the survey). This thesis has concluded that officers do not work differently when in the camera's presence, as tabled in the survey results. However, it was important to explore other avenues of a similarly designed question to provide a balanced result.

Due to the anonymity of the survey respondents, direct questions could not be attributed to any one member of the target audience; therefore, the only option was to conduct the investigation via the interviewed officers. It was felt that the difference might have been due to the question's wording, and there was a need to establish if they had understood the meaning of the question; therefore, it was discussed in the

one-on-one interviews. This process allowed the officers to consider their interpretation of the question and provide supporting evidence to back up their answers. Every officer interviewed was asked one final question: Does the presence of the camera change the way police work? Nineteen of the 20 officers interviewed said 'no'. Many were emphatic in their answer, and others were at pains to ensure that the author completely understood the reasoning behind their answer.

The information collected from the surveys indicated that the officers felt that they did not work differently as a result of the camera's presence. However, it was interesting to note that some suggested they did. For this reason, it was important to explore why that may have been the case. Although the surveyed officers had participated in several police observational documentaries, most of those officers were spread across the state of NSW. For ease of access, and to compare officer responses, it was decided to only include officers from the *Beach Cops* program in the one-on-one interviews, where those questions were further explored. *Beach Cops* was filmed close to the authors home, and a professional relationship had already been established with many of the officers at that Command. It was felt that this connection would help seek out 20 police officers to volunteer for the interview process. However, interviewing officers from one program had its own limitations. It soon became apparent that the interviewed officers generally gave the same or similar answers to all questions asked. However, this could be attributed to those officers generally having the same policing experience. Additionally, as previously noted, officers working in a more affluent area are not always faced with the same policing experiences as officers working in areas consider more lower class and this too may be a contributing factor to the results of this study. A similar study conducted with police in those areas would provide a better interpretation of the data and more conclusive result. The *Beach Cops* factual documentary was filmed over two years at the same police station and involved the same staff both on- and off-screen. Because it was filmed on the Northern Beaches of Sydney, the officers generally attended a variety of the same types of policing jobs. There was minimal variation in the production compared with other NSWPF documentaries. For example, *The Force* was filmed throughout the state, and the stories almost always included an arrest. Officers who appeared in *The Force* were hand-selected by their peers and usually filmed two shifts back to back. Although the officers gave consent to participate in filming *The Force*, they were not as keen to

participate in the show when they were compared with officers from the *Beach Cops* production. The 'buy-in' for officers participating in *Beach Cops* was perhaps community engagement; many officers who worked at the Northern Beaches Command had been born and raised in the area, which created a deep connection for the police participants. Not discouraged about being noticed off duty, these officers alluded to connecting to the area they policed. Being a local member of the community in which they lived and worked was important to them. This was their symbolic interaction and the way they expressed a connection with the community they served.

In the interviews with the police cohort, all bar one detailed why they did not work differently due to the presence of the camera. When exploring what the word 'work' may have meant to them, they indicated that it was reflective of how they went about their duties. Interestingly, all officers advised that they were cautious about how they presented themselves on camera, ensuring that they were captured as professional police officers. Therefore, the final answer to this thesis question is no, the camera's presence does not change the way police work.

The 'sometimes' survey response the author was seeking to address by exploring the answers further with the interviewees was perhaps not fully determined. Therefore, it is presumed that officers who answered 'sometimes' in the survey likely did not participate in the *Beach Cops* production. It was established that officers who were part of the *Beach Cops* program gave similar answers after having faced a similar filming experience. Further research could be undertaken with officers who participated in the production of *The Force* to establish how they may have worked differently when film crews were present. However, given that most of the officers filmed for the factual police productions were filmed for *The Force*, it is unlikely that a call for interviews from police participants who were unhappy with their filming experience would attract the right people. In addition, requests for interviews are unlikely to garner support from those who were not supportive of police factual productions, because they are unlikely to volunteer for further research. Therefore, the answers provided in this research study may only be drawn from the information already provided in the surveys. It is acknowledged that the intention to clarify the borderline responses of 'sometimes' could not be achieved.

Where to from Here?

Documentaries focus on real-life events and situations and present a version of reality, and although they are seen to be a reflection of the truth, they are all carefully edited and constructed, including police factual documentaries. A mixture of techniques is used to create a sense of realism. The officers believed that the police factual documentaries of the NSWPF accurately represent them and their policing role. However, they conceded that not all types of police work are shown on television, which they felt was disappointing. While those events are edited for visual presentation on television within a brief timeslot, Andersen (1994) suggested that they 'form nothing more than stories' (p. 8). That said, officers also accepted that some types of police work, such as deceased and domestic violence situations, could not be broadcast on television for various reasons. Ultimately, *Beach Cops* depicts real-life events of policing involving real police and real incidents.

However, it may be time for police agencies to reconsider the role and level of police cooperation in making such programs. This is particularly important given the recent changing nature of society and the increasing acceptance of the Black Lives Matter movement. In particular, in the US, where police observational documentaries have stopped production because of the over-representativeness of people of colour in those productions,[39] a new question has arisen: Will police factual documentaries continue in their current format? Further, why are some areas chosen for filming while others are excluded? We know that consent plays a vital role in creating these types of shows, and it is acknowledged that those from more affluent areas are unlikely to provide consent; for this reason, we are unlikely to see camera crews in those parts of town. That said, with crime occurring in all parts of society, it would be remiss not to capture crime in all parts of the community. It may be time to rethink how police work as entertainment is captured and delivered to viewers.

Producers often pitch ideas for police observational documentaries with a view that the production will provide benefits for recruitment; however, none of the officers

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[39] In 2013, after the murder of Trayvon Martin and in the early days of Black Lives Matter, a campaign by Color of Change convinced Fox to part ways with *Cops*, although it was immediately picked up by another network. It has now been taken off the air and is unlikely to return. According to Color of Change, since *Cops* made its debut in 1989, the network, the show's producers and the advertisers 'have built a profit model around distorted and dehumanizing portrayals of black Americans and the criminal justice system' (Molofsky, 2020).

interviewed in this research supported that perspective. Further research and questioning of police recruits could validate this theory; however, as established in this research, the types of people who seek a career in policing are unlikely to be influenced by these types of productions because they are generally born with a sense of wanting to serve the community. Interestingly, some of the questions returned noteworthy results in terms of police recruitment. The backgrounds of the officers, along with their age groups, suggest that they were not recruited directly from school. These answers may assist police recruitment agencies in targeting the right audiences at the right moments, such as sporting events rather than school career days.

The most discussed feature of the factual documentaries by the interviewed officers related to the content broadcast to television. As raised in the literature review, all productions need to have a beginning, middle and an end, which can be difficult when filming fly-on-the-wall documentaries. Film crews assigned to police generally follow police who are actively going about their work. Filming the countless hours of surveillance work or the research work undertaken before a takedown, search warrant or arrest can be executed is too time-consuming and costly for producers and too boring for viewers. Therefore, the more serious and complex jobs are generally only presented to viewers in the form of an arrest, and these stories are mostly presented on the evening news. Additionally, operations requiring the same level of detail, but on a smaller scale, are also not captured for television due to the *modus operandi* undertaken. Police executives constantly remind police film officers that productions should never reveal their sources or let criminals know how police came to capture their crime. It is important for police organisations to stay one step ahead of criminals, and they do this by creating new technology and adopting innovative processes. If these ideas and devices were shown on television, it would essentially be showing the criminals their cards, thereby allowing the criminals to create new ways of committing crimes undetected. Non-factual productions tend to showcase protracted criminal investigations, which can also have unintended consequences. The *CSI* production was so popular with viewers that audiences, including police, jurors and other officials, inaccurately believed that the production portrayed accurate forensic science capabilities, creating what became known as the 'CSI effect'.

My Reflections

The research undertaken for this body of work unintentionally touched upon other areas of importance in the making and presentation of police factual documentaries. Many of those areas have been explored in some detail, with significant value placed on a more thorough analysis of several areas of significance. It is particularly important to note the timing of this research and how it has affected the outcome of the study. At this point in time, in 2021, the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines is taking place, and we are in what is suspected to be the turning point of the pandemic. The past 12 months have had a major impact on the world, halting business with lockdowns and the implementation of health and safety requirements, including the observance of physical distancing rules, all of which has temporarily put a stop to film productions. COVID-19 became a major worldwide issue in around March 2020, and Australia was one of the first countries to enter lockdown. Regular daily news cycles kept citizens updated with the pandemic and how other countries coped. In May 2020, a major incident occurred in the US that would have far-reaching effects on the world as a whole when George Floyd died at the hands of police. His death gave rise and a significant voice to the Black Lives Matter movement. Television executives took notice of this and, one by one, police factual productions were removed from screens and funding was withdrawn. People were listening and taking note that people of colour—particularly Black citizens—were being unfairly represented as criminals in these types of documentaries, and white police officers were being portrayed as heroes. It also demonstrated that crime figures reported some areas as being crime capitals when in fact they were not. Although this barely touches the surface of the real matters of significance, it raises the notion that this may now be the time for a new direction in the presentation of police factual documentaries that are more reflective of the community and its citizens and more accurate in their depictions of crime and justice.

This new direction in crime shows creates new images for the public to see. Police in this study voiced their concern that the bulk of their duties and functions are not fairly represented on television, with mental health, domestic violence, suicides, drug overdoses and fatalities now the predominant duties undertaken by police officers. These are difficult images to capture and produce for television; however, the narrative and discussion that this type of police program would create is worthy of wider discussion and may, in turn, help to reduce these types of incidents from occurring.

These are the 'backstage' areas of policing that have been kept behind closed doors and, in the words of Meyrowitz (1985), it is time that 'television lifts the veils of secrecy … [to] peek behind the curtains' (p. 68). These are undoubtedly difficult areas to address; however, these same discussions likely took place 30 years ago, when the *Cops* show was initially created. It is now time for producers and police to collaborate to deliver productions that accurately reflect today's society and the issues routinely faced by police and the community. This research has identified that the role of police and their policing functions have changed. There has been a significant shift from making arrests, to warning and informing and generally adopting community-based policing strategies.

The police participant survey presented in Chapter 5 assisted in the creation of the model officer and delivered a number of key findings. There was scope to delve into some of the answers and explore them further with the interviewed officers. This was particularly the case when trying to establish whether the officers worked differently when in the presence of cameras. Unfortunately, the opportunity to ascertain additional information in this particular area was not achieved. The survey was designed using the Likert scale, which allowed for a scaled response to questions rather than a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer. This style of survey was robust in its approach and collected valuable information that appeared to reflect the views of most of the participants; however, it also created gaps in some answers. This, in hindsight, created a middle ground view of the question, with officers not committing either way, thereby requiring further exploration. These borderline answers did not change, and would not have changed, the statistical outcome of the information collected. The 'sometimes' answers, when added to the tally of either 'yes' or 'no', had no effect on the conclusion of this research. There may have been some benefit gained from interviewing officers who participated in other NSWPF factual programs such as *The Force, RBT* and *Motorbike Cops*; however, input from other officers would have been unlikely to change the evaluation of this research due to the definitive statistical analysis ascertained from the survey answers. Importantly, regardless of how many interviews were conducted and who they were conducted with, the answers would have had little bearing on this study, and certainly would not have changed the outcome. That said, to gain a better understanding of the research question, and its impact on officers of the NSW Police Force, it would be beneficial to conduct the same study with officers

who were filmed for other programs in higher crime areas. Officers who work in high crime areas where a community based policing style is rarely undertaken due to crime workload, may provide a different perspective of how they work, their policing style and their inbuilt characteristics. Their answers may even debunk theories explored in this thesis, particular with regard to Goffman's *Presentation of self in everyday life.*

Précis of Recommendations

1. Consideration should be given to creating a new format of police factual documentary.
2. Police recruits should be canvassed regarding what influenced them to become a police officer.
3. Police who participated in the making of *The Force* in the western suburbs of NSW could be interviewed to determine whether there is any variation in their answers.
4. The community could be surveyed regarding their views of police factual documentaries to determine whether they view episodes as a learning experience or simply as entertainment.
5. Matters regarding consent could be explored, especially regarding gaining consent from vulnerable persons.

Now turning to the main question of the research study: From the outset, it was hypothesised that police did work differently when in the presence of cameras. In fact, discussions of this research project with peers and colleagues showed that they had the same work-based opinion. Initially, it seemed incomprehensible to have an opposing view, and this created a division in pre-established views. When the surveys were returned citing a contradictory view, there was a need to explore why the respondents thought differently. The one-on-one interviews provided an opportunity to tease out the thoughts of the officers, who were the actors in this study, and to discuss their active participation in the factual program. Their answers were conclusive and were supported and validated by their personal experiences of being filmed at work while undertaking their policing duties. As discussed, any doubt regarding the overall question only related to the interpretation of the question posed. The survey was circulated to more than 400 police, representing 100% of police filming participants in the NSWPF. A return rate of 32% of participants was achieved, with approximately

50% of those participating in the *Beach Cops* program. Of the 70+ officers filmed for *Beach Cops*, 20 volunteered to take part in the interview process. Many officers gave similar answers to each question asked, and this was both advantageous and inhibiting due to the limited variation in the information provided. It has been noted that an additional study of officer representation from other parts of Sydney working in areas of higher crime rates, world be beneficial to this study and may provide a more conclusive answer to the target question. Regardless, those officers were the representative sample for officer participation in factual documentaries in NSW, and they conclusively stated that the presence of the camera did **<u>not</u>** change the way they worked.

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Annexure A

CONSENT FORM

LONDON METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH INTERVIEW

Police Work as Entertainment

I_____

being over the age of 18 years hereby consent to participate as requested in a face to face interview with the researcher Donna Bruce and the answers I provide may be used in the development of her university thesis for a professional doctorate.

1. I have read the information provided.

2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.

3. I agree to audio recording of my information and participation.

4. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.

5. I understand that:

    - I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
    - Participation is entirely voluntary, and I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.
    - I may decline to answer any particular questions.
    - The information gained in this study will be published as explained, and my participation will be anonymous and confidential.
    - Whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect on any treatment or service that is being provided to me.
    - I may ask that the audio recording or observation be stopped at any time, and that I may withdraw at any time.

Participant's name: _____

Participant's signature: _____ __Date:__ /   /

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

Researcher's name: Donna Bruce

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: /   /

NB: Two signed copies should be obtained. The copy retained by the researcher may then be used for authorisation of Item 8 as appropriate.

Annexure B

INFORMATION SHEET

LONDON METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

INFORMATION SHEET

Title: 'Police Work as entertainment'

Researcher
Donna Bruce
London Metropolitan University
Tel: 0412 082 220

Supervisor
Dr Nick Ridley & Professor Rob McCusker
London Metropolitan University
Email: n.ridley@londonmet.ac.uk and robmccusker@hotmail.com

Description of the study
This study is part of the project titled '*Police Work as entertainment*'. This project will investigate if the presence of the camera changes the way police work. This project is supported by London Metropolitan University and the NSW Police Force.

Purpose of the study
This project aims to find out your views as a participant and/or as an observer of police factual documentaries filmed in New South Wales. It will assist the researcher in producing a thesis partially fulfilling the academic requirements for a Professional Doctorate in policing, security and community safety.

What will I be asked to do?
You are invited to participate in a one-on-one interview with a researcher who will ask you a few questions regarding your views about police observational television programs. The interview will be conducted during work hours at a mutually agreeable time and location. The interview will take approximately 15 minutes. Participation is entirely voluntary. The interview will be audio recorded using a digital voice recorder to help with reviewing the results. Once recorded, the interview will be transferred to an external hard drive and securely stored in an approved home safe only accessible by the researcher.

What will happen to the information I give?
The researcher will transfer the information you provide into a data collection plan. Some of your comments may be directly used in the thesis however your identity will remain anonymous.

When the thesis is completed it will be read by other academics at London Metropolitan University. The thesis may later become publicly available in the United Kingdom. Once the researcher has fulfilled the requirements of the academic award, all research documents used to gather information collected including audio interviews, will be destroyed.

What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?

The sharing of your experiences will help build a template to identify model officers for future participation in similar programs. The collective view will assist in developing standard operating procedures for future use by the NSW Police Force. This is important to address because the NSW Police Force has never conducted an internal review of the participants needs and requirements as 'actors' in police documentaries.

Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?

No. There is no need to identify participants of this study (unless a participant expressly wishes to be identified). Your personal details including your name and registered number will not be released and participants will remain anonymous. Any identifying information will be removed, and your comments will not be linked directly to you.

Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?

The researcher has conducted a risk assessment of this study. The level of risk associated with conducting field-based interviews has been assessed as low. If you have any concerns regarding anticipated or actual risks or discomforts, please raise them with the researcher.

How do I agree to participate?

Participation is voluntary. You may answer 'no comment' or refuse to answer any questions, and you are free to withdraw from the interview at any time without effect or consequences. A consent form accompanies this information sheet. If you agree to participate please read and sign the form and send it back in the envelope provided.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet, and I hope that you will accept my invitation to be involved.

Donna Bruce

Doctoral candidate
London Metropolitan University

Annexure C

ETHICS APPROVALS

Dear Donna,

Many thanks for sending through and your comprehensive and detailed response in the additional Q and A Document. Consequently, you now have ethical approval for your project and I include a signed off copy of the ethics form along with your additional document outlining the key considerations.

I am also ccing to your supervisory team and the Research Student officers for central records at the University and Professor Klaus Fischer as the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee. I am including the signed off ethics form with Q and A document for these records.

Best,
Mark Wheeler

Additional Q &
A's.docx

Ethics
Applica...ce.doc

Annexure D

RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR RESEARCH PROJECT BY DONNA BRUCE

Hazard Identification and initial Risk Rating			Control measures and Residual Risk Rating		Remaining Hazards
What are the steps of the activity / items of equipment?	What are the potential hazards?	Risk Rating based on Risk Matrix	What control methods or measures will be used to reduce the likelihood and/or the consequence of an illness or injury from those hazards?	Residual Risk Rating based on Risk Matrix	What hazard remains?
Carrying out interviews and questionnaires in face-to-face environments.	There is the potential for the researcher to become over familiar with an officer or situation, as most participants having already previously established a professional working relationship.\n\nThere is the possibility that the researcher may lead the participant down a certain path due to previous established knowledge of particular events.	Medium	The researcher should be trained in interview techniques.\n\nParticipant information sheets will explain in layperson's terms what questions might be asked, and how long interviews will take.\n\nThe researcher will avoid making personal remarks about people or environments (making light of incidents they had previously attended together).\n\nThe researcher will wear plain clothes and not wear police uniform to minimise the level of 'rank' during the interview allowing the participant to feel comfortable with an open and frank discussion.\n\nThe researcher will need to be mindful of the potential to lead the interview and refrain from doing so by asking open ended questions allowing the participant to provide their own answer.	Low	Self-monitoring.
Harassment/bullying of individual officers in workplace long after focus group interview have been conducted	Psychological harm	High	Do not hold focus group interviews\n\nOnly hold one on one interviews to prevent embarrassment from occurring.	Low	Nil.\n\nGroup discussions excluded from research.
Travel risks to researcher	Physical injury\n\nFatigue management due to the researcher working full time shift work as a police officer and the potential for some research interviews being held long distances from usual abode.	Low	Travel with a companion when there is potential for fatigue.\n\nStop the car every 2 hours for longer travel distances and where possible travel during the day.\nBeware of fatigue and manage as arises\n\nResearcher has been a police officer/shift worker for almost 30 years. Fatigue management is a regular part of the researchers daily routine.	Low	Nil.\n\nSelf-monitoring.
Disclosure of information about poor police practice.	Stress/anxiety	Low	Refrain from 'what if' scenarios and only discuss information displayed to the general public on national television.\n\nUnlikely that this type of event would occur.\n\nBefore starting the interview advise officer that you only wish to discuss matters that have been shown on television and not matters that were excluded from public viewing. This will ensure that only matters legally permissible can be discussed and are publicly available information.	Low	Negligible.\n\nOfficers have individual responsibility to report misconduct via their Code of Conduct and Ethics.\n\nIf required, refer officer to Education & Development Officer (EDO)
Working in institutional environments	Risk of physical threat	Medium	Researcher must make herself aware of relevant health and safety, safeguarding and risk protocols in that site.	Low	Hold interviews in safe place away from prisoners & other dangers involving police station equipment.
Discussion of a sensitive topic in an interview has a potential to cause distress to a participant	Psychological stress recounting a stressful situation\nAnxiety drawing on past events	Medium	Cease interview where it becomes apparent that the officer is not coping with discussing the topic.\n\nAt conclusion of formal interview discuss matter with participant and address their concerns.\n\nRefer officer to EAPs (support services for NSWPF)	Low	Nil.\n\nInterview ceased.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Whilst the level of risk associated with this research project is assessed as MEDIUM the probability of something going wrong is LOW and therefore the researcher determined that the level of risk is manageable.

		LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
LIKELIHOOD	**HIGH** 1	0	0	
	MEDIUM 3	0	0	
	LOW 2	0	0	
		LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
			CONSEQUENCES	

Annexure E

PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Police Film Participant Survey
'Police Work as entertainment' By Donna Bruce Doctoral Candidate

What is your rank?

PRO CST	CONSTABLE	SEN CONST	L S C	SERGEANT	OTHER

What is your **year** of birth? 1 9 _ _

Are you: MALE   /   FEMALE

What **year** did you **attest** from Goulburn?   _   _   _   _

What program were you filmed for? _____

Approximately how many filming **shifts** did you participate in?   _ _

Did you **appear** on television for a police TV show?   YES   /   NO

You have been requested to participate in this survey because you participated in a police filming project such as Beach Cops, Motor Bike Cops, The Force or RBT.
Please answer the following questions circling the word that best describes your answer:

1. How did you feel about seeing yourself on television?

Hated it	Unhappy	No Opinion	OK	Happy	Great

2. How did you feel about being filmed at work for television?

Hated it	Unhappy	No Opinion	OK	Happy	Great

3. Generally, how did your immediate family members react to seeing you on television?

Hated it	Unhappy	No Opinion	OK	Happy	Great

4. Overall, how did your non-police friends react to seeing you on television?

Hated it	Unhappy	No Opinion	OK	Happy	Great

5. Do you think your colleagues *criticised* your performance?

Don't know	No	Sometimes	Yes

6. Do you think your colleagues *praised* your performance?

Don't know	No	Sometimes	Yes

7. Did you feel that the presence of the film crew impeded your police duties/work during filming?

NO	Don't know	YES

8. Have you been recognised by the general public because of your appearance on TV?

NO	YES

9. Did you feel pressured to participate in filming?

NO	Sometimes	YES

10. Do you feel your participation in the filming project may _adversely_ affect your career prospects?

NO	Maybe	YES

11. Do you feel your participation in the filming project may have a _positive impact_ on your career prospects?

NO	Maybe	YES

12. Do you feel that you conducted your work differently due to the presence of the camera?

Don't know	No	Sometimes	Yes

13. Do you feel that the presence of the camera changed the policing decisions you made?

Definitely Not	No	Sometimes	Mostly Always

14. Do you feel all your colleagues have been given the same opportunity to participate in police filming projects for television?

NO	Don't know	YES

15. How do you think other police feel about NSW Police TV shows?

Hated it	Unhappy	No Opinion	OK	Happy	Great

16. In general, do you feel that police factual productions are a true representation of policing?

Definitely Not	No	Sometimes	Mostly Always

17. In general, do you feel that police factual productions are 'unreal' / staged?

Definitely Not	No	Sometimes	Mostly Always

18. Do you think the viewer learns something about police work from watching and episode of a police factual production?

NO	Don't know	YES

19. Do you think that the NSWPF benefit from factual police TV?

NO	Don't know	YES

20. Do you think the NSWPF should make more factual police TV type products?

NO	Maybe	YES

21. If police TV participation was available as a 'user-pays' would you participate?

NO	Maybe	YES

22. Would you participate in a police television filming project again?

NO	Maybe	YES

Any further comments you wish to add:

....

....

....

Thank you for assisting my research project.
Donna Bruce (Sgt Police Filming Supervisor)

Annexure F

COLLECTION OF COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEYS

Written comments from Police Surveys

	COMMENTS
1	I appreciate that Beach Cops is a family friendly/sanitised version of policing, but I believe that the general public would believe that Beach Cops represents policing in its entirety. MAYBE consideration to covering the more stressful high impact incidents that don't always have a family friendly / happy ending.
2	Shows to the public we as police officers are 'normal' everyday people like them with personalities, humour, feelings and opinions. Only shows public the small scale jobs not the real hard jobs we as police deal with which is a negative.
3	Thank you to the film crew and staff for being so friendly and making it fun
4	My only wish is that the program had showed better stories rather than some showed. I wasn't a fan of my stories or appearance and I KNOW there were other better stories excluded from the show that I would've liked to have seen.
5	Only impact I felt the film crew did have was in a crowd. I felt it added to the problem as I was concerned for their safety when a fight broke out. I felt I had to watch myself, partner and them which was difficult.
6	Please film in Penrith and St Marys way more fun and true representations.
7	Anytime. I reckon a great show would be looking at murders from witness to 1st responders to Ambos, investigations and then through to the prosecution of the offender. And then with family members.
8	In relation to Q7 – It impeded police work by certain people (POI) would "play up" because a camera was there, if no camera was present I feel some situations would have been resolved quicker.
9	Make the show more serious, it looks like a joke to the public. It should be like COPS the US TV show. Show people the real jobs we go to, DVs, deceased, serious assaults. Incorporate/follow dog unit, police rescue, polair etc. Just be more serious, the singing, the donuts, stupid humour is not professional to the public and makes us look stupid and unprofessional. Show police being assaulted so the public sees the real shit we deal with.
10	Due to the direction of the show and its theme as well as the limit of what could and couldn't be filmed and shown on TV I feel that the viewers are given a disproportionate view on this nature of police work as well as how busy police are.
11	Less footage of police eating McDonalds
12	The media unit were fantastic to film with and did not adversely affect the police work carried out. It was a great experience.
13	Not sure why showing us shoving Maccas in our faces on every clip is a positive image, yes we choose to eat it if we miss dinner due to a job and that's all that's available at 2am.

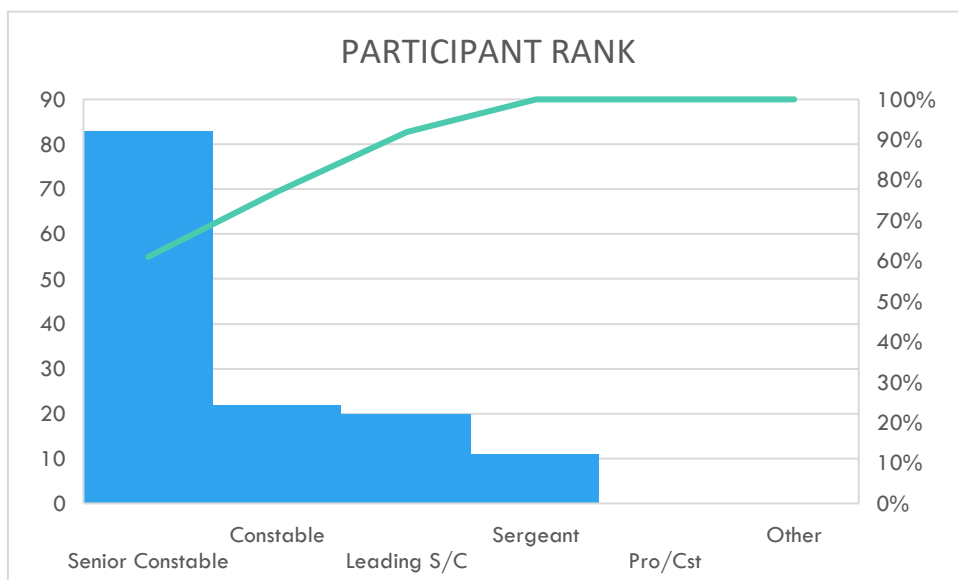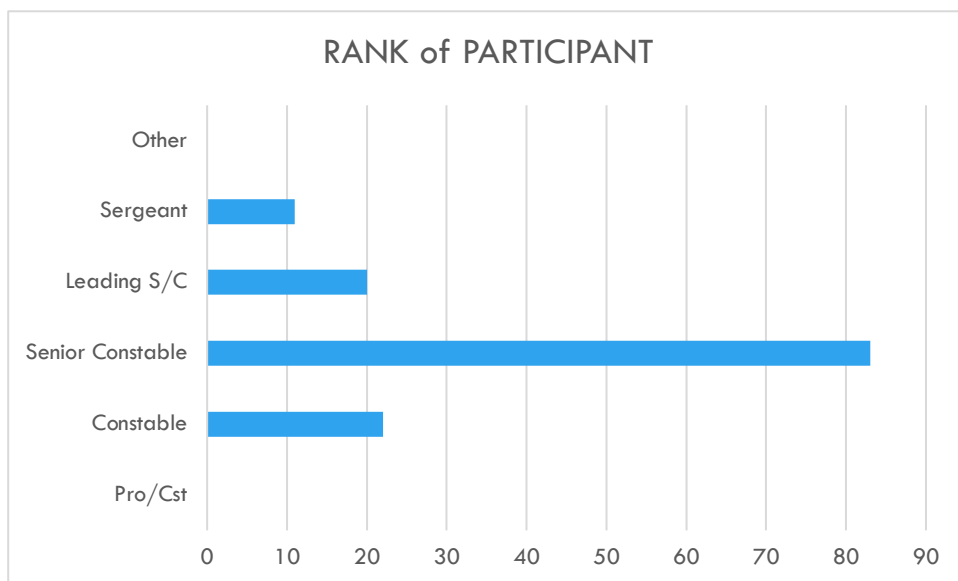| 14	After completing one season and questioning why certain great jobs that showed the real 'Corso' and so on weren't shown, I was told it would diminish/devalue the Northern Beaches area and look. Some of the basic jobs were clearly blown up just for TV and to be honest make NB policing look laughable when NB police do some great jobs that are big/serious and realistic of the area. I enjoyed the experience but would like to see the full reality shown.
15	Police participation in shows like Ninja Warrior should be encouraged
16	It's a positive image for the community with benefits
17	While working at jobs filmed for the TV show The Force, the Film & TV Unit are friendly, supportive and professional. The more realistic police TV shows the better public perception is for our job.
18	My appearance on the show was extremely brief (few seconds) as they were following traffic and highway patrol officers to a car on fire. My appearance was by chance as I was the first officer on the scene however I was made aware of this filming by relatives who watch the show. Filming = Accountability. Accountability is critical to uphold the integrity of the force.
19	I have been provided contact details for PAB Film Unit should any job arise that would be of interest for film crews.
20	Film crew were lovely. Just hated the interview/talking in front of the camera.
21	I believe the community forms opinions ad attitudes about police work by watching these types of shows. Some opinions are positive but overall I don't know if it assist the NSWPF
22	Good experience
23	Sgt Bruce does an amazing job
24	It shows a side of policing general duties attend alot more serious incidents which would show the viewers that side of policing and what is faced daily seeing victim's injuries may make it more surreal pending extent of injuries and upon them agreeing to it.
25	My friends and family did not see the episode. Q20. Plenty variety of factual tv police show. I was restricted duties and had little to do in the production (sort of background staff). Apologies my response isn't more in depth but did not play a significant role in the production. Thanks.
26	At the time of filming I was a 3 months probationary constable. It was too overwhelming. I was already a nervous wreck about the job and being filmed was awkward. If I was to do now, after being in the job 5 years, Ide love it and be stoked. They should ask people who are interested as I believe you will get a better results with more confident/ enthusiastic police.
27	The police work is sensationalised by the production crew to obtain ratings.
28	Q12. I'm very awkward in front of the camera, when not being filmed from dashcam/go pro. Q16, We need to be very careful about revealing police methodology
29	I would be happy to participate in police television program. I enjoyed the experience.

30	For people to understand policing, filming the day to day operations of GDs police is a much better idea. The jobs filmed by The Force are the fun and interesting jobs. The public need to see the mental health/self-harm, the petty family disputes and the junkie people being dealt with everyday.
31	This type of activity gives away police methodology. HWP supervisors direct members to participate in these shows. If it was on a volunteer basis no one would do it.
32	I think showing the public our tactics, processes and duties can have a positive effect, but gives crims intel on us and can give then ideas/loop holes to get away/off with various offences. The public should not be able to see how we operate.
33	Love your work Donna.
34	I enjoyed the experience and my family and friends loved seeing me on TV.
35	At first having the cameras on you was overwhelming but by the 5th show/time became easier and forgot they were there. Not sure if I would do it again. Family members were happy to see me on TV.
36	19,20,21,22/ Depends on what type of show it is.
37	I think overall it helped the general public to see that police are real down to earth people and not robots
38	A lot of methodology is revealed in episodes. It makes for good viewing but hinders police.
39	My experience was OK and enjoyable. I believe some shows I have watched don't always demonstrate a portrayal of professionalism by officers. Balance of being human and professional.
40	Keep up the good work
41	I was pressured into doing this and did not to participate in the show at all
42	I was not a willing participant so that influenced my enthusiasm and decision making
43	Good luck
44	Enjoyed my involvement in the production
45	Factual police tv is great in some perspective. However, it can also show/reveal police methodology which I find a negative impact
46	Production crews easy to work with and most interactions with public was positive and would participate again
47	There are a lot of TV shows depicting police duties at the moment, however few of these productions depict the boring side of police work such as brief preparations, the charge room, court etc.
48	Thankyou – Dale.
49	I participated in filming with The Force on 3 occasions. All positive – all made TV. Did not enjoy working with RBT as they dictated to me what they wanted whereas The Force let us work freely.
50	In relation to Q22. It's not up to us. Supervisors tell us it's happening. In relation to factual police TV, it's my opinion that it gives away too much police methodology and in some instances paints police in a bad lights. The civilian producers of the show look for a story (beginning, middle, end) where a lot of good police work goes unproduced because the TV show missed the story. In my opinion, a police TV show more like the US version of "COPS" would be better.
51	Enjoyed the experience and professional staff

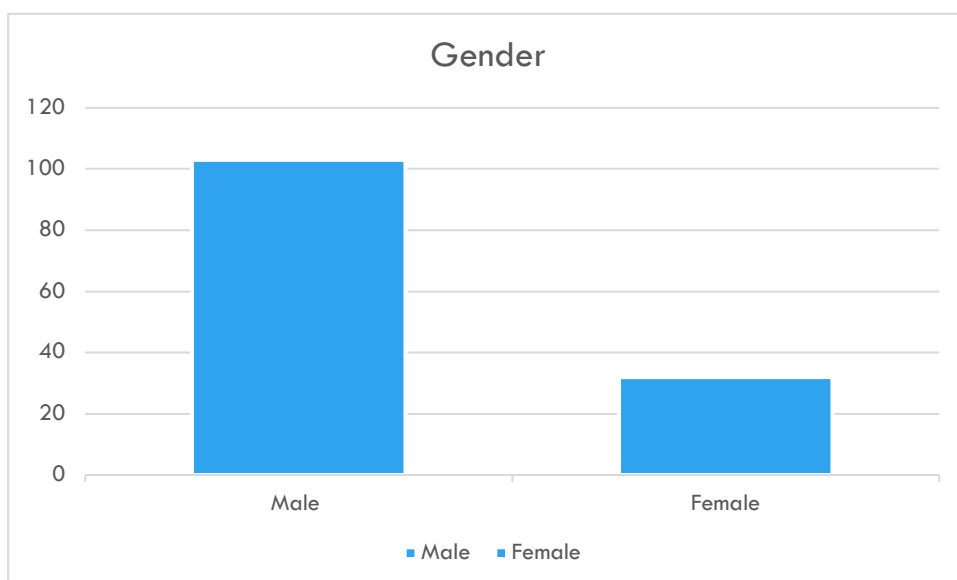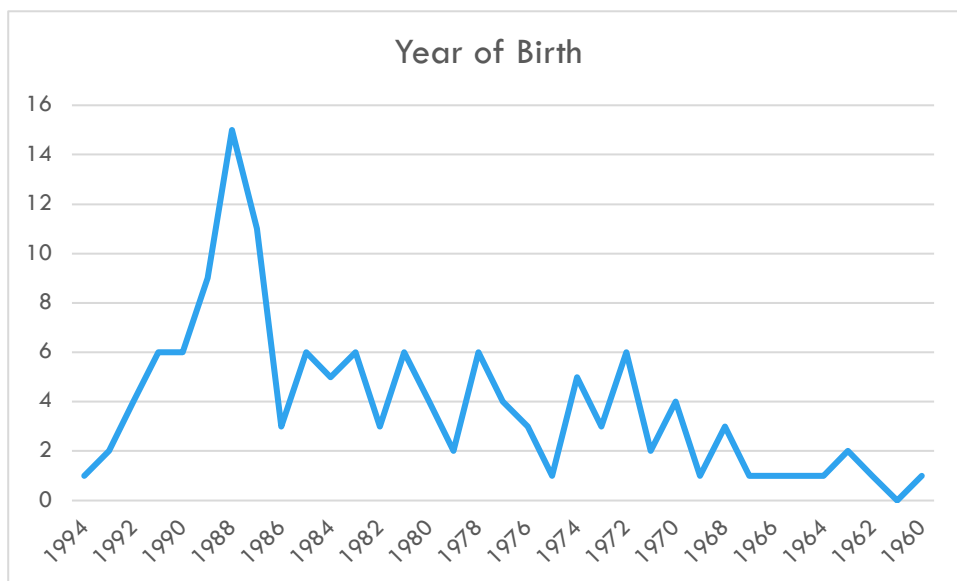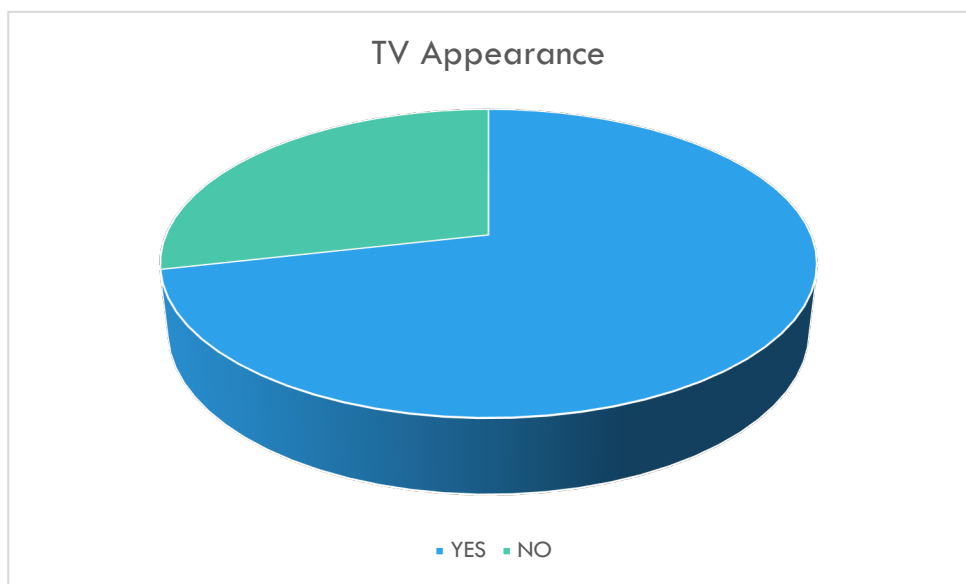| 52 | I felt that Beach Cops did not reflect true police work, a major part of our work is DV and MH which is not shown on this show. |

Survey Results

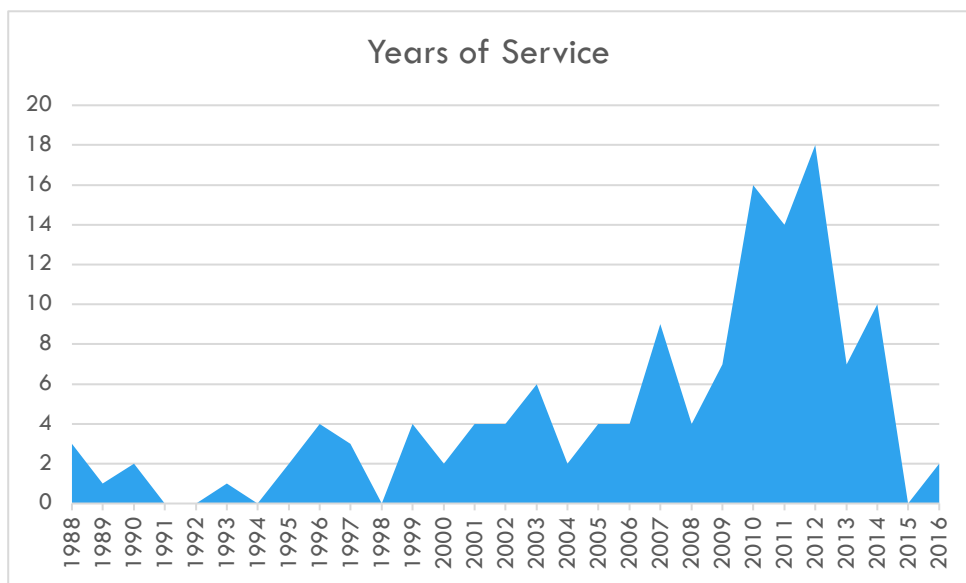The following pages provide tables and graphs showing the collection of results from each question in the participant survey.
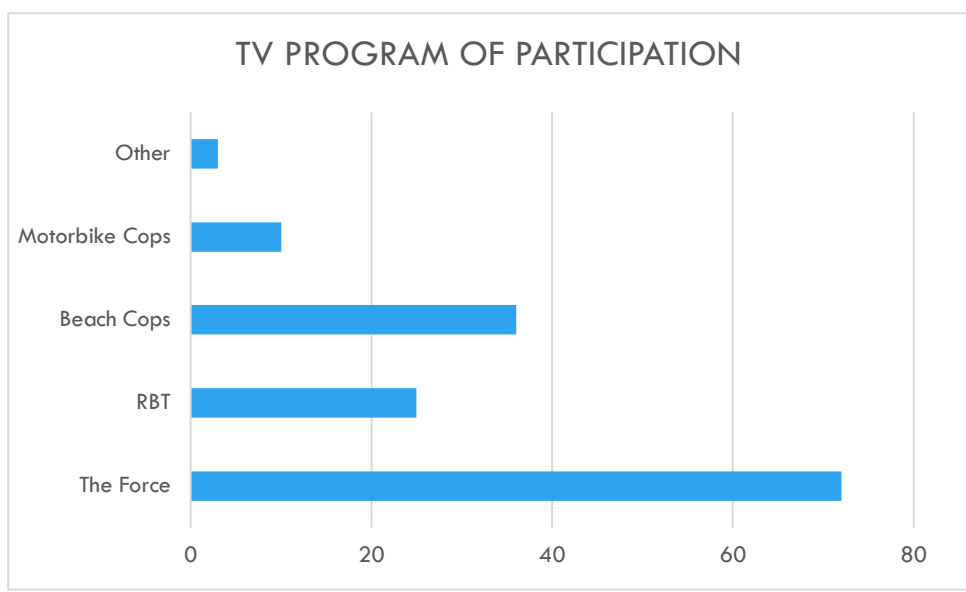
RANK of PARTICIPANT

PARTICIPANT RANK

Pro/Cst	0
Constable	22
Senior Constable	83
Leading S/C	20
Sergeant	11
Other	0

Year of Birth

Gender

Male	Female
103	32

Years of Service

TV Appearance

Yes	No
95	38

TV PROGRAM OF PARTICIPATION

The Force	72
RBT	25
Beach Cops	36
Motorbike Cops	10
Other	3

No. of filming shifts undertaken
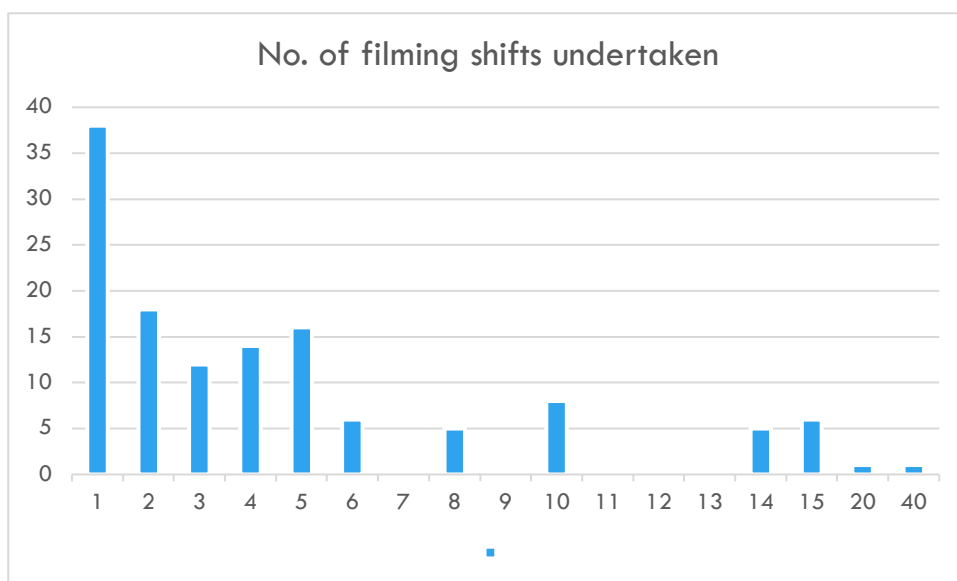
No. of shifts	
1	38
2	18
3	12
4	14
5	16
6	6
7	0
8	5
9	0
10	8
11	0
12	0
13	0
14	5
15	6
20	1
40	1

Q1. How did you feel about seeing yourself on TV?

Feeling of seeing oneself on television
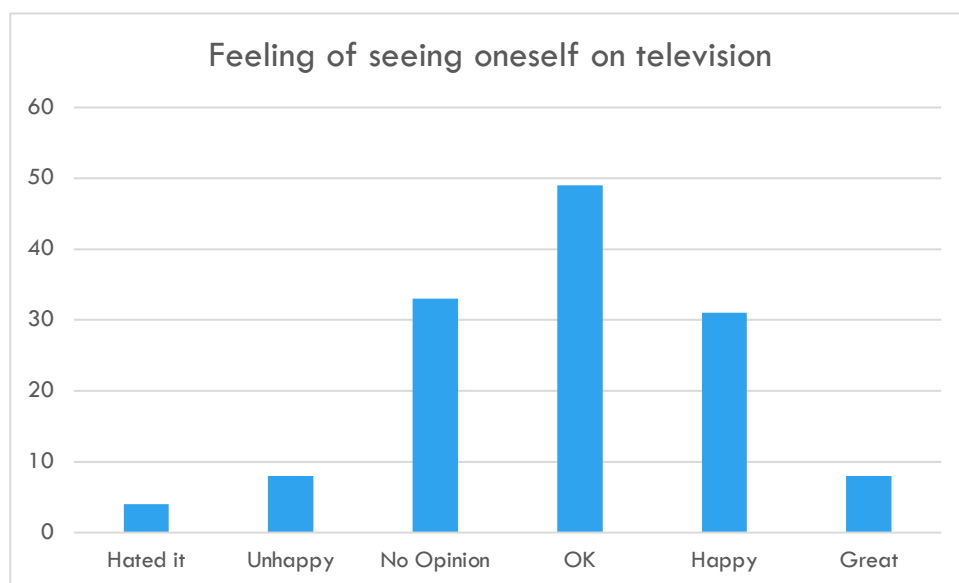
Hated it	Unhappy	No opinion	OK	Happy	Great
4	8	33	49	31	8

Q2. How did you feel about being filmed at work for television?

Feelings of being filmed at work
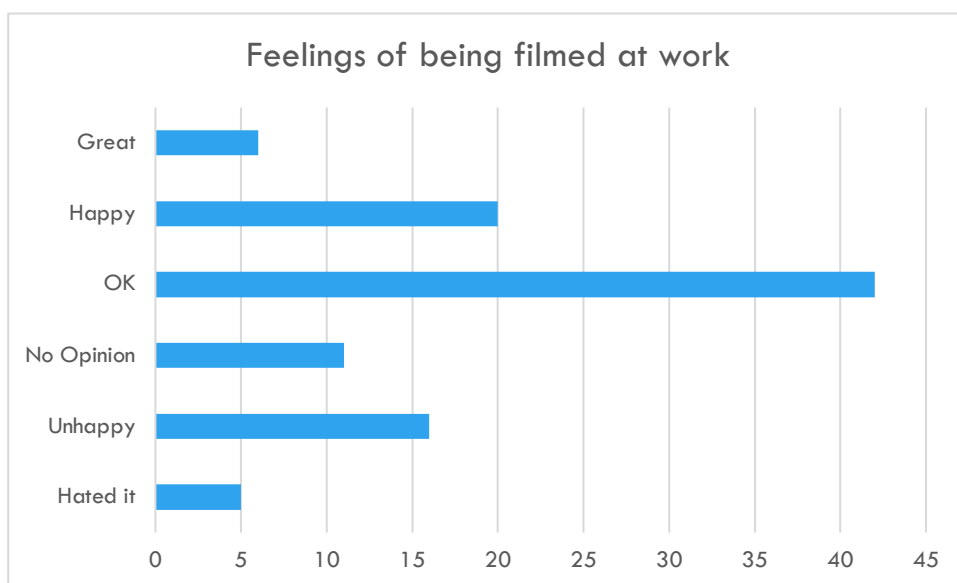
Hated it	Unhappy	No opinion	OK	Happy	Great
5	16	11	42	20	6

Q3. Generally, how did your immediate family members react to seeing you on television?

Feelings of family seeing you on television
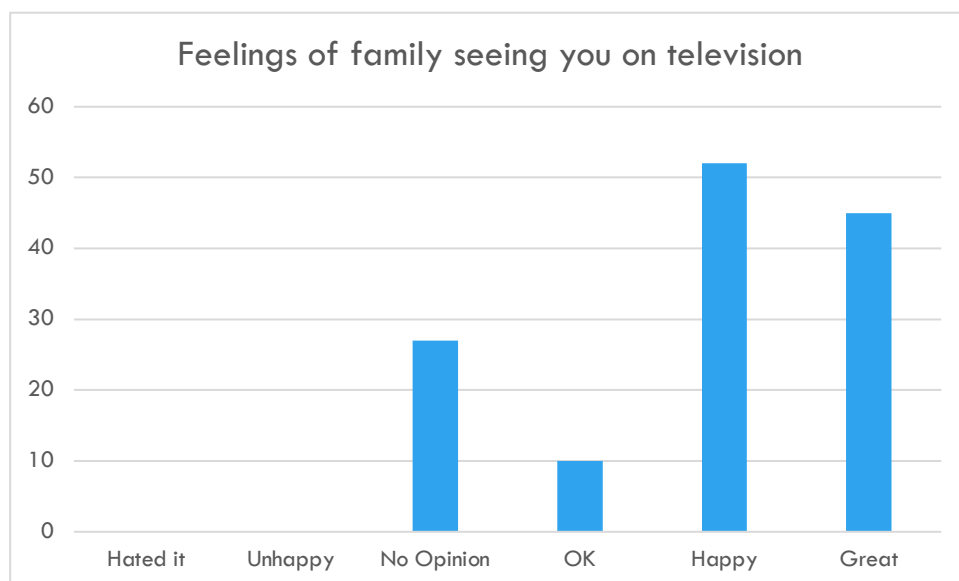
Hated it	Unhappy	No opinion	OK	Happy	Great
0	0	27	10	52	45

Q4. Overall, how did your non-police friends react to seeing you on television?

Reactions from freinds seeing you on television
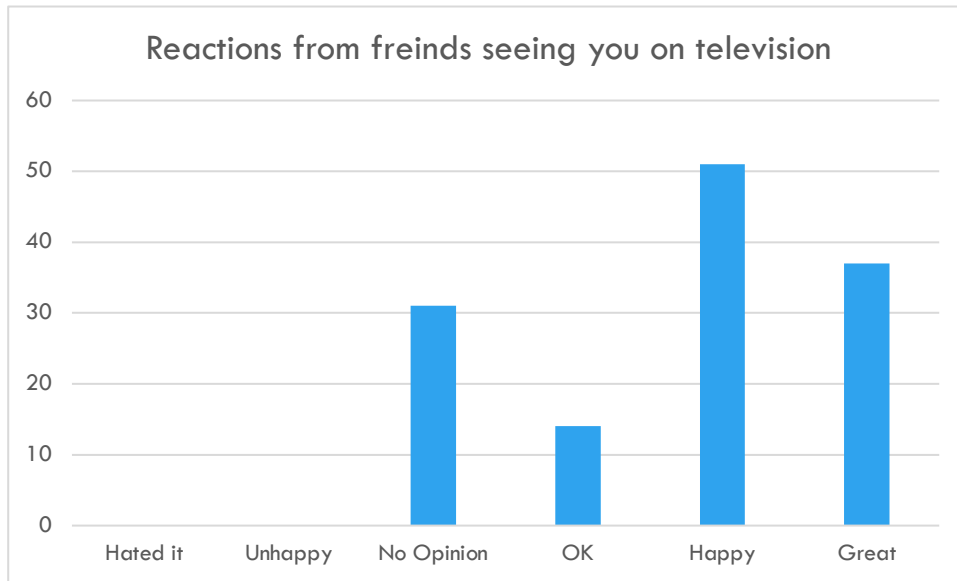
Hated it	Unhappy	No opinion	OK	Happy	Great
0	0	31	14	51	37

Q5. Do you think your colleagues critised your performance?

Don't know	No	Sometimes	Yes
21	70	33	9

Q6. Do you think your colleagues praised your performance?

Did your colleagues praise your performance?

	Yes	Sometimes	No	Don't Know

Chart values (approximate):
- Yes: 19
- Sometimes: 40
- No: 44
- Don't Know: 30

Don't know	No	Sometimes	Yes
30	44	40	19

Q7. Did you feel that the presence of the film crew impeded your police duties/work during filming?

Did the film crew impede your duties?

No	Don't know	Yes
82	13	39

Q8. Have you been recognised by the general public because of your appearance on TV?

Have you been recognised by the general public for your on screen performance?
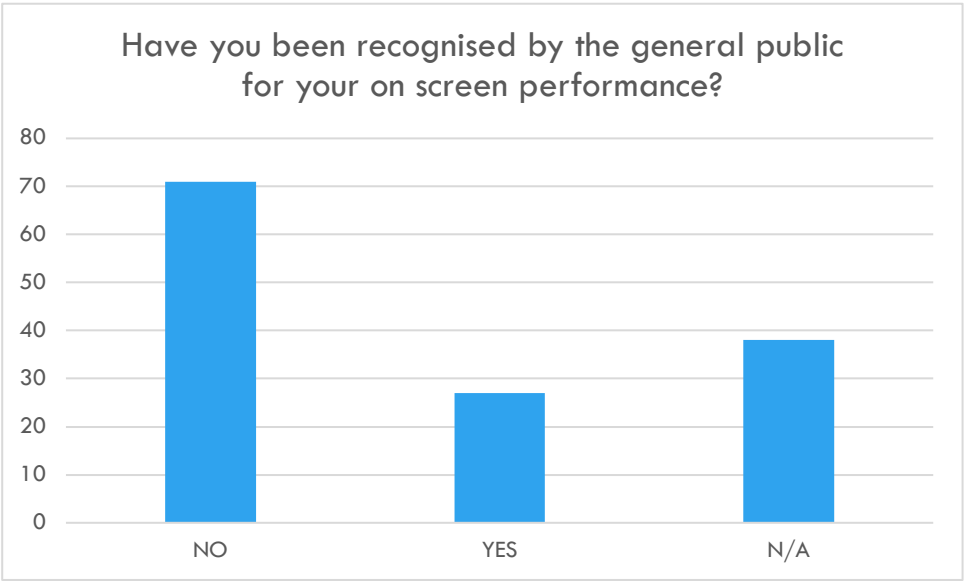
No	Yes	N/A
71	27	38

Q9. Did you feel preasured to participate in filming?

Were you pressured to participate in the production?

No	Sometimes	Yes
76	22	33

Q10. Do you feel your participation in the filming project may adversely affect your career prospects?

Will your participation adversley affect your career?

No ▪ Maybe ▪ Yes

No	Maybe	Yes
111	16	5

Q11. Do you feel your participation in the filming project may have a positive impact on your career prospects?

No	Maybe	Yes
60	60	12

Q12. Do you feel that you conducted your work differently due to the presence of the camera?
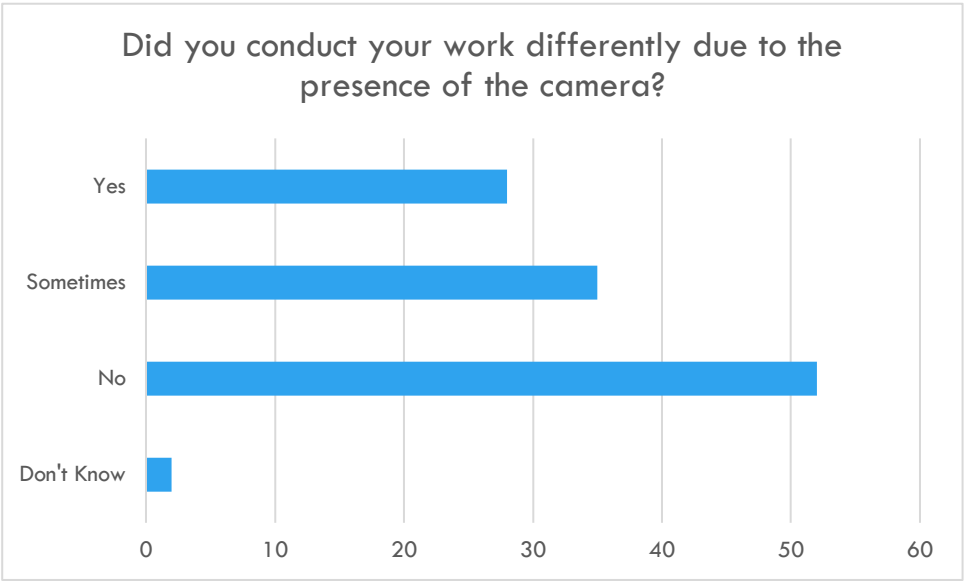
Don't know	No	Sometimes	Yes
2	52	35	28
	87		
		63	

Q13. Do you feel that the presence of the camera changed the policing decisions you made?
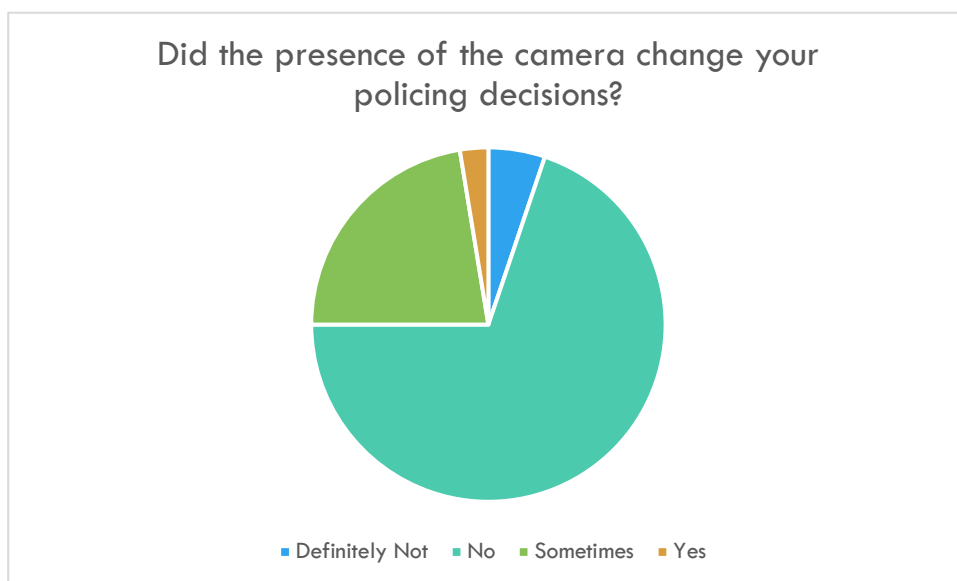
Definitely not	No	Sometimes	Yes
6	81	26	3
87		29	
112			

Q14. Do you feel all your colleagues have been given the same opportunity to participate in police filming projects for television?

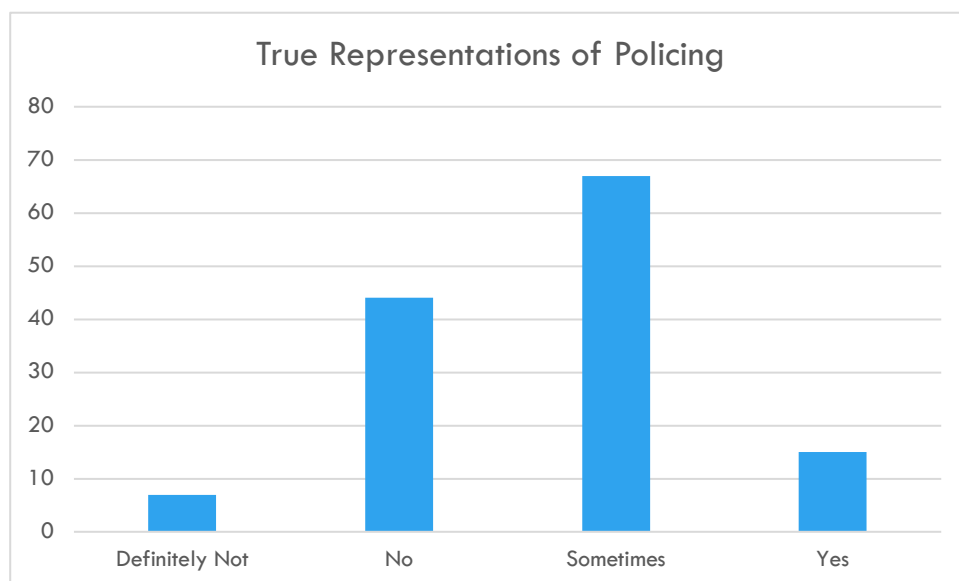Could everyone participate in the filming program?
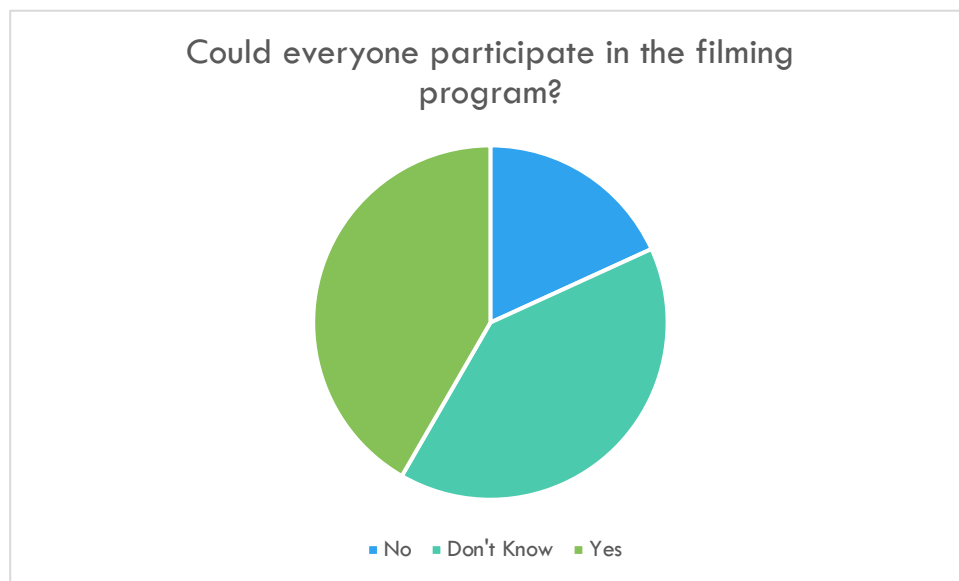
■ No   ■ Don't Know   ■ Yes

No	Don't know	Yes
24	53	55

Q15. How did think other police feel about NSW Police TV shows?
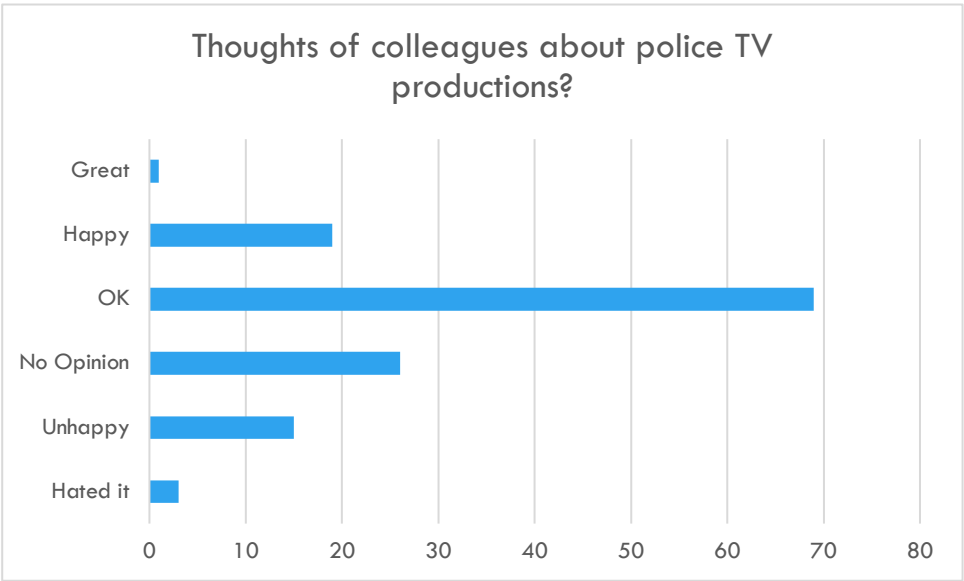
Hated it	Unhappy	No opinion	OK	Happy	Great
3	15	26	69	19	1

Q16. In general, do you feel that police factual productions are a true representation of policing?

Definitely not	No	Sometimes	Yes
7	44	67	15
51		82	

Q17. In general, do you feel that police factual productions are 'unreal' or staged?

Is police 'unreal' or staged?

Legend: Definitely Not | No | Sometimes | Yes
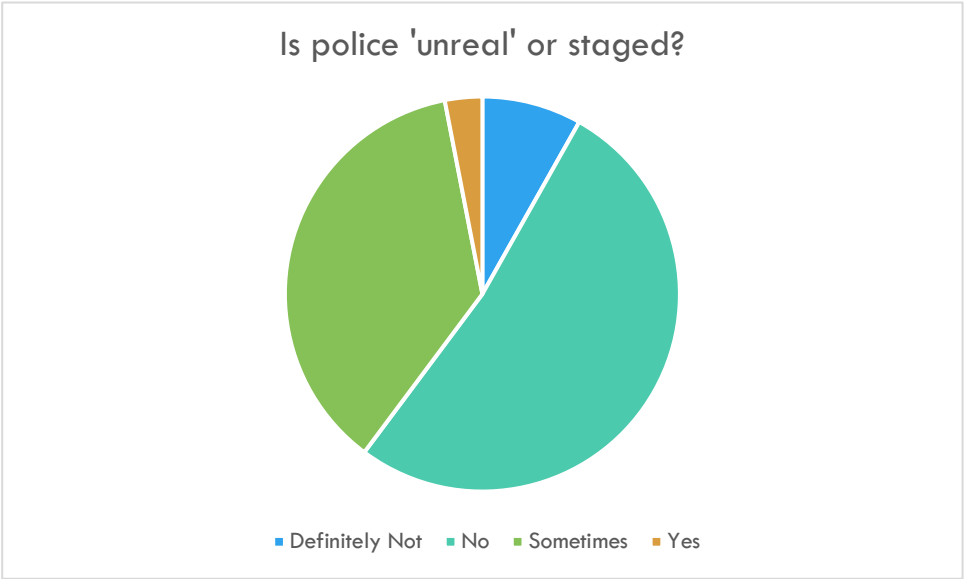
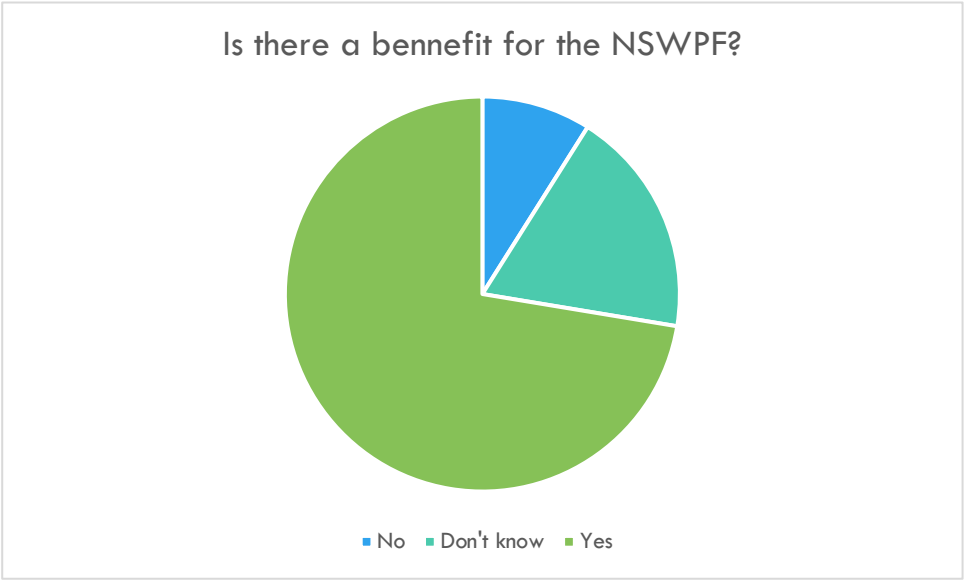| Definitely not	No	Sometimes	Yes
8	51	36	3

Q18. Do you think the viewer learns something about police work from watching an episode of a police factual production?

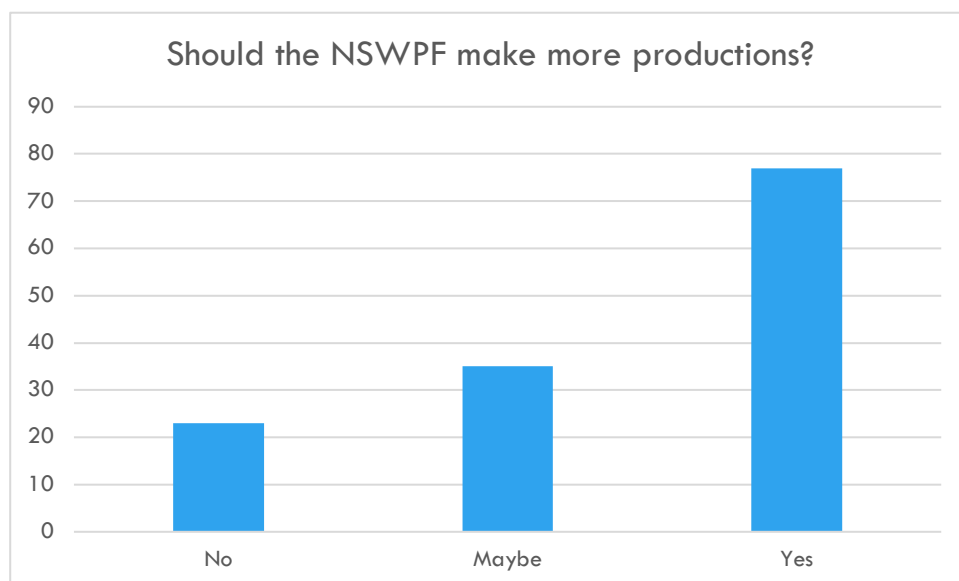Do you viewers learn from factual police productions?
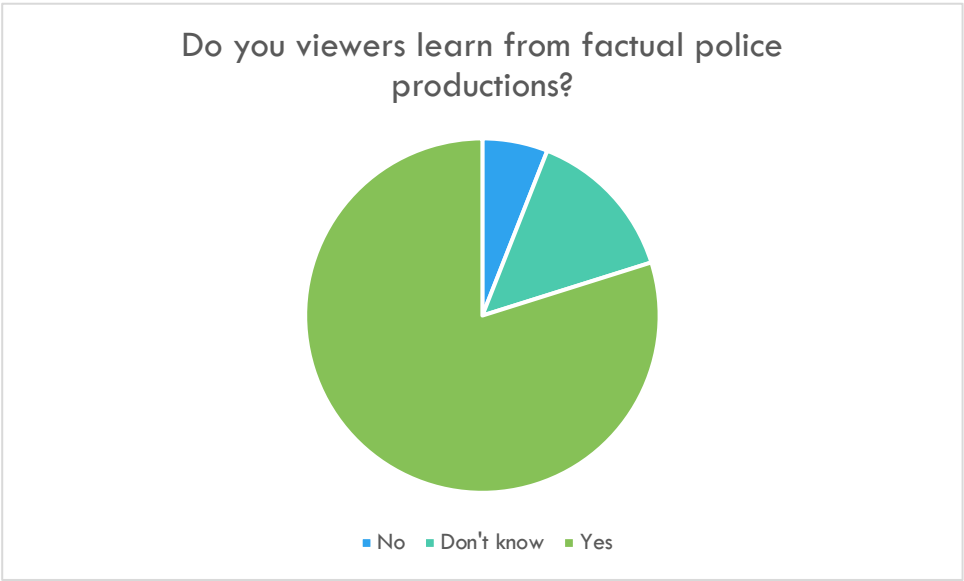
■ No ■ Don't know ■ Yes

No	Don't know	Yes
8	19	107

Q19. Do you think that the NSW Police Force benefits from factual police TV?

Is there a bennefit for the NSWPF?

■ No ■ Don't know ■ Yes

No	Don't know	Yes
12	25	97

Q20. Do you think that the NSWPF should make more factual police TV type products?

No	Maybe	Yes
23	35	77

Q21. If police TV participation was available as a 'userpays' would yu participate?

Would you participate in more productions if it
was available under usercharges?
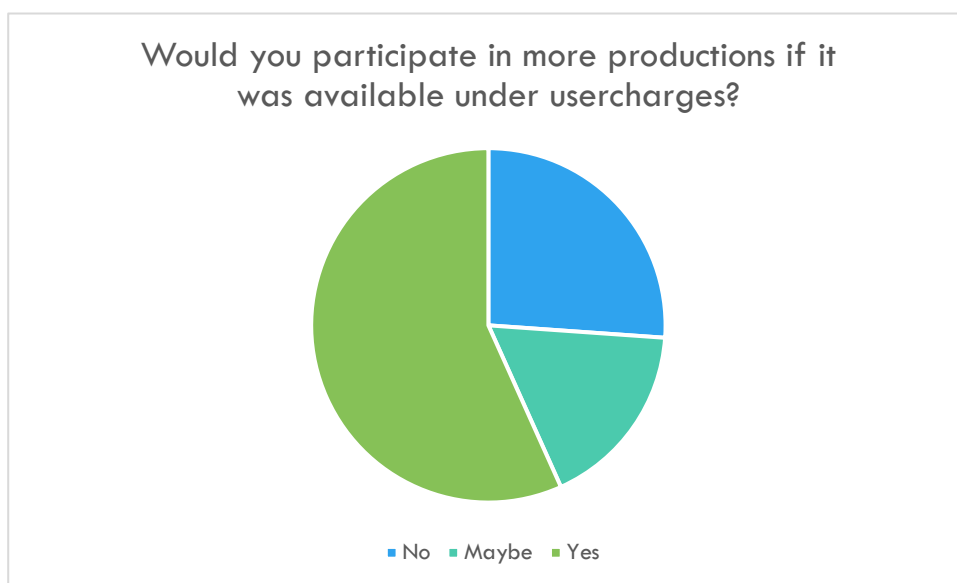
■ No ■ Maybe ■ Yes

No	Maybe	Yes
35	23	76

Q22. Would you participate in a police television filming project again?
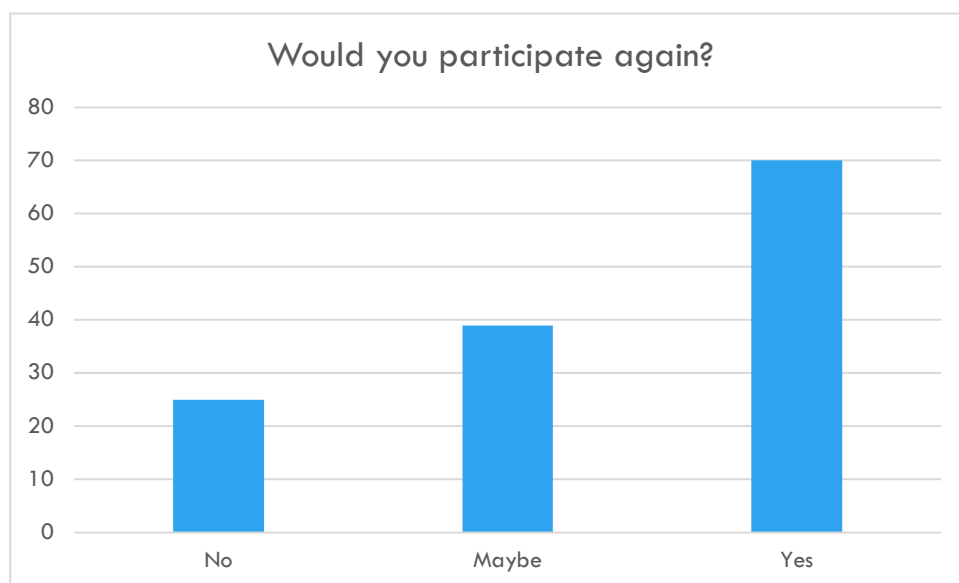
No	Maybe	Yes
25	39	70

Surveys sent and response rate:

Surveys	Total sent	Total returned	Rate
Total	429	136	31.70%