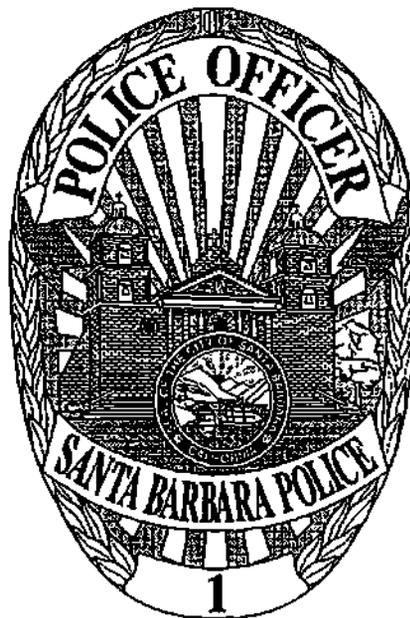


**COMMUNITY ORIENTED PROBLEM SOLVING**  
**DETECTIVE PROBLEM SOLVING**



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	1
What was the Problem?	1
For Whom was is a Problem?	2
Who was Affected by the Problem and How Were They Affected?	2
How did the Department Handle the Problem in the Past?	3
What Information was Collected About the Problem?	3
Were There any Difficulties in Getting the Information?	3
What was the Goal of the Problem Solving Effort?	4
What Strategies Were Developed to Reach the Goal?	4
Was the Goal Accomplished?	7

## **INTRODUCTION**

Detective Doug Kresky is enthusiastically nominated for the Police Executive Research Forum's annual Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem Solving Award as a result of his highly successful problem solving effort at 411 Anacapa Street. 411 Anacapa Street is a two story apartment building consisting of approximately eight rental units. It is situated in a residential/commercial area and is approximately one block from Santa Barbara's most heavily travelled and visited business district known as Lower State Street. This commercial area has been the focus of a recent redevelopment effort by the City and private business in the area of millions of dollars in an attempt to upgrade the area for tourism appeal, which is one of Santa Barbara major industries and, in general, to increase the overall quality of life in that area.

## **WHAT WAS THE PROBLEM?**

For the past few years the apartment building at 411 Anacapa Street has been a haven for narcotics activity, where many residents and visitors to the property openly sold and used narcotics. The apartment building and surrounding area experienced other crimes associated with high narcotics activity, such as residential and auto burglaries, receiving stolen property and other assorted misdemeanor and felony offenses. The frequency of reported crime and arrest were proportionately one of the highest in the City of Santa Barbara.

The actual structure of 411 Anacapa Street was deteriorated to the point that it not only was the most dilapidated structure on the street, but the living conditions were sub-standard and unhealthful. In one instance officers reported that the floor in one apartment was rotted through and the plumbing simply drained directly onto the rotted floor and into the sub-floor area.

Because of the out of control crime problem and deteriorated structure, one can easily see that the quality of life in that apartment complex and surrounding neighborhood was unacceptable to say the least.

FOR WHOM WAS IT A PROBLEM?

WHO WAS AFFECTED BY THE PROBLEM AND HOW WERE THEY AFFECTED?

These living conditions created problems for many community members and agencies. Needless to say the Santa Barbara Police Department was directly affected because several hundreds of man hours were regularly expended handling calls for service or special directed patrols in the area. This high crime activity had a trickle-down affect on other arms of the criminal justice system, such as the District Attorney's Office, the criminal courts, and probation departments just to name a few. The deteriorating quality of life also negatively impacted the surrounding businesses and residences, stretching over one block to one of Santa Barbara's major tourist areas.

Lastly, we would be remiss not to include the affected residents at 411 Anacapa Street, who lived daily within the eye of this criminal storm. Even though at least half the residents were directly involved in narcotics activity, the remaining half had no involvement in drug activity whatsoever and were forced to live in these sub-standard conditions.

**HOW DID THE DEPARTMENT HANDLE THE PROBLEM IN THE PAST?**

Historically, the Santa Barbara Police Department took a traditional/reactive approach to handling the problem at 411 Anacapa. The focus was responding to calls for service, directed patrols and undercover operations. The results, if any, were only temporary. In fact, usually within minutes of the police departure drug activity would continue. Overall the police department's response lacked consistency, coordination and innovative problem solving techniques. There was definitely a lack of effective leadership regarding this problem.

**WHAT INFORMATION WAS COLLECTED BY THE PROBLEM?**

**WERE THERE ANY DIFFICULTIES IN GETTING THE INFORMATION?**

Statistically, for a two year period (1991 to 1993) there were approximately 256 reported offenses for the apartment complex at 411 Anacapa Street and the immediate area. These offenses ranged from simple Municipal Code Violations to burglaries and narcotics sales and

possession offenses. In addition, there were approximately 345 arrests for various misdemeanor and felony crimes during that same period.

After reviewing crime statistics, conducting surveillance, making on-site visits (city building inspectors reported several building code violations) and reviewing numerous pieces of information from informants and complaining parties, Detective Kresky noted that past efforts had failed.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **WHAT WAS THE GOAL OF THE PROBLEM SOLVING EFFORT?**

Detective Kresky had a vision to improve the quality of life within the neighborhood. With this overall goal in mind, Detective Kresky's immediate goals were to stop the narcotics activity at the apartment complex and bring the structure up to proper building codes and standards.

### **WHAT STRATEGIES WERE DEVELOPED?**

After Detective Kresky's problem analysis, he formulated a strategy employing traditional and non-traditional policing techniques to finally put an end to this chronic problem. From

the standpoint of the narcotics problem, Detective Kresky called on the resources of the Narcotics Unit and a Special Enforcement Team from the Operations Division to target known narcotics dealers and users.

Detective Kresky also recognized the need for a multi-agency enforcement effort with other city departments to correct the sub-standard living conditions at the apartment complex. Not only did Detective Kresky involve these agencies, but he assumed a leadership role by coordinating all efforts.

Lastly, Detective Kresky involved the management company and owner of the building, putting the responsibility on them for the narcotics problem and poor living conditions. Both agreed to work with the police department in lieu of further legal action.

### RESPONSE

Some traditional techniques employed by Detective Kresky included undercover buy/bust operations, and joint directed patrols with the Operations Division's Tactical Patrol Force. Numerous arrests of apartment complex residents and building visitors occurred. However, as in the past these methods failed to have a sustained effect on the problem. The information developed from the traditional enforcement efforts proved beneficial when Detective kresky worked with the building management company and owner.

From a non-traditional point of view, Detective Kresky coordinated on-site inspections by the city's Zoning Department, Sanitation Department, Building and Fire Departments. All information gathered from their inspections were available if further enforcement action was necessary.

Detective Kresky worked with the management company who informed him the property was being foreclosed upon. Detective Kresky was able to contact the bank and learn the account had been transferred to the Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC) and was being transferred to a new management company in the Santa Barbara area. Through Detective Kresky's perseverance, he was able to follow this lengthy paper trail and eventually develop a working relationship with the new management company. Detective Kresky was able to obtain their full cooperation in making changes at the apartment complex in the hopes of eventually eliminating the problem.

Within days the new management company made several building improvements from the requests made by Detective Kresky. The improvements included changing fencing and lighting, making the area less conducive to drug activity, as well as some apartment upgrades recommended by Detective Kresky. Several weeks later, Detective Kresky identified five apartments of the eight who were involved in narcotics activity. Ultimately, all five of these residents were evicted. As a result, narcotics activity and crimes associated with narcotics

activity dramatically decreased. The new owner and management company have started a complete renovation of the property with the intent of converting the building into low income housing for the elderly.

## ASSESSMENT

### WAS THE GOAL ACCOMPLISHED?

Recent information by several sources indicate that narcotics activity has completely stopped and all indications are that this will continue. Statistically, there had only been six reported incidents of criminal activity in the area during the past four months. Three of the calls were DUI arrests and the other for simple Municipal Code Violations for people possessing open containers of alcohol. As one can see, this is a significant improvement.

Needless to say, the dramatic reduction in crime and the building improvements have had a significant impact on the quality of life in the area of 411 Anacapa Street. Without a doubt this was a truly successful problem solving effort to a once persistent crime dilemma. It is evident that Detective Kresky successfully accomplished his original goal.

The victory at 411 Anacapa Street exemplifies the policing philosophy of the Santa Barbara Police Department, which is community oriented policing and its true commitment to

community oriented problem solving. It also demonstrates what can be accomplished when an officer takes responsibility and acts pro-actively on a persistent crime problem. This effort is an example of Detective Kresky's perseverance, innovation, ability to take a risk, and overall leadership and problem solving skills.