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# Real Women? Gender and Race in Prime Time Police Shows

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The University of Southern Mississippi

REAL WOMEN? GENDER AND RACE  
IN PRIME TIME POLICE SHOWS

by

Rondrek Juwayne Cowans

Abstract of a Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School  
of The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2012

ABSTRACT

REAL WOMEN? GENDER AND RACE

IN PRIME TIME POLICE SHOWS

by Rondrek Juwayne Cowans

December 2012

For the past 25 years, reality shows, in particular, police reality shows has figured prominently in American culture as a true representation of police/criminal interactions. This dissertation is a case study that examined the portrayal of African Americans as criminals on the police reality show entitled *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County* (Phoenix, AZ) and *Broward County* (Ft. Lauderdale, FL). The cities were chosen because they represent the entire five seasons that the series has been on television. This particular police reality show was also chosen due to its mirror image of local and national television newscasts. In other words, they both convey stories of crimes being committed in society but one uses anchors and reporters while the other uses narratives from female police officers.

The purpose of this study was to determine if African American are overrepresented as criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County* and *Broward County* when compared to the aggregate crime data originating from the five aforementioned cities. A content analysis was conducted that compared the quantity and types of crimes being committed by African Americans on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County* and *Broward County* reality shows against the quantity and types of crimes committed by African Americans from the crime statistics from their respective cities.

*The Police Women of Cincinnati and Broward County* season series were recorded over a five month period in 2010, while *The Police Women of Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas* season series were purchased from The Learning Channel (TLC) Network in the summer of 2011. A content analysis consisted of all five seasons of *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County*. Each season consisted of eight weekly episodes which were one-hour each. Each one-hour episode contained eight crime segments in which four female police officers were shown conducting daily crime interactions with suspects twice per episode. The unit of analysis consisted of forty episodes multiplied by eight individual crime segments for a total of 320 crime segments. There were nine segments that did not pertain to crime segments, therefore they were not coded in the quantitative analysis of the study. Hence there were 311 crime segments that were analyzed for this study.

As the study revealed, African Americans males were overrepresented as criminals in only one of the five cities analyzed (Maricopa County), when compared to aggregate crime data and were overrepresented as violent criminals in only one of the five cities that were analyzed (Dallas) when compared to aggregate crime data. Similarly, the study revealed that African American females were overrepresented as criminals in only one of the five cities analyzed (Dallas), when compared to aggregate crime data but were not overrepresented as violent criminals in any of the five cities when compared to aggregate crime data. In addition, the study revealed that African American males and females were shown committing violent crimes more frequently than White, Asian, Hispanic and Indian males and females that appeared on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas*. The study also

revealed that African American female police were more frequently involved in crime segments that involved African American suspects than white, Asian, Hispanic or Indian suspects. The qualitative data gives specific examples of how racial stereotypes are oftentimes formed from viewing television and a feminist perspective of female police officers.

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A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School  
of The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In their empirical study of reality based programming, Nabi, Beily, Morgan and Stitt (2003) forthrightly made the argument that “television news programming is strongly rooted in real events and thus is reality based as are evening dramas based on true crime stories or movies that dramatize celebrities’ lives” (p. 304). Their argument is not without basis. The reality television shows that Nabi et al. (2003) talked about were relatively new to the television arena. Hence, they possess a unique relationship with television news by acting as a hybrid or an extension of television news. In other words, they report the same crimes (e.g. homicide, robbery, rape) but in an unorthodox way that does not employ anchormen, anchorwomen or reporters. Instead these reality shows employ narration, interviews and real video footage of the actual events that were involved in the scenario. Cavender (1992) gives support to the legitimacy of police reality shows by emphasizing that “the law enforcement community lauds these programs” (p. 79). Barber (1991) refers to police reality shows as an extension of “participatory democracy of law enforcement that promotes a sense of community” (p. 91). In addition, Best (1989) points out two similarities between television news and police reality shows. First, he notes that both are driven by fears from the public that want to be informed of criminal behavior. He notes “the public fears what these criminals symbolize” whereby television news and police reality shows both “breathe life into this symbolism giving their criminals a name and a face” (p. 82). His second observation that relates television news to police reality shows pertains to victims and suspects. He points out that both genres depict their victims as “respectable, often physically attractive people (e.g. a good

looking college kid or pretty young wife). The victims who typify innocence and beauty shape our sense of the crime problem as dirty and threatening” (p. 82).

Prior to their argument, media scholars oftentimes attacked or ridiculed the validity and authenticity of police reality shows. For example, Fishman (1998) suggested that police reality shows “blur the boundaries between factual and fictional genres” (p. 643). Similarly, media scholars assert that police reality shows only “claim to present reality” and have the propensity to produce gender stereotypes such as women being weak, vulnerable or stupid (Dobash, Schlesinger, & Weaver, 1998, p. 304).

Police reality shows such as *America’s Most Wanted*, *FBI Files* and *Forensic Files* have burgeoned upon the American television landscape within the past two decades and have introduced a new genre of reality television shows where crime, crime news and high viewer ratings intersect (Battaglio, 1991). This genre is known as police reality shows. According to Cavender, Bond-Maupin, and Jurik (1999), police reality shows typically use one of two formats. The first is the reenactment format whereas the actual crime is retraced from the beginning, to the end along with providing a precise narrative voice track to keep the viewer’s abreast of the story line. Police reality shows such as *America’s Most Wanted*, *FBI Files* and *Cold Case Files* have witnessed an enormous increase in popularity due to their exhaustive pursuit of apprehending the criminal suspect and employing the reenactment format. The second format used is referred to as a ride-along format. Although similar to the aforementioned, the police reality show *Cops* employs the ride-along format that places the viewer’s up-close and personal with the daily activities of police/criminal interactions. The authenticity of these

models make police reality shows credible to the viewers; hence making police reality shows an entity worthy of further investigation.

The examination of the portrayals of African Americans on television is not new but has gained momentum over the past decade. One of the earliest investigations of the portrayal of blacks by news media outlets was conducted by the Kerner Commission in 1967 (Poindexter, Smith, & Heider, 2003). The study was conducted to gain a better understanding of why race riots were occurring in largely urban populated cities during 1964 through 1967. Hence, President Lyndon Johnson created the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, which became known as the Kerner Commission to get to the cause of the riots and what could be done to quell them. The Kerner Commission critically examined the role of media involvement with the riots and concluded that media outlets had failed to adequately report the underlying problems that led to the riots. They also concluded that media outlets showed biased reporting towards stories pertaining to whites and failed to report positive stories pertaining to blacks. Perhaps their most critical finding was that the nation was “moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal” (p. 384).

There are several reasons why further research is needed in the area of the portrayal of African Americans on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Memphis*, *Dallas*, *Maricopa County* and *Broward County* series. First, because the shows are filmed in cities where there is a large population of African American citizens. Second, since there is a large percentage of African Americans, other ethnicities may tend to cultivate stereotypes of African Americans, particularly African American males. Third, due to watching *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Memphis*, *Dallas*, *Maricopa County* and

*Broward County* series, a cognitive association may be caused that links African Americans with criminality.

Another reason to examine *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County* and *Broward County* series, and its intersection with African Americans and crime can be found in the work of McConahay (1986) who offered the theory of modern racism. Modern racism theory posits that the antiquated beliefs that blacks are inferior to whites due to smaller brains or genetics have been pushed aside, but a new more subtle form of racism has appeared that suggests that a general hostility toward blacks, a resentment of political demands of blacks and that racism is dead. Modern racism theory suggests that television is the centrifugal force that is accelerating the feelings of whites towards blacks.

The final reason for examining the portrayal of African Americans as criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County* and *Broward County* series, is the paucity of studies that have been conducted of this nature. Television news, either local or national has been the primary media tool which scholars have used to investigate the delineation of African Americans as criminals. For example LeDuff (2008), examined the portrayal of African Americans as criminals on local television newscasts in Indianapolis and New Orleans. Entman (1990), examined the portrayal of African Americans as criminals on local newscasts in Chicago. Similarly, Dixon and Linz (2002) examined the portrayal of African Americans as criminal on local television newscasts in Los Angeles 2005. As stated earlier, there has been a paucity of studies that have examined the portrayal of African Americans as criminals on police reality shows. Oliver (1994) conducted a content analysis of the police reality show *Cops* but only

analyzed the aggressive behavior of suspects and police. She did not examine if African Americans were overrepresented as criminals. Hence, I have concluded that one area of media research, in particular, the portrayal of African Americans in the media, is currently lacking an examination of the portrayal of blacks as criminals on police reality shows.

The purpose of this study is to critically examine the intersection of the portrayal of African Americans as criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Memphis*, *Dallas*, *Maricopa County* and *Broward County* series, compared to the actual crime statistics from the aforementioned cities to see if African Americans are overrepresented as criminals.

The significance of this study is grounded heavily on George Gerbner's Cultivation Theory. Media scholars contend that these shows can have a profound impact on cultivating, framing and stereotyping certain groups of people, in particular African Americans. Gerbner's Cultivation theory posits that people gradually come to accept the view of the world as portrayed in television as a true representation of reality and adopt their hopes, fears and understanding accordingly. Adding support to the latter comes from Bandura (2002), who posits that individuals are influenced by the images they see on television due to the power of media to shape their perceptions. In other words, if African Americans are overrepresented as criminals on these police reality shows, it can cause unwarranted negative stereotypical views towards African Americans. In contrast, the overrepresentation of whites as victims of crime may foster unwarranted views that whites stand a much greater chance to be victim of crimes.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### History of Reality Shows

Prior to television becoming a concrete fixture in the lives of Americans in 1948, Arnheim (1935) suggested that television possessed the propensity to become a substitute for life itself. Though the latter assertion may seem minute when juxtaposed with television of today, whereas the American television landscape has changed dramatically with the explosion of reality TV shows that have burgeoned. As Taddeo and Dvorak (2010) notes, “reality TV continues to grow in popularity as television programming that offers ‘real,’ albeit edited and scripted experiences before the handheld camera” (p. vii). Reality based television programming has been defined as television shows that document the daily life activities of real people as they transpire, while captured through the vehicle of film (Nabi et al., 2003). This genre consists of several components: (1) individuals living through themselves (i.e. non actors or performing from rehearsed scripts), (2) individuals are filmed in their natural surroundings as opposed to a pre-produced set, (3) every aspect is natural on unscripted. Similarly, Barton (2009) defines reality TV shows as any show displaying non-actors being monitored by video or audio equipment, who perform in unscripted everyday activities in their environment. In addition, Jadgodzinski (2003) posits that reality television is a specific genre that displays “the lives of ordinary people engaged in sometimes extraordinary events” (p. 320).

In order to understand the contemporary reality shows and their proliferation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we need to go back in time to 1947. Early reality shows such as *Chelsea Girls* or *I'd Like to See*, exposed the audience to real people in dramatic situations. When

reflecting over a forty-five year time span of America's first reality show, *Candid Camera*, Allen Funt (1994) vividly recalls the immediate success during his new television genre's infancy stage.

In the weeks that followed, newspaper and magazines critics waged lively debate about the worthiness of "Candid Camera." Many of them loved the new show.

*Time* wrote, "Funt is a highly resourceful ad-libber, and his victims are life itself, about as pure as the screen can ever catch it." *Variety* said, "Candid Camera' is even better as a sight-and-sound presentation that it was as an AM (radio) attraction." *Billboard* was even more enthusiastic: "It provided a highly entertaining stanza with a genuine flair for bringing out the human in human beings." The writer's summation: "Candid Camera' deserves a long life." (p. 53)

Funt was young, enthusiastic and highly motivated by an insatiable desire to capture individuals in their natural state, a state that was not bounded by inhibitions, whereas people would act and react with each other naturally (Nadis, 2005). Although the latter would eventually gain great success and become a household name decades later, Funt initially introduced this upstart reality show by naming it *Candid Microphone*. Caught in the euphoria of developing this new phenomenon, in his book *Candidly, Allen Funt A Million Smiles Later*, Funt (1994) states:

I should say at this point that I can't even remember how the name Candid Microphone chosen. It is after all, a slight misuse of the word "candid." Hidden Microphone would have been a more appropriate title for the show. However, my advertising days had taught that certain words grabbed people's attention, and the word "candid" was one of them. It was fortunate that "Candid Microphone" was

what we chose because when we converted it to “Candid Camera,” it worked even better. (p. 29)

Funt’s excitement was not without basis. *Candid Microphone* was the first reality show in America. Throughout the show Funt would conceal microphones and record individual’s everyday natural occurrences. Funt found great success with his show and was approached by ABC Network to negotiate airing the reality show on their stations. Hence, in the summer of 1947 the first episode of *Candid Camera* was broadcast on the ABC Network.

There are several reasons why Funt’s work began the groundwork for reality shows. Overall, his approach to the production and distribution of reality shows was unique. As Nadis (2005) points out, instead of conceptualizing *Candid Camera* as entertainment, Funt constructed and based *Candid Camera* on being real and unscripted, whereby turning the camera on “Regular Joes” (p. 3). In other words, nothing was rehearsed or planned. Funt believed employing real life situations on film could convey messages to the audience where they could see themselves. Hence during the 1950s, a new wave of open minded, out of the norm type of thinking emerged, that embraced the new genre of reality shows. For example, from 1950 to 2001, at least one reality program was rated within the top twenty-five television programs according to Nielson rankings (Baker, 2005). In particular, a certain type of reality show was consistently ranked in the top twenty-five television programs that began to gain popularity with American audiences during the 1950s. These new reality shows focused on law enforcement agencies solving crimes.

According to Ouellette and Murray (2004), the harbinger of the crime solving was *The Big Story* which began airing in 1951. The crux of *The Big Story* involved using story lines along with dramatic reenactments based on real life occurrences. As Baker (2005) succinctly states “this group has the longest history in prime time television” (p. 61). A key ingredient that led to the success of *The Big Story* was that it used real cases involving journalists who solved crimes or participated in prestigious service activities. An additional incentive for journalists to participate was given by the shows’ sponsor, *American Tobacco Company*, which gave a five-hundred dollar prize to the journalist whose story was featured. Hence at the end of each episode, the winning journalist would receive the Pall Mall Award.

Edwards (2009) argues that the popularity of reality crime shows in the 1950s was due to “viewers have the voyeuristic opportunity to peer into other people’s households and witness their diverse practices” (p. 6). If Edward’s argument holds true, this can provide a concrete explanation to the audience shift during the 1950s. Television programming during the 1950s was known as the era of cohesiveness, which delineated a heavy emphasis on family values, whereby the family unit usually consisting of four (Taddeo & Dvorak, 2010). With the inception of crime shows in the 1950s, audiences have other viewing options. As mentioned earlier, each era of television programming has a direct correlation to the popular culture and beliefs of that particular time. The latter is supported by Nachbar and Lause’s (1992) popular culture equation, which assert “the popularity of a given cultural element (object, person, event) is directly proportional to the degree to which that element is reflective of audience beliefs and values” (p. 5). Nachbar and Lause’s (1992) argument is supported by the increase of crime shows that

were created after *The Big Story*. For example, the following season NBC Network began airing *Dragnet* in 1951, a police dramatization based on true events. According to Marc and Thompson (1992), “*Dragnet* emerged as an enormous hit for NBC. More than that, it became a cultural icon” (p. 61). Baker (2005) attributes *Dragnet*’s success to several key factors. He states:

It was the first to use law enforcement language, adding to the ‘realistic’ nature. Also, it was the first to win an Emmy. In fact, it won ‘Best Mystery, Action, or Adventure Program’ for three consecutive years. Indeed, *Dragnet* ensured the creation of a new television genre, the police show. (p. 61)

Interestingly, Baker’s (2005) supposition seems to be valid. By Smith and Wood’s (2003) account, *Dragnet* was the second highest watched television program in America in 1953 and 1954 according to the Nielson Ratings. Indeed, *Dragnet* represented a new television phenomenon that was embraced by audiences throughout America. Scholars suggest that *Dragnet*’s popularity could be attributed to the shows’ authenticity or realness. Cavender and Fishman (1998) credits *Dragnet*’s success to its “gritty realism, by abandoning the Hollywood sounds stage in favor of location shooting” (p. 8). In other words, audiences gained an affinity for crime shows that resembled and felt genuine or real, rather than watching scripted, acted out Hollywood crime movies. As Stark (1987) points out, “*Dragnet* relied on actual scenes and used location shooting and police jargon to create a sense of realism” (p. 9).

Although the crime show landscape during the 1950s had been filled with an array of popularity and acceptance, the 1960s continued the trend of producing crime television programs but more of them. During this decade, crime shows such as *Men in*

*Action, Gangbusters* and *Highway Patrol* continued television's trend on law enforcement (McCarthy, 2003). The 1960s also ushered in an era where producers decided to add new components to their crime programs. As Gitlin (1983) notes, "the goal of the producer was to make a show with a realistic texture of sound and visuals. Unusual angle shots with hand held cameras gave it a nervous look of controlled chaos" (p. 9). As a result of the new infusion of production techniques, crime shows began to incorporate significantly more ingenuity into their programs. For example, *The FBI* incorporated a segment that profiled wanted criminals by revealing pictures and requesting citizens help at the conclusion of each show (MacDonald, 1990).

Arguably, the most popular crime show that was created during the 1960s was *The Untouchables*, based upon Oscar Fraley's biography of crime fighter Elliot Ness (Baker, 2005). While continuing the tradition of adding new elements to crime shows, *The Untouchables* implemented a narrator to set the scenario for the audience. Again, episodes were based on true accounts of Elliot Ness' battles with organized crime. According to Marc (1996), *The Untouchables* initiated a congressional investigation to examine the effects of media violence. Like its predecessor *Dragnet*, *The Untouchables* was increasingly popular among American households. As Smith and Wood (2003) point out, *The Untouchables* was the eighth highest watched show in 1960 according to the Nielson Rankings.

The 1970s continued the influx of police crime shows into the television landscape with the introduction of *Adam 12* and *Police Story* (Cavendar, 1984). Like its predecessors the aforementioned was based primarily on placing emphasis on law enforcement and realism. As Gitlin (1983) observes, the 1970s gave birth to a new type

of crime show that not only featured crime fighting, but encouraged audience participation in helping to solve the crime. This new television program was called *Crime Stoppers*, which contained a brief reenactment of the crime committed followed by an on-camera plea from a law enforcement official or host to the audience to assist police by offering information that could help solve the case. The first broadcast of *Crime Stoppers* aired in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1976, which eventually expanded to 700 programs throughout various cities in 1988, as well as 29 Canadian programs (Carriere & Ericson, 1989). What added to the uniqueness of *Crime Stoppers* is that it employed a combination of television journalist along with law enforcement agencies working together to solve the crime. As Geiser-Getz (1995) notes, *Crime Stoppers* offered an additional incentive for viewers to watch which was a reward. By implementing a financial bonus, viewers felt a greater sense of urgency to offer information that could lead to an arrest.

The 1980s continued to build upon the framework of crime shows engaging in audience participation by offering information to help law enforcement officials solve crimes (Breslin, 1990). In particular, three new crime shows were introduced that appealed to audience's moral and civic obligations. According to Cavender and Bond-Maupin (1993), *America's Most Wanted* and *Unsolved Mysteries* "present vignettes depicting actual crimes in which theories of crime are dramatized (p. 305). What set *America's Most Wanted* and *Unsolved Mysteries* from its predecessors is the aforementioned used dramatizations which included feature actors, actual photographs or video along with interviews with eyewitnesses and police. As mentioned earlier, the uniqueness of these shows were conveyed through its pleas to viewers to help law

agencies solve crimes by calling the show. In some cases law enforcement officials were present at the television studios to obtain information from the public.

In her book *Armed With Power of Television: Reality Crime Programming and Reconstruction of Law and Order in the United States*, Donovan (1998) chronicles a 1994 drug raid by Long Island law enforcement officers on a suspected drug house:

As the cops led the suspects out in handcuffs, the crowd began to sing. Bad boys, bad boys, what'chu gonna do? What'chu gonna do when they come for you?! Bad boys, bad boys, what'chu gonna do? What'chu gonna do when they come for you?! (p. 117)

What Donovan is referring to is the theme song from the police reality show *Cops* and the Long Island public showing its affinity for the show by singing its theme song. There is consensus among scholars that *Cops* is the harbinger of the new wave of police reality shows (Coe, 1993). As mentioned earlier, police reality shows *America's Most Wanted* and *Unsolved Mysteries* used reenactments of real crimes, while *Dragnet* and *The FBI* employed actors. In contrast, *Cops* decided to stray away from the aforementioned methods and implement a new ingredient in the formula of police reality shows. As Oliver (1994) asserts, "Cops uses actual video footage that features police officers investigating crimes, questioning suspects and making arrests" (p. 2). Similarly, Doyle (1996) makes an acute observation of *Cops* and its implementation of the "ride along format" in which a curious audience can now tag along in a police officer for a shift (p. 98). Leading the insurgence of *Cops* was producer, John Langley. Prior to becoming a producer, Langley developed a television series called *Cocaine Blues* in 1983. The crux of the show involved producers following police officers arresting suspecting drug

dealers. Langley, unlike his predecessors began to question how to merge daily police interactions with criminals and documentary film techniques. Hence, it became Langley's mission to create a police reality show using hand held cameras to follow police during their daily activities.

When Fox Network debuted in 1986, it found itself struggling to compete against established television giants CBS, ABC and NBC (Abelman, 1998). Langley introduced his idea of actualism to Fox management, which agreed to broadcast *Cops* in 1989. He asserts that "his show is as pure as you can get in documentary film making" (p. 73).

If the police reality show *Cops* effectively worked its way up as the number one rated crime show in America in the 1980s, and became known as the harbinger of police reality shows that constructed and represented the daily activities of policemen and their interactions with criminals, then *The FBI Files* and *America's Most Wanted* achieved similar results by employing reenactments and extending their shows past the antiquated thirty minutes to sixty minutes. Fast forward to 2007, as cable television networks such as A&E, Bravo, and Tru TV began their explosion of police reality shows that took America by storm and effectively earned high viewer ratings. Hence, after watching their competitors battle for supremacy in the police reality show landscape, The Learning Channel decided to get into the race and introduce their own version of police reality shows but drastically different. Their show unlike their competitors focused on police women. As a result they launched a new police reality series called *The Police Women of Memphis, Dallas, and Maricopa County* (Phoenix, AZ). After three highly successful seasons of airing their newly created Police Women series of Memphis, Dallas and Maricopa County (Phoenix, AZ), the Learning Channel decided to up the ante and

produce two more additional shows featuring police women and their day to day interactions with criminals. Hence, during the winter and spring seasons of 2011, The Learning Channel launched *The Police Women of Cincinnati* and *Broward County* (Fort Lauderdale, FL) to their police craving audience. As a result, each week airings consistently were rated in the top ten of cable television programming.

### Why People Watch Reality Shows

Over the past three decades the television industry has witnessed an explosion of newly developed reality shows, transforming it into the most widely viewed form of entertainment for Americans (Schroeder, 2006). For example in 2006, 80% of the top five prime time television shows were reality shows (Zappia, 2006), beating out popular shows such as *CSI* and *Sex in the City*. Similarly, the last episode of *Survivor* was viewed by over 57 million people. In addition, a recent study by Andrejevic (2003) revealed that the popularity of reality shows has increased so dramatically that “there are now more people applying to *The Real World* each year than to Harvard” (p. 460).

With the influx of so many reality shows throughout the years, media scholars have conducted numerous studies investigating what motivates individuals to watch reality shows. For example Raney (2002) used disposition theory to investigate television audiences’ motives. Oliver (1996) investigated the portrayals of race and aggression in reality crime shows. According to Murray and Oullette (2004), reality television offers an alternative form of programming due to its low production costs and unscripted interactions of the people involved. Thompson (2001) offers an alternative view. He suggests audiences are attracted to reality shows due to their infatuation with “celebrity culture” (p. 22). According to Gamson (1992), a celebrity is defined as an individual who

can be distinguished by image, personality, or an association with a product. Campbell (1995) suggests that society lives vicariously through celebrities in hopes of achieving fame one day themselves. In their book *Survivor Lessons: Essays on Communication and Reality Television*, Smith and Wood (2003) give their assertion to why individuals are drawn to reality shows:

The significance of these programs lies in the dramatization of real life events and people. The entertainment value of these programs is emphasized by its realistic nature. This allows audience members a visceral thrill where they are able to experience actual events while still being entertained. The experience of historical events within the context of dramatization and professional programming standards establishes a new televised reality that acts as a social safety valve where viewers are able to experience these events within a sterilized setting that is shaped by the program producers and the content itself. (p. 63)

To investigate more thoroughly, Blumler and Katz's (1974), Uses and Gratification Theory is a good place to gain a better understanding of why individuals are drawn to watch reality television. Their theory posits that media users play an active role in selecting and using media (Rubin, 2002). It also assumes that audiences' are not passive but are active in terms of interpreting media into their lives. As Severin and Tankard (2001) notes "the approach emphasizes audiences' choice by assessing their reasons for using a certain media to the disregard of others, as well as the various gratifications obtained from the media, based on individual social and psychological requirements" (p. 293). A variety of factors have been proposed as explanations to what role uses and gratification plays in audience's relationships with television. McQuail, Blumler, and

Brown (1972) in particular, categorized three gratifications individuals receive from watching television: 1) people's background; 2) social circumstances and 3) gratifications sought. They asserted people are motivated to watch television for diversion, personal relationships and personal identity. Interestingly, their conclusions can be traced back to earlier studies of uses and gratifications during the 1940s. For example, media uses pioneer Herta Herzog, explored audiences motives for using certain media content (Herzog, 1944). She conducted a study of women who listened to daytime radio soap operas and found that women obtained several benefits from listening which were: emotional release; wishful thinking; and personal advice.

As mentioned earlier, television has witnessed an abundance of reality shows burgeoning onto the television landscape such as *The Bachelor*, *Wife Swap*, *The Real Housewives of Orange County* and *Celebrity Apprentice*. These shows in particular have proved their mettle by garnishing high ratings among viewers and solidifying their place within American homes. Reiss and Wiltz (2004) attribute the success of reality television shows to an exhaustive study they conducted that critically examined human motivation for watching reality shows. Their results produced a ground breaking theory called "Sensitivity Theory." Sensitivity theory posits that individuals subliminally focus on stimuli that register as important to them and disregard stimuli that are unimportant to them. Their study questioned 239 adults to rate themselves according to 16 human motives and rate how often and what gratifications they received from watching reality television. They concluded that reality show viewers had above average desires to feel self-worthiness, vindicated, romantic and experience high morale. The above findings are consistent with a uses and gratifications study of reality programming conducted by

Barton (2009). He concluded that there is a correlation between the specific content of reality shows and the gratification received by the viewer. A similar study by Nabi et al. (2003), produced similar results. Their results revealed that 92% of respondents have watched at least one of the seven reality shows in their survey. They also found that regular viewers of reality shows watched because they were entertained, found the programs suspenseful and enjoyed the shows unscripted characteristics.

### Portrayals of African Americans in the Media

Over the years, television has painted a not so pleasant picture characterizing blacks. In his book *Blacks and White TV*, MacDonald (1983) states “broadcasters had been comfortable with racial stereotyping, whether it was the abrasive representations so abundant in the 1950s or the subtler stylizations of the 1970s. In the early days of television the series of ‘Amos ‘n’ Andy’ portrayed black men as clowns or con men hectoring by bossy black women” (p. 248). According to Entman and Rojecki (2001), “The predominant imagery of blacks on television oscillates between the supremely gifted, virtuous and successful and the corrupt criminal, and dangerous (with some black athletes a bit of both), much more so than whites. There is little in the way of the merely ordinary, those examples that fail to register a blip on a cultural radar screen calibrated to detect only the extremes” (p. 207). Dixon (2008) observed that “blacks typically occupy roles as poor, loud politicians, and criminals on network news” (p. 322). Ladson-Billings (2009) in her research on the portrayals of black women in the media points out black females have historically been portrayed as “Mammies, Sapphires and Jezebels” which in turn have deep roots in American slavery (p. 90). These stereotypical views have been found to have a direct impact on how other races perceive blacks through the media.

Television is a powerful media outlet that possesses the distinct ability to distort or persuade its viewers to think in a particular manner (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). Similarly, research indicates that Americans use television as their primary source of news gathering and also find it more credible than newspapers (Roper Organization, 1993.) One of the thinking patterns in which Morgan and Shanahan (2010) are referring to deals with criminality. As Dixon and Linz (2000) note, “Blacks and Latinos are significantly more likely than whites to be portrayed as law breakers on television news” (p. 131). In addition, Dixon and Linz (2002) assert that “black perpetration of crime particularly if whites are victims may be deemed highly newsworthy by news gatherers who feel obligated to conform to ethnocentric discursive practices in order to maintain viewer interest” (p. 117). A recent study by LeDuff (2008) gives support to Dixon and Linz’s claim. When examining news stories involving white and black victims of crime in New Orleans and Indianapolis, she discovered that stories involving whites as victims received almost three times as much follow-up news coverage by television stations in New Orleans than black victims as well as white victims receiving almost six times as much follow-up news coverage by Indianapolis television stations than black victims. After analyzing a week of newscasts from three Chicago television stations, Entman (1990) came to a similar conclusion. In a crime where a white female was the victim and the criminals were black, the story received follow-up coverage for three days, within 11 of the possible 15 times. He also noted that four of the stories were over two minutes in length, which is atypical for newscasts.

For years scholars have argued that television has typically blacks as menacing criminals and whites as victims who need to be protected from the criminally inclined

blacks (Lipshultz, Hilt, & Smile, 2003). In their book *The Black Image in the White Mind*, Entman and Rojecki (2000) says “that local TV news faces strong pressures to stick to its typical diet of crime and calamity with starring roles for minorities” (p. xi). Their conclusion derives from a study involving a television station in Chicago conducted in 2000.

According to Entman and Rojecki (2000):

Beginning in February of 2000, WBBM (CBS-Chicago) tried airing a journalistically serious news program. Three months later during May sweeps, ratings had plunged, WBBM a mere 8 percent share of viewers (compared with 23 and 18 percent for the ABC and NBC affiliates). By July ratings were down another 26 percent. The station changed back to ‘leading with bleeding’ later in 2000. (p. xii)

The decision to resort back to a crime dominated newscast is not something new. To gain a further perspective on television news and its affinity for crime and criminal images, Kappeler, Blumberg, and Potter (1996) investigated the portrayals of crime through the media and developed four conclusions: (1) the media focuses on “deviant populations”; (2) the media portrays ordinary people as crime victims; (3) the media defines boundaries that pose a “threat to established norms, values or traditional lifestyles”; (4) the media portrays law enforcement officers as the hero and the protector of the innocent from dangerous criminals. (p. 18).

There is an abundance of research that has concluded that blacks have frequently been delineated as perpetrators of crime conveyed through television news (Dixon and Linz, 2000; Entman, 1990; Yanich, 2004). For example, a content analysis by Dixon and

Linz (2000) revealed that blacks were more than twice as likely as whites to be delineated as criminals on local television newscasts. Similarly, Entman (1990) discovered that mug shots of black suspects were more likely to be shown on local newscasts than mug shots of white suspects. His study also revealed that blacks were more likely to be shown in handcuffs in local newscasts than whites. Such consistent findings have lead scholars to posit that when local television news broadcasts a high quantity of crime news stories, the viewer's subliminally could develop the propensity to link blacks with criminality (Shrum, 1996).

Media scholars have also recognized other trends that have burgeoned from the television news landscape. As a result, scholars have attributed their new discovery to an entity that lies within television news which deals with myths. Media scholars Prosis and Johnson (2004) says that "the media's portrayal of law enforcement and crime tells public audiences about such things as 'good and evil,' heroes and villains, 'morality,' and it suggests appropriate societal responses to crime and social problems" (p. 73). By Christopher Campbell's (1995) account, "the nature of local television news makes it especially susceptible to myth making. Stories are brief – many less than half a minute- and feature quick sound bites accompanied by rapid fire video" (p. 12). Schattenberg (1981) asserts that "the crime genre renders moralistic plots in which criminals, whose villainy symbolized social malaise and disorder, threaten the established order" (p. 81). Through myths of good versus evil, justice versus injustice, faces are oftentimes associated with the two. Dixon (2007) notes that these constructions of myths through perceptions disproportionately depicts black's as representing evil, menacing criminals

and white police officers representing the good guys who will ultimately protect the citizens from the crime prone blacks.

### Cultivation

According to Fishman and Cavender (1998):

Television reality crime programs which appeared in the late 1980s and flourished in the 1990s, reflect the hopes for and the uncertainties about the future. These programs are a display of the worst in us. Drugs, crime, and threats to the family and to safety generally are the stock-in-trade of these shows. However, programs like *Cops* depict the police as the front line of defense against such threats.

*America's Most Wanted* gives viewers a sense of empowerment as they fight back with telephone calls that help to capture dangerous criminals. (p. 7)

Dixon and Linz (2000) explains how the media tends to give more salience to portray whites as the good guys and minorities as the bad guys. They stated: "Blacks and Latinos are more likely to be portrayed as lawbreakers than as defenders, whereas Whites are significantly more likely to be portrayed as defenders than as lawbreakers" (p. 141).

Indeed, television in particular local television news plays an integral part of Americans lives. According to McManus (1994), roughly 71 million people watch local television newscasts. According to the Pew Center for the People and Press (1998), roughly 81 million people watch local television news. Those statistics indicate that the number of people who watch local television news are double the amount of people who watch network news (McManus, 1994). According to a study by Newport and Saad (1998), over 50% of Americans said they obtained news information from television news compared to obtaining information from newspapers. The latter is firmly supported

by a 2002 Gallup poll that revealed that slightly under 60% of Americans used local television news as their primary source for obtaining information (Gallup Poll, 2002). If the aforementioned literature shows that the majority of American gather information from television news, then how do these images and messages impact viewers?

Subsequently, over the past four decades, a myriad of researchers have examined the cognitive effects of television audiences viewing reoccurring images of blacks as criminals (Eschholz, Chiricos, & Gertz, 2003; Busselle & Crandall, 2002; Dixon, 2007). Arguably the most frequently studied cognitive effects theory is cultivation. According to Bryant and Miron (2004), from 1956 to 2000, cultivation theory ranked within the top three most cited theories in mass communication research published in reputable scholarly journals. Developed by George Gerbner in the 1960s as a method “to find the most suitable ways of selling (or disguising) policies which serve institutional objectives” (Gerbner, 1966, p. 100). Its main tenet states that “those who spend more time watching television are more likely to perceive the real world in ways that reflect the most common and recurrent messages of the world of television” (Morgan & Shanhan, 2010, p. 337). A study by Gerbner and Gross (1976) provided evidence consistent with the cognitive effects of cultivation theory. They found that “television cultivates opinions about the social reality which heavy viewers will learn from being disproportionately exposed to them: victims like criminals must learn their proper roles and televised violence may perform the teaching function all too well” (p. 181). They also found that cultivation theory has several underlying components: First, television acts as a visual raconteur, that is it tell stories that are subliminally consumed and processed by the audience. Second, the images that are transmitted through television reinforce traditional thoughts and

beliefs. Last, television viewers have the propensity to watch only programs they are interested in and will not watch programs in which they are not interested in. Hence, Gerbner and Gross (1976) posits that tunnel vision occurs within viewers. In other words since messages conveyed through television are similar, they have the propensity to skew the political and social beliefs, ultimately causing a myopic perspective among viewers. In their book *Black Image in the White Mind*, Entman and Rojecki (2000) exemplify the latter in a conversation between a citizen and President Bill Clinton:

Mr. Morgan: Yes, I do honestly think that there is still discrimination in this country to a point. There are a lot of prejudices people out there that still remain... And I think it has been ironed out in our generation.

The President: Do you think it's because of personal experiences, do you think it's because you've had more direct personal experiences with people from different age groups?

Mr. Morgan: I think it was because I grew up in a different time. We grew up watching television. The Cosby Show was my favorite show. (Laughter).

The President: So, therefore, if you worked at a bank and a black person came in with a check you wouldn't necessarily think it ought to be held because you saw Bill Cosby as he was a good role model?

Mr. Morgan: Yes, I don't think I would give him a hard time. But at the same time, I have my own prejudices, whereas if I'm walking downtown on a street and I see a black man walking towards me that's not dressed as well. I may be a little bit scared.

The President: Do you think that's because of television crime shows, or because of your personal experience?

Mr. Morgan: It would have nothing to do with my personal experience. Just from the media, television shows and things that I have heard. (p. 2)

As mentioned earlier cultivation theory has been widely used in hundreds of media studies and has received high praise from scholars but has also been met with opposition. As Morgan and Shanahan (2010) note "one common criticism of cultivation is that Gerbner and colleagues lumped together all viewing into one undifferentiated homogenized mass, as if there were no appreciable differences between *Laverne & Shirley* and *Starsky & Hutch*" (p. 340). Still other scholars have also questioned the efficacy of cultivation. For example, Wober (1978) when examining heavy and light viewers of television in their expectation of being involved in a robbery found no difference in respondents. A study by Doob and MacDonald (1979) supported Gerbner's cultivation hypothesis until the neighborhood crime rates were factored into the equation. Subsequently, only urban characters stemming from high crime neighborhoods showed a correlation to cultivation. After they implemented a second level of analysis using multiple regression of sex and age, they concluded that heavy viewing of television, in particular violent television was insignificantly related to fear or crime. Similarly, inconsistent findings of cultivation were reached by Skogan and Maxfield (1980). After surveying over 1300 respondents, they concluded that neither viewing local television as well as viewing good versus evil crime shows were related to fear of crime. More extensive criticisms of cultivation theory have come from scholars who re-analyzed Gerber's work. For example, Hawkins and Pingree (1980) posit the juxtaposition of light

and heavy viewers of television in not as important as examining the type of program selected and what ideology they hold to be true in their real world experiences. They also concluded that there are five underlying components individuals use in constructing social reality: (1) the processing of information; (2) the importance of media messages; (3) the effects of direct exposure; (4) influences stemming from social structures; (5) the characteristics of audience members whether active or passive. Based on the aforementioned literature, there is substantial evidence that the media does have some effect. The conundrum that exists is exactly what that effect may be? Hall (2003) notes that the media has the propensity to cultivate “representations of the social world, images, descriptions, explanations and frames for understanding how the world is and why it works as it is said and shown to work” (p. 91). Campbell, LeDuff, Jenkins and Brown (2012) states that “mass media portrayals construct social reality for individuals and groups. What audiences see on the national news may influence what they believe about people with whom they have little or no interaction. Media images may be seen as representations that contribute to the construction of social reality of race in the United States” (p. 45). Finally Delgado and Stafancic (2000) states “society constructs the social world through a series of tacit agreements mediated by images, pictures, tales and scripts. Much of what we believe is ridiculous, self-serving, cruel but not perceived to be so at the time. Attacking embedded preconceptions that marginalize others or conceal their humanity is a legitimate function of all fiction” (p. 42).

Despite crime rates declining in America within the past decade, public opinion polls reveal that crime and public safety are two of the biggest concerns of Americans (Pastore & Maguire, 2001). As a result, local newscasts have capitalized on the latter and

placed an emphasis on reporting crime news. Subsequently, along with reporting crime news, a cognitive association between blacks and crime among viewers began to develop. Consequentially, a myriad of studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between crime news and blacks. For example, a content analysis by Dixon and Linz (2000) revealed that blacks were more than twice as likely as whites to be delineated as criminals on local television newscasts. Similarly, Entman (1994) discovered that mug shots of black suspects were more likely to be shown on local newscasts than mug shots of white suspects. Entman's study also revealed that blacks were more likely to be shown in handcuffs in local newscasts than whites. Such consistent findings have lead scholars to posit that when local television news broadcasts a high quantity of crime news stories, the viewer's subliminally could develop the propensity to link blacks with criminality (Shrum, 1996).

#### Feminist Studies

According to Kaplan (1987), the crux of feminist studies can be attributed to: Women's need to resist the long standing male tradition of defining women only in relation to male needs and desires. Feminists wanted to break down this marginalization and silencing of women: one way of doing so was to assert women's ways of being as different from men's ways of being and from male configurations of women. (p. 253)

In addition, Hoffert (2003) suggests that the history of feminist studies is not new but an oftentimes overlooked entity, causing it to appear new. In order to fully comprehend feminist studies and its proliferation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we need to look back to its beginning. The origins of feminist studies can be traced back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> and early

20<sup>th</sup> centuries, during what was referred to as the first wave of feminism (Casetti, 1999). As Lerner (1974) notes, women during that time had “a different experience with respect to consciousness, depending on whether their work, their expression, their activity is male-defined or woman oriented” (p. 5). She succinctly states:

Women like men, are indoctrinated in a male defined value system and conduct their lives accordingly. Thus colonial and early nineteenth century female reformers directed their activities into channels which were merely an extension of their domestic concerns and traditional roles. They taught school, cared for the poor, the sick, the aged. As their consciousness developed, they turned their attention toward the needs of women. (p. 6)

The 1960s ushered in what was known as the second wave of feminism. Gillis, Howie and Munford (2004) explain that this second wave was a “movement which was a response to a shared exclusion from political, social, and economic life.” (p. 1). Indeed, the 1960s represented a period of struggle, oppression, dissatisfaction and uncertainty for women.

The attitudes that women possessed during that era was not an accident. According to Bullough (1973), these subordinate views of women were introduced into western civilization from the Near East centuries ago.

Hence, as the 60s emerged, so did feminist activists. After years of frustration many women began to challenge the dominant patriarchal system that was in place in the United States. This era of feminist activity was known as the Second Wave of Feminism. Leading the charge was Betty Friedan, an outspoken feminist who despised the antiquated, domestic roles that were assigned to women. Hence, she published *The*

*Feminine Mystique* which encouraged women to attack the patriarchal ideology that domestic, motherly, and nurturing roles were best suited for them (Adelstein & Pival, 1972). She asserts that World War II played a pivotal role in changing the views of women. For example, during the war, women were a vital part of the workforce due to the high number of men being drafted. After the war when men returned home, women left the workplace and returned to sedentary roles at home. She states:

In the fifteen years after World War II, this mystique of feminine fulfillment became the cherished and self-perpetuating core of contemporary American culture. Millions of women lived their lives in the image of those pretty pictures of the American suburban housewife, kissing their husbands good bye in front of the picture window, depositing their station wagons full of children at school and smiling as they ran the new electric waxer over the spotless kitchen floor. They baked their own bread, sewed their own and their children's clothes, kept their new washing machines and dryers running all day. (p. 5)

This was the harbinger of the Women's Liberation Movement that gave birth to NOW (National Organization for Women) and the National Women's Political Caucus. Now, as Freedman (2002) argues, feminism inspired, empowered and uplifted women to unite and join forces to confront the dominant male culture. As a result, women's organizations burgeoned resulting in legislation that created laws to ensure women were treated equally. For example, The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited racial discrimination but also banned sex discrimination as well (Scott, 1996). This gave birth to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to hear cases that dealt with complaints of discrimination based on gender and race. In addition the Women's

Educational Equity Act and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act were created of prohibit sex discrimination in hiring, training and promotion (Freedman, 2002).

The 1990s ushered in the third wave of feminism. This movement was inspired in response to perceived failure of the second wave movement as in the eyes of some feminist (Pender, 2002). In their book *Third Wave Feminism*, Gillis, Howie, and Mumford (2007) suggests that economics was a driving factor that heavily contributed to forming this new movement for women. They argue:

The shift away from the public works philosophy of the Roosevelt years to the free market fundamentalism of the Reagan/Thatcher years clearly contextualizes the third wave tendency to focus on individual narratives and to think of feminism as a form of individual empowerment. (p. 14)

In other words, women during the third wave were consciously motivated to become financially independent and stable. Long gone were the notions of depending upon a man to provide for them, this new mentality empowered women to become self-sufficient. Third wave feminism also opened the doors for multi-racial and multi-cultural feminist to emerge, who would later examine the intersections between race, class and culture (Duggan & Hunter, 1995). Many of these young activists were reared up during the 60s and 70s, witnessing firsthand the social and political uprisings that were instigated by second wave feminists. Hence, this new wave of feminist leaders took their cues from their predecessors push for equality through political, social and cultural means.

## Female Police Officers

Historically, the field of law enforcement has been perceived as an all-boys club. Law enforcement typically involves the use of force, aggressive behavior, physical strength and uniting with cohorts (Remington, 1981). The latter is consistent with perceptions of gender roles in society. Roles that require using brute force, physicality and acting in an aggressive behavior are typically perceived to be duties that are best suited for males. In contrast, roles that require working in sedentary positions, possessing nurturing or caring behavior are typically perceived be duties that are best suited for females.

In our present culture, women are enjoying a significantly higher degree of success in the law enforcement milieu. There is consensus among scholars that the increase of females in law enforcement could be attributed to the implementation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 (Cuadrado, 1995; Steel & Lovrich, 1987), an amendment to Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. As mentioned earlier, law enforcement has traditionally been associated as being a male dominated environment but with the implementation of the aforementioned laws, law enforcement agencies were encouraged to hire female officers to assist in combating crime. Consequently, there was a significant amount of growth of female police officers during the following years. For example, from 1980 to 1990 there was a sharp increase from 4.6 to 12.6% of female officers in metropolitan cities (Martin, 1993). In addition, scholars assert that female police may have a slight advantage over their male counterparts in terms of community outreach and victim assistance. For instance, in certain cases female officers were preferred more than male officers in situations where empathy and sensitivity were

required as opposed to physical strength (Charles, 1982: National Center for Women and Policing, 1999). A study by Greenwald and Connolly (1974) suggested that female officers in New York City performed up to standards and were viewed highly favorably by the public. Research has also suggested that there is no difference between the performance level of female police officers as compared to male police officers in categories of competence and fulfilling job duties (Bloch & Anderson, 1974).

The assimilation by female police into the male dominated workforce has not been easy and oftentimes met with resistance. Hence, the latter has created a myriad of challenges and stereotypes of female police officers in the workplace. Prior research has shown that male police officers traditionally, have not always viewed their female counter parts as equal. For example, Koenig (1978) reported that male officers possessed unfavorable views of women working on patrol duty, along with viewing female officers as unequal, as well as having the propensity to undermine police solidarity. Research also indicates that female officers experience more difficulties in their work environment than male officers in particular discrimination, isolation and sexual harassment (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2005).

Indeed, experiencing negative attitudes within the workplace can be a traumatizing experience. A study conducted by Kanter (1977) revealed that female police officers are oftentimes faced with yet another, more formidable form of negativity within their milieu which she described as “tokenism.” Kanter defines tokenism as a selected group of individuals who are hired specifically to fill or maintain a quota set by an authoritative agency. Kanter also suggests that working environments that possess a small percentage of minority employees can create additional pressure on those individuals. In

addition, tokens oftentimes feel that they are under a microscope, experience isolation and stress due to a small margin of error they are given compared to their male counterparts. Interestingly, Kanter found that female police officers are frequently stereotyped into four categories. The first category is the “mother” who is portrayed as having compassion and nurturing. The second category is the “sex object” where the female officers displays a sexier side that inspires men to show interest for her. The third category is the “kid sister” who gives moral support to the male and the last category is the “women’s liberalist” who is viewed as an outcast.

#### Research Questions

Based on the review of literature I developed a list of research questions. Dixon and Linz (2000) conducted a content analysis of television news coverage involving African Americans and Latinos in Los Angeles. They discovered that African Americans and Latinos are more likely to be delineated as criminals than Whites. In contrast, actual police data indicate that those findings by Dixon and Linz can be misleading. A study by Brownstein (2000) found that whites made up more than 53% of arrests for violent crime. For this reason the first and second research question examine the portrayals of African Americans as criminals on the *Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* series.

RQ-1: Will African American males be overrepresented as criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* when compared with real world aggregate crime data from those cities?

RQ-2: Will African American females be overrepresented as criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County*

*County* when compared with real world aggregate crime data from those cities?

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), violent crime is defined as homicides, assaults, burglary, rape, large theft and robbery. The next issue that was addressed in this study involves the type of crimes that will occur the most frequently. Research suggests that local television news overrepresents African Americans as violent criminals (Dixon, 2008) and African Americans are significantly higher to be cognitively associated with violent criminal behavior rather than nonviolent criminal behavior (Dixon & Linz, 2000; Entman & Rojecki, 2000). Research also suggests that reoccurring images of more African Americans as law breakers than other racial groups could persuade viewers to believe that society is saturated with African Americans who are dangerous and possess a propensity for crime (Armstrong & Neuendorf, 1992). Prior research has indicated that murder and robbery have accounted for over one-third of crime news in the Chicago Tribune (Graber, 1980). Similarly a content analysis by Sheley and Askins (1981) discovered that murder and armed robbery were reported the most frequently on New Orleans television stations. The findings led to the third and fourth research questions.

RQ-3: Will African American males be overrepresented as violent criminals (e.g. murder, rape assault, etc.) on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* when compared with aggregate crime data from those cities?

RQ-4: Will African American females be overrepresented as violent criminals (e.g. murder, rape assault, etc.) on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis,*

*Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* when compared with aggregate crime data from those cities?

When it comes to content, several studies have been conducted that examined the frequency of crime stories where African Americans were involved. A study by Sheley and Ashins (1981) found that African Americans in New Orleans made up 93% of the city's robbery suspects in the daily newspaper. It was also discovered that African Americans accounted for over 80% of robbery suspects on local newscasts in New Orleans. In addition, Entman (1990) discovered that 41% of all news stories in Chicago local newscasts that involved African Americans were associated with violent crime. Hence, most studies predict that news stories involving African Americans as violent criminals will occur more frequently than other ethnic groups, but what will be found in these five cities? Hence, the fifth and sixth research questions were formulated.

RQ-5: Will crime segments involving African American males be shown more frequently committing violent crimes (e.g. murder, rape, assault, etc.) than White, Asian, Hispanic, Indian etc. males on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County*?

RQ-6: Will crime segments involving African American females be shown more frequently committing violent crimes (e.g. murder, rape, assault, etc.) than White, Asian, Hispanic, Indian etc. females on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County*?

There is consensus among criminal justice researchers that police are motivated to perform at a high level, in particular during instances when they are required to chase lawbreakers (Reiner, 2000). While police reality shows typically involve high speed

chases consisting of police in high pursuit of lawbreakers, recent research has been conducted to examine if certain ethnic groups are over or underrepresented as police officers. Oliver (1994) discovered that African Americans account for 9% of police officers on police reality shows compared to 17% of African Americans being police officers according to employment data. An “Interole” comparison by Dixon and Linz (2000) found that whites are portrayed more as defenders of the law than as criminals. For this study on the over or underrepresentation of African American females on the *Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County*, the following research question was developed.

RQ-7: Are policewomen featured on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* more likely to be shown interacting with suspects of their same racial or ethnic group?

#### Qualitative Analysis

There are some elements of *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* series which may be further examined by using qualitative methods. Qualitative methods are frequently used to analyze texts, in particular focusing on the original text and its underlying themes. Qualitative analysis commonly uses different methodologies such as semiotics, narrative analysis or structuralism. In this analysis, semiotics will be employed. Fiske and Hartley (1978) define semiotics as the study of all things that may be used for communication. In addition Hall (1997) defines semiotics as the discipline of signs that examines various exchanges of communication and information. According to Sebeok (1976), “the scope of semiotics and its subject matter includes the exchange of any messages whatsoever

and of the systems of signs which underlie them, with the sign always the fundamental concept” (p.1). The two underlying components of signs are denotative, that is, the first order of signification: the signifier is the image itself and the signified the idea or concept, what it is a picture of and connotative, that is, a second-order signifying system that uses the first sign, (signifier and signified), as its signifier and attaches an additional meaning, another signified, to it (Seiter, 1992). In addition, Stuckey and King (2007) explain that semiotics is a science that can address encoding and decoding messages through movies. She contends that “movies can also be a particularly useful tool for developing critical media literacy in educational settings; they help students learn how to analyze the ways in which gender, race, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation are portrayed in a film” (p. 25). Hence, the entire episodes of *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* series were analyzed individually. Not only will individual crime segments be analyzed, but all aspects of the shows from the beginning to the end. The purpose is to uncover underlying verbal or non-verbal interpretations that may be embedded within the shows. A connotative and denotative reading was done to answer the following research questions.

RQ-8: Does there appear to be any underlying visual, verbal, or non-verbal elements (pictures, racial code words, music, etc.) of *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* that seem to portray African Americans in a negative light?

RQ-9: Are there any other significant qualitative findings that reveal underlying characteristics of suspects, victims, cities, police officers, race, etc. on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County*?

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY

In order to critically examine crime segments on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Memphis*, *Dallas*, *Maricopa County* and *Broward County* series, the methodology of content analysis was selected. Prior studies involving the portrayal of African Americans (LeDuff, 2008; Entman, 1990; Dixon and Linz, 2000) have employed content analysis. For the purpose of this study, the unit of analysis was the crime segment. The crime segment is defined as each individual portion of the show that involves a police officer and her daily interactions with criminals. To further analyze the quantitative findings, a qualitative textual analysis through semiotics was applied to specific segments other than crime segments. Fiske and Hartley (1978) define semiotics as the study of all things that may be used for communication. In addition Hall (1997) defines semiotics as the discipline of signs that examines various exchanges of communication and information. In her book chapter, *Semiotics, Structuralism, and Television*, Ellen Seiter (1992) states:

By addressing the symbolic and communicative capacity of humans in general semiotics and structuralism help us see connections between fields of study that are normally divided among different academic departments in the university.

Thus, they are especially suited to the study of television. (p. 32)

What Seiter is referring to falls under qualitative research and has been commonly used over the past 30 years by media scholars to analyze television texts, programming, society and culture. The roots of semiotics extend as far back as the pre-Socratic era, where Hippocrates examined human movements as conduits of messages pertaining to physical and mental capacities (Mick, 1986). The term semiotics was coined by

American philosopher Charles Peirce and the field of semiotics was invented by Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure (Seiter, 1992). According to Sebeok (1976), “the scope of semiotics and its subject matter includes the exchange of any messages whatsoever and of the systems of signs which underlie them, with the sign always the fundamental concept” (p. 1). Mick (1986) asserts the purpose of semiotics is to analyze the foundation of meaning producing events, both verbal and nonverbal. To better understand these meanings, one must take its cues from Ferdinand de Saussure and critically examine semiotics. As West (2005) points out, Saussure is not concerned with a specific language, “but with the nature of language in general” (p. 327). In other words, the language belonged to a system of communication through signs, therefore linguistics should be studied on a larger scale of science, that is semiology, which deals with signs within society (Harmon, 1981). As mentioned earlier, semiotics is the study of all things that may be used for communication. Within semiotics lies the foundation in which it rests upon, the “sign.” Within every sign lies a “signifier,” the picture, object, or sound and the “signified,” which represents the underlying meaning of the signifier. According to Seiter (1992), in her book chapter *Semiotics, Structuralism and Television*, learning the vocabulary of semiotics could be considered a daunting task but ultimately can become rewarding. As she continues to describe the advantages of learning the jargon of semiotics she says “this vocabulary makes it possible, however, to identify and describe what makes TV distinctive as a communication medium as well as how it relies on other signs to communicate” (p. 31).

Building on de Saussure’s work is semiotician Umberto Eco (Seiter, 1992). He argues there are additional, underlying signs that “account for all types of signs including

pictorial one” (p. 35). Hence, he introduced three additional vocabulary to semiotics which are symbolic, iconic and indexical.

He suggests that television constantly uses all three types of signs simultaneously, whereas television images are both iconic and indexical and television programs often use words which are symbolic signs on the screen and sound track (Seiter, 1992). He notes that in the iconic sign, the signifier structurally resembles its signified. For example a drawing of a dog and the signified dog (the concept) could take many different forms. The drawing could be skeletal or anatomical, in which case it may take a trained veterinarian to recognize any structural similarity between the drawing and the signified dog. The iconic sign could be a child’s drawing in which case another kind of decoder, for instance the child’s parent or teacher might be recognized to detect the structural resemblance. Indexical signs involve an existential link between the signifier and the referent. In other words, they rely on a material connection between signifier and signified. For example, smoke means fire, paw prints mean the presence of a cat.

In addition, Stuckey and King (2007) explain that semiotics is a science that can address encoding and decoding messages through movies. She contends that “movies can also be a particularly useful tool for developing critical media literacy in educational settings; they help students learn how to analyze the ways in which gender, race, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation are portrayed in a film” (p. 25). A study by Furia and Bielby (2009) involving the portrayal of women in films over a 70 year period found that 7% of films did not include women, 19% only used women in roles with no dialogue and 25% of films portrayed women in roles of little significance.

Fiske (1983) notes that Stuart Hall's essay "Encoding/Decoding" is often seen as a major turning point in British cultural studies, for it introduces the idea that television programs do not have a single meaning but are relatively open texts capable of being read in different ways by different people" (p. 292). Hall suggests that there is a necessary correlation between people's social situations and the meanings that they may generate from a television program (Hall, 1980). Interestingly, he also suggests a possible tension between the frame of the text which conveys the dominant ideology and the social factors of the viewers, which may put them in contrast with the ideology.

In order to properly understand the encoding/decoding theoretical model proposed by Hall (1980), it is imperative to make connections to the core foundations of his theory. While studying at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, England, Hall (1980) was greatly influenced by Marxist theory, in particular dominant ideology being conveyed to people of lower social status (Gurevitch & Scannell, 2003). According to White (1992), the root of Marxism stems from two primary concepts; the infrastructure and the superstructure. She states:

Classical or orthodox Marxist theory construes society in terms of a base/superstructure model. According to this model, the primary and crucial organizing factor of a human society is its material or economic base (some theorists call this the infrastructure), its mode of production. The dominant mode of production in turn determines the superstructure, which includes the arrangement of political and legal systems, culture, and ideology. Within this model, the superstructure is not only organized in line with the interests of the

ruling class but thereby functions to sustain and perpetuate the dominate mode of production. (p.164)

Hall (1980) asserts the media has an interest in “production, circulation, distribution and consumption rather than conveying a message” (p. 201). He states that the meaning of the text is located between the producer and the reader. In other words, the producer acts as the encoder, who framed or encoded a meaning in a particular way, while the reader acts as the decoder, who decodes the message differently according to his/her personal background (McQuail, 1994). Hence, reading or watching television ignites a process of negotiation between the viewer and the text. Hall (1980) succinctly points out that “the word negotiation implies both that there is a conflict of interests that needs to be reconciled in some way and that the process of reading television is one in which the reader in an active maker of meanings from the text, not a passive recipient of already constructed ones” (p. 292). As a result, Hall (1980) developed his theory of preferred readings to account for this conflict of interest. He determined there are three types of reading strategies, the dominant, negotiated and the oppositional. The dominant reading is produced by a viewer who shares cultural meanings with the producer and accepts the dominant ideology that is produced. The negotiated reading is one produced by a viewer who fits into the dominant ideology but sometimes resists and modifies the reading based on his/her social position. The oppositional reading is produced by individuals whose social situation puts them in direct opposition with the dominant ideology.

Two underlying components of signs are denotative, that is, the first order of signification: the signifier is the image itself and the signified the idea or concept, what it

is a picture of and connotative, that is, a second-order signifying system that uses the first sign, (signifier and signified), as its signifier and attaches an additional meaning, another signified, to it (Seiter, 1992). In his semiotic analysis of wrestling, Barthes (1973) identifies several denotative and connotative storylines. On the denotative level, Barthes notes that wrestling is a competitive match between two motivated combatants. On the connotative level, Barthes notes that “wrestling is a spectacle,” a scripted play that pits good versus evil (p. 19). The wrestlers are recognized by their gestures. The good wrestler gives signs to the fans that he represents righteousness by being affable, courteous and responding to the cheers from the crowd. In contrast, the wrestler who represents evil often sends signs to the crowd by dressing in dark colors, having an ominous look and being unruly to fans. Barthes notes how important it is that the signs of good and evil be conveyed to fans and that fans must interpret those signs to identify with the storyline (Barthes, 1973). He also notes that in the end, “the function of the wrestler is not to win: it is to go exactly through the motions which are expected of him” (p. 19). This chapter outlines the procedure that I followed to gather data for analysis, train coders, and analyze and code data.

#### Study Cites

The five cities chosen for this study were selected because they represent the entire five seasons of episodes of *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Memphis*, *Dallas*, *Maricopa County* and *Broward County* series as shown later in table 1. According to the 2010 U.S. Census data, the population of Cincinnati, Ohio is 296,943. Of the latter number, 42.1% are Black; 52.0% are White; 2.4% are Hispanic; 1.6% are Asian; and 0.1% are Native American. The metropolitan population of Cincinnati is 2.1 million people making it the

27<sup>th</sup> largest city in the United States. According to the 2010 U.S. Census data, the population of Memphis, Tennessee is 646,889. Of that population 60.7% are Black; 30.7% are White; 5.2% are Hispanic; 1.7% are Asian; and 0.1% are Native American. The metropolitan population of Memphis is 1,316,100 people making it the 20<sup>th</sup> largest city in the U.S. According to the 2010 U.S. Census data, the population of Dallas, Texas is 1,197,816 people. Of the latter number, 22.3% are Black; 30.5% are White; 43.1% are Hispanic; 2.7% are Asian; and 0.2% are Native American. The metropolitan population of Dallas is 6,371,773 people making it the 6<sup>th</sup> largest city in the United States. According to the 2010 U.S. Census data, the population of Maricopa County (Phoenix, Arizona) is 1,601,587. Of the latter number, 5.3% were Black; 45.5% are White; 43.2% were Hispanic; 2.8% are Asian; and 1.5% are Native American. The metropolitan area population is 4.2 million people making Phoenix the 14 largest city in the United States. According to the 2010 U.S. Census data, the population of Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale, Florida) is 1,655,521. Of that population, 28.4% are Black; 53.6% are White; 14.6% are Hispanic; 1.2% are Asian; and 0.3% are Native American. The metropolitan area of Broward County is 1.7 million people making it the 31<sup>st</sup> largest city in the United States as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*2010 City of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas  
Population, Racial Demographics, and U.S. Population Rankings*

City	Population	Population According to Race	U.S. Rankings According to Population of City
Cincinnati, OH	296,943	Black - 42.1%	

Table 1 (continued).

	(2.1 million metro)	White - 52.0% Asian - 1.6% Hispanic - 2.4% Native - 0.1%	27 <sup>th</sup> largest in U.S.
Memphis, TN	646,889 (1.3 million metro)	Black - 60.7% White - 30.7% Asian - 1.7% Hispanic - 5.2% Native - 0.1%	20 <sup>th</sup> largest in U.S.
Dallas, TX	1,197,816 (6.3 million metro)	Black - 22.3% White - 30.5% Asian - 2.7% Hispanic - 43.1% Native - 0.2%	6 <sup>th</sup> largest in U.S.
Maricopa County (Phoenix, AZ)	1,601,521 (4.2 million metro)	Black - 5.3% White - 45.5% Asian - 2.8% Hispanic - 43.2% Native - 1.5%	14 <sup>th</sup> largest in U.S.
Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale, FL)	165,521 (1.7 million metro)	Black - 28.4% White - 53.6% Asian - 1.2% Hispanic - 14.6% Native - 0.3%	31 <sup>st</sup> largest in U.S.

Source: <http://www.census.gov/>

### Population of Study

Currently, *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Memphis*, *Dallas*, *Maricopa County* and *Broward County* series, is currently in its sixth season on television on The Learning Channel (TLC) Network dating back to its first season originating in 2010. Each season consisted of eight weekly broadcasts. Hence, multiple seasons were shown within the same year. Season one began airing in January of 2010 with *The Police Women of Memphis* series; season two began airing in April of 2010 with *The Police Women of Dallas* series; season three began airing in July of 2010 with *The Police Women of Maricopa County* series; season four began airing in January of 2011 with *The Police Women of Cincinnati* series and season five began airing in April of 2011 with *The Police*

*Women of Broward County* series. Each episode was one hour in length, in which four different police women were filmed conducting their daily police duties, two times per show for a total of eight crime segments per show. A total of forty, one-hour episodes, consisting of eight segments per show were analyzed for this study (i.e.  $n=40$  episodes  $\times$  1 hour length each  $\times$  eight crime segments per show) which totaled 320 individual crime segments as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

*Breakdown of crime segments from the five seasons The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas*

City Segments	1-Hour Episodes	Crime Segments per Episode	Total Crime
Cincinnati	8	8	64
Broward Co.	8	8	64
Maricopa Co.	8	8	64
Memphis	8	8	64
Dallas	8	8	64
Total			320

As mentioned earlier, there were nine segments that were not coded due to them falling outside the category of police work. Therefore 311 crime segments were coded for this study.

### Coding

A code book and a code sheet were developed for analysis of the data. For the purposes of this study crime segment was defined as any portion of the show that followed an individual police woman conducting her daily assignments as a law

enforcement officer including interactions with criminal suspects or victims of crime. For this particular study, crime segments were coded as those occurring in Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County.

Suspect race was the next issue that was addressed. The coders identified every individual visually by race and by the law enforcement officer verbally identifying the person's race. If the coders concluded that the individual appeared to be of African, African American or possessing African features, they were identified as black. If the individual appeared to be of Caucasian or European descent, they were identified by the coders as white. If the individual appeared to be of Asian or possessed Asian features, the individual were identified by the coders as Asian. If the individual appeared to be of Hispanic or Latin descent or possessing Hispanic features, they were identified by the coders as Hispanic. If an individual appeared to be of Native American descent, the individual were identified by the coders as Native American. If the individual was of a race or ethnicity other than Black, White, Asian, Hispanic or Native American, they were identified as other. Race of suspects, victims and police women were also coded using these same criteria.

There were multiple characteristics coded for each character in each segment. For suspects, the categories of race, gender, suspected of committing what crime, prior criminal history and age were coded. For victims, the categories of race, gender, what type of crime was committed and age were coded. For police officers, the categories of police identity, police officers race, and police officer position (i.e. uniform or undercover).

The type of crime committed was also coded. The types of crimes listed on the code sheet were: murder, robbery, rape drug seller, drug possession, burglary, assault, prostitution/provider, prostitution/client, illegal immigration/citizen, attempted murder, disorderly conduct, DWI/OVI, outstanding warrants, no payment of child support, issued citation/no arrests and other.

If the crime committed involved an incident other than the crimes listed on the code sheet, it was identified as other.

### Reliability

Because there were two coders, intercoding reliability had to be determined just as it was in the pre-test. The purpose of intercoding is to make sure that the testing instrument (the code sheet) provides reliable results. It was important to test this instrument not only in the pre-test but also in the actual analysis.

The portion of the code sheet that was pre-coded (A-1 through A-5) was not included in the intercoding reliability, nor were any of the qualitative questions in the final page of the code sheet. According to Krippendorff (2004), the acceptable level of interceding reliability is at least 80% or above. In this case interceding reliability was 87.6%, actually exceeding the acceptable level.

### Sampling Method

This study used a non-probability sample, specifically a purposive study. Consequently, since *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* series aired in consecutive season and weeks, my study will employ consecutive-unit sampling.

## Statistical Analysis

After all of the crime segments are coded, I as the primary coder entered all data into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). There were a total of 311 (N=311) crime segments coded in this study. To answer research questions, the following variables were chosen and statistical tests appropriate for nominal data will be used to answer research questions and test hypothesis. For comparison, aggregate crime data acquired from the Uniform Crime Reports (UCRs) from the Cincinnati Police Department, Memphis Police Department, Dallas Police Department, Maricopa County Police Department and Broward County Police Department will be gathered.

### Answering Research Questions

Research questions 1 and 2 are:

RQ-1: Will African American males be overrepresented as criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* when compared with aggregate crime data from those cities?

RQ-2: Will African American females be overrepresented as criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* when compared with aggregate crime data from those cities?

The data entered on the code sheet as variable B-2 (race of suspect), variable B-3 (gender of suspect) and B-4 (crime committed by suspect) will be used. Hence, frequencies and difference of proportions analysis will be run to compare each of these variables by the respective cities (Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County). These results will then be compared to the national crime data obtained from the Uniform Crime Reports.

Research questions 3 and 4 looks specifically at violent crime committed by African American males/females on *The Police Women* series compared to aggregate violent crime data committed by African American males/females.

RQ-3: Will African American males be overrepresented as violent criminals (e.g. murder, rape assault, etc.) on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* when compared with aggregate crime data from those cities?

RQ-4: Will African American females be overrepresented as violent criminals (e.g. murder, rape assault, etc.) on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* when compared with aggregate crime data from those cities?

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, violent crime is defined as homicides, attempted homicides, assaults, burglary, rape, large theft and robbery. The data entered on the code sheet as variable B-2 (race of suspect), variable B-3 (gender of suspect) and B-4 (crime committed by suspect) will be used. Pertaining to variable B-4, only violent crimes will be analyzed to answers research questions 3 and 4. Hence, frequencies and difference of proportions analysis will be run to compare each of these variables by the respective cities (Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County). These results will then be compared to the national crime data obtained from the Uniform Crime Reports.

Research questions 5 and 6 deals with frequency of violent crimes committed by African American males/females compared to other males/females from other ethnicities appearing on *The Police Women* series. The questions are:

RQ-5: Will crime segment involving African American males be shown more frequently committing violent crimes (e.g. murder, rape assault, etc.) than White, Asian, Hispanic, Indian etc. males on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County*?

RQ-6: Will crime segment involving African American females be shown more frequently committing violent crimes (e.g. murder, rape assault, etc.) than White, Asian, Hispanic, Indian etc. females on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County*?

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, violent crime is defined as homicides, attempted homicides, assaults, burglary, rape, large theft and robbery. The data entered on the code sheet as variable B-2 (race of suspect), variable B-3 (gender of suspect) and B-4 (crime committed by suspect) will be used. Pertaining to variable B-4, only violent crimes will be analyzed to answers research questions 5 and 6. Hence, frequencies and Chi-Square analysis will be run to compare each of these variables by the frequencies of violent crimes that were committed by suspects of ethnicities other than Black on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* series.

Research question 7 addressed the race of female police officers in relation to the race of the suspect.

RQ-7: Are policewomen featured on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* more likely to be shown interacting with suspects of their same racial or ethnic group?

The data entered on the code sheet as variable B-2 (race of suspect), C-2 (race of victim) and D-2 (race of police officer) will be used. Hence, frequencies and Chi-Square analysis will be run to compare each of these variables by the frequency of segments pertaining to police officers interactions with suspects and victims.

### Qualitative Analysis

RQ-8: Does there appear to be any underlying visual, verbal, or non-verbal elements (pictures, racial code words, music, etc.) of *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* that seem to portray African Americans in a negative light?

RQ-9: Are there any other significant qualitative findings that reveal underlying characteristics of suspects, victims, cities, police officers, race, etc. on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County*?

While the statistical analysis section of this study examines trends or patterns that exist in crime segments from *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas*, the qualitative portion of this study will seek to find underlying messages that are embedded within the text that statistical analysis could not. Section E-2 and E-3 on the coding sheet specifically asked each coder to indicate whether or not there were special effects (still frames, slow motion, rapid shots, music, etc.) in the crime segment and whether or not there were crime segments involving police officers that were not pertaining to crime. The purpose was to analyze how the segments might be interpreted by the audience on the connotative level.

As the primary researcher, I reviewed all coding sheets and looked at the interpretations. Hence, I reviewed the interpretations of the coder again to see if I reached similar

conclusions regarding the crime segments. In addition to examining crime segments that fell under qualitative analysis, I also identified underlying themes, messages and embedded artifacts that were not evident in the quantitative portion of the study. This was primarily done using semiotics. Hence, crime segments from *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Maricopa County*, *Memphis* and *Dallas* will be examined and written through denotative and connotative readings.

CHAPTER IV  
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Of the 311 crime segments from *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* analyzed in this study 22% (n=69) were from Cincinnati, 20.6% (n=64) were from Broward County, 18.3% (n=57) were from Maricopa County, 18.6% (n=58) were from Memphis and 20.3% (n=63) were from Dallas as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

*Number of crime segments from The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas included in the study.*

City	n (column %)
Cincinnati	69 (22%)
Broward County	64 (20.6%)
Maricopa County	57 (18.3%)
Memphis	58 (18.6%)
Dallas	63 (20.3%)
Total	311 (100%)

RQ-1: Will African American males be overrepresented as criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* when compared with aggregate crime data from those cities?

Of those crime segments from The Police Women series, black males dominated crime segments in all cities except Maricopa County, accounting for 131 out of 311 crime

segments (42%). A further breakdown reveals that in Cincinnati, black males accounted for 29 out of 69 crime segments (42%), in Broward County black males accounted for 29 out of 64 crime segments (45.3%), in Maricopa County, black males accounted for 6 out of 57 crime segments (10.5%), in Memphis, black males accounted for 38 out of 58 crime segments (65.5%), and in Dallas, black males accounted for 29 out of 63 crime segments (46%) as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

*Number of crime segments from The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas that involved black males as suspects.*

City	Crime Segments Involving Black Males as suspects n(column%)	Total Crime Segments
Cincinnati	29 (42%)	69
Broward County	29 (45.3%)	64
Maricopa County	6(10.5%)	57
Memphis	38(65.5%)	58
Dallas	29(46%)	63
Total	131(42.1%)	311 (100%)

But when compared to the 2010 aggregate crime statistics from the cities of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas from 2010, crime segments from *The Police Women* series appears to overemphasize black males as criminals. A further analysis revealed that 4 out of 5 cities overrepresented black males as criminals. Hence, when results from all five cities were compared, there was an

overrepresentation of black males as criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Maricopa County*, *Memphis* and *Dallas* as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

*Number of crime segments from The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas that involved black males as suspects compared to the 2010 aggregate crime statistics from the the city of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas Police Departments.*

City	Crime Segments Involving Black Males as Suspects	Total Crime Segments n(column%)	2010 Aggregate Arrest Data Involving Black Males as Suspects	Total Aggregate Arrest Data n(column%)
Cincinnati (36.3%)	9	69 (42%)	15,585	42,931
Broward Co (42%)	29	64 (45.3%)	1,564	3,721
Maricopa Co. (11.3%)	6	57 (10.5%)	2,125	18,683
Memphis (45.8%)	38	58 (65.5%)	22,066	48,085
Dallas	29	63(46%)	15,637	59,365 (26.3%)
Total	131	311 (42.1%)	56,977	172,785 (32.9%)

Source of Cincinnati data: Cincinnati Police Department.

Source of Broward County data: Ft. Lauderdale, FL Police Department.

Source of Maricopa County data: Phoenix, AZ Police Department.

Source of Memphis data: Memphis Police Department.

Source of Dallas data: Dallas Police Department.

\*\* Pooled sample proportions  $p = (p_1 * n_1 + p_2 * n_2) / (n_1 + n_2)$

\*\* Standard error  $SE = \sqrt{p * (1 - p) * [(1/n_1) + (1/n_2)]}$

\*\*Test statistic  $z = (p_1 - p_2) / SE$

\*\*Calculations for difference of proportion z scores attached in appendix.

Of the 311 crime segments in which the race of the suspect was identified, 131 (42.1%) of suspects were black males ( $z = 1.09$  (86.82),  $p > .05$ ). Even though the totals from the aggregate crime statistics from the Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas police departments indicates that black males are committing less crimes when compared to the totals of black males committing crimes on

*The Police Women series*, there seems to be an overrepresentation of black males as criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Maricopa County*, *Memphis* and *Dallas*.

Table 6

*Percentages of crimes committed by black males on The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas compared to the percentages of crimes committed by black males according to the aggregate crime data from the 2010 Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas Police Departments.*

Crime	Cincinnati TV/Aggregate	Broward Co. TV/Aggregate	Maricopa Co. TV/Aggregate	Memphis TV/Aggregate	Dallas TV/Aggregate
Murder	(0.0%)/(0.3%)	(0.0%)/(0.3%)	(0.0%)/(0.8%)	(2.6%)/(0.3%)	(0.0%)/(0.2%)
Att. Murder	(3.4%)/(0.4%)	(0.0%)/(0.2%)	(0.0%)/(0.3%)	(7.8%)/(0.4%)	(10.3%)/(0.3%)
Robbery	(0.0%)/(13.9%)	(3.4%)/(10%)	(14.4%)/(6.8%)	(2.6%)/(13.1%)	(3.4%)/(10.3%)
Rape	(0.0%)/(1.2%)	(3.4%)/(0.4%)	(0.0%)/(0.4%)	(0.0%)/(1.4%)	(2.6%)/(1.4%)
Assault	(3.4%)/(15.8%)	(0.0%)/(23.8%)	(0.0%)/(46.7%)	(15.7%)/(40.9%)	(27.5%)/(15.5%)
Theft	(0.0%)/(29.2%)	(0.0%)/(19.1%)	0.0%)/(36.9%)	(0.0%)/(17.4%)	(0.0%)/(33.5%)
Burglary	(0.0%)/(18.8%)	(3.4%)/(13.5%)	0.0%)/(6.4%)	(18.4%)/(18.1%)	(13.7%)/(20.3%)
Drug Seller	(41.3%)/(4.9%)	(68.9%)/(13.1%)	0.0%)/(0.0%)	(2.6%)/(2.8%)	(6.8%)/(4.5%)
Drug Possession	(0.0%)/(4.3%)	(6.8%)/(0.0%)	(28.6%)/(0.0%)	(26.3%)/(2.1%)	(6.8%)/(2.5%)
Prostit./Provider	(0.0%)/(0.1%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.3%)
Prostit./Client	0.0%)/(0.2%)	(0.0%)/(5.1%)	(0.0%)/(2.1%)	(0.0%)/(0.6%)	(0.0%)/(0.6%)
Ill. Immigration	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)
Dis. Conduct	(6.8%)/(11.3%)	(0.0%)/(27.6%)	(14.3%)/(0.0%)	(2.6%)/(3.4%)	(3.4%)/(11.1%)
DWI/OVI	(10.3%)/(0.0%)	0.0%)/(0.0%)	(14.3%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(17.2%)/(0.0%)
Outst. Warrants	(13.7%)/(4.9%)	(6.8%)/(0.0%)	(14.3%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)
Unpaid Supp	(0.0%)/(0.1%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(7.8%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)
Other	(20.6%)/(0.0%)	(6.8%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(5.2%)/(0.0%)	(13.7%)/(0.0%)

Source of Cincinnati aggregate data: Cincinnati Police Department.

Source of Broward County aggregate data: Ft. Lauderdale, FL Police Department.

Source of Maricopa County aggregate data: Phoenix, AZ Police Department.

Source of Memphis aggregate data: Memphis Police Department.

Source of Dallas aggregate data: Dallas Police Department.

RQ-2: Will African American females be overrepresented as criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Memphis*, *Dallas*, *Maricopa County* and *Broward County* when compared with aggregate crime data from those cities?

Of those crime segments from The Police Women series, 27 out of 311 crime segments (8.6%) were black females (( $z = 12.47$  (99.98),  $p > .05$ ). A further breakdown reveals that in Cincinnati, black females accounted for 7 out of 69 crime segments (10.1%), in Broward County black females accounted for 2 out of 64 crime segments (3.1%), in Maricopa County, black females accounted for 2 out of 57 crime segments (3.5%), in Memphis, black females accounted for 7 out of 58 crime segments (12%), and in Dallas, black females accounted for 9 out of 63 crime segments (14.2%) as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

*Number of crime segments from The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas that involved black females as suspects.*

City	Crime Segments Involving Black Females as suspects/n(column%) n(column%)	Total Crime Segments
Cincinnati	7 (10.1%)	69
Broward County	2 (3.1%)	64
Maricopa County	2 (3.5%)	57
Memphis	7 (12%)	58
Dallas	9 (14.2%)	63
Total	27(8.6%)	311 (100%)

But when compared to the 2010 aggregate crime statistics from the cities of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas from 2010, crime segments from *The Police Women* series appears to overemphasize black females as criminals in only one out of the five cities that were analyzed. When results from all five

cities were compared, there was an overrepresentation of black females as criminals only from *The Police Women of Dallas* as shown in Table 8.

Table 8

*Number of crime segments from The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas that involved black females as suspects compared to the 2010 aggregate crime statistics from the the city of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas Police Departments.*

City	Crime Segments Involving Black Females as Suspects	Total Crime Segments n(column%)	2010 Aggregate Arrest Data Involving Black Females as Suspects	Total Aggregate Arrest Data n(column%)
Cincinnati	7	69 (10.1%)	7,279	42,931 (16.1%)
Broward Co.	2	64 (3.1%)	470	3,721 (12.6%)
Maricopa Co.	2	57 (3.5%)	1,064	18,683 (5.6%)
Memphis (12.6%)	7	58 (12%)	6,077	48,085
Dallas	9	63(14.2%)	6,437	59,365 (10.8%)
Total	27	311 (8.6%)	21,297	172,785 (12.3%)

Source of Cincinnati data: Cincinnati Police Department.

Source of Broward County data: Ft. Lauderdale, FL Police Department.

Source of Maricopa County data: Phoenix, AZ Police Department.

Source of Memphis data: Memphis Police Department.

Source of Dallas data: Dallas Police Department.

\*\* Pooled sample proportions  $p = (p_1 * n_1 + p_2 * n_2) / (n_1 + n_2)$

\*\* Standard error  $SE = \sqrt{p * (1 - p) * [(1/n_1) + (1/n_2)]}$

\*\*Test statistic  $z = (p_1 - p_2) / SE$

\*\*Calculations for difference of proportion z scores attached in appendix.

As mentioned earlier, of the 27 crime segments in which the race of the suspect was identified, 8.6% of suspects were black females (( $z = .62$  (73.24),  $p > .05$ ). Even though the totals from the aggregate crime statistics from the Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas police departments indicates that black females are committing 12.6% crimes, black females appeared less frequently on crime

segments airing on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Maricopa County*, *Memphis* and *Dallas*.

Table 9

*Percentages of crimes committed by black females on The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas compared to the percentages of crimes committed by black females according to the aggregate crime data from the 2010 Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas Police Departments.*

Crime	Cincinnati TV/Aggregate	Broward Co. TV/Aggregate	Maricopa Co. TV/Aggregate	Memphis Dallas TV/Aggregate	TV/Aggregate
Murder	(0.0%)/(0.3%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.2%)	(0.0%)/(0.2%)	(0.0%)/(0.1%)
Att. Murder	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)
Robbery	(0.0%)/(9.4%)	(3.4%)/(1.7%)	(14.4%)/(1.8%)	(2.6%)/(6.3%)	(11.1%)/(6.4%)
Rape	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)
Assault	(42.3%)/(17.2%)	(50%)/(21.1%)	(0.0%)/(27.3%)	(28.6%)/(45.4%)	(11.1%)/(16.9%)
Theft	(0.0%)/(38.7%)	(0.0%)/(37.2%)	(50%)/(48.1%)	(0.0%)/(20.4%)	(0.0%)/(34%)
Burglary	(0.0%)/(11.8%)	(0.0%)/(5.7%)	(0.0%)/(1.4%)	(0.0%)/(5.4%)	(0.0%)/(6.5%)
Drug Seller	(0.0%)/(1.1%)	(0.0%)/(3.1%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(2.5%)	(0.0%)/(1.8%)
Drug Possession	(14.3%)/(3.6%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(5.3%)	(11.1%)/(4.9%)
Prostit./Provider	(0.0%)/(0.1%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.3%)
Prostit./Client	(0.0%)/(0.2%)	(0.0%)/(5.1%)	(0.0%)/(2.1%)	(0.0%)/(0.6%)	(0.0%)/(0.6%)
Ill. Immigration	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)
Dis. Conduct	(0.0%)/(11.3%)	(0.0%)/(27.6%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(28.6%)/(3.4%)	(44.4%)/(11.1%)
DWI/OVI	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(50%)/(0.0%)	(14.3%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)
Out. Warrants	(14.3%)/(4.9%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)
Unpaid Support	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)
Other	(14.3%)/(0.0%)	(50%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(28.6%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)

Source of Cincinnati aggregate data: Cincinnati Police Department.

Source of Broward County aggregate data: Ft. Lauderdale, FL Police Department.

Source of Maricopa County aggregate data: Phoenix, AZ Police Department.

Source of Memphis aggregate data: Memphis Police Department.

Source of Dallas aggregate data: Dallas Police Department.

RQ-3: Will African American males be overrepresented as violent criminals (e.g. murder, rape assault, etc.) on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Memphis*, *Dallas*, *Maricopa County* and *Broward County* when compared with aggregate crime data from those cities?

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, violent crime is defined as murder, assault, rape and robbery. Of those crime segments from *The Police Women* series that fell under the category of violent crime, black males accounted for 21 out of 311 crime segments (6.7%). A further breakdown reveals that in Cincinnati, black males accounted for 1 violent crime segment out of 69 crime segments (1.4%), in Broward County black males accounted for 2 violent crime segments out of 64 crime segments (3.1%), in Maricopa County, black males accounted for 1 violent crime segment out of 57 crime segments (1.7%), in Memphis, black males accounted for 8 violent crime segments out of 58 crime segments (13.7%), and in Dallas, black males accounted for 9 violent crime segments out of 63 crime segments (14.2%) as shown in Table 10.

Table 10

*Number of crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime from The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas that involved black males as suspects.*

City	Violent Crime Segments Involving Black Males /n(column%)	Total Crime Segments
Cincinnati	1 (1.4%)	69
Broward County	2 (3.1%)	64
Maricopa County	1 (1.7%)	57
Memphis	8 (13.7%)	58
Dallas	9 (14.2%)	63
Total	21(6.7%)	311 (100%)

But when compared to the 2010 aggregate crime statistics from the cities of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas Police Departments, crime segments from *The Police Women* series does not appear to overrepresent black males as violent criminals. When results from all five cities were compared, there was an overrepresentation of black males as violent criminals in only one of *The Police Women* series which was Dallas as shown in Table 11.

Table 11

*Number of crime segments from The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas that involved black males as violent criminals compared to the 2010 aggregate violent crime statistics from the city of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas Police Departments.*

City	Crime Segments Involving Black Males as Violent Suspects	Total Crime Segments n(column%)	2010 Aggregate Arrest Data Involving Black Males as Violent Suspects	Total Aggregate Arrest Data n(column%)
Cincinnati	1	69 (1.4%)	4,850	42,931 (11.2%)
Broward Co.	2	64 (3.1%)	571	3,721 (14.5%)
Maricopa Co.	1	57 (1.7%)	1,161	18,683 (6.2%)
Memphis	8	58 (13.7%)	6,983	48,085 (14.5%)
Dallas	9	63(14.2%)	4,271	59,365 (7.1%)
Total	21	311 (6.7%)	21,297	172,785 (10.3%)

Source of Cincinnati data: Cincinnati Police Department.  
 Source of Broward County data: Ft. Lauderdale, FL Police Department.  
 Source of Maricopa County data: Phoenix, AZ Police Department.  
 Source of Memphis data: Memphis Police Department.  
 Source of Dallas data: Dallas Police Department.

Of the 21 crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime, 6.7% of suspects were black males ( $z = 1.8$  (57.14),  $p > .05$ ). Even though the totals from the aggregate violent crime statistics from the Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa

County, Memphis and Dallas Police Departments indicates that black males are committing more violent crimes (10.3%), there seems to be less emphasis of black males as violent criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Maricopa County*, *Memphis* and *Dallas*. Hence research question 3 was not supported.

Table 12

*Percentages of violent crimes committed by black males on The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas compared to the percentages of violent crimes committed by black males according to the aggregate crime data from the 2010 Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas Police Departments.*

Crime	Cincinnati TV/Aggregate	Broward Co. TV/Aggregate	Maricopa Co. TV/Aggregate	Memphis Dallas TV/Aggregate	TV/Aggregate
Murder	(0.0%)/(0.3%)	(0.0%)/(0.3%)	(0.0%)/(0.8%)	(12.5%)/(0.3%)	(0.0%)/(0.2%)
Att. Murder	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)
Robbery	(0.0%)/(5%)	(50%)/(10%)	(100%)/(6.8%)	(12.5%)/(13.1%)	(11.1%)/(10.3%)
Rape	(0.0%)/(0.6%)	(50%)/(0.4%)	(0.0%)/(0.4%)	(0.0%)/(1.4%)	(0.0%)/(1.4%)
Assault	(28.3%)/(5.7%)	(0.0%)/(23.8%)	(0.0%)/(46.7%)	(75%)/(40.9%)	(88.8%)/(15.8%)

Source of Cincinnati aggregate data: Cincinnati Police Department.

Source of Broward County aggregate data: Ft. Lauderdale, FL Police Department.

Source of Maricopa County aggregate data: Phoenix, AZ Police Department.

Source of Memphis aggregate data: Memphis Police Department.

Source of Dallas aggregate data: Dallas Police Department.

RQ-4: Will African American females be overrepresented as violent criminals (e.g. murder, rape assault, etc.) on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Memphis*, *Dallas*, *Maricopa County* and *Broward County* when compared with aggregate crime data from those cities?

Of those crime segments from *The Police Women* series that fell under the category of violent crime, black females accounted for eight out of 311 crime segments (2.5%). A further breakdown reveals that in Cincinnati, black females accounted for 3

violent crime segments out of 69 crime segments (4.3%), in Broward County black females accounted for 1 violent crime segment out of 64 crime segments (1.5%), in Maricopa County, black females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 57 crime segments (0%), in Memphis, black females accounted for 2 violent crime segments out of 58 crime segments (3.4%), and in Dallas, black females accounted for 2 violent crime segments out of 63 crime segments (3.1%) as shown in Table 13.

Table 13

*Number crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime from The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas that involved black females as suspects.*

City	Violent Crime Segments Involving Black Females /n(column%)	Total Crime Segments
Cincinnati	3 (4.3%)	69
Broward County	1 (1.5%)	64
Maricopa County	0 (0%)	57
Memphis	2 (3.4%)	58
Dallas	2 (3.1%)	63
Total	8 (2.5%)	311 (100%)

But when compared to the 2010 aggregate crime statistics from the cities of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas Police Departments, crime segments from *The Police Women* series underrepresents black females as violent criminals. When results from all five cities were compared, there was

not an overrepresentation of black females as violent criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas*. (see Table 14).

Table 14

*Number of violent crime segments from The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas that involved black females as suspects compared to the 2010 aggregate violent crime statistics from the the city of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas Police Departments.*

City	Crime Segments Involving Black Females as Violent Suspects	Total Crime Segments n(column%)	2010 Aggregate Arrest Data Involving Black Females as Violent Suspects	Total Aggregate Arrest Data n(column%)
Cincinnati	3	69 (4.3%)	4,850	42,931 (11.2%)
Broward Co.	1	64 (1.5%)	571	3,721 (14.5%)
Maricopa Co.	0	57 (0.0%)	1,161	18,683 (6.2%)
Memphis	2	58 (3.4%)	6,983	48,085 (14.5%)
Dallas	2	63(3.1%)	4,271	59,365 (7.1%)
Total	8	311 (2.5%)	17,836	172,785 (10.3%)

Source of Cincinnati data: Cincinnati Police Department.  
 Source of Broward County data: Ft. Lauderdale, FL Police Department.  
 Source of Maricopa County data: Phoenix, AZ Police Department.  
 Source of Memphis data: Memphis Police Department.  
 Source of Dallas data: Dallas Police Department.

Of the eight crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime, 2.5% of suspects were black females ( $z = .13$  (55.17),  $p > .05$ ). Even though the totals from the aggregate violent crime statistics from the Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas Police Departments indicates that black females are committing more violent crimes (10.3%), there seems to be less emphasis of black

females as violent criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Maricopa County*, *Memphis* and *Dallas*.

Table 15

*Percentages of violent crimes committed by black females on The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas compared to the percentages of violent crimes committed by black females according to the aggregate crime data from the 2010 Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas Police Departments.*

Crime	Cincinnati TV/Aggregate	Broward Co. TV/Aggregate	Maricopa Co. TV/Aggregate	Memphis Dallas TV/Aggregate	TV/Aggregate
Murder	(0.0%)/(0.3%)	(0.0%)/(0.3%)	(0.0%)/(0.2%)	(100%)/(0.2%)	(0.0%)/(0.3%)
Robbery	(0.0%)/(1.5%)	(0.0%)/(2.1%)	(0.0%)/(0.1%)	(0.0%)/(0.7%)	(50%)/(0.6%)
Rape	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)	(0.0%)/(0.0%)
Assault	(100%)/(2.8%)	(100%)/(2.6%)	(0.0%)/(0.5%)	(75%)/(5.7%)	(50%)/(1.8%)

Source of Cincinnati aggregate data: Cincinnati Police Department.

Source of Broward County aggregate data: Ft. Lauderdale, FL Police Department.

Source of Maricopa County aggregate data: Phoenix, AZ Police Department.

Source of Memphis aggregate data: Memphis Police Department.

Source of Dallas aggregate data: Dallas Police Department.

RQ-5: Will crime segment involving African American males be shown more frequently committing violent crimes (e.g. murder, rape assault, etc.) than White, Asian, Hispanic, Indian etc. males on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Memphis*, *Dallas*, *Maricopa County* and *Broward County*?

Of those crime segments from *The Police Women* series that fell under the category of violent crime, black males accounted for 21 out of 311 (6.7%) crime segments ( $\chi^2 = 3.312$ ;  $df = 1$ ,  $p > .05$ ), white males accounted for six out of 311 (1.9%) crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime, Asian males accounted for 0 out of 311 (0%) crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime, Hispanic

males accounted for 0 out of 311 (0%) crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime and Native American males accounted for 0 out of 311 (0%) crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime. A further breakdown reveals that in Cincinnati, black males accounted for one violent crime segment out of 69 crime segments (1.4%), white males accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 69 crime segments (0%), Asian males accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 69 crime segments (0%), Hispanic males accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 69 crime segments (0%) and Native American males accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 69 crime segments. In Broward County black males accounted for two violent crime segments out of 64 crime segments (3.1%), white males accounted for two violent crime segments out of 64 crime segments (3.1%), Asian males accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 64 crime segments, Hispanic males accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 64 crime segments (0%) and Native American males accounted for 0 violent crime segments (0%) out of 64 crime segments. In Maricopa County, black males accounted for one violent crime segment out of 57 crime segments (1.7%), white males accounted for two violent crime segments out of 57 crime segments (3.5%), Asian males accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 57 crime segments (0%), Hispanic males accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 57 crime segments (0%) and Native American males accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 57 crime segments (0%). In Memphis, black males accounted for eight violent crime segments out of 58 crime segments (13.7%), white males accounted for one violent crime segments out of 58 crime segments (1.7%), Asian males accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 58 crime segments, Hispanic males accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 58 crime

segments (0%) and Native American males accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 58 crime segments (0%). In Dallas, black males accounted for nine violent crime segments out of 63 crime segments (14.2%), white males accounted for one violent crime segment out of 63 crime segments (1.5%), Asian males accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 63 crime segments (0%), Hispanic males accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 63 crime segments (0%) and Native American males accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 63 crime segments (0%), as shown in Table 16.

Table 16

*Number of crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime from The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas that involved black, White, Asian, Hispanic and Native American males.*

Crime Cities		Murder		Robbery		Rape		Assault	
Cincinnati	Black	1 (100%)		Black	0	Black	0	Black	1 (100%)
	White	0		White	0	White	0	White	0
	Asian	0		Asian	0	Asian	0	Asian	0
	Hisp.	0		Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0
	Native	0		Native	0	Native	0	Native	0
	Total	1		0		0		1	
Broward Co.	Black	0		Black	1 (100%)	Black	1 (50%)	Black	0
	White	0		White	0	White	1 (50%)	White	1 (100%)
	Asian	0		Asian	0	Asian	0	Asian	0
	Hisp.	0		Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0
	Native	0		Native	0	Native	0	Native	0
	Total	0		1		2		1	
Maricopa Co.	Black	0		Black	1 (100%)	Black	0	Black	0
	White	0		White	0	White	0	White	2 (100%)
	Asian	0		Asian	0	Asian	0	Asian	0
	Hisp.	0		Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0
	Native	0		Native	0	Native	0	Native	0
	Total	0		1		0		2	
Memphis	Black	0		Black	1 (100%)	Black	0	Black	6 (85.7%)
	White	0		White	0	White	0	White	1 (14.3%)
	Total	0		1		0		7	

Table 16 (continued).

	Asian	0	Asian	0	Asian	0	Asian	0
	Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0
	Native	0	Native	0	Native	0	Native	0
Dallas	Total	0		1		0		7
	Black	0	Black	1 (100%)	Black	0	Black	8 (88.1%)
	White	0	White	0	White	0	White	1 (11.1%)
	Asian	0	Asian	0	Asian	0	Asian	0
	Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0
	Native	0	Native	0	Native	0	Native	0
	Totals	0		1		0		9
Column Totals		1		4		2		20

When compared to other ethnic groups, crime segments that fall under the category of violent crime from *The Police Women* series appears to overemphasize black males as violent criminals. A further analysis revealed that three of five cities analyzed showed black males committing violent crimes more frequently than white, Asian, Hispanic and Native males. Hence, when results from all five racial groups were compared, there seems to be an emphasis on black males being portrayed as violent criminals more frequently than males from other racial groups on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Maricopa County*, *Memphis* and *Dallas* as shown in table 16.

RQ-6: Will crime segment involving African American females be shown more frequently committing violent crimes (e.g. murder, rape assault, etc.) than White, Asian, Hispanic, Indian etc. females on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Memphis*, *Dallas*, *Maricopa County* and *Broward County*?

Of those crime segments from *The Police Women* series that fell under the category of violent crime, black females accounted for eight out of 311 (2.5%) crime

segments ( $\chi^2 = 3.231$ ;  $df = 1$ ,  $p > .05$ ), white females accounted for two out of 311 (.6%) crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime, Asian females accounted for 0 out of 311 (0%) crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime, Hispanic females accounted for 0 out of 311 (0%) crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime and Native American females accounted for 0 out of 311 (0%) crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime. A further breakdown reveals that in Cincinnati, black females accounted for three violent crime segments out of 69 crime segments (4.3%), white females accounted for 1 violent crime segment out of 69 crime segments (1.4%), Asian females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 69 crime segments (0%), Hispanic females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 69 crime segments (0%) and Native American females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 69 crime segments. In Broward County black females accounted for one violent crime segments out of 64 crime segments (1.5%), white females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 64 crime segments (0%), Asian females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 64 crime segments, Hispanic females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 64 crime segments (0%) and Native American females accounted for 0 violent crime segments (0%) out of 64 crime segments. In Maricopa County, black females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 57 crime segments (0%), white females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 57 crime segments (0%), Asian females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 57 crime segments (0%), Hispanic females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 57 crime segments (0%) and Native American females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 57 crime segments (0%). In Memphis, black females accounted for two violent crime segments out

of 58 crime segments (3.4%), white females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 58 crime segments (0%), Asian females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 58 crime segments, Hispanic females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 58 crime segments (0%) and Native American females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 58 crime segments (0%). In Dallas, black females accounted for two violent crime segments out of 63 crime segments (3.1%), white females accounted for one violent crime segment out of 63 crime segments (1.6%), Asian females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 63 crime segments (0%), Hispanic females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 63 crime segments (0%) and Native American females accounted for 0 violent crime segments out of 63 crime segments (0%), as shown in Table 17.

Table 17

*Number of crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime from The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas that involved black, white, Asian, Hispanic and Native American females.*

Crime	Murder	Robbery	Rape	Assault
Cities				
Cincinnati				
Black	0	Black 0	Black 0	Black 3 (75%)
White	0	White 0	White 0	White 1 (25%)
Asian	0	Asian 0	Asian 0	Asian 0
His.	0	Hisp. 0	Hisp. 0	Hisp. 0
Native	0	Native 0	Native 0	Native 0
Total	0	0	0	4
Broward Co.				
Black	0	Black 0	Black 0	Black 1 (100%)
White	0	White 0	White 0	White 0
Asian	0	Asian 0	Asian 0	Asian 0
Hisp.	0	Hisp. 0	Hisp. 0	Hisp. 0
Native	0	Native 0	Native 0	Native 0

Table 17 (continued).

Total	0	0	0	1			
Maricopa Co.							
Black	0	Black	0	Black	0	Black	0
White	0	White	0	White	0	White	0
Asian	0	Asian	0	Asian	0	Asian	0
Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0
Native	0	Native	0	Native	0	Native	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0		
Memphis							
Black	0	Black	0	Black	0	Black	2 (100%)
White	0	White	0	White	0	White	0
Asian	0	Asian	0	Asian	0	Asian	0
Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0
Native	0	Native	0	Native	0	Native	0
Total	0	0	0	0	2		
Dallas							
Black	0	Black	1(100%)	Black	0	Black	1 (50%)
White	0	White	0	White	0	White	1 (50%)
Asian	0	Asian	0	Asian	0	Asian	0
Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0	Hisp.	0
Native	0	Native	0	Native	0	Native	0
Totals	0	1	0	2			
Column Totals	0	1	0	9			

When compared to other ethnic groups, crime segments that fall under the category of violent crime from *The Police Women* series appears to overemphasize black females as violent criminals. In particular 4 out of 5 cities analyzed showed black females committing violent crimes more frequently than white, Asian, Hispanic, and Native females. Hence, research question 6 was supported. When results from all five racial groups were compared, there seems to be an emphasis on black females being portrayed as violent criminals more frequently than other racial groups on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Maricopa County*, *Memphis* and *Dallas* as shown in Table 17.

RQ-7: Are policewomen featured on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Memphis*,

*Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* more likely to be shown

interacting with suspects of their same racial or ethnic group?

Crime segments from *The Police Women* series typically involve the daily interactions with police officers and criminals as shown in Table 18.

Table 18

*Race of police officers and race of suspects they investigated on The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas.*

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Cincinnati									
Officer:	Mandy Curfiss		Colleen Deegan		Rose Valentino		Tia Pearson		
Officer Race:	White		White		White		Black		
	Race (col. n. (%))		Race (col. n. (%))		Race (col. n. (%))		Race (col. n. (%))		
Suspect Race:	Black	11 (65%)	Black	8 (44%)	Black	9 (75%)	Black	16 (94%)	
	White	6 (35%)	White	10 (56%)	White	3 (25%)	White	1 (6%)	
	Asian	0 (0%)	Asian	0 (0%)	Asian	0 (0%)	Asian	0 (0%)	
	Hispanic	0 (0%)	Hispanic	0 (0%)	Hispanic	0 (0%)	Hispanic	0 (0%)	
	Native	0 (0%)	Native	0 (0%)	Native	0 (0%)	Native	0 (0%)	
Total		17 (5.6%)		18 (5.9%)		12 (3.9%)		17 (5.6%)	
Broward Co.									
Officer:	Andrea Penoyer		Julie Bower		Ericka Huerta		Shelunda Cooper		
Officer Race:	White		White		Hispanic		Black		
	Race (col. n. (%))		Race (col. n. (%))		Race (col. n. (%))		Race (col. n. (%))		
Suspect Race:	Black	18 (63%)	Black	3 (23%)	Black	8(89%)	Black	7 (54%)	
	White	5 (17%)	White	8 (61%)	White	1(11%)	White	6 (46%)	
	Asian	0 (0%)	Asian	0 (0%)	Asian	0 (0%)	Asian	0 (0%)	
	Hispanic	6 (20%)	Hispanic	2 (15%)	Hispanic	0 (0%)	Hispanic	0 (0%)	
	Native	0 (0%)	Native	0 (0%)	Native	0 (0%)	Native	0 (0%)	
Total		29 (9.5%)		13 (4.2%)		9 (2.9%)		13 (4.2%)	
Maricopa Co.									
Officer:	Dieb Moyer		Lindsey Smith		Kelly Bacardo		Amie Dououng		
Officer Race:	White		White		Hispanic		Asian		
	Race (col. n. (%))		Race (col. n. (%))		Race (col. n. (%))		Race (col. n. (%))		
Suspect Race:	Black	3 (17%)	Black	3 (20%)	Black	1 (8.3%)	Black	2 (17%)	
	White	8 (44%)	White	5 (33%)	White	7 (58%)	White	6 (50%)	
	Asian	0 (0%)	Asian	0 (0%)	Asian	0 (0%)	Asian	0 (0%)	
	Hispanic	7 (39%)	Hispanic	7 (47%)	Hispanic	4 (33%)	Hispanic	4 (33%)	
	Native	0 (0%)	Native	0 (0%)	Native	0 (0%)	Native	0 (0%)	
Total		18 (5.9%)		15 (4.9%)		12 (3.9%)		12 (3.9%)	
Memphis									
Officer:	Aubrey Olson		Virginia Awkward		Arica Logan		Joy Jefferson		
Officer Race:	White		Black		White		Black		
	Race (col. n. (%))		Race (col. n. (%))		Race (col. n. (%))		Race (col. n. (%))		
Suspect Race:	Black	15 (94%)	Black	15 (100%)	Black	5 (45%)	Black	19 (100%)	
	White	1 (6%)	White	0 (0%)	White	6 (55%)	White	0 (0%)	
	Asian	0 (0%)	Asian	0 (0%)	Asian	0 (0%)	Asian	0 (0%)	
	Hispanic	0 (0%)	Hispanic	0 (0%)	Hispanic	0 (0%)	Hispanic	0 (0%)	
	Native	0 (0%)	Native	0 (0%)	Native	0 (0%)	Native	0 (0%)	

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Table 18 (continued).

Total	16 (5.2%)	15 (4.9%)	11 (3.6%)	19 (6.2%)				
Dallas								
Officer:	Tracy Jones Beth Burnside		Sara Ramsey & Mia Shegena		Melissa Person			
Officer Race:	Black	White	White/White	White	White			
	Race (col. n. (%))	Race (col. n. (%))	Race (col. n. (%))	Race (col. n. (%))	Race (col. n. (%))			
Suspect Race:	Black	10 (71%)	Black	2 (20%)	Black	11 (65%)	Black	17 (100%)
	White	4 (29%)	White	6 (60%)	White	2 (12%)	White	0 (0%)
	Asian	0 (0%)	Asian	0 (0%)	Asian	0 (0%)	Asian	0 (0%)
	Hispanic	0 (0%)	Hispanic	2 (20%)	Hispanic	4 (23%)	Hispanic	0 (0%)
	Native	0 (0%)	Native	0 (0%)	Native	0 (0%)	Native	0 (0%)
Total	14 (4.6%)	10 (3.2%)	17 (5.5%)	17 (5.5%)				
Total Suspects: 301								

A further breakdown reveals that of the 21 policewomen featured on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis, and Dallas*, white females made up 62% (n=13), black females made up 24% (n=5), Asian females made up 4.3% (n=1) and Hispanic females made up 9.5% (n=2) as shown in Table 19.

Table 19

*Combined race of police officers and race of suspects they investigated on The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas.*

Officer:	Black Officers	White Officers	Asian Officers	Hispanic Officers
Combined Segments:				
Black suspects	67 (86%)	105 (55%)	2 (17%)	8 (40%)
White suspects	11 (14%)	60 (31%)	6 (50%)	8 (40%)
Asian suspects	0	0	0	0
Hispanic suspects		26 (14%)	4 (34%)	4 (20%)
Native suspects				
Total	78 (26%)	191 (63%)	12 (3.9%)	20 (6.4%)

Overall, the results shown in Table 21 indicate that when all suspects were combined, black police officers were involved in 86% of crime segments involving black suspects and 11% of crime segments involving white suspects ( $\chi^2 = 28.923$ ; (n=311) df =

1,  $p < .05$ ). White officers were involved in 55% of crime segments that involved black suspects, 31% of crime segments involving white suspects and 26% of crime segments involving Hispanic suspects. Asian officers were involved with 17% of crime segments involving black suspects, 50% of crime segments involving white suspects and 34% of crime segments involving Hispanic suspects. Hispanic officers were involved in 40% of crime segments involving black suspects, 40% of crime segments involving white suspects, 0% of crime segments involving Asian suspects and 20% of crime segments involving Hispanic suspects. When results from all police officers and suspects were compared, it appears that white, Asian and Hispanic police women seem to interact more frequently with suspects other than their race on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Maricopa County*, *Memphis* and *Dallas*. In contrast, it appears that black police women seem to interact more frequently with suspects of their own race *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Maricopa County*, *Memphis* and *Dallas* as shown in Table 19.

## CHAPTER V

### QUALITATIVE RESULTS

In the qualitative portion of this study, it was imperative to critically look at the underlying messages that were embedded in the crime segments. Hence a semiotic analysis was employed. Fiske and Hartley (1978) define semiotics as the study of all things that may be used for communication. In addition Hall (1997) defines semiotics as the discipline of signs that examines various exchanges of communication and information. According to Mick (1986), the purpose of semiotics is to analyze the foundation of meaning producing events, both verbal and nonverbal. To better understand these meanings, one must take its cues from Ferdinand de Saussure and critically examine semiotics. Within semiotics lies the foundation in which it rests upon, the “sign.” Within every sign lies a “signifier,” the picture, object, or sound and the “signified,” which represents the underlying meaning of the signifier. According to Seiter (1992), in her book chapter *Semiotics, Structuralism and Television*, learning the vocabulary of semiotics could be considered a daunting task but ultimately can become rewarding. As she continues to describe the advantages of learning the jargon of semiotics she says “this vocabulary makes it possible, however, to identify and describe what makes TV distinctive as a communication medium as well as how it relies on other signs to communicate” (p. 31). The roots of semiotics extend as far back as the pre-Socratic era, where Hippocrates examined human movements as conduits of messages pertaining to physical and mental capacities (Mick, 1986). Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and American philosopher Charles Peirce were pioneers of semiotics. “The scope of semiotics and its subject matter includes the exchange of any messages

whatsoever and of the systems of signs which underlie them, with the sign always the fundamental concept” (Sebeok 1976, p. 1). De Saussure argued that language was a system of communication through signs, therefore linguistics should be studied on a larger scale of science, that is semiology, which deals with signs within society (Harmon, 1981).

The methodological framework of this qualitative analysis borrows from the extensive research of British cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall’s encoding and decoding process. Hall posits that there are two underlying components of the decoding process which is the “denotative” meaning and the “connotative” meaning. Concerning the denotative meaning he writes:

The so-called denotative level of the television sign is fixed by certain, very complex (but limited or closed) codes. (p. 134)

Concerning the connotative meaning, Hall (1997) writes:

But its connotative level, though also bounded, is more open, subject to more active transformations, which exploits its polysemic values. Any such already constituted sign is potentially transformable into more than one connotative configuration. (p. 134)

For the purpose of this study I will offer both denotative and connotative interpretations.

RQ-8: Does there appear to be any underlying visual, verbal, or non-verbal elements (pictures, racial code words, music, etc.) of *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* that seem to portray African Americans in a negative light?

The qualitative analysis of *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Maricopa County*, *Memphis* and *Dallas* were fraught with underlying encoded messages that were noticeable when viewing through a semiotic lens. After all five cities were examined, three embedded themes stood out, in particular from Cincinnati and Broward County. Research question 8 asked does there appear to be any underlying visual, verbal, or non-verbal elements (pictures, racial code words, music, etc.) of *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Memphis*, *Dallas* and *Maricopa County* that seem to portray African Americans in a negative light? Overall, two denotative and connotative readings consisting of the show opening of *The Police Women of Cincinnati* and African American males being guilty by association on *The Police Women of Broward County* seem to stand out. In both examples dependence upon editing techniques common in police reality shows leads to creating stereotypes of African American males as criminals even though an arrest was not made.

#### The Show Opening

After weeks of promoting a police reality show that featured the daily interactions of police women and criminals, on January 13, 2011, *The Police Women of Cincinnati* made its highly anticipated debut on The Learning Channel. As with all television shows, in particular ones that pertain to law enforcement, an eye catching, attention grabbing 20-30 second show opening is the precursor to the actual content of the show. In this particular instance, *The Police Women of Cincinnati*'s show opening begins with a high intensity music bed being played for approximately 10 seconds, then is slightly turned down and played underneath the following audio consisting of four consecutive tracks:

He's going toward the football field, turn around and meet me there! Everybody let me see your hands put 'em up! I'm not your baby, you call me officer! Get down on your knees, keep your hands on top of your head!

It can be argued that the latter audio of *The Police Women of Cincinnati* is typical of any law enforcement television show but when examined through a denotative and connotative lens, it could be perceived otherwise. Scholars have also given attention to this subject as well. Unlike radio which is audio only, television is a combination of both audio and video. In their analysis of edited television scenes, Nack and Parkes (1997) found that:

While the image is highly important in making the visual statement, it is the specific interaction of shots (at the level of length, rhythm, graphical direction, darkness and lightness, color, etc.) that produces meaning. (p. 333)

Subsequently, the video that was placed over the aforementioned audio tracks reveal that there are several underlying meanings to the show opening.

On the denotative level, the initial 10 seconds of high intensity music is overlapped with corresponding fast paced, quick edited shots of downtown Cincinnati's skyline at night. The next shot shows a different view of the Cincinnati skyline at night but in this particular instance, you can see sparse traffic as cars cross the Ohio River Bridge that links Cincinnati to Kentucky. The next series of video clips show a wide, medium and a quick zooming shot to a city bus that reads "Queen City 6," referring to the bus route. The following shot is a close-up of a sign that reads "City of Cincinnati Police" followed by a loud police siren that transition into the next sequence. This new wave of fast paced, attention grabbing editing has not gone unnoticed by scholars. For example, a

study conducted by Lang, Bolls, Potter and Kawahara (1999) concluded that fast paced edited content significantly affects how viewers feel, learn and store television content. Similarly, Schaefer and Martinez III (2009) contend that pacing strategies have been an ongoing trend in television that has increased significantly over the past decade. Grabe, Lang and Zhao (2003) attributes this contemporary style of show openings' to a "tabloid" style of television aimed specifically at arousing feelings and increasing attention.

As mentioned earlier the first audible sound that indicates a person's voice comes from Cincinnati police officer Colleen Deegan who works in the Cincinnati police vice squad that primarily does undercover work. Officer Deegan forthrightly states:

Colleen Deegan: (running) "He's going towards the football field turn around and meet me there!"

The video clip shows officer Deegan on a high pursuit foot chase after a suspect who is not visible and is apparently a substantial distance away from her. The video is intense and gives an up-close look of police/criminal interactions as Deegan is running at full speed with a police radio in one hand. Even as she approaches a fence, she is not deterred as she skillfully climbs over it to continue her pursuit of apprehending her suspect. On the denotative level, this can be perceived as just a typical, ordinary day of police officers doing their job. The next clip shows Deegan preparing for target practice by taking aim at a silhouette on a shooting range. The next shot is extreme tight shot of her holding a gun and firing at twice at her target. A loud pow, then a pause, then another loud pow is heard again as she shoots at her target.

The next sequence of the show's opening transitions to officer Tia Pearson. Pearson is shown in a wide shot involving several suspects. In this particular video clip she firmly states:

Tia Pearson: "Everybody let me see your hands put 'em up!"

The video clip shows Pearson in complete control of the scene with her weapon drawn on the suspects while they obey her command by putting their hands in the air.

The show's opening next sequence then shifts to police officer Mandy Curfiss. Curfiss is shown in the hallway of an apartment building questioning a suspect. Apparently the suspect must have said something unprofessional to Curfiss in which a quick cut to her is precisely cued to her response and she authoritatively states:

Mandy Curfiss: "I am not your baby, you call me officer!"

After Curfiss admonishes the suspect, there is a quick edit to another video clip of her locking and loading a shot gun. The audio of the shot gun making a click, click sound is crystal clear.

The final show opening sequence involves a video clip showing police officer Rose Valentino conducting what appears to be an arrest. Valentino has her weapon drawn on a suspect in which she clearly states:

Rose Valentino: "Get down on your knees, keep your hands on top of your head!"

The video then cuts to a shot where it is clear that suspect is adhering to Valentino's verbal command.

After the *The Police Women of Cincinnati* are introduced the remaining part of the show's opening consists of quick edits and snap zooms of each officer running after

an unknown suspect and finally ends with an array of flying graphics and animations that read *The Police Women of Cincinnati* with downtown Cincinnati as the background.

On the denotative level, the show's opening could be perceived as a typical, ordinary police show opening with quick shots and flashy graphics designed to keep the audience's attention focused on the dangerous work that these police women are thrust in to everyday. But on the connotative level, there seems to be several underlying factors that can be perceived otherwise. We agree with the assertion made by Pudovkin (1929) that the production behind the scenes can become the facilitator of the viewing audiences' reality by manipulating the sequence in which characters are involved. A similar conclusion was produced by a study by Kuleshov (1974) which contends that the process of editing is substantially more than just a way of creating a sequential storyline but the arrangement of shots and audio that subliminally convey meanings that it originally did not possess.

Our connotative analysis begins in the first few seconds of *The Police Women of Cincinnati* show's opening. It is at this particular point where a gritty, high intensity, up-tempo music bed is played underneath of quick shots of the dark downtown Cincinnati skyline. On the connotative level, the wide shots to downtown Cincinnati at night couple with a funky, hip, type of music conveys that this is the "other" or sinister side of Cincinnati. Even though the high rise skyscrapers are lit up, Cincinnati is a dark, ominous city at night. The sparse traffic flowing over the Ohio River bridge indicates that it is late at night and most law abiding Cincinnati residents are at home sleep, but there is another segment of society who are awake and have a propensity to commit crimes. The next series of shots shows a city bus at a corner picking up passengers. The bus sign reads

“Queen City 6” referring to the bus route. On the connotative level, the city bus represents a means of transportation for people who cannot afford a vehicle. Oftentimes those people who cannot afford transportation are minorities, in particular African Americans. If a person has to depend on the bus for transportation, there is a good chance that that person is living at or below the poverty line. Prior research has suggested that there is a correlation between crime and poverty.

The next video clip that is shown is a sign that reads “City of Cincinnati Police.” On the connotative level this represents that the savior of Cincinnati is aware of the criminal activity in the city and is here to protect the good citizens from harm. Immediately after the sign of the Cincinnati police department ends, the sound of a police siren is increased several decibels while the video quickly cuts to Cincinnati police officer Colleen Deegan chasing after a suspect. A connotative reading of the latter suggests that the increased audio of the police siren is employed to make the audience aware that the Cincinnati police are on their way to answer the call of duty. Even though the suspect that Deegan is pursuing cannot be seen on the denotative level, the connotative level reveals another side. On the connotative level Officer Deegan is running behind an unknown suspect indeed, but when looking at the building that she is running by, it is clear that Deegan is running by a multi-unit, low income, subsidized housing complex that is usually associated with a seedy, crime filled part of a city. Low income housing is commonly referred to as “projects” which are oftentimes occupied by low income African American families. Once again a relationship is established between African Americans and criminal activity. It’s a battle of good versus evil with the seedy side of Cincinnati representing evil. In other words, this video clip is indicating

that the seedy part of Cincinnati is perceived as the bad guy's domain and Deegan is perceived as the crime fighting heroine that will do whatever it takes to keep the city of Cincinnati safe from unruly lawbreakers.

The connotative reading of the next video clip involving police officer Tia Pearson shows some resemblance to her cohort Colleen Deegan. As mentioned earlier in the denotative reading, Officer Pearson is involved in a situation with two suspects in which she authoritatively yells "everybody let me see your hands put 'em up!" Indeed this could be perceived as proper protocol when a police officer is faced in this type of situation but the connotative reading tells another side. In this particular instance the suspects are two black males standing outside of a car with shiny rims on it. The men are dressed in t-shirts, baggy jeans and tennis shoes. On a connotative level, this type of attire is associated with urban, inner city gang culture. The automobile is a late model, two toned Chrysler 300 painted silver at the top and blue at the bottom. The connotative reading of the latter indicates that the two black males are gang affiliated, menacing criminals who pose a threat to society. Officer Pearson is forced to draw her weapon and possibly use deadly force to get these two individuals to adhere to her commands. Interestingly, while the video of Officer Pearson and the two black males is transpiring, a graphic that says "wanted" is flashed repeatedly over the screen despite there is no notification from Officer Pearson that the men are under arrest or what crime they are wanted for. The connotative reading on the latter suggests that the two black males are guilty until proven innocent and are highly sought after criminals.

The next connotative reading involves police officer Mandy Curfiss admonishing a shirtless black male in a hallway of an apartment. Curfiss loudly says to the black male

suspect that “I am not your baby, you call me officer!” On the connotative level, this represents Officer Curfiss being highly upset and disrespected by a black man who refers to her as baby. According to Conrad, Dixon and Zhang (2009) words such as “baby,” “the crib,” “the man” and “my boy” are commonly used words by African American males. Curfiss and the black male are shown in the hallway of what appears to be a low income housing complex. As with the previous clips involving police officers, once again a link is made between African Americans and criminality. The next video clip shows Officer Curfiss locking and loading a shot gun. On the connotative level, this represents that Curfiss is not to be taken lightly and will use deadly force if necessary.

The final connotative analysis involves police officer Rose Valentino. As mentioned earlier, Valentino is shown with her weapon drawn on a suspect. Valentino orders the suspect to “get down on your knees, keep your hands on top of your head.” Remaining consistent with the previous two officers involved in the show’s opening, the suspect Valentino is giving instructions to is also a black male. The black male suspect has on a black jacket, baggy jeans and athletic shoes. As stated earlier, this type of attire is commonly worn by black males living in an urban neighborhood, who have an affiliation with gang culture. On the connotative level, this video clip suggests that Officer Valentino is in a confrontation with a dangerous black male subject. Valentino is shielded by her car with her weapon pointed directly at the black male suspect that clearly indicates that she feels he is a threat to her safety and will not take any chances with him. She is so threatened by this black male that she is forced to make him get on his knees and place his hands on his head.

Indeed *The Police Women of Cincinnati's* show opening is exciting and attention grabbing but at what price? According to the 2000 census, the city of Cincinnati total population consists of 331,285 citizens. Of that number 175,492 (53%) are white, 142,176 (42%) are black, 5,132 (1.5%) are Asian, 4,230 (1.3%) are Hispanic and 2,093 (0.6%) are other. Despite the statistics that show that 42 percent of Cincinnati residents are African American, three out of four police women (75%) are shown in a confrontation with black male suspects and the fourth officer is shown running through an inner city neighborhood chasing an unknown suspect. In addition, two of the three officers who were shown interacting with black male suspects had their weapons drawn on them. A study by Dixon and Linz (2000) revealed that recurring images of blacks being perceived as criminals can lead to a subliminal association between blacks and criminality. Consequently, *The Police Women of Cincinnati* aired for eight consecutive weeks in which the same show opening will be used for each week.

#### Guilty by Association

There is consensus among media scholars that modern technology in terms of editing techniques has made it possible for media companies to manipulate audio and video linkage that subsequently produces false or misleading representations (Noggle & Kaid, 2000). In addition, Nack and Parkes (1997) succinctly assert that the video editor has two main tenets:

First, he or she must arrange the material so that the resulting film becomes perceptible in its entirety, or the illusion or reality will be lost. Second, he or she must ensure that the intended them engages the spectator both emotionally and intellectually. (p. 332)

A classic example comes from a denotative and connotative reading from a series of video segments from *The Police Women of Broward County*. Our first of three textual analyses involving Officer Andrea Penoyer begins with a wide shot of a massive cruise line ship sailing peacefully along the Atlantic Ocean. It's a picture perfect sunny day as the ship sails to its next exotic destination. The following video clip zooms quickly to an overhead view of an affluent, upscale neighborhood of Broward County. The neighborhood is saturated with palm trees and well-manicured lawns. The next shot cuts to a white male enjoying the lovely day by surfing on the Atlantic. The last video clip shows a wide shot of several people sunbathing and relaxing on the beach while another luxury cruise line ship passes by in the background. The latter video clips represent a posh, high end, well to do segment of Broward County's social life. The next series of video clips transitions from an upscale lifestyle to low income status as video clips on Penoyer riding in her black SUV through a low income neighborhood are shown. As she rides, a low, mysterious, almost sinister style music bed is played underneath. The camera angle then cuts to Officer Penoyer as she conducts a ride along interview inside her police vehicle while informing the viewing audience that she is on her way to a crime scene. She emphatically states:

Andrea Penoyer: "We're headed to an area now where there's a lot of blatant drug dealing, motels that have prostitution and drug dealers, so we're just gonna ride through and see how it goes."

As the interview is conducted, Officer Penoyer is riding in the passenger seat with her co-worker driving while she is stating her intentions. As they drive the camera is positioned in the back seating area where a clear view through the front glass is shown. As she says

“we’re headed to an area now” it is noticeable that the streets are sparse with traffic and the sidewalks are clear due the camera still being directed from the rear of Penoyer’s head. Consequentially, when she gets to her statement saying “there’s a lot of blatant drug dealing,” her audio continues but the video cuts from the rear angle of Officer Penoyer and sparse traffic being seen through the front windshield to a video clip of four black males standing on a street corner. As Kaid (1991) notes, the latter video and editing technique has the propensity to skew reality among viewers. Still other scholars have also paid close attention to the effects of manipulated audio and video. Schaefer and Martinez (2009), succinctly states:

TV journalists can use several layers of recorded audio with previously shot video imagery drawn from a variety of times and places to convey the sights and sounds as well as the more complex thematic statements that form the ‘contents’ of edited news reports. (p. 353)

A classic example that mirrors the latter quote comes from the 1968 presidential election. In this particular instance, the same editing technique of replacing the original video with other video while the audio track remains the same occurred. A presidential ad that was aimed to get Richard Nixon elected showed video clips of Hubert Humphrey laughing while the voice narration underneath talked about the horrific experiences that occurred during the Vietnam War (Noggle & Kaid, 2000).

When conducting a textual analysis of Officer Penoyer on the denotative level, this can be viewed as an ordinary sequence of shots that are commonly used by producers and video editors. On the connotative level, this is referred to as visual literacy. Diamond and Bates (1984) define visual literacy at the observation of manipulated audio and video

by swapping or interchanging video in efforts to affect the perception of the message. Hence, the editing techniques create an ominous association between black males and drug dealing to the unaware audience. This observation gives support to Shrum's (1996) assertion that an overabundance of images of blacks associated with criminal activity could subliminally influence the viewing audience to link blacks with crime. In addition, this particular edited piece could also bring an unwarranted stereotyping of blacks as drug dealers even though they were not affiliated with the crime scene investigation.

Subsequently, when Officer Penoyer finishes her on camera interview as to where she and her partner are going, the video clip cuts from the black males on the corner to a shot of Penoyer and her cohort riding on a highway. A connotative reading of the latter is twofold. First, it clearly shows that the video clip of the black males standing on the corner had absolutely no association with the story. Second, it shows that the video of black males standing on a corner simultaneously being shown over an audio track where Officer Penoyer talked about drug dealing changed the entire landscape of her interview and linked black males with drug dealing. Consequentially, Penoyer and her partner eventually reach their crime scene which involved two black females.

Our next textual analysis involving Officer Penoyer begins with a shot of the sun slowly rising at daybreak signaling the beginning of a new day. The black SUV Penoyer and her partner are riding in slowly drives through the streets of Broward County. The camera angle comes from a high, overhead angle giving the viewers a perspective of the neighborhood she and her partner are patrolling. The neighborhood seems to be a quiet, middle class, closely knit community nestled just outside of the gritty inner city. The following video quickly cuts to a shot where seven black males are casually gathered

around each other talking. Their view is partially blocked by an overhanging tree that is in the foreground. On the denotative level, this video clip could be perceived as a group of black males engaged in a friendly conversation, perhaps reminiscing on old times. But through the power of television editing, the audio that is placed underneath the video clip gives an entirely different meaning of the black men standing outside.

While heading to her next assignment Officer Penoyer states:

Andrea Penoyer: “This area right here is a very high drug area, high crime, so we have to come out here and make our presence known, try to take some drug dealers off the streets and when we do that it’s a great day.”

As Officer Penoyer begins her first line of “this area right here is a very high drug area,” the video of the seven black males is edited precisely over this particular portion of her audio creating a link between the black males and high drug area. Interestingly, immediately after Penoyer finishes her opening line and talks about “making our presence known,” the video cuts to her inside of her vehicle conducting her interview. In other words, her initial statement of “this area right here is a very high drug area” was part of her interview taken from riding in her police unit but subsequently, a video clip of seven black males was superimposed over her audio. This sequence clearly shows that the shots of the seven black males standing on the corner were intentionally edited over her voice for precisely the duration of her description on a neighborhood she was in route to. Hence, Officer Penoyer has not yet arrived at the neighborhood that she is assigned to investigate, but only explaining the characteristics of it while in route. This subtle editing technique skews the perception of the unassuming viewing audience by placing an unassociated video clip of black males over a voice track narration describing a high drug

neighborhood. Scholars have raised concerns that this type of visual imagery manipulation through television can contribute to unethical outcomes (Sheridan, 1990). Similarly, Signorielli, Gross, and Morgan (1982) concluded that television is the dominant projector of views and images of the world and through repeated observations, it influences perceived reality to be seen as a true representation of the world. Hence, on the connotative level, the seven black males are now the ominous criminal element that are selling drugs and making the neighborhood bad.

Our third textual analysis of Officer Penoyer begins with aesthetic shots of high rise upscale condominiums and affluent beach front properties along the ocean. People are enjoying a beautiful sunny day relaxing and playing on the white sandy beaches. The next video clip cuts to a couple cruising the blue waters on a yacht. The denotative reading shows a lifestyle of luxury, privilege and limited possibilities afforded by only a select few of Broward County's elite social class. Suddenly a loud sound effect mimicking an abrupt sound of thunder is heard and the video quickly cuts to an overhead view of Officer Penoyer's black SUV patrolling what seems to be a low income neighborhood. Deal III (2007) posits that individuals use sounds as a method of communication that employs a sense of direction, navigation and perspective as to the proximity of objects being close or distant. In this particular case, the audience's sense of direction is led from opulence to penury. On the connotative level, the thunderous sound effect symbolizes the transition from an affluent, posh, first class lifestyle, to a poverty stricken, crime filled neighborhood. As Penoyer and her partner cruise the streets, the camera suddenly cuts to her as she informs the viewing audience of her next assignment.

Andrea Penoyer: “So what we’re gonna do right now is conduct surveillance on one of these well known drug spots in our city. Every crack head around the area can go there and definitely score some dope, so we watch it a lot and it’s pretty much always good for a drug arrest. This is actually a very dangerous apartment complex, one time there was a guy actually hiding in the attic with an AK-47.”

The denotative reading of the information Penoyer gives the viewing audience can be seen as harmless. After all, she is only describing what police officers encounter on a day-to-day basis all over America. However, on the connotative level, the video clips that were placed over Officer Penoyer’s audio describing her upcoming mission reveals another underlying story. Once again using the same editing techniques discussed earlier, the meaning of the video sequence is skewed. When Penoyer says “so what we’re gonna do right now is conduct surveillance on one of these well known drug spots in our city,” the camera is pointed directly on her as she conducts her interview. When she says “every crack head around the area can go there and definitely score some dope,” the video immediately cuts from Penoyer to two consecutive video clips of black males over her audio track. The first video clip shows a middle aged black man riding a decrepit bicycle down a street. In the background is an old abandoned building with sections of glass missing from apparently being knocked out. On the denotative level, if the video clip was without audio, it could be perceived as a middle aged black man riding a bicycle through a low income neighborhood, perhaps going to a neighborhood grocery store. With the addition of the audio track of Officer Penoyer saying “every crack head around the area” playing simultaneously underneath the black man riding a bicycle, the connotative

reading becomes the black man is the drug addicted crack head who is riding his bicycle looking to either purchase drugs or commit a crime to support his drug habit. Once again, the editing technique that Noggle and Kaid (2000) described is use to bring an unwarranted association between blacks and illegal drug activity.

The second video clip is precisely edited over Penoyer's audio track when she states "can go there and definitely score some dope." This particular video clip shows two black males casually walking along a side walk on a semi busy street. Just as the previous clip with the black male on a bicycle, if the video clip of the black men walking along the side walk is shown without an audio track played underneath, one could perceive it to be two men taking a casual stroll together, enjoying a beautiful day. But when the video of the black men walking is shown precisely over an audio track of a law enforcement officer describing a particular place where crack heads frequently go to, the meaning of the video is manipulated. As a result the connotative reading of the video clip is that the two black males are two crack heads who are on their way to a known drug location to purchase drugs.

The third video clip is precisely edited over Officer Penoyer's audio track when she says "this is actually a very dangerous apartment complex." This particular video clip shows a black male standing outside wearing a white t-shirt and shorts, who is talking to an unidentified person sitting in the passenger seat of an automobile. The shot is cropped tightly whereas cars are seen passing in the foreground and background. Once again, if the video clips is shown without an audio track playing underneath it could be perceived as a black male talking to an acquaintance or possibly giving someone directions. But when an audio track of Officer Penoyer describing a dangerous apartment complex is

added underneath, as with the previous video clips, the meaning is changed. On the connotative level, the black male is now a very dangerous person who has the propensity to commit violent crimes. Research by Dixon and Linz (2000) asserts that negative images of blacks on television can lead to stereotyping of blacks as aggressive and dangerous criminals. It should also be noted that this particular video clip has nothing to do with an apartment complex. In other words, an apartment complex cannot be seen in this video clip even though it's been precisely edited over Officer Penoyer's audio track describing a dangerous apartment complex.

RQ-9: Are there any other significant qualitative findings that reveal underlying characteristics of suspects, victims, cities, police officers, race, etc. on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County*?

As mentioned earlier, *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis* and *Dallas* not only employed crime segments that featured police daily interactions with criminals. Several segments were also shown portraying the police women in a different light. After all five cities were examined, a constant, often times overlooked portrayal of police women were embedded in particular from Cincinnati and Broward County. Research question 8 asked are there other significant qualitative findings that reveal underlying characteristics of suspects, victims, police officers, race, etc. on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Memphis, Dallas* and *Maricopa County*. Interestingly, one denotative and connotative reading consisted of placing salience on police officers lives outside of their normal duties stood out.

### A Softer Side

Prior research has suggested that police work is one of the most dangerous jobs as well one of the most mentally challenging occupations in the world (Axelbred & Valle, 1978). Additionally, law enforcement has been perceived as an all-boys club which frequently involves the use of force, aggressive behavior and the use of physical strength (Remington, 1981). The latter is consistent with perceptions of gender roles in society. Roles that require using brute force or employing a physical nature are typically perceived to be the duties that are best suited for males. In contrast, roles that require working in sedentary position, being nurturing or possessing a caretaking behavior are typically perceived to be duties that best suited for females. Consequently, the textual analysis is a combination of the two aforementioned. Female officers from The Police Women of Cincinnati and Broward County were highlighted in individual segments to show a softer, feminine side of their life away from their chaotic workplace environment. The video begins with a shot of the sun rising on Cincinnati's horizon. The background music is slow and peaceful as the sun slowly rises over the Queen City. The next shot shows cars commuting over a venerable bridge which slowly dissolves to a shot of Officer Valentino arriving at her cozy two story home. It is just after dawn and she have just finished working a grueling overnight shift patrolling some of Cincinnati's most dangerous streets. The home is located in a quite middle class suburban neighborhood, safely tucked away from the hectic, crime filled inner city. Next, Officer Valentino reveals a rare glimpse of her feminine side that has been bottled up inside her for the past eight hours as she reflects on her family.

Rose Valentino: “I have an amazing eight-year old daughter named Lilly and when I get home from work in the morning the first thing I like to do is creep into my daughter’s room and I steal some kisses, and it is the best part of my day.”

The latter statement made by Officer Valentino is the antithesis of how law enforcement officers are perceived. As mentioned earlier, law enforcement has typically been viewed as a masculine profession. Valentino’s actions are a reflection of what feminist scholar Hayes (1996) describes as “intensive mothering.” She asserts that working mothers instinctively makes sacrifices of careers, time, money etc. to provide a safe haven that is conducive to protecting and rearing their children. Next, the video transitions to a smiling Valentino carefully walking into her daughter’s room and getting into bed with her. Suddenly the child wakes up from her mother being in bed with her in which Valentino affectionately asks her daughter to “give mommy a hug.” As the two lovingly embrace each other, it is clear to see that their mother/daughter bond is tightly intertwined with each other. The embrace last for approximately five seconds as Valentino carefully pets her daughter’s face, and then kisses her on her forehead. The sequence ends with the two sharing a warm embrace with each other as the video slowly pans to an open window revealing a bright morning in Cincinnati. The denotative reading reveals a nurturing, compassionate side of Officer Valentino who looks forward to sharing intimate moments with her daughter. It also reveals that she is not always the tough, aggressive police woman that she is portrayed but a devoted mother who is committed to her family. The sequence then transitions to Valentino preparing a cozy family meal with her fiancé and daughter. She states:

Rose Valentino: “Before I go to work every night it’s extremely important to me to get to spend a little bit of time with my fiancé Matt and my daughter Lilly.”

The video shows a wide shot of the three happily together in the kitchen. Matt is shown adding spice to the meal, Valentino is shown slicing potatoes, while her daughter looks on. The denotative reading shows Officer Valentino’s domesticated side as a cook, mother and future wife. Interestingly, Valentino is shown wearing make-up, earrings and her coiffure is perfectly groomed. The next video clip shows her helping her daughter with her homework. In this particular sequence, Valentino is assisting her daughter in spelling her vocabulary words. As her daughter struggles to spell some words, her mother gently informs her of her incorrect spelling. After pausing to rethink, her daughter spells the words correctly as Valentino smiles with approval. Interestingly, while she works with her daughter, another softer side of revealed as she is shown affectionately caressing their family cat. The sequence ends with Valentino hugging her fiancé as she prepares to leave their residence to go to work. As they embrace each other, they both tell each other “I love you” and end with a kiss. Next, Valentino is shown walking off and getting into her car and drives off.

The next textual analysis involves Officer Tia Pearson as she is preparing for perhaps the biggest day in her life. Pearson is engaged and is shown shopping for a wedding dress. The video begins with Pearson and her mother strolling down the sidewalks of a shopping plaza. They both are smiling and laughing while enjoying a beautiful sunny Cincinnati afternoon. As Officer Pearson and her mother enter the store, they are greeted by an affable store employee who leads her to the dresses. After looking

at several dresses, Pearson selects one that she would like to try on. She enters the dressing room and comes out in a beautiful white dress. As Pearson walks out to reveal her dress, the video quickly transitions to her mother whose eyes are becoming watery as she watches her daughter parade around in an elegant dress. This is a very emotional moment for Officer Pearson as well as she reflects on how important her mother is to her. She states:

Tia Pearson: “My mom basically raised me and helped mold me into the beautiful woman that I am today, so she has to share this joyous occasion with me.”

The video clip suddenly cuts to Pearson slowly walking out of the dressing room adorning her white wedding dress while the store employee walks behind her holding the train. Her mother has both hands to her face in awe of her daughter’s beauty as she affectionately says “she’s so pretty.” Pearson responds to her mother’s comment by revealing a majestic, teary eyed smile. The camera then cuts to a wide shot where the audience can see Pearson’s glowing façade in front of a three sided mirror while holding a bouquet of red roses. The sequence ends with Officer Pearson and her mother warmly embracing each other while both profess their love to one another.

The next textual analysis is with Officer Mandy Curfiss. The video begins with a wide shot that slowly pans across Officer Curfiss’s home. It shows a cozy, two story, middle class home with a two car garage. The foreground shows a luscious green lawn that is well manicured, with perfectly trimmed hedges in the background. The bed of music being played underneath is soft and calming, setting the tone to portray a much lighter and feminine side of Curfiss. The sequence begins with Curfiss and her mother in

the kitchen preparing a meal. Both are smiling and enjoying the company of one another. Unlike while on patrol duty, Officer Curfiss is wearing her hair down rather than up and she is also wearing make-up. The women are shown working feverously in the kitchen to put the finishing touches on the family dinner. The denotative reading represents a domestic side of Officer Curfiss that is rarely seen. As she continues to prepare the meal she states:

Mandy Curfiss: "One of my favorite things to do on my day off is spend time with my family, sit down, have an awesome home cooked meal and just enjoy my family."

The video continues to show the audience the joyful time that the Curfiss family is having together. The next video clip shows Officer Curfiss sitting at the dining room table with her mother, father and two siblings. The family seems to be very close knit, as they laugh and reminiscence on old times. Curfiss indicates that her daddy is the rock of the family and that she's a daddy's girl. The denotative reading reveals a traditional All-American family with the father as the head and mother who is the nurturer and caregiver who have a special relationship with their two daughters. At the end of the video, Curfiss' father tenderly tells her "no matter how old you get, you're still dad's little girl." As her dad finishes, the video cuts to Officer Curfiss who is looking straight into her dad's eyes. Her emotions appear to be stirred up as she fondly replies "aw, you're gonna make me cry." The video ends by showing a nighttime exterior show of Curfiss' home that slowly zooms out.

The next textual analysis involves Officer Shelunda Cooper as she prepares to speak to a group of at-risk teenage girls. The video begins with Officer Cooper walking

confidently into the lobby and informing the receptionist that she is there to speak to girls. After receiving clearance, Cooper calmly walks into a medium size room where she is face to face with slightly over a dozen at-risk teenage girls from various races.

According to Morris (2000), at-risk is defined as youth who come from low socioeconomic neighborhoods, have low achievement, retention in grades, exhibit behavior problems and attend schools with a high proportion of poor students. Research has indicated that youth who have been subjected with many risk factors will drop out earlier than others (Kronick, 1997). These teenagers pose a challenge to Cooper due to them coming from diverse backgrounds, broken homes and high crime neighborhoods. According the U.S. Department of Juvenile Justice, in 2000, girls accounted for 23% of juvenile arrests for aggravated assault, 31% of simple assaults, and 18% of aggregate violent crimes (Snyder 2003). Cooper realizes she has a huge task in front of her but she is committed to the endeavor. Her objective is to mentor and counsel the girls in hope of redirecting their lives in a positive direction. Cooper exudes her nurturing and compassionate qualities by addressing the teenagers before going off to work. She begins by saying:

Shelunda Cooper: “Whether you all have done something bad to get into this program such as get arrested or whether you were referred to this program, let that be a thing of past, you slipped up and now you’ve moved on.”

The teenagers pay close attention to Cooper’s motherly advice. The video clip quickly cuts to tight shots of the girls eyes deadlocked on Cooper, giving her their utmost attention. It appears the girls have bonded with Officer Cooper as they are shown nodding in agreement with her comments. Cooper shares her warm wisdom with the

teenagers by advising them to not hang out with the wrong crowd. She also tells them to set short, medium and long-term goals for themselves. Her last point conveys to the girls to not let their background and prior behavior deter them from being successful. Officer concludes by encouraging the girls that “they can do it and go as far as you can.” The immersed girls reply in unison to Officer Cooper by saying “thank you.”

Although *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas* has received praise for its originality in documenting the daily activities of female law enforcement officers and their interactions with criminals, it can be argued that the show is most notable as a conduit that reinforces stereotypes of a mean world where a constant battle of good versus evil exists that is fueled by the proliferation of blacks committing crimes. Hence, the answer is that the good guys who are oftentimes portrayed by whites must combat and defeat the bad guys to protect society. In conceptualizing *The Police Women* series, it is important to recognize the subliminal messages of crime, criminals and crime fighting that is encoded and more importantly decoded by the audience. In other words shows such as these could contribute to cultivate unwarranted stereotypes of blacks as menacing criminals who pose a direct threat to white society. It is only through more scholarly research that the aforementioned portrayals can be subdued and eventually rescinded.

## CHAPTER VI

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Crime segments from all five series of *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Maricopa County*, *Memphis* and *Dallas* were chosen for this research to examine the portrayals of African Americans as criminals. The goal of this study was to juxtapose the portrayal of African Americans as criminals on *The Police Women* series to the actual aggregate crime statistics from the respective city in which these shows were filmed in to determine if African Americans were overrepresented as criminals. Interestingly, the results showed a pattern of African Americans being overrepresented as criminals similar to prior research conducted by Entman (1994), Dixon (2008), and LeDuff (2008). In contrast, the results indicated that African Americans were not overrepresented, but underrepresented as violent criminals as suggested in the review of literature.

Dixon (2007) asserted that the overrepresentation of African Americans as criminals can lead to unwarranted stereotypes. Based on the results of this study, it seems that on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Maricopa County*, *Memphis* and *Dallas*, stereotypes of black criminality are being frequently conveyed through crime segments, which ultimately affect how racial groups perceive these stereotypes as a true representation of African Americans. Indeed the results of this study are not generalizable, however they offer insight on how police reality shows can overrepresent African American as criminals even when the aggregate crime data suggests otherwise.

RQ-1: Will African American males be overrepresented as criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Memphis*, *Dallas*, *Maricopa County* and *Broward County* when compared with real world aggregate crime data from those cities?

The number of crime segments involving African American males as suspects were compared to 2010 aggregate crime data originating from the Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas Police Departments. As in previous studies examining African American males as criminals on television, the majority of crime segments from *The Police Women* series involved African American males as suspects. This finding was similar to a prior study conducted by Entman (1990) that found that the majority of news stories in Chicago involved black males as suspects. Interestingly, drug selling and drug possession was the most frequently committed crime by African American males on *The Police Women* series, despite theft being the most frequently committed crime by black males according to the aggregate crime data. Law enforcement throughout American has placed heavy emphasis on combating the war on drugs. Hence the aforementioned finding could be attributed to the film crews being following police women who are assigned to work high drug areas.

RQ-2: Will African American females be overrepresented as criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* when compared with real world aggregate crime data from those cities?

The number of African American female suspects appearing on crime segments on *The Police Women* series was compared to 2010 aggregate crime data from the Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas Police Departments. The results indicate that out of the five cities examined, only the city of Dallas there an overrepresentation of black females as criminals. This can be interpreted several ways. First, *The Police Women* series portrays an accurate depiction of black females as criminals in 80% of their shows or second, the overrepresentation of black

females in Dallas reinforces stereotypes of “the angry black woman.” According to the 2010 census, African Americans account for 22% of the population in Dallas.

Interestingly, Hispanics account for 43% of the population in Dallas but no Hispanic females were involved in crime segments from *The Police Women of Dallas* series.

Although only one of the five cities analyzed overrepresented African American females as criminals, the results from *The Police Women of Dallas* has the propensity to mislead audiences resulting in a skewed view of black females.

RQ-3: Will African American males be overrepresented as violent criminals (e.g. murder, rape assault, etc.) on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* when compared with aggregate crime data from those cities?

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines violent crime as murder, robbery, rape and assault. The number of African American males appearing on crime segments that fell under the category of violent crimes were compared to aggregate violent crime data from Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas Police Departments. In Cincinnati, Memphis and Dallas, assault was the most frequently committed violent crime by African American males. In Broward County and Maricopa County, robbery was the most frequently committed violent crime by African American males. Notably, only one city out of five analyzed overrepresented African American males as violent criminals which Dallas. As stated earlier, according to the 2010 census African Americans account for 22% of the population in Dallas while Hispanics make up 43% of the population. Interestingly, in crime segments that fell under the category of violent crimes from *The Police Women of Dallas*, African American

males accounted for 14.2% of violent crimes while Hispanic males accounted for zero percent. Although only one of five cities that were examined in this study overrepresented African American males as violent criminals, the findings have the penchant to create stereotypes for African American males as violent criminals.

Notably, violence among African American males in both The Police Women of Memphis and the aggregate crime data from the Memphis Police Department were significantly higher than the other cities analyzed in this study. For example, the population of Memphis is almost 50% smaller than Dallas, but in terms of violence, African American males in Memphis made up 13.7% of crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime compared to 14.2% of African American males in Dallas. The same similarity is seen with the aggregate crime data from Memphis and Dallas Police Departments. For example, African American males accounted for 14.5% of crimes that fell under the category of violent crimes in Memphis while African American males in Dallas accounted for 7.1% of crimes that fell under the category of violent crimes. The findings could be attributed the disparaging racial demographics of Memphis and Dallas. For example, the 2010 census indicates that African Americans make up 60.7% of Memphis residents compared to African American making up 22% of residents in Dallas. The spike in violence in Memphis could also be attributed to the city's high poverty and high illiteracy rates. A 2010 census report based on 2009 income data revealed that 28.6% of African Americans in Memphis were living at or below the poverty line. Similarly, according to a 2006 national literacy survey, Memphis ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation in terms of illiteracy.

RQ-4: Will African American females be overrepresented as violent criminals (e.g. murder, rape assault, etc.) on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* when compared with aggregate crime data from those cities?

As mentioned earlier the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines violent crimes as murder, robbery, rape and assault. The number of African American females on crime segments that fell under the category of violent crimes were compared with aggregate violent crime data from Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas Police Departments from 2010. Similar to a pattern noticed with African American males involved in violent crimes in Memphis, the same trend of violence was observed with African American females in Memphis. As mentioned earlier, according to the 2010 Census Bureau, the population of Memphis is almost a twice as small as Dallas but African American females committed the same amount of crimes that fell under the category of violent crimes in both Memphis and Dallas. These findings are consistent with national crime statistics that rank Memphis as one of the most violent cities in America.

RQ-5: Will crime segment involving African American males be shown more frequently committing violent crimes (e.g. murder, rape assault, etc.) than White, Asian, Hispanic, Indian etc. males on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County*?

African American males involved in crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime were compared to white, Asian, Hispanic and Native American males involved in crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime on *The Police*

*Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas.*

Notably, African American males (n=21) appeared in three times as many violent crime segments as white males (n=6). Also, Memphis was the only city out of five that were analyzed in this study, where African Americans were the majority in population (65%). Further analysis reveals that in Cincinnati whites make up 58% of the population compared to 42% for African Americans. Yet African American males accounted for more crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime than white males in Cincinnati. Similarly, whites make up (53%) almost double the population of African Americans (28%) in Broward County, but in crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime, African American males (n=2) were equal to white males (n=2). In Maricopa County, whites (45.5%) make up almost nine times the population as African Americans (5.3%), but in crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime, African American males (n=1) accounted for the same number of violent crimes as white males (n=1). Also, Hispanics make up 43% of the population in Maricopa County but appeared in none of the crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime. In addition, in Dallas whites account for 30% of the population compared to 22% for African Americans. Yet African American males (n=9) appeared in nine times the amount of violent crime segments than white males (n=1). Also, Hispanics make up 42% of the population in Dallas but accounted for zero crime segments that fell under the category of violent crime.

RQ-6: Will crime segment involving African American females be shown more frequently committing violent crimes (e.g. murder, rape assault, etc.) than White, Asian, Hispanic, Indian etc. females on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*,

*Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County?*

The number of African American females appearing in crime segments that fell under the category of violent crimes were compared with white, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American females that were involved in violent crime segments on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Maricopa County*, *Memphis* and *Dallas*. Of the 311 crime segments, ten fell under the category of violent crimes committed by females. A further analysis revealed that African American females accounted for 80% (n=8) of violent crime segments compared to white females accounting for 20% (n=2) of violent crime segments. Pertaining to the 8 violent crime segments in which African American females appeared in, 7 (87.5%) fell under the category of assault, once again contributing heavily to the stereotype of “the angry black woman.” A demographic pattern involving African American males in Cincinnati was also noticed with African American females in Cincinnati. For example as state earlier, African Americans make up 42% of the population in Cincinnati to 52% of whites. In stark contrast, African American females accounted for 75% (n=3) of violent crime segments compared to 25% (n=1) for white females on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*. Similarly, whites make up 53% of the population in Broward County compared to 28% for African Americans yet African American females accounted for 100% (n=1) of violent crime segments compared to 0% for whites on *The Police Women of Broward County*. How are these images of violent African American females perceived by the viewing audience? As previously mentioned, Memphis is ranked among the top ten most violent cities in America. This has a trickledown effect. For example, new businesses will be reluctant to relocate or open in Memphis, hence weakening the city’s tax base. A weak tax base will produce an inferior

educational infrastructure due to the inability to pay higher teacher salaries resulting in low teaching wages. Low teaching wages will not attract high quality teachers resulting in low performing schools. These are problems that not only plague inner city residents but have a profound effect on everyone.

RQ-7: Are policewomen featured on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* more likely to be shown interacting with suspects of their same racial or ethnic group?

This question seeks to examine if police officers who belong to a specific race are assigned to crime scenes where suspects are of the same race. Interestingly, when all cities were combined, African American officers interacted with African American suspects 86% of the time compared to 14% with white suspects. White officers were involved in crime segments with African American suspects 55% of the time compared to 31% for white suspects. Asian officers were involved in crime segments with African American suspects 17% of the time compared to 50% with white suspects and 34% with Hispanic suspects. Hispanic officers were involved in crime suspects with African American suspects 40% of the time compared to 40% with white suspects and 20% with Hispanic suspects. The findings do suggest a bias towards African American officers being assigned to crime scenes where the majority of suspects are African American. These findings are similar to a television news study conducted by LeDuff (2008) that found that African American reporters in New Orleans covered 80% of stories involving African American victims and less than 20% of stories involving white victims. These findings also indicate that news directors and police dispatchers may share similar views that African Americans are more adept at covering crimes or news stories that involve

African Americans. It can also be interpreted that news directors or police dispatchers want to protect their white employees from possible harm from African American suspects and would prefer to send African American police or reporters to African American neighborhoods.

RQ-8: Does there appear to be any underlying visual, verbal, or non-verbal elements (pictures, racial code words, music, etc.) of *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County* that seem to portray African Americans in a negative light?

RQ-9: Are there any other significant qualitative findings that reveal underlying characteristics of suspects, victims, cities, police officers, race, etc. on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, Maricopa County and Broward County*?

The qualitative portion of this study enabled deeply embedded messages and artifacts to be uncovered from *The Police Women* series. Without the use of viewing the program through a semiotic lens, the aforementioned would remain hidden and subdued. The qualitative findings suggest that stereotypes created by constant images of African Americans depicted as criminals identified by Dixon (2007) are very much in existence. Furthermore, Gerbner's (1980) Cultivation Theory posits that viewers who frequently watch television for extended periods will begin to perceive the images as a true representation of life. Hence, the perpetual viewing of reoccurring images of African Americans as criminals can subliminally link African Americans to crime. For example, the show opening of *The Police Women of Cincinnati* showed multiple clips of African Americans interacting with police. Despite that no arrests were made, the interactions of police and African Americans as suspects creates a stereotype of the good guys who are

the cops protecting the city of Cincinnati from the bad guys who are African Americans. In addition, *The Police Women* series was rated among the top ten cable shows averaging over one million viewers per episode.

### Conclusion

This study examined the portrayal of African Americans as criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis* and *Dallas* police reality show and the propensity of these shows to create unwarranted stereotypes. As the study revealed, African Americans were overrepresented and underrepresents as criminals when compared to aggregate crime data. For example, research question one revealed that African American males were overrepresented as criminals when compared to aggregate crime data in four out of five cities that were analyzed. In contrast, African American males were underrepresented as violent criminals in four out of five cities analyzed when compared to aggregate violent crime data. It can be argued that the findings send mixed messages about *The Police Women* series. On one hand it can be argued that *The Police Women* series continues the perpetual cycle of crime shows that continue to paint a negative picture of African American males as ominous criminals, or on the other hand, it can be argued that *The Police Women* series presents a true representation of African American males and criminality that is supported by aggregate crime data. Even if the latter is accurate, as Higgins, Rhodes, and Jones (1977) suggests, “when people make judgments about other persons, they tend to use constructs that are most readily accessible from memory” (p. 54). In other words, even though *The Police Women* series underrepresented African American males as violent criminals, people will still view African American males as violent do to memory of seeing them as criminals

even though the crimes committed were not violent crimes. Similarly, the study also revealed that African American females were underrepresented as criminals and violent criminals in four out of five cities analyzed when compared with aggregate crime data. The findings once again strengthen the argument that *The Police Women* series is not creating unwarranted stereotypes of African Americans males and females as unruly criminals but actually underrepresenting African Americans as criminals. The results of this study adds to the existing literature on race and stereotypes, hence providing insight on understanding how racial stereotypes and negative depictions impact our society. It is imperative that scholarly attention is given to address the issue of reoccurring negative images of African Americans on television and the subliminal effects it has on audiences. Carmody (1998) notes that “the typical criminal and the typical crime on television news and police dramas bear little resemblance to reality” (p. 159). In addition, Surette (1997) asserts that “police dramas tend to emphasize a war metaphor in which criminals are seen as predators and strong social control measures are presented as necessary and appropriate” (p. 159). The danger lies when the latter is combined with the former, a skewed perception of reality is created in which African Americans are transformed into ominous, prone to crime individuals.

Media scholars must also recognize that police reality shows along with television news are controlled by powerful, influential, and affluent media groups. As a result these powerful media giants own and control the airways and are able to convey their ideology to the viewers. Herman and Chomsky (1988) points out that this cannot be done without hegemony, propaganda and class. Gramsci (1987) defines hegemony as the process by which a dominant class wins the willing consent of the subordinate classes to the system

that ensures their subordination. He states “this consent must be constantly won and re-won, whereby people’s material and social experience constantly reminds them of the disadvantage of subordination and thus poses a threat to the dominate class” (p. 173). According to White (1992), social and cultural conflict is expressed as a struggle for hegemony, as struggle over which ideas are recognized as the prevailing commonsense view for the majority of social participants. Herman and Chomsky (1988) assert that “propaganda focuses mainly on the inequality of wealth by lower class and wealth by dominant class and its multilevel effects on mass-media interests and choices. It traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent and allow the government and dominate private interests to get out their message across to the public” (p. 13).

In other words, what Herman and Chomsky (1988) are suggesting is profits play a key role in what message is seen or heard on television. Until race, gender and media scholars are willing to continue to do further research and address these issues of dominant groups using the media airwaves to delineate African Americans in a negative light, these reoccurring images will continue to come into millions of Americans living rooms, many of them who have never interacted with African Americans and rely on the television solely as a means of information. Hence, unassuming audiences will continue see these reoccurring images of African American as criminals and perceive them to be a true representation of life. The latter can only eliminated by a concerted effort by media scholars to continue to conduct research on race, gender and media.

Ideas for future research include collaborating with television executives from various media companies such as ABC, Fox, and The Learning Channel and present

scholarly findings involving race, gender and media to them. This could lead to an increase in dialogue between media representatives and media scholars to discuss the negative perceptions that are created by some shows that their network airs. Ideas for the future also include focus groups between media scholars and television viewers to openly discuss how or if television has influenced them on how they perceive African Americans and their relationship with crime. It is imperative that these issues are kept at the forefront of media discussion and scholarly attention as well as research is continued in hopes of ameliorating the negative images and unwarranted stereotypes of African Americans on television.

#### Limitations

The data collected for this study is limited only to *The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis* and *Dallas* series. There are a myriad of other police reality shows such as *American Justice, FBI Files* and *The First 48* that has had sparse or any scholarly research conducted. This is germane for media studies because by conducting research with only a small sample size, an over generalization can be made. For example, this study revealed that African American females were underrepresented as criminals and violent criminals on *The Police Women* series when compared to aggregate crime data. These findings cannot be generalized to other police reality shows. Therefore conducting research on other police reality shows such as *Cops* or *America's Most Wanted* may reveal findings that suggest otherwise. The latter represents the essence of why scholars conduct research; to discover something new. This is why it is imperative that media scholars continue to give scholarly attention to race, gender and stereotypes.

In the qualitative analysis of this study it could be argued that my denotative and connotative readings could be biased. In other words, my explanations of underlying, embedded messages could be due to my background as an African American male growing up in the south. Indeed a significant amount of denotative and connotative readings have to deal with how a person interprets information. My interpretation as a 44-year old African American male growing up in a low income neighborhood will be different from a white male growing up in an affluent, upscale neighborhood in the north. For example, one of the semiotic analysis in this study dealt with a police officer conducting a high speed chase, running by what appears to be a low income housing complex, oftentimes referred to as “projects.” In contrast, a white male or female may have a different interpretation of the scenario and therefore perceive it differently.

Episodes of *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Maricopa County*, *Memphis* and *Dallas* represent a minute portion of the population in the United States. As a result some cities analyzed such as Memphis have majority African American populations. Hence it could be argued that the high number of African Americans appearing in *The Police Women* series is due to the high population of African Americans in Memphis.

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this study was to examine the portrayal of African Americans as criminals on *The Police Women of Cincinnati*, *Broward County*, *Maricopa County*, *Memphis* and *Dallas* series. One of the limitations of this study was the low percentage of African Americans living in Maricopa County (Phoenix, Arizona). According to the 2010 U.S. Census, African Americans make up 5.3% of the population in Maricopa County. As stated previously, Maricopa County was the only city that did

not overrepresent African American males as criminals. This could be attributed to the sparse amount of African Americans in Maricopa County.

## APPENDIX A

## THE POLICE WOMEN OF CINCINNATI, DALLAS, MEMPHIS, MARICOPA COUNTY AND BROWARD COUNTY CODE BOOK

For the purpose of this study only crime segments will be content analyzed. Crime segments refer to each individual segment in which the law enforcement official is shown conducting her daily assignments in the field. This may include interactions with criminals as to making arrests.

## Section A:

A-1) Broadcast Date: Enter the month and day of *The Police Women* series in which it aired. Please enter 0 before any single months or days. For example: (01)=January, (02)=February, (03)=March, (04)=April. For the days please enter (01)=first, (02)=second, (03)=third, etc. for double digit days simply enter both digits (ex. 10 for the tenth of the month).

A-2) City: Enter the number which corresponds with the city: (1) for The Police Women of Cincinnati (2) for The Police Women of Broward County (3) for The Police Women of Maricopa County (4) for The Police Women of Memphis and (5) for The Police Women of Dallas

A-3) Type of Crime: Enter the number which corresponds with the type of crime(s) shown within the segment of The Police Women of Cincinnati, Broward County, Maricopa County, Memphis and Dallas. (1)=murder, (2)=robbery, (3)=rape, (4)=drug seller, (5)=drug possession, (6)=burglary, (7)=assault, (8)=prostitution/provider, (9)=prostitution/client, (10)=illegal immigration/citizen, (11)=attempted murder, (12)=disorderly conduct, (13)=DWI/OVI, (14)=outstanding warrants, (15)=no payment child support (16)=issued citation/no arrests, (17)=other.

A-4) Segments in Show: Enter the chronological order in which the segment that includes police officers interactions with criminals appears. For example enter (1)=for first segment in show, (2)=for second segment in show, (3)for third segment in show, (4)=for fourth segment in show, (5)=for fifth segment in show, (6) for sixth segment in show, (7)=for seventh segment in show, (8)=eighth segment show

A-5) Neighborhood where the crime took place: If the neighborhood where the crime occurred is described by police please indicate by entering the following number. (1)= for high crime neighborhood, (2)=for inner city neighborhood, (3)=for quiet neighborhood, (4)= for suburban neighborhood.

## Section B:

B-1) Suspect Identity Order: Enter the number in chronological order for each individual suspect in which they appear on the *Police Women* series: There are typically eight (8) sequences in a one (1) hour show. (1)=for first suspect in first sequence, (2)=for second suspect in second sequence, (3)=for third suspect in third sequence.

B-2) Suspect Race: Enter the number which corresponds with the race of each suspect: (1)=for Black , (2)=for White, (3)=for Asian, (4)=for Hispanic, (5)=for Native American, (6)=Other.

B-3) Suspect Gender: Enter the number which corresponds with the gender of each suspect: (1)= male and (2)=female.

B-4) Suspect of What Type of Crime: Enter the number which corresponds with the crime that was committed by the suspect on the *Police Women* series. (1)=murder, (2)=robbery, (3)=rape, (4)=drug seller, (5)=drug possession, (6)=burglary, (7)=assault, (8)=prostitution/provider, (9)=prostitution/client, (10)=illegal immigration/citizen, (11)=attempted murder, (12)=disorderly conduct, (13)=DWI/OVI, (14)=outstanding warrants, (15)=no payment child support (16)=issued citation/no arrests, (17)=other.

B-5) Suspect Prior Criminal History: Enter the corresponding number which represents if the suspect has a previous arrest record while being investigated on the *Police Women* series: (1)=yes and (2)=no.

B-6) Suspect Age: Enter the number which corresponds with the age of the victim on the *Police Women* series. For example: (1)=under 18, (2)=18-25, (3)=26-40, (4)=41-55, (5)=over 56.

### Section C:

C-1) Victim Identity Order: Enter the number in chronological order for each individual victim in which they appear on the *Police Women* series. There are typically eight (8) sequences in a one (1) hour program. (1)=first victim in first sequence (2)=second victim in second sequence, (3)=third victim in third sequence. (Note: There may be sequences in which the segment contained no victims of crime).

C-2) Victim Race: Enter the number which corresponds with the race of each victim. For example, (1)=Black , (2)=White, (3)=Asian, (4)=Hispanic, (5)=Native American, (6)=Other.

C-3) Victim Gender: Enter the number which corresponds with the gender of each victim. For example: (1)=male and (2)=female.

C-4) Victim of What Type of Crime: Enter the number which corresponds with the crime that was committed against the victim on the *Police Women* series. (1)=murder,

(2)=robbery, (3)=rape, (4)=drug seller, (5)=drug possession, (6)=burglary, (7)=assault, (8)=prostitution/provider, (9)=prostitution/client, (10)=illegal immigration/citizen, (11)=attempted murder, (12)=disorderly conduct, (13)=DWI/OVI, (14)=outstanding warrants, (15)=no payment child support (16)=issued citation/no arrests, (17)=other.

C-5) Victim Age: Enter the number which corresponds with the age of the victim on the *Police Women* series. For example: (1)=under 18, (2)=18-25, (3)=26-40, (4)=41-55, (5)=over 56.

#### Section D:

D-1) Police Identity: Enter the number that corresponds with the name of the female police officer who is shown in the sequence in which they appear on the *Police Women* series. (1)=Mandy Curfiss, (2)=Colleen Deegan, (3)=Rose Valentine, (4)=Tia Pearson, (5)=Andrea Penoyer, (6)=Julie Bower, (7)=Ericka Huerta, (8)=Shelunda Cooper, (9)=Dieb Moyer, (10)=Lindsay Smith, (11)=Kelly Barcardo, (12)=Amie Duoung, (14)=Virginia Awkward, (15)=Arica Logan, (16)=Joy Jefferson, (17)=Tracy Jones, (18)=Beth Burnside, (19)=Sara Ramsey & Mia Shegena, (20)=Melissa Person. (Please note that certain segments will include Sara Ramsey and Mia Shegena as partners).

D-2) Police Officer Race: Enter the number which corresponds with the race of each police officer who is highlighted during the individual crime segments. For example, (1)=Black , (2)=White, (3)=Asian, (4)=Hispanic, (5)=Native American, (6)=Other.

D-3) Police Officer Position: Enter the number which corresponds with the attire of the police officer who is highlighted during the individual crime segments. (1)=uniformed police, (2)=undercover (plain clothes) detective.

#### Section E:

E-1) Full screen graphics: Please indicate whether or not there was use of still pictures in the segment by circling (1)=yes (2)=no

E-2) Music: Please indicate whether or not there was use of music in the segment by circling (1)=yes (2)=no

E-3) Special effects: Please indicate whether or not there was use of special effects (still frames, slow motion, rapid shots, etc.) in the segment by circling (1)=yes (2)=no.

#### Section F:

F-1 to F-5 Qualitative Analysis: Please answer the qualitative questions in sentence form in the spaces provided. If for any reason the question is not applicable to the story, simply enter N/A in the space provided.

## APPENDIX B

THE POLICE WOMEN OF CINCINNATI, DALLAS, MEMPHIS, MARICOPA  
COUNTY AND BROWARD COUNTY

Code Sheet #\_\_\_\_\_

## Section A

A-1) Broadcast Date: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011

A-2) City: 1-Cincinnati 2-Broward County 3-Maricopa County 4-Memphis 5-  
DallasA-3) Type of crime committed: 1-murder 2-robbery 3-rape 4-drug seller  
5-drug possession 6-burglary 7-assault 8-prostitution/provider 9-  
prostitution/client 10-illegal immigration/citizen 11-attempted murder 12-disorderly  
conduct 13-DWI/OVI 14-outstanding warrants 15-no payment child support 16-  
issued citation/no arrests 17-otherA-4) Segment order: 1-first segment 2-second segment 3-third segment 4-fourth  
segment 5)-fifth segment 6-sixth segment 7)-seventh segment 8-eighth segmentA-5) Neighborhood where the crime took place: 1-high crime neighborhood 2)-inner  
city neighborhood 3-quiet neighborhood 4-suburban neighborhood.

## Section B /Suspect Data

B1) Sequence In Show #	B2) Race	B3) Gender	B4) Suspect of What Crime?			B5) Suspect Prior Criminal History
1	1-Black 2-White 3-Asian 4-Hispanic 5-Native 6-Other	1-Male 2-Female	1-Murder 2-Robbery 3-Rape 4-Drug Seller 5-Drug Possession 6-Burglary	7-Assault 8-Prostitution/Provider 9-Prostitution/Client 10-Illegal Citizen 11-Attempted Murder 12-Disorderly Conduct	13-DWI/OVI 14-Outstanding Warrants 15-No Child Payment 16-issued citation 17-Other	1-Yes 2-No
2	1-Black 2-White 3-Asian 4-Hispanic 5-Native 6-Other	1-Male 2-Female	1-Murder 2-Robbery 3-Rape 4-Drug Seller 5-Drug Possession 6-Burglary	7-Assault 8-Prostitution/Provider 9-Prostitution/Client 10-Illegal Citizen 11-Attempted Murder 12-Disorderly Conduct	13-DWI/OVI 14-Outstanding Warrants 15-No Child Payment 16-issued citation 17-Other	1-Yes 2-No
3	1-Black 2-White 3-Asian 4-Hispanic 5-Native 6-Other	1-Male 2-Female	1-Murder 2-Robbery 3-Rape 4-Drug Seller 5-Drug Possession 6-Burglary	7-Assault 8-Prostitution/Provider 9-Prostitution/Client 10-Illegal Citizen 11-Attempted Murder 12-Disorderly Conduct	13-DWI/OVI 14-Outstanding Warrants 15-No Child Payment 16-issued citation 17-Other	1-Yes 2-No
4	1-Black 2-White 3-Asian 4-Hispanic 5-Native 6-Other	1-Male 2-Female	1-Murder 2-Robbery 3-Rape 4-Drug Seller 5-Drug Possession 6-Burglary	7-Assault 8-Prostitution/Provider 9-Prostitution/Client 10-Illegal Citizen 11-Attempted Murder 12-Disorderly Conduct	13-DWI/OVI 14-Outstanding Warrants 15-No Child Payment 16-issued citation 17-Other	1-Yes 2-No
5	1-Black 2-White 3-Asian 4-Hispanic 5-Native 6-Other	1-Male 2-Female	1-Murder 2-Robbery 3-Rape 4-Drug Seller 5-Drug Possession 6-Burglary	7-Assault 8-Prostitution/Provider 9-Prostitution/Client 10-Illegal Citizen 11-Attempted Murder 12-Disorderly Conduct	13-DWI/OVI 14-Outstanding Warrants 15-No Child Payment 16-issued citation 17-Other	1-Yes 2-No
6	1-Black 2-White 3-Asian 4-Hispanic 5-Native 6-Other	1-Male 2-Female	1-Murder 2-Robbery 3-Rape 4-Drug Seller 5-Drug Possession 6-Burglary	7-Assault 8-Prostitution/Provider 9-Prostitution/Client 10-Illegal Citizen 11-Attempted Murder 12-Disorderly Conduct	13-DWI/OVI 14-Outstanding Warrants 15-No Child Payment 16-issued citation 17-Other	1-Yes 2-No
7	1-Black 2-White 3-Asian 4-Hispanic 5-Native 6-Other	1-Male 2-Female	1-Murder 2-Robbery 3-Rape 4-Drug Seller 5-Drug Possession 6-Burglary	7-Assault 8-Prostitution/Provider 9-Prostitution/Client 10-Illegal Citizen 11-Attempted Murder 12-Disorderly Conduct	13-DWI/OVI 14-Outstanding Warrants 15-No Child Payment 16-issued citation 17-Other	1-Yes 2-No
8	1-Black 2-White 3-Asian 4-Hispanic 5-Native 6-Other	1-Male 2-Female	1-Murder 2-Robbery 3-Rape 4-Drug Seller 5-Drug Possession 6-Burglary	7-Assault 8-Prostitution/Provider 9-Prostitution/Client 10-Illegal Citizen 11-Attempted Murder 12-Disorderly Conduct	13-DWI/OVI 14-Outstanding Warrants 15-No Child Payment 16-issued citation 17-Other	1-Yes 2-No

## Section C /Victim Data

C1) Sequence In Show #	C2) Race	C3) Gender	C4) Victim of What Crime?		
1	1-Black 2-White 3-Asian 4-Hispanic 5-Native 6-Other	1-Male 2-Female	1-Murder 2-Robbery 3-Rape 4-Drug Seller 5-Drug Possession 6-Burglary	7-Assault 8-Prostitution/Provider 9-Prostitution/Client 10-Illegal Citizen 11-Attempted Murder 12-Disorderly Conduct	13-DWI/OVI 14-Outstanding Warrants 15-No Child Payment 16-issued citation 17-Other
2	1-Black 2-White 3-Asian 4-Hispanic 5-Native 6-Other	1-Male 2-Female	1-Murder 2-Robbery 3-Rape 4-Drug Seller 5-Drug Possession 6-Burglary	7-Assault 8-Prostitution/Provider 9-Prostitution/Client 10-Illegal Citizen 11-Attempted Murder 12-Disorderly Conduct	13-DWI/OVI 14-Outstanding Warrants 15-No Child Payment 16-issued citation 17-Other
3	1-Black 2-White 3-Asian 4-Hispanic 5-Native 6-Other	1-Male 2-Female	1-Murder 2-Robbery 3-Rape 4-Drug Seller 5-Drug Possession 6-Burglary	7-Assault 8-Prostitution/Provider 9-Prostitution/Client 10-Illegal Citizen 11-Attempted Murder 12-Disorderly Conduct	13-DWI/OVI 14-Outstanding Warrants 15-No Child Payment 16-issued citation 17-Other
4	1-Black 2-White 3-Asian 4-Hispanic 5-Native 6-Other	1-Male 2-Female	1-Murder 2-Robbery 3-Rape 4-Drug Seller 5-Drug Possession 6-Burglary	7-Assault 8-Prostitution/Provider 9-Prostitution/Client 10-Illegal Citizen 11-Attempted Murder 12-Disorderly Conduct	13-DWI/OVI 14-Outstanding Warrants 15-No Child Payment 16-issued citation 17-Other
5	1-Black 2-White 3-Asian 4-Hispanic 5-Native 6-Other	1-Male 2-Female	1-Murder 2-Robbery 3-Rape 4-Drug Seller 5-Drug Possession 6-Burglary	7-Assault 8-Prostitution/Provider 9-Prostitution/Client 10-Illegal Citizen 11-Attempted Murder 12-Disorderly Conduct	13-DWI/OVI 14-Outstanding Warrants 15-No Child Payment 16-issued citation 17-Other
6	1-Black 2-White 3-Asian 4-Hispanic 5-Native 6-Other	1-Male 2-Female	1-Murder 2-Robbery 3-Rape 4-Drug Seller 5-Drug Possession 6-Burglary	7-Assault 8-Prostitution/Provider 9-Prostitution/Client 10-Illegal Citizen 11-Attempted Murder 12-Disorderly Conduct	13-DWI/OVI 14-Outstanding Warrants 15-No Child Payment 16-issued citation 17-Other
7	1-Black 2-White 3-Asian 4-Hispanic 5-Native 6-Other	1-Male 2-Female	1-Murder 2-Robbery 3-Rape 4-Drug Seller 5-Drug Possession 6-Burglary	7-Assault 8-Prostitution/Provider 9-Prostitution/Client 10-Illegal Citizen 11-Attempted Murder 12-Disorderly Conduct	13-DWI/OVI 14-Outstanding Warrants 15-No Child Payment 16-issued citation 17-Other
8	1-Black 2-White 3-Asian 4-Hispanic 5-Native 6-Other	1-Male 2-Female	1-Murder 2-Robbery 3-Rape 4-Drug Seller 5-Drug Possession 6-Burglary	7-Assault 8-Prostitution/Provider 9-Prostitution/Client 10-Illegal Citizen 11-Attempted Murder 12-Disorderly Conduct	13-DWI/OVI 14-Outstanding Warrants 15-No Child Payment 16-issued citation 17-Other

## Section D /Police Identity

D1) Police Officer Name		D2) Race	D3) Officer Position
1-Mandy Curfiss	11-Kelly Bacardo	1-Black	1-Uniform
2-Colleen Deegan	12-Amie Duoung	2-White	2-Plain
3-Rose Valentine	13-Aubrey Olson	3-Asian	Clothes
4-Tia Pearson	14-Virginia Awkward	4-Hispanic	
5-Andrea Penoyer	15-Arica Logan	5-Native	
6-Julie Bower	16-Joy Jefferson	6-Other	
7-Ericka Huerta	17-Tracy Jones		
8-Shelunda Cooper	18-Beth Burnside		
9-Dieb Moyer	19-Sara Ramsey & Mia Shegena		
10-Lindsey Smith	20-Melissa Person		

## Section E: Editing/Production Techniques

E-1 Full screen graphics: 1=yes 2=no

E-2) Music: 1=yes 2=no

E-3) Special effects (still frames, slow motion, rapid shots, etc.)

## Section F: Qualitative Analysis

F-1) What was the segment about?

F-2) Is there any noticeable association of guilt through video or audio? Ex. police officer referring to neighborhood as “bad” or “high crime area” or video of suspects sitting in back of police car but not under arrest.

F-3) Are there any enhanced editing techniques used. Ex. fast edits, special effect graphics, placing video over audio.

F-4) Are the police officers shown in a negative or positive manner? Ex. aggressive physically or verbally, friendly, sirens flashing, drawing weapons.

F-5) Are suspects shown in a negative or positive manner? Ex. aggressive physically or verbally, friendly, running from police officers.

NOTES:

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Coder Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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