

## CSLS MINISERIES IN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH METHODS

### Materials for "Doing Story-Based Research in Socio-Legal Studies"

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Seminar Room, 2240 Piedmont Ave

#### Stories for Workshop "Doing Story-Based Research In Socio-Legal Studies"

From Steven Maynard-Moody and Michael Musheno, *Cops, Teachers, Counselors: Stories from the Front Lines of Public Service* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003).

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#### **Story 1.1.** Midwestern Vocational Rehabilitation "A Happy Ending" (p. 6)

This is a happy ending story. This is one of those that poor [supervisor] would probably just faint away dead. This is one [the supervisor] does not want to know about....

This is about a lady with severe chronic mental illness. She came through the mental health center through the support of an employment grant.

This is somebody who had been Miss Texas or Miss Oklahoma or something—you know, a real high achiever and then bang. I don't remember if it was depression or what happened. Well, anyway, she ended up in a series of mental hospitals. Somewhere along there she was married and had a little boy and was divorced. So now she is in [midwestern city], she is a single mom living with zero money practically in a real bad part of town with this little guy.

And she worked so hard to put herself back together. She was doing so well. She had picked up an associate's degree in electronics something, computer something, but had never actually worked with the degree or anything because of her mental illness.

Meanwhile, back at home in the neighborhood, her little boy was probably the only white guy in the neighborhood, and the neighborhood bullies were just beating the crap out of this little guy. The [other] parents were like, "So what?"... So all these other stresses were coming back on her. She couldn't move until she got a job, and she can't get a job.

Somehow she caught a ride to [nearby town] and interviewed. And they were hiring bachelor's degree people to do these jobs... Somehow she waltzed in there and convinced them that she could do the job, ... and they hired her, which was amazing in itself. And plus she had done it on her own, which was even more wonderful, except she didn't have a car.

And now she found somebody that had a good dependable older little Toyota for like \$1,500. Well, if you have no money, \$1,500 might as well be \$15 million. Somehow, the mental health center could come up with \$400, just kind of seed money. So I came up with \$340 for maintenance, but that still left a bunch.

So we got creative. I wrote up enough money to cover insurance, car tags, and fees, and, you know, called them interview clothing and gas, knowing good and well that these are things she is going to need but the money is really for the car. So she went and bought her car.

So she finally moved ... and lived happily ever after. Her little boy is still in school and is doing great. She has advanced into a better position. They love her.

Everything worked out beautiful, but if we had gone by the rule book, she would not have gotten the car, she would not have gotten the job. She would have ended up back in the hospital.

**Story 8.2. Western Police Department**  
"Bad Dealers, Good Dealers, and Stray Bullets" (p. 99.)

This incident occurred a couple of years ago. There was an individual that had been involved in a lot of criminal activity, including shootings, and his name was [Steve]. Steve never really seemed to be able to do anything that was aboveboard. He never seemed to have a job. When he did have a job, he would steal from the employer. What he eventually started doing was dealing small amounts of marijuana. He had a cousin by the name of [Cory]. Cory is a black male. Steve is a mulatto.

Well, Steve and Cory met with another individual who was a Mexican guy. He had a wife, and she was white. He had been a laborer all his life. He was a Mexican guy from Texas. This guy's name was [Francisco], and Francisco had been a hard worker.

When I talked to Francisco, he had chemical burns on his arms and back, and he explained to me that one time he had lived in a rural area and had to carry this chemical container on his back to spray weeds in these huge fields, and it was a difficult life. He came from a migrant worker's family in Texas and he came to [big city] and settled down. He had a wife and a baby and wasn't able to make ends meet. So he started dealing small amounts of marijuana, which is, of course, against the law.

He started dealing with Steve, and he thought that Steve was his friend. Steve was selling small amounts of marijuana for him, and one day Steve and his cousin Cory decided that they were going to rip Francisco off.

So they drove over to Francisco's house. It was a duplex in a residential area. It was a nice little neighborhood. I wouldn't have expected problems to have occurred in that neighborhood...

The cousin showed up, went into the house and he had a loaded, high-capacity nine-millimeter handgun. He confronted Francisco, took all that Francisco had, and marched him through the house...

Francisco's wife was at work. She was a waitress. So [Cory] put the gun to Francisco's head. He took him back out to the living room, and, while holding Francisco at gunpoint, he started closing the blinds in the living room, and he ordered Francisco down on his knees. Francisco knew then that he was going to be executed.

Francisco was about five feet, eight inches tall and weighed about 220 to 230 pounds. He was a stout little guy. Cory weighed about 130 and he was about five feet, eight inches tall...When he had the opportunity, Francisco grabbed the gun with both hands and forced it up and got Cory off his feet and started swinging him from side to side across the room. And he threw him into a kitchen table and collapsed the table. It was enough to make Cory release his hold on the gun.

Cory then ran and ... suddenly his high capacity was being used on him. Well, he took a couple of rounds through his midsection, but he kept running. Francisco was right behind him, and Francisco fired at him across the parking lot. Cory ran to where Steve was waiting to drive getaway. Francisco shot through the back of the car.... They left at a high rate of speed, bounced out into the roadway, ... and Francisco continued to shoot this high-capacity nine-millimeter. The gun had about a sixteen-round capacity. And some of the bullets went directly across the roadway and hit a house across the way.

They fled to the hospital and we started to receive phone calls at the police department about a residential burglary.... Well, of course, the supervisors came to the scene and they said, "Okay, we're going to arrest the driver of the car. We're going to file charges on the wounded suspect."

At the same time, this Francisco, who was traumatized and upset, said, "Yup, I do deal with small amounts of marijuana. I'm scared. He was going to kill me. I was afraid for my life."

The supervisor decided to arrest him for endangerment for shooting the gun and having it cross the roadway.... The supervisors were adamant that Francisco be arrested. I think to them Francisco was seen as a semiliterate Hispanic.... Francisco had come clean with us.... He was terrified and traumatized....

Ultimately, what happened was I didn't file a case against him. The other two went to prison, and I didn't file anything else. I thought personally that Francisco had been through enough.... He was fearful for his life and he was just defending himself, period.