

The New York Times Reprints

This copy is for your personal, noncommercial use only. You can order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers [here](#) or use the "Reprints" tool that appears next to any article. Visit www.nytreprints.com for samples and additional information. [Order a reprint of this article now.](#)



March 8, 2012

Telling the Truth Like Crazy

By **JIM DWYER**

One summer day in 2009, a woman walked into the police station house of the 81st Precinct, in Brooklyn, to report that her car had been stolen. She was well into her second day of trying to file a report, having already spoken to five or more officers in two precincts and was waiting, exasperated, for a lieutenant to turn up as he had promised.

Then an officer named Adrian Schoolcraft emerged and heard her story. She wrote an account for him. He bundled it with a dozen other cases of crime victims who found themselves trapped in bureaucratic hamster wheels that seemed to have purposely been set up to make it hard to report serious crimes. It was a pattern, Officer Schoolcraft was convinced.

That October, he met with investigators and told them about the woman and her car, and others who were the victims of felonies but whose cases either disappeared from statistics or wound up classified as misdemeanors: a Chinese-food deliveryman who was beaten and robbed; a cabby held up at gunpoint; a man who was beaten and robbed of his wallet and cellphone, a case that the 81st Precinct classified as “lost property.”

Officer Schoolcraft’s career in the Police Department was about to take a turn for the worse.

On the evening of Oct. 31, 2009, Officer Schoolcraft, who had gone home sick from work, was forcibly taken from his home in Queens by senior police officials and delivered to a hospital psychiatric ward.

He had been telling the truth like crazy.

This week, the findings of an internal police investigation into his claims [were](#)

reported in [The Village Voice](#) in an article by Graham Rayman, the latest installment in a series that has won awards for chronicling the case of Officer Schoolcraft and the corruption of police crime statistics. The investigation found “a concerted effort to deliberately underreport crime in the 81st Precinct.”

The 85-page report, never released by the Police Department, vindicated Officer Schoolcraft, who has been suspended without pay for more than two years. He has filed a lawsuit, charging that he faced retaliation for telling the truth. [Officer Schoolcraft recorded all the precinct roll calls](#) for two years, and also recorded the raid on his home when he was brought to the psychiatric ward. One senior official confiscated his audio recorder during that encounter, but he had secreted a backup.

The question of crime statistics is a matter of great sensitivity in the Police Department and at City Hall, which regularly boasts of New York’s safety. But more than 100 retired police commanders [told researchers that intense pressure for annual crime reductions had led some officials to manipulate statistics](#). The department set up a panel in January 2011 to investigate the claims and report in three to six months, but authorities have said nothing of it or its work since then.

The investigation of Officer Schoolcraft’s claims does not provide any camouflage for those involved in manipulating crime reports.

A portion of the document headed “Incident No. 10, Handwritten Letter From Complainant” gives a road map of the difficulties faced by ordinary citizens trying to make a report.

On July 30, 2009, a woman discovered that her car, parked a few blocks from her home, had been stolen. “She called 911 from her residence,” the report states, and the matter was assigned to the police in the precinct where she lived, the 79th.

“Officers from the 79 responded,” it continues. She told them where the vehicle had been parked. The officers informed her that she had to report the theft to the 81st Precinct. The next day, she went to the 81st Precinct, and was told that she had to go to the street where the car was stolen.

There, she was met by a lieutenant from the 81st, who told her to go back to the station house and that he would meet her there, according to the report. “While

waiting for the lieutenant, she encountered Officer Schoolcraft and wrote the letter that she provided to case investigators.”

Finding out what happened to the Schoolcraft case was as daunting as trying to file a crime report. Using the state’s Freedom of Information Law, Mr. Rayman of The Village Voice sought the report, which was completed in June 2010. The police denied his request. He appealed. They denied it again. He finally obtained a copy through back channels and published an article this week.

It was, as he points out, not nuclear launch codes, but a factual recitation of everyday bureaucratic activities in a police station house.

The government does not have a Fifth Amendment right to silence.

E-mail: dwyer@nytimes.com

Twitter: [@jimdwyernyt](https://twitter.com/jimdwyernyt)