



# Montana Narcotic Officers Association Newsletter

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## 2008 Annual Conference to be held in Bozeman, Montana

The 2008 annual MNOA conference has been set and will be held March 10-14, 2008 at the Grand Tree Inn, Bozeman, MT. We have scheduled some very exciting instructors and have made a few changes. The training has been designed to reach all levels of law enforcement.

## Regional trainings coming your way

Upcoming MNOA sponsored training.

**12/4-5/2007** Advanced marijuana grow school,  
Glasgow, MT

The advanced marijuana grow school session is a new and expanded version of a MCTC course instructed by Inspector Les Kjemhus (ret.) formerly of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who has become an internationally known expert in the field of indoor marijuana cultivation. This will be an excellent updated and expanded refresher for those who have previously attended Inspector Kjemhus' marijuana grow school. There are additions to the training and recent updates, to include the rising dangers of mold and safety of the investigation. With health risks involved in the dismantling of grows it is important for investigators, patrol officers, administrators and anyone likely to enter into a grow environment to understand these dangers.

This course will include: investigative techniques for identifying and dismantling indoor marijuana grow operations, power diversions techniques utilized by illegal growers, dangerous mold issues, and officer safety considerations when processing indoor marijuana grow operations.

This training is being offered at a very low cost and will include lunch, morning items and free rooms to the first 40 that sign up. It is very important to register now for the class. Visit the website for more details and registration information.

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## Suicide by Cop:



**Topics & Tactics for Law Enforcement**  
with Scott Buhmaster

## Suicide By Cop: 15 warning signs that you might be involved

One of the worst nightmares in law enforcement is a "suicide by cop" situation. These highly pressurized, seemingly no-win incidents threaten you tactically, emotionally and -- should the shooting end up in court -- possibly even legally and professionally.

Dr. Barry Perrou, Psy.D, founder of the Public Safety Research Institute and a former full-time crisis negotiation team commander, is a leading expert on the suicide by cop phenomenon. Recently, he served as an important contributor to an outstanding new book, "SUICIDE BY COP: INDUCING OFFICERS TO SHOOT," compiled by Dr. Vivian B. Lord and published by Looseleaf Law Publications (800-647-5547 or [www.looseleaflaw.com](http://www.looseleaflaw.com)), which we highly recommend for all officers. This powerful new resource reveals essential insights into the suicide by cop phenomenon and shares the potentially life-saving findings surfaced after taking a magnifying glass to actual SbC incidents.

Through his research, Dr. Perrou has identified 15 indicators that can help you recognize when you may be facing a SbC situation.

### The 15 indicators are:

- The subject is barricaded and refuses to negotiate.
- The subject has just killed someone, particularly a close relative, his mother, wife or child.
- The subject says that he has a life-threatening illness.
- The subject's demands of police do not include negotiations for escape or freedom.
- The subject has undergone one or more traumatic life changes (death of a loved one, divorce, financial devastation, etc.)
- Prior to the encounter, the subject has given away all of his money or possessions.
- The subject has a record of assaults.
- Subject says he will only surrender to the person in charge.
- Subject indicates that he has thought about planning his death.
- Has expressed an interest in wanting to die in a "macho" way.
- Has expressed interest in "going out in a big way."
- Subject expresses feelings of hopelessness or helplessness.
- Subject dictates his will to negotiators.
- Subject demands to be killed.
- Subject sets a deadline to be killed.

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## Links

[methfreemt.org](http://methfreemt.org)

Meth Free Montana

If you find that a compilation of these indicators are present, be aware that you may be dealing with a subject who wants to be killed and someone who may be willing to take any steps to reach that goal including, of course, firing on you. In situations like this, tactical vigilance is critical. Your recognition of the fact that a subject is interested only in having you shoot him should NOT cause you to hesitate to do so if at any point you feel your life is threatened. Remember, this subject wants to die and he may stop at nothing to reach his goal, including taking you or a fellow officer with him.

In the book, Dr. Perrou explores two interesting dynamics that he has seen develop in the scores of suicidal situations he has dealt with. One directly impacts your safety and the other may impact the outcome of the event.

The first dynamic can best be described as the "Rescue Dynamic," a subtle but dangerous phenomenon that can threaten your life. This dynamic is fueled by the fact that most officers are not specifically prepared to face suicide by cop situations. When most officers find themselves face-to-face with a subject who wants to die, the officer's primary objective can have a tendency to shift from personal safety to subject preservation.

In a suicidal situation, a subject's death may be inaccurately perceived by the confronting officer as a failure that reflects that officer's inability to "do his job" which, at that time, he perceived as keeping the subject alive at any cost. In an effort to avoid this "failure," officers may take such tactically unsound steps as hesitating to fire when a weapon is pointed at him, coming too close to the subject in an effort to create an emotional bond, or making risky "last ditch efforts" to disarm the subject.

Remember that although a peaceful resolution is certainly the desired outcome, it MUST NOT come at the expense of your safety.

The second dynamic Dr. Perrou describes in the book could be termed "The Annoyance Factor." In observing scores of SbC situations, Dr. Perrou has determined that in some cases, an officer's earnest attempts to help may in fact be perceived by the suicidal subject as an annoyance strong enough to actually expedite the suicide.

Dr. Perrou writes that in instances where a "connection" between the suicidal subject and the intervening officer is lacking, the subject may see death as his only escape from the agitating voice of the officer. Sadly, the officer, seeing that his efforts to resolve the situation peacefully are not being effective, tries even harder ... which only compounds the subject's interest in escape.

Unfortunately, a clear means by which this dynamic can be accurately identified and resolved is not readily available. To comply with a subject's request that you simply "go away" is not feasible. However, you should remain aware that a subject's claims that your efforts to talk him out of the situation are seriously annoying him may in fact be true.

If and when possible, enlist the assistance of professional crisis negotiators as quickly as possible. If they are not readily available, consider transitioning the intervention to another officer if feasible.

In "Suicide By Cop" Dr. Perrou also shares some potential indicators that a peaceful resolution to an SbC may be at hand. Some things that he has observed in subjects prior to peaceful resolutions:

- Less interactive tension
- Lowered voice
- Less anger
- Less profanity
- Diminished aggressive body language
- Increased non-aggressive body language
- Diminished threats of violence
- Less hopelessness and helplessness
- Greater willingness to listen to the officer's suggestions
- Solicitation of situation outcome promises and safeguards, such as "No handcuffs, no press and I will surrender if you will..."

It is important to keep in mind that these indicators should not entice you to compromise your safety by weakening your tactical awareness. However they may serve as tips for the direction of your verbal negotiations and the speed at which you may push for an end to the encounter.

Dr. Perrou goes on to share several behaviors that have been commonly observed as indicators that a suicidal subject is preparing to die. They are:

- **Hyper-vigilance (scanning) -**

This involves a subject visually scanning his surroundings, typically from shoulder to shoulder, and illustrating indications that the surroundings are being perceived as "negative." The subject shows no indication that the presence of first responders is considered at all comforting or helpful.

- **Change in rate of breathing -**

"This is usually detectable (visually, audibly, or both) as the last act before death," writes Perrou. "However, the breathing pattern is not always pronounced; sometimes it is so subtle that it can be seen only by an observer specifically looking for such behavior"

- **Counting down or up -**

This involves a counting cadence, often illustrated by a rocking motion, that helps the suicidal subject take himself to "the point of release and fall."

The value of these preparatory indicators is that they can allow you to monitor the subject's state of mind and his immediate level of willingness to take the situation to a violent end. When identified, these indicators can serve as catalysts to a prompt interruption of the subject's death plan.

"In actual crisis situations, the identification and subsequent interruption of the antecedent (pre-death) behaviors has successfully diverted individuals away from suicide, ultimately bringing the person to surrender," writes Dr. Perrou. "Police officers, as crisis negotiators, have reported both visually and

audibly observing antecedent behaviors and, where possible, have changed their tactic from one of calmly soliciting cooperation to one of making loud and forceful demands, thus rudely diverting the person's attention and momentum away from the suicide disconnect."

As an example, consider that an officer finds himself facing an armed subject seemingly intent on dying. At one point during the contact the officer notices the subject begin rocking his head, hyperventilating and seemingly mumbling "One...two..."

At this point, a forceful verbal blast of "STOP WHAT YOU'RE DOING! I CAN SEE WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND I AM TELLING YOU TO STOP IT RIGHT NOW! STOP! TALK TO ME! DON'T DO THAT" can serve as a life-saving tactic.

For more information on the suicide by cop phenomenon, a copy of the new book, "Suicide By Cop: Inducing Officers To Shoot" (280+ pages, Softcover, 6x9) are available for \$24.95 plus S/H by contacting Looseleaf Law Publications at (800) 647-5547.

For more information on contacting the board, upcoming training and application forms for training visit the webpage at [www.mnoa.org](http://www.mnoa.org)