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In contrast to the conventional wisdom that a process of "moral degeneracy" inevitably ensues with increased heroin addiction, recent research has identified a distinctive set of ethical standards held in common by many "junkies." This article examines the ethical dynamics associated with distinct situations of heroin use with data obtained from extensive life history interviews with 30 hard-core criminal addicts. Addicts tended to violate the ideal norms of their own subculture under circumstances directly related to two contingencies: *drug availability* and *life structure*. Although novice addicts may violate subcultural standards out of ignorance, the greatest potential for deviation from these normative ideals occurs when low levels of drug availability are combined with a lack of daily routine and life structure, a combination typical of the "street junkie" situation.

DRUG AVAILABILITY, LIFE STRUCTURE, AND SITUATIONAL ETHICS OF HEROIN ADDICTS

CHARLES E. FAUPEL

A WIDELY SHARED BELIEF in American society holds that increased heroin addiction inevitably results in moral degeneracy. According to the "dope fiend mythology" (Lindesmith, 1940), as the addict becomes hopelessly enslaved to this deadliest of all drugs, all ethical restraints dissolve. In the words of a vice squad officer interviewed by Gould and his associates:

These junkies become so degenerate it is sad. They live in such filth. You should see some of the apartments I've been in. What's more, junkies have no consideration for their families and their friends I think the drug does something basic to a person. I don't know what it is. I'm not

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an expert on that sort of thing, but it seems as if drug users just don't have any morals left after a while [Gould et al., 1974: 71].

As this statement indicates, many believe that addicts will indiscriminately victimize anyone they know or encounter. One San Francisco journalist flatly asserts:

He's after that money; he needs it to buy heroin. And he'll take it from you if you are his nearest and dearest friend, even if he has to kill you to do it [quoted in Silver and Aldrich, 1979: 42].

Similarly, the "dope peddler" is commonly depicted as an unscrupulous entrepreneur with a penchant for turning young children on to drugs (Anslinger and Tompkins, 1953; Ashley, 1972; Eldridge, 1967; Lindesmith, 1940; Rubington, 1967). "Every addict," say Anslinger and Tompkins (1953: 272), "knowing himself to be a moral and social outcast, delights in bringing others into the outcast fold."

Recent research has openly questioned this assumption of the inevitable and totally morally destructive effects of heroin use. Studies by Ashley (1972), Bullington (1977), Coombs (1981), Hanson et al. (1985), Hughes (1977), Preble and Casey (1969), Reese (1975), Rosenbaum (1981a, 1981b), Waldorf (1973), and Zinberg (1984) suggest that most heroin addicts maintain a sense of ethical responsibility in the social world in which they function. Contrary to the popular imagery, this research has consistently reported that heroin addicts are not indiscriminate with regard to whom they will victimize. Rosenbaum (1981a: 54) found, for example, not only that addicts espouse a distinct code of ethics, but also that the inclination and ability to adhere to this code varies with an addict's standing in the street world of heroin use:

A code of ethics is, in fact, a part of the stratification system in the addict world. Theft, for example, is graduated. The more impersonal the target of stealing, the better; the closer

to home, the worse the addict feels about it. While it is seen as all right, even courageous and bold, to steal from a large store or a person unknown to the addict, stealing from friends, family and to a lesser extent, other addicts is not sanctioned.

Ethnographic studies have also failed to support the image of the addict as promiscuously turning on the young and vulnerable. Most young users were first turned on by close friends who were themselves just beginning to experiment with drugs (Ashley, 1972; Blum, 1972; Blumer et al., 1976; Crawford et al., 1983; Eldridge, 1967; Hughes, 1977; Sutter, 1969). Moreover, Sutter (1969: 807) insists that "turning someone on"

is an expression of trust, friendship and acceptance. Most lower strata youth were introduced to drugs by a close friend or relative. After they learned to use drugs for pleasure, being turned on and turning others on became an established social practice, similar to the convention of buying a friend a drink or offering a drink to a guest when he comes to your house.

In spite of this body of research, however, we know that most addicts have at times engaged in behaviors that violated the standards and ideals of their own subculture. Despite ethical protestations to the contrary, young neophytes may be turned on to drugs by experienced addicts, and addicts may victimize those nearest and dearest to them. It is not sufficient simply to note that addicts engage in such norm-violating behaviors. Situational exceptions to idealized cultural standards can frequently be observed throughout various sectors of the population. Consequently, we should expect that there will also be times, places, and circumstances when normative standards in the heroin subculture will fail to invoke strict conformity. The more important consideration is the circumstances under which these standards are violated and the stance that addicts take

toward these violations and the values they represent. For as Meier (1981: 14) has argued:

The concept of norm . . . does not require a correspondence between what persons say and what they do; discrepancies are to be expected . . . [B]ecause norms identify behavior that "ought" or "ought not" to occur, behavior may (and often does) depart from norms The more relevant consideration includes the conditions under which this potential for deviance is realized and the conditions under which norms guide specific conduct.

The subculture of heroin use provides an excellent opportunity to examine the situational contingencies affecting departure from or conformity to such subcultural normative standards. Heavily involved heroin addicts experience a daily demand for high-cost drugs, a harsh reality that may indeed come to overshadow all other concerns in the addict's life. This article seeks to identify and analyze those conditions that tend to undermine conformity to espoused subcultural ideals.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in 1980-1981 as part of a larger, ongoing research project that examined the relationship between drug use and crime among hard-core heroin users. In an effort to explore more thoroughly the dynamics of the drugs-crime nexus, I conducted in-depth life histories with a subsample of 30 so-called hard-core heroin addicts¹ in the Wilmington, Delaware area. Women addicts were deliberately overrepresented, constituting 12 of the 30 respondents. Ethnically, 22 of the respondents were black and 8 were white. There is no Hispanic representation in this sample due to the lack of a sizable Hispanic drug-using population in the Wilmington area. The interviews ranged from 10 to 25 hours in length and, with one exception, were tape recorded. Respondents were paid \$5

per hour contributing to a 100% response rate. Respondents were selected on the basis of extensive involvement in the heroin subculture, limiting the generalizability of the data to heavily involved, hard-core urban addicts.

A number of relevant "focal areas" emerged early in the research, including early childhood experiences, peer group associations, patterns of initiation into drug use and crime, techniques of committing crimes, and the nature of encounters with the criminal justice system and with treatment agencies. I also talked with these addicts about the normative structure of the heroin subculture and the processes by which it was internalized. This line of inquiry often produced quite idealized accounts of addict ethics and behavior. My efforts to get addicts to specify these ideals and, occasionally, to confront them with discrepancies in their testimonies led to further discussion of the vicissitudes of daily life on the street and of the circumstances under which subcultural norms had been ignored and violated. The interviews were conducted in an unstructured, open-ended format, which provided maximum flexibility in interviewee response.

All of the respondents had prior contact with the criminal justice system and most (24) were incarcerated at the time of interview. Most of the incarcerated respondents were enrolled in the prison drug-treatment program. The six street respondents had also had contact with treatment programs, either by direct court order, voluntary involvement, or through close personal relationships with treatment personnel or graduates of treatment programs. Both street and incarcerated respondents were selected with the aid of treatment personnel who were carefully instructed regarding the goals of the research and selection criteria. This strategy proved invaluable for two reasons. First, by utilizing treatment personnel in the screening process, I was able to avoid the time-consuming task of establishing the appropriateness of respondents for the purposes of this research; the treatment personnel were already intimately

familiar with the drug-using and criminal histories of the respondents. Second, the treatment personnel had an unusually positive relationship with the population of drug users from which the respondents were selected. Addicts regarded the treatment counselor in the prison system as a highly trustworthy ally in the quest for better living conditions, appeals for early release, and so on. His frequent confrontations with prison authorities over prisoner rights and privileges enhanced his reputation among inmates considerably. Similarly, the treatment counsellor who aided in the selection of street respondents had long-standing multifaceted relations with Wilmington-area addicts and had been instrumental in bringing about reforms in area treatment agencies.

Clearly, this sample of respondents does not necessarily represent the population of heroin users in the Wilmington community. In particular, the heavy reliance on incarcerated respondents warrants caution in the interpretation of the data. Furthermore, these respondents, who had not been active in the subculture for a period of time ranging from several weeks to over two years, necessarily had to reconstruct their previous drug-using and criminal activities, much of which had occurred at earlier points in time. Johnson et al. (1985) note that with the passage of time such respondents have a tendency to overestimate the magnitude of their drug and crime involvement, seemingly forgetting days they were incapable of hustling and scoring successfully. As to their reported ethical dynamics and related street behavior, however, the incarcerated respondents I interviewed did not differ appreciably from the street respondents in this and similar ethnographic studies.

DRUG AVAILABILITY AND LIFE STRUCTURE

The situational character of addict ethics must be understood in the context of addict careers. As Crawford et al.

(1983) and Rubington (1967) point out, heroin-using careers are not an inevitable result of heroin use, but are shaped by external career contingencies. Two contingencies that have a profound influence both on the direction of addicts' careers and on their conformity to or departure from subcultural norms of behavior are *drug availability* and *life structure* (Faupel, 1981). *Availability* refers in the broadest sense to the extent to which heroin is accessible to any particular addict. At issue here is more than mere access to sellers of heroin who have quantities of the drug to sell, although this is certainly an important aspect of availability. Availability is also a function of the fluctuating cost of heroin, the resources and opportunities to obtain the drug in nonmonetary ways (for example, see Goldstein, 1981; Johnson et al., 1985), possession of the conventional and/or criminal skills necessary to provide money to purchase heroin, and the knowledge and techniques necessary to actually use heroin. In short, availability is a product of all of those opportunities and obstacles that may influence a heroin user's prospects for ultimately introducing a quantity of the drug into his or her bloodstream.

This feature of heroin-using careers has profound implications for the ethical behavior of addicts. Ready availability of drugs affords the addict the luxury of maintaining a comfortable level of consumption without engaging in many of the "low-down" or desperate tactics characteristic of less fortunate users. Rosenbaum (1981b: 77) notes, for example, that

the addict who occupies the top of the stratification system—the successful dealer or hustler—does not have to resort to those activities more characteristic of poorer addicts. Such addicts do not have to become unscrupulous and without values or morals. However, those addicts who are sick from withdrawal and penniless find themselves in a situation that forces them to get money by *whatever* means possible [emphasis in the original].

These moral dynamics are not, of course, limited to the experience of heroin addicts. Hughes (1971), for example, has observed a "moral division of labor" in the legal and medical professions where, because of their relative position in the professional hierarchy, some lawyers and physicians end up doing the "dirty work" enabling those of higher status to "stay clean."

Life structure refers to the regularly occurring patterns of domestic, recreational, work, and criminal activity that shape and constrain the daily life of heroin users. Recent ethnographic accounts of street heroin use in several major cities reveal that, like their "straight" counterparts, most addicts maintain reasonably predictable daily routines (Beschner and Brower, 1985; Walters, 1985). Throughout their lives all of the respondents in my study fulfilled conventional as well as criminal and other subcultural roles, both of which serve to structure the addict's daily routine. Indeed, although conventional roles are frequently overlooked in accounts of street addicts, the individuals I interviewed typically spent more time engaged in conventional activities than in criminal or deviant ones. Several worked conventional jobs. Women with children performed routine housekeeping and child-rearing duties. Many leisure-time activities did not differ from those of nonaddicts. These hard-core addicts spent time grocery shopping, tinkering with cars, visiting relatives, talking with friends and watching television in totally unremarkable fashion.

Criminal activity, too, is an important source of life structure for the addicts I interviewed. Burglars spend time "casing" residential areas and business establishments. Shoplifters typically establish "runs," more or less stable sequences of targeted stores from which to "boost" during late morning, noon, and early afternoon hours, fencing their goods later in the afternoon. Most prostitutes keep a regular evening and nighttime schedule; mornings are usually spent sleeping and afternoons are typically occupied with conventional duties.

Although the source of these daily routines (conventional versus criminal) may have important implications for drug availability—as I shall point out momentarily—the degree of life structure exerts a significant force independently of its source. Durkheim's (1897) observation of the impact of economic disruption on suicide behavior is pertinent here; it is during such periods of instability that the usual structures of restraint lose their relevance, resulting in a state of "anomie." Lacking a routinized life structure, the heroin addict, too, finds himself or herself in an anomic condition. Under such conditions, when routine conventional and subcultural roles that serve to guide and constrain drug-using and criminal behavior are abandoned or suddenly altered, addicts typically find themselves in normative limbo. The problems of adjustment entailed in the shift from heroin to methadone maintenance, particularly as such a change disrupted the structuring of daily routine, provide a recurrent theme in the life histories. For example, "Belle," an older female addict who attempted to replace her heroin-using lifestyle with the use of "crank" (amphetamines), recalled:

It was just like day and night between the person I had been when I was using heroin and the person I was when I got on this meth and crank . . . doing things in my home I had never done before; and taking things from my home that I had never done before. It was always a no-no touching my home in any way . . . and this last period—whew! It was really abominable.

This brief behavioral aberration, which lasted several weeks, captures the anomic reality encountered by addicts who experience an abandonment or sudden alteration of normal daily routine. In this respect, life structure exercises an important stabilizing force that helps regulate an otherwise insatiable appetite and provides the addict with a meaningful normative context.

Finally, drug availability and life structure are dynamically interrelated. Availability, for example, is often considerably enhanced when a beginning user abandons or curtails conventional routines for more lucrative criminal roles. Similarly, an addict may suffer reduced availability to drugs if he or she has a falling out with a connection (dealer), if his or her connection is arrested, or if a dealer decides to appreciably raise prices. Such eventualities may force the addict to abandon or alter normal routines in order to raise more money to obtain higher-priced drugs or to accommodate to lowered availability. Other factors, such as loss of a job, divorce, or problems from the police may result in an abandonment of normal routines, which in turn may have direct implications for an addict's ability to secure a stable supply of heroin. Consequently, the careers of addicts are characterized by periods of structured routine and relative ease of availability and by periods of disruption in routine and/or difficulty in obtaining drugs.

TYPES OF HEROIN USE AND THE CONTINGENCIES OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

Figure 1 depicts four "heroin use types" that reflect the drug-use patterns produced by different combinations of drug availability and life structure. Since drug availability and life structure involve dynamic and fluctuating contingencies, these types do not represent static descriptions of particular addicts. Rather, any specific addict is likely to have experienced varying constellations of availability and structure at different times during his or her career. Furthermore, addicts do not necessarily move through these types in any sort of linear career path. Although some addicts did indeed seem to follow the sequence that will be discussed, others moved in different patterns or skipped types entirely. Moreover, it was not uncommon for there to be movement back and forth between types as the

| | Life Structure | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| | High | Low |
| High Availability | The Stabilized Junkie | The Free-Wheeling Junkie |
| Low Availability | The Occasional User | The Street Junkie |

Figure 1: A Typology of Heroin Use

circumstances of an addict's life situation changed. Each heroin use type does represent, however, certain critical constraints and opportunities that profoundly affect addicts' inclinations and/or abilities to maintain the ethical ideals of the subculture.

THE OCCASIONAL USER

Initiates into the heroin-using subculture typically fall into this category, characterized by high life structure and low drug availability. A number of factors limit the availability of heroin to beginning users. They have not spent enough time in the subculture to have developed extensive connections for "copping dope." Moreover, their level of income is probably not capable of supporting substantial levels of heroin consumption inasmuch as successful hustling takes time to learn technique, to establish patterns, and to develop necessary connections within the subculture.

Corresponding to low levels of availability, this early period of drug use usually takes place within a structure of more conventional roles. In many cases, individuals experimenting with drugs are young and involved in school and

related activities. Adolescents experimenting with drugs are also typically tied into a family structure. Conventional adult roles similarly serve to structure heroin consumption. Ron, an older black addict who had an unusually long period of occasional use, was shooting an average of only \$10-\$15 in street dope a day for eight years. During this eight-year period he was working a full-time job. At the same time he was living with his mother, who did not allow drug use in her home. At the end of this eight years he became a "tester" for a local dealer, a job that entailed injecting drug samples to test for quality. At that same time he lost his job and moved out of his mother's home. Hence, in addition to having more drugs available as a tester, Ron no longer maintained the rigorous daily routine that had been crucial in controlling his heroin use for eight years. His consumption escalated dramatically over a few short weeks as he quickly came to assume the "stabilized junkie" status.

All of the addicts I interviewed can be characterized as occasional users during the early period of their involvement in the subculture. Indeed, recent research by Zinberg (1984) suggests that there is a sizable number of users who never advance beyond such "controlled" use. Just beginning their careers as heroin users, many occasional users have not spent sufficient time in the subculture to internalize its normative expectations. Consequently, many of the respondents admitted to having violated commonly espoused subcultural standards during this phase of their careers. For example, a number of the addicts I interviewed turned friends on to heroin in a way analogous to that described by Sutter (1969). It was also during this period as young initiates that these individuals most frequently reported dipping into the family's petty cash box for some extra "spending" money. The following remarks by a veteran female addict, however, suggest that such behavior is not so much a violation of an internalized ethic, but rather a

manifestation of inadequate socialization at this early point in one's career.

When you're real young . . . you don't have the same kind of ethics as when you get older . . . All you think about in the beginning is just getting the money. But after a while as you go through the years . . . you begin to see that this is not the right way.

THE STABILIZED JUNKIE

Often, though not necessarily, the occasional user moves directly to the status of "stabilized junkie," characterized by a high level of availability and high, though usually modified, life structure. As occasional users, emerging addicts become socialized into the life of the subculture. Not only do they learn and internalize the normative expectations of the subculture, they also learn the essentials of copping (locating and purchasing), cooking (preparing), and spiking (injecting) themselves—all factors that, in effect, increase the availability of heroin. It was not uncommon for the addicts I interviewed, for example, to experience a sharp increase in their heroin consumption after they learned to inject themselves. They were no longer dependent on the presence of more experienced drug using friends to "get off."

In addition to enhancing these fundamental skills as a drug user, the stabilized junkie increases drug availability by upgrading copping skills and connections. The addict who must rely on the lower-quality, more expensive "street bag," who gets "ripped" by paying high prices for "bad dope," or who is totally dependent on the quality or quantity of heroin a single supplier happens to have available, does not have access to regularly available, high-quality heroin. As Belle explains, gaining such access usually requires extending and developing contacts in the drug subculture:

You got to start associating with different people. You got to be in touch with different people for the simple reason that not just one person has it all the time. you got to go from one person to the other, find out who's got the best bag and who hasn't You want to go where the best bag is for your money You got to mingle with so many different people.

Not only must the aspiring stabilized junkie learn the essentials of shooting and copping, but the expensive nature of heroin usually requires that the addict become familiar with the art of hustling. Hustling provides an alternative basis for life structure capable of accommodating higher levels of drug use. Unlike the adolescent in school or some types of conventional jobs, the hustler role provides a daily structure capable of incorporating periodic visits to a copping connection to secure a "fix." At the same time, however, hustling does provide a routine structure that serves to limit one's habit and prevent it from "getting out of hand." Most hustles, for example, require regular commitments of time and patience, and must be practiced within certain unavoidable constraints. Just as important, however, the hustler role provides the addict with increased income that facilitates the ready availability of heroin without compromising the normative and ethical ideals of the subculture. "Little Italy," a young male addict in his early twenties, reports that his ready access to dependable supplies of heroin was crucial in maintaining ethical respectability:

I just kept right at it [using heroin] because . . . I had it in my possession every day. . . . I could go get it and that's just the way it was. With that in order, I didn't have to go out and burglarize. No one had to worry about me stealing from them. . . . I had money. I didn't have to beat anybody.

For this reason, the stabilized junkie, which often represents a dominant phase in the career of the hard-core addict, is characterized by a high degree of *conformity* to subcultural

norms and most closely reflects the recent ethnographic accounts of the normative structure of drug use.

THE FREE-WHEELING JUNKIE

In contrast to the stabilized junkie, the free-wheeling junkie lacks a daily structure to guide and constrain his or her consumption. A number of factors may undermine the stable life structure characteristic of the stabilized junkie. Addicts place particular importance on the inevitable vicissitudes of the hustler routine. Here it is not so much the hard times or difficulties in raising money that are critical. Addicts can often accommodate themselves to such lean periods by adjusting the level of their heroin use, substituting other drugs for heroin, or working longer and harder at hustling without undue disruption or abandonment of daily routine. "You can adjust yourself to a certain amount of drugs a day," explains Belle, "that you don't have to have but just that much." On the contrary, it is the unusual success, the "big sting," that distinctively undermines the stabilized junkie's high level of life structure. Often, in the course of hustling, addicts will confront an opportunity to make a score so big that they will not have to hustle so rigorously for a period of time. If successful, such a score brings a dramatic change in daily routine. Consider the experience of a burglar named Harry. Harry was working residential areas full time and supporting a modest habit. An associate stopped by one day with a roll of bills worth several thousand dollars and asked Harry if he would like to be partners in a new and more profitable hustle. Harry agreed and began holding up local grocery stores. His profits increased dramatically, and with his bigger earnings he started using drugs on a grand scale; not only did he increase his heroin use, but began using cocaine heavily as well.

However, the robberies brought a critical disjuncture to his normal daily routine. Harry no longer had to work eight

hours a day for his copping money, but could secure a much more sizable income working only two or three hours per day three days a week. Harry now marvels that he was not even aware of the extensiveness of his habit until he voluntarily quit robberies because of the risk and returned once again to burglaries. All of these changes took place over a six-month period.

With drugs available, the free-wheeling junkie typically experiences a sharp escalation of his or her drug use. Moreover, because normal daily routine is suspended at least temporarily, the lifestyle of the addict tends to be erratic and often out of control. The free-wheeling junkie quite often resembles the sometimes stereotyped "flashy" junkie (often associated with pimps), engaged in seemingly uncontrolled conspicuous consumption with a greatly expanded wardrobe, expensive cars, and extreme generosity; in short, the free-wheeling junkie typically finds himself or herself in a state of anomie, lacking the structures of restraint characteristic of the stabilized junkie.

The anomic condition peculiar to the free-wheeling junkie, however, relates specifically to patterns of personal consumption. The windfalls that catapult the addict to this type of heroin use usually allow him or her to maintain ethical integrity. As he mentally relives a particularly lucrative period of drug dealing, Little Italy recalls the following:

So I'm a junkie now. But I'm not one of those scrub junkies, where I got to steal from my family. . . . I'm dealing. And I'm paying for my habit thataway. And man, listen here, don't you know that everybody that didn't know me, knew me now. Because I'm uptown on the Main Street Strip. You can drive by in your pretty car, blow at the girls. I had flashy clothes and the whole bit.

Provided that the free-wheeling junkie has not severed connections or alienated himself or herself in some way from the subculture, he or she may be able to rebuild the

necessary daily routine and accommodate to new and lower levels of drug availability. Insofar as this can be managed the free-wheeling junkie may resume a stabilized junkie lifestyle. In many cases, however, the "big sting" has the effect of isolating the free-wheeling junkie from the subculture by decreasing the need to participate in the coping and hustling aspects of the subculture. Where this occurs the free-wheeling junkie is particularly susceptible to change toward the "street junkie" type.

THE STREET JUNKIE

The street junkie, characterized by low drug availability and minimal life structure, is the basis for the commonly held "junkie" stereotype. With drugs not freely available, the street junkie must typically cop his or her dope from the nearest street dealer who may be willing to provide credit on a bag or two. The cost is much higher on the street, and often the street junkie can afford only enough to take the edge off his or her "jones" (withdrawal) temporarily.

After I stopped going back and forth to New York, the street coping cost a lot more, too. . . . I might not have been shooting as much as I was [before] but I was spending a hell of a lot more money.

Under these conditions, the street junkie lives from one "fix" to the next, often unable to maintain the most rudimentary routine. Personal hygiene and regular eating habits may be abandoned as the addict desperately seeks to scrape up enough money for his or her next shot. Not uncommonly, the street junkie will also abandon normal hustling routine, impulsively committing crimes that "happen" along, often in response to a felt need for dope due to withdrawal sickness. This happened to "Little Italy" who, after cutting himself off from his wholesale connection, turned to robberies to support his use. Lacking experience

and technique, Little Italy staged these robberies largely on impulse:

I know today, I can say that if you don't have a plan you're gonna fuck up, man. . . . Now those robberies weren't no plan. They didn't fit in nowhere . . . just by the spur of the moment, you know what I mean? I had to find something to take that place so that income would stand off properly, 'cause I didn't have a plan or didn't know anything about robbery.

The street junkie type might be precipitated by structural factors as well, particularly those that lead to the relinquishing of conventional roles. Some addicts, for example, report that "things started going downhill" after a divorce or the death of a loved one. Another common precipitator is the loss of conventional jobs. It is not uncommon for the stabilized junkie to be working a part-time job in addition to carrying out regular hustling activities. If an employer learns about drug use, the addict may well be fired. The emerging street junkie loses not only income, but also the high degree of daily routine provided by conventional employment. Desperately seeking to maintain even the most meager level of consumption to keep the edge off his or her "jones," the street junkie is forced to take chances that would ordinarily be quite unthinkable. Moreover, under those conditions, the street junkie becomes difficult to live with and family relationships become strained or perhaps even severed. Again, the addict faces a state of anomie, but this time without the luxury of easy access to drugs. This "down and out junkie" who has by now probably lost all semblance of respect and perhaps has been disenfranchised even by peers has little stake in the moral order of the subculture. The addict in these desperate straits is likely to consider the possibility of "beating" friends or even family members for money to cop a street bag. Sylvia, a black woman in her twenties, explains:

After the money is coming in like that . . . and it gets to the point where their habit is worked up like that, then they might do anything [if they're cut off] and they have to find a new way of making their money. They might do anything.

Rosenbaum (1981a: 60) also reflects the dynamics of this situation for the female addict when she writes:

The woman addict's self-respect is at least temporarily damaged when, due to the fluidity of the money-stratification system, she finds herself down and out, with no way to earn money legally. It is at this point that she becomes temporarily unscrupulous and may rip off a personal friend, even family. It is important to note that this unscrupulousness is *temporary* and that in some way, most addicts become unscrupulous in some form, at some point in their careers. [emphasis in the original].

Similarly, the street junkie who has lost access to a stable network of coping connections is the most likely candidate to turn on a stranger (perhaps even a novice), introducing him or her to a dealer acquaintance in return for a bag of dope. Such a situation almost always creates a dilemma for the street junkie. Rose had recently lost her coping connection and had to rely on a young neophyte to cop for her. Unfortunately for Rose, the young girl was not willing to make the purchase without compensation in drugs. Rose explained how she attempted to resolve her ethical dilemma:

I gave her the least amount I figured she'd feel with a whole bunch of water so it would look like she had a lot It wasn't that I was trying to cheat her . . . it's just that I didn't want her to really get into it.

Lacking a daily routine and with drugs difficult to obtain, the street junkie must take more chances than would otherwise be the case. Under these circumstances addicts will engage in criminal hustles at which they are not adept. Unless their life circumstances change, arrest is virtually

inevitable. Although not universally the case, it is the street junkie who typically encounters the criminal justice system. As Fiddle (1967: 12-13) has observed,

The police see junkies at their worst. They see them under the spur of need or pseudo-need . . . they see them violating even their own negative codes. The police rarely see the addict engaging in a purely voluntary humane act.

Moreover, that population of addicts most available to the media as well as to researchers are those who have been apprehended. For this reason, the image of the heroin addict generally available to the public is that of the stereotyped "street junkie." It is important to recognize, however, that the street junkie represents but one phase in the addict's career. For substantial portions of their careers, most addicts lead relatively stable, though fast-paced, lives. Far from being an inevitable result of the physiological dynamics of heroin use, the behavior of the street junkie, with all of its stereotyped ethical compromises, only emerges in response to the career contingencies that limit accessibility and disrupt established patterns of behavior.

CONCLUSIONS

Drug using careers, like other careers, are subject to external constraints that affect the maintenance of ideal normative standards.² The testimony of the addicts I interviewed points to the importance of the career contingencies of drug availability and life structure in affecting their lifestyles. Most important, although most addicts generally proceed from a period of occasional use to more extensive stabilized use and often to the stereotyped down and out street junkie, these career contingencies are themselves affected by numerous factors in the addict's social environment so as to preclude a simple linear career model. Due to circumstances entirely beyond his or her control, for example, the stabilized junkie may lose access to a main

connection, thereby reducing availability. If this unfortunate situation coincides with tighter law enforcement, forcing abandonment of usual hustling routine, the addict finds himself or herself in the situation of the street junkie without the benefit of "free wheeling." Similarly, it is not uncommon for free-wheeling junkies to reorganize their lives sufficiently by engaging in new or previous hustling role activities, thereby assuming once again the status of the stabilized junkie.

Regardless of the specific turns that an individual's drug using career may take, however, ethical conduct in the heroin subculture is dependent upon and sustained by the constraints and opportunities imposed by drug availability and life structure. That addict ethics are situated in this manner is hardly remarkable; the situational character of social behavior has long been documented in other contexts as well, particularly in the areas of racial attitudes and behavior (Deutscher, 1966; Kutner et al., 1952; LaPiere, 1934; Linn, 1965), classroom behavior (Freeman and Ataov, 1960; Henry, 1959), and drinking behavior (Warriner, 1958), among others. Nevertheless, unlike individuals in these other contexts who fail to adhere to their stated principles, the failure of heroin addicts consistently to maintain ethical integrity is commonly understood to be evidence for a lack of any normative sensitivity whatsoever.

The testimony of the individuals reported here would suggest otherwise. These hard-core addicts readily articulated their ethical standards, often in a most forceful manner. Moreover, even as they failed to maintain their ethical standards behaviorally, addicts acknowledged and asserted the legitimacy of the very norms they violated. Many like "Joy," expressed deep regret at their behavior during these desperate times:

I felt bad . . . doing the things I was doing . . . I didn't want to take nobody's check that I know [they] only get once a month and they probably got kids—and I know they did have kids or else they wouldn't be on welfare.

At other times these addicts used various sorts of excuses and rationalizations to mitigate or neutralize their culpability (see Sykes and Matza, 1957), as in Belle's emphasis on the deleterious effect of methamphetamines on her behavior. Then, too, some addicts attempted to lessen the impact of their indiscretion by pointing to the even more serious violations of actual or hypothetical peers. As one female addict put it, "There's things I've done that I've been ashamed of . . . but there's things that . . . I know I could have done that I didn't do."

In short, the credibility of the system of ethics embraced by street addicts cannot be measured by absolute behavioral conformity any more than the credibility of business ethics can be assessed in terms of the absolute absence of fraud. As Meier (1981: 14) reminds us once again, "because norms identify behavior that ought or ought not to occur, behavior may (and often does) depart from norms." The legitimacy of these street ethics is rather established by the addict's reaction to their violation. The regrets expressed, and the very necessity of offering excuses, rationalizations, and moral comparisons, all acknowledge the legitimacy of those norms that have been breached. Through these sorts of statements and reactions, then, addicts honor and reaffirm their own indigenous standards of conduct, even in pointing to and acknowledging their violation on particular occasions. In this way addict subculture is sustained and preserved in much the same way that interactional order, as Goffman (1967) reminds us, is sustained and preserved by displays of embarrassment at moments of incompetence performance.

NOTES

1. One of the respondents used methamphetamine heavily but heroin only marginally. This respondent was especially insightful, however, and is included in the final sample because of her close association with the heroin subculture.

2. Such career contingencies are not, of course, limited to drug-using careers. Career contingencies have been discussed in relation to the fate of idealism in medical school (Becker and Geer, 1958); in nursing school (Psathas, 1968); and in dental school (Morris and Sherlock, 1971). Similarly, Cressey (1953) has discussed those external contingencies that are conducive to embezzlement among otherwise respectable businessmen. More generally, Lofland (1969) has specified a number of external conditions affecting the direction of deviant careers.

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