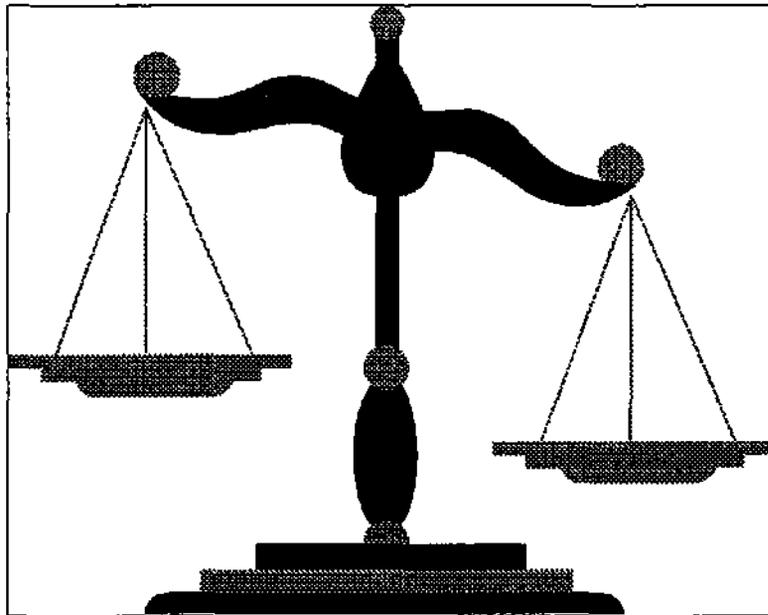


# JOLIET POLICE DEPARTMENT

Schools Are For Education Project



Project: BLACK TIGER

KARATE STUDIO

Ofc. Tab JENSEN

Partnership is the Basis for Problem-Solving

**1. ABSTRACT:** BLACK TIGER KARATE STUDIO  
Ofc. Tab Jensen  
Joliet, Illinois Police Department

**Scanning:** Groups of people hanging around Studio<sub>r</sub> located within four blocks of elementary school, causing disturbances; neighbors complain about being approached to buy raffle tickets; parents complain about staff "altering students<sup>1</sup> minds."

**Analysis:** Black Tiger is found to be illegally selling raffle tickets; several people are rumoured to be sleeping and/or living at the Studio; students and parents complain of beatings by Studio staff for "disrespect" or not selling enough raffle tickets.

**Response:**

- Jensen contacts Attorney General's Office who, having no current or pending record of Studio as registered non-profit, agree to investigate;
- Officers begin to issue compliance citations to Black Tiger staff and students selling raffle tickets;
- Jensen contacts City Building Inspections who conduct assessment of Black Tiger Studios and temporarily close down premises;
- Jensen meets with Proprietor's probation officer and verifies that Proprietor is registered in Illinois as a sex offender and is not allowed unsupervised contact with children;
- Jensen contacts County Sheriff's Office, who discover an outstanding warrant against Proprietor for domestic battery.

**Assessment:** Studio temporarily closed by City; property owner moves to evict Studio and bring property into compliance; Proprietor and staff arrested on weapons charges; Proprietor incarcerated.

2. DESCRIPTION: BLACK TIGER KARATE STUDIO  
**Ofc. Tab Jensen**  
**Joliet, Illinois Police Department**

**A. Scanning**

The City's SAFE {Schools Are for Education} Areas are centered upon elementary and junior high schools and include a four-to-six block radius surrounding each school. Since the fall of 1995, with the help of COPS Universal Hiring funds, Joliet had permanently assigned one officer each - including Ofc. Tab Jensen - to ten problem-ridden SAFE Areas. In the fall of 1996, the Black Tiger Karate Studio was identified as a problem in the Cunningham SAFE Area.

The Black Tiger Studio was on the edge of the Cunningham SAFE Area and, although Ofc. Jensen had always kept an eye on the juveniles who frequented the Studio, the only complaints the neighbors ever had concerned the large number of people that "hung out" around the Studio late at night. When a concerned parent called complaining that the Studio was forcing her son to sell raffle tickets and "altering his mind", however, Jensen began to focus more closely on Studio activities.

After talking with other officers, Area residents, students and students' parents, Jensen became convinced that the Studio was more than just a place where juveniles "hung out." In addition to being noisy and disruptive late at night, the Studio was reputedly selling raffle tickets without a permit/ forcing students to work there without being paid, and allowing people to sleep at the

Studio. When Jensen spoke to the Studio's Proprietor about his concerns, the Proprietor claimed the Studio was a non-profit organization but agreed to suspend the sale of raffle tickets because the Studio did not have a fundraising permit. The Proprietor also agreed to "look into" the large groups hanging around the Studio late at night but denied that anyone was sleeping there. However, because the Studio was in such close proximity to the elementary school, because Area parents and neighbors were concerned, and because Studio activities appeared to disproportionately impact upon juveniles, Ofc. Jensen continued to gather information despite the reassurances of the Proprietor.

## **B. Analysis**

Teams of officers assigned to fourteen neighborhoods and ten school-based neighborhoods throughout the City receive detailed incident analyses on a monthly basis. And, although the Black Tiger Studio had been in existence for almost five years, the Studio had not appeared on monthly "problem address" reports (three calls or more within a month). Ofc. Jensen therefore requested a year-to-date report of incidents at the Studio which revealed sporadic disorder-based complaints from neighbors. Jensen then spoke with other Area residents who confirmed that they had been approached by Studio staff and students selling raffle tickets. Further, Studio neighbors believed that up to seven people were sleeping or living at the Studio.

Parallel to Ofc. Jensen's search of the Department's incident database, stepped-up observation of the Studio and interviews with individual Area residents, Jensen attempted to investigate the Studio's business license and non-profit status. To this end, Jensen first contacted the State Attorney General's Office to see if the Studio was registered as a non-profit corporation, who gave Jensen an address to which complaints about businesses and organizations could be forwarded and directed him to contact the Secretary of State's Office for Non-Profit Corporations. Jensen also spoke with the City's Neighborhood Services Division about inspecting the Studio to see if anyone was living there in violation of the Studio's business license and/or if there were any other health or structural violations.

In his research into recent incidents occurring at the Studio, Jensen discovered that two subjects had been arrested at the Studio for disorderly conduct. Jensen further discovered that one of the juvenile arrestees had been released to the custody of the Proprietor of the Studio, who stated that the juvenile would be staying at the Studio "for a few days." Jensen immediately re-interviewed the Proprietor of the Studio who denied that anyone was sleeping or living on the premises. The Proprietor also showed Jensen permits for fundraising but, in contradiction of both his former statements and the fundraising permits, the Proprietor stated that the Studio's lawyer was still "working on" the Studio's application for non-profit status.

Subsequent to his second interview with the Studio's Proprietor, Jensen asked to address the Area's Neighborhood Watch group regarding the Studio. Again, Area residents complained about members of the Karate Studio being loud and disruptive, and soliciting for donations. Although Area residents resented the disorder caused by the Studio and were somewhat intimidated by Studio staff and students, it was also clear that there was a great deal of concern regarding the potentially dangerous attraction the Studio held for other Area juveniles.

Due to the complaints and concern expressed by Area residents, the apparent lack of impact that increased police surveillance and police contact had on the Studio's activities, the inability of City inspectors to gain permission to inspect the property, and increasingly evasive and unsatisfactory contacts with the Proprietor, Ofc. Jensen began to plan a more aggressive response to the Black Tiger Karate Studio problem.

### **C. Response**

First, Jensen alerted other officers in the area to the Black Tiger problem and asked them to contact him if they saw any Studio staff or members soliciting for donations. Jensen requested that officers be sure to issue a citation if Studio personnel were found soliciting donations without a permit. Jensen also asked officers and neighborhood residents to immediately notify him if they saw the juvenile who had previously been released to the Proprietor's custody.

Second, Jensen continued to urge the State Attorney General's Office to aggressively pursue their investigation of the Studio.

Third, Jensen attempted to discover who actually owned the property occupied by the Studio. When Jensen contacted the listed owner, the owner stated that he had sold the property. The former owner did, however, agree to have the person to whom he sold the property contact Jensen. Jensen then independently discovered the identity of the present owner, who agreed to cooperate with the City's efforts to inspect and, if necessary, shut down the Studio.

Fourth, and most importantly, Jensen decided to investigate the Studio Proprietor's background. Jensen quickly discovered that the Proprietor was registered with the State of Illinois as a sex offender. Further, the Proprietor was currently on probation for the offense of Indecent Liberties with a Child; an offense committed in another state. Jensen immediately sought out and contacted the Proprietor's probation officer. The probation officer told Jensen that, as a condition of Proprietor's probation, Proprietor was not allowed to be around children without another adult present. The probation officer further told Jensen that he had recently performed a visit at *Proprietor's home* and had found no violations at that time. The probation officer, however, was not previously aware of the allegations regarding juveniles "hanging out" and sleeping or living at the Studio and promised to inform Jensen if he find out anything else about the situation.

Shortly thereafter, the juvenile who had been remanded to the custody of the Proprietor was spotted and Ofc. Jensen took the juvenile, as a Minor Requiring Authority Intervention, into Department offices for an interview. The juvenile said that he was living at the Studio because his parents had kicked him out of the house. The juvenile stated that other people were also staying at the Studio and that the Proprietor often stayed at the Studio all night with the juvenile. The juvenile acknowledged being forced to sell raffle tickets for the Studio but stated that he is allowed to keep half of the proceeds from raffle ticket sales. Finally, the juvenile told Jensen that he had been beaten by a Studio instructor for "disrespect" and that Studio staff had forced him to file a false police report concerning the battery. Following his interview with the juvenile, Ofc. Jensen contacted the juvenile's probation officer and the Department of Child and Family Services, to whom the juvenile was remanded into custody.

At approximately the same time as his interview with the aforementioned juvenile, Ofc. Jensen received a message from another parent who stated that her son was attending the Studio and that the Proprietor claimed to be an undercover Joliet Police Officer.

Probation re-contacted Jensen regarding another probationer who claimed to be living at the Studio. The probationer confirmed that there were usually about seven people living at the Studio, including yet another probationer with an outstanding warrant.

City inspectors inspected the Studio the next day, and temporarily closed the Studio for 18 different code violations. Jensen again spoke with the owner of the property, who agreed to ask the Studio to leave the building. Jensen also spoke to personnel at the Attorney General's Office who agreed to present a request for permanently closing down the Studio to their supervisors.

In his continuing investigation into the Proprietor's background, Jensen discovered that the Proprietor was wanted for domestic battery by the County Sheriff. Jensen contacted the Sheriff and the State's Attorney's Office, who promised to work with Jensen regarding the Proprietor.

Throughout this period, Jensen and other officers had received reports of Studio staff selling raffle tickets,- at times, far from the Studio and the surrounding neighborhood. These ticket sellers were issued citations requiring them to pay \$75 for soliciting without a permit.

Finally, a citizen who had heard about Ofc. Jensen's concern over the situation at the Studio, informed Jensen that Studio staff allegedly carried guns, and that the Proprietor had a gun and dynamite at his home. The informant was willing to sign an anonymous affidavit to support a search warrant. Jensen contacted the State's Attorney's Office, a search warrant was prepared and a judge issued the warrant that same day.

#### **D. Assessment**

When the warrant was executed, the Proprietor was found to have explosive powder and an explosive device at his home. The Proprietor was arrested and charged with multiple counts of unlawful possession of weapons. Jensen contacted the Proprietor's probation officer, probation was revoked and the Proprietor was incarcerated. One other Studio staff member was also arrested and charged with multiple weapons-related felonies and an earlier battery (against the juvenile).

The owner of the property evicted the Studio and has remedied the building's code violations. Although no other businesses have moved into the building, the building is secure and it is no longer the site of the disorder that annoyed and intimidated Area residents. Most importantly, the Studio does not attract local juveniles looking for recreational opportunities into the company of felons and a convicted child molester.

It has now been a year since the Studio was closed and staff were incarcerated. As often happens, the Proprietor and staff member have been released from custody. However, the criminal justice system (police, sheriff, probation, state's attorney's office), the State's administrative apparatus (Attorney General's Office, Secretary of State), the school system (through their SAFE officers) and local residents are now keeping a close eye on the activities of these individuals. The offenders have not re-opened their former business, nor have they attempted to open any new

business. Complaints have been received from citizens, however, regarding the Proprietor. Ofc. Jensen is always informed of these complaints, which usually consist of the Proprietor's disorderly or suspicious behavior, and Jensen follows up with the Proprietor and/or his probation officer.

### 3. AGENCY AND OFFICER INFORMATION

1. The Black Tiger Karate Studio problem-solving project was initiated by Ofc. Tab Jensen, one of ten SAFE (Schools Are For Education) officers who are on long-term assignment to a junior high or elementary school and its surrounding neighborhood. Ofc. Jensen was primarily assisted by other patrol officers and sergeants.

2. The entire Joliet Police Department received problem-oriented policing training from Police Executive Research Forum staff in the fall and winter of 1991-92. Since that time, problem-solving and community internship have each become three-week segments in our eighteen-week recruit field training. Individual officers are given the opportunity to attend both general and specific (e.g., landlord/tenant, prostitution) problem-solving seminars, and a 12-hour problem-oriented policing refresher course is offered annually.

3. Although the Department has no established incentives for officers who engage in problem-solving, officers who do undertake projects are allowed some "flex" time to network with other agencies, attend meetings, etc. It is also well-known in the Department that an officer's problem-solving activity is a significant factor when that officer is being considered for special assignments and promotions. And, finally, officers who submit exceptional problem-solving projects to national

competitions (such as the Goldstein Award) are promised an expense-paid trip to the awards ceremonies (such as the Annual POP Conference).

4. Because the Department has been practicing problem-solving in the field since 1991, Ofc. Jensen had the experience of many other officers and successful projects to draw upon.

5. By undertaking a thorough analysis of the problem, and utilizing resources outside of the Department, Ofc. Jensen identified the Proprietor as a convicted child molester. Jensen's contacts with probation also led to another probationer disclosing that there were seven people living at the Studio, which moved City Inspections to step up their efforts to inspect the building which, in turn, led to the closure of the Studio.

6. Ofc. Jensen, and the other officers who assisted him, undertook this project as part of their regular duties and no additional Department resources were required.

7. Project Contact Person:

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