

What is said and what is unsaid
Stanford Semfest - 15 March 2002
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1. including or omitting details in a description will influence, sometimes quite significantly, the way the description is understood in context

- 2.1. some people came in the middle of the night and dug up my garden and carried it away
- 2.2. a family of Cambodian immigrants came in the middle of the night etc. etc.

3. American newspapers used to identify perpetrators of crimes by race/ethnicity only when the perps were other than “white”; a house style that omitted any identifier for “white” miscreants highlighted crimes by non-“white” people while backgrounding those by “whites”

4. police blotter items are reported in the Palo Alto Daily News (PADN), from material made available by local police forces (from Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Atherton, and Los Altos): “Items shown are from the daily police logs of the cities shown below. Times given are when police received the calls.” - Tuesday 13 November 2001 through Saturday 5 January 2002 (no PADN published on Sundays or holidays)

5. complaint items vs. arrest items

- 5.1. 11/19/01: Mountain View, Friday. “**San Antonio Center, 5:27 p.m.:** Report taken of an embezzlement at Funcoland.”
- 5.2. 11/19/01: Mountain View, Saturday. “**1000 block Grant Road, 8:19 p.m.:** Person arrested for petty theft at Marshalls department store.”

6.1 non-located persons

- a. 12/14/01: Los Altos, Yesterday: “**San Antonio Road and Edith Avenue, 2:17 a.m.:** DUI arrest.” [Driving Under the Influence]
- b. 12/28/01: Palo Alto, Yesterday: “**500 block University Avenue, 2:17 p.m.:** Someone was disturbing the peace at Hair Society Salon. No arrests were made.”
- c. 1/2/02: Los Altos, Friday: “**100 block Alvarado Ave., 11:00 p.m.:** Arrest made for drunkenness.”
- d. 1/2/02: Menlo Park, Friday: “**200 block El Camino Real, 9:14 p.m.:** A person tried to commit suicide by slitting their wrists. The person was taken to Stanford Hospital emergency room.”

6.2. located persons

- a. 11/28/01: Palo Alto, Monday: “**100 block El Camino Real, 7:26 p.m.:** A Mission Viejo man was arrested for grand theft shoplifting at Nordstrom.”
- b. 12/13/01: Menlo Park, Tuesday: “**900 block Marsh Road, 10:23 p.m.:** “A 47-year-old Menlo Park woman with two dogs was seen smashing windows of a business. When police caught up to her, she tried to sic her dogs on police and was arrested on charges of vandalism and resisting arrest. Police believe she may have psychological problems.” [narrative, with interpretation; **self-location** - a person accosted by police in L reported as being from L]

- c. 12/31/01: Atherton, Friday: “**Bay Road and 11th Avenue, Redwood City, 1:23 a.m.:** An underage Milpitas man was arrested for driving under the influence.”
 - d. 1/2/02: Atherton, Sunday: “**El Camino Real and Maple Avenue, 2:38 a.m.:** A 32-year-old East Palo Alto man arrested for DUI.”
7. “drunk in public”/“drunkenness” items: no located persons
- 7.1. citations/complaints: Mountain View 11, Palo Alto 4, Los Altos 3, East Palo Alto 1
 - 7.2. Atherton: 3 complaints, no citations/arrests:
 - a. 12/11/01, Sunday: “**Caltrain station, 1:12 p.m.:** A 33-year-old man was lying down near the bike racks, intoxicated.”
 - b. 12/13/01, Tuesday: “**Middlefield Road and Oak Grove Avenue, 8:49 p.m.:** A man riding his bicycle under the influence fell off the bike and was unresponsive.”
 - c. 1/3/02, Monday: “**Rittenhouse Avenue, 11:36 a.m.:** A transient man was reported as being drunk in public. He said he was just enjoying the sun and left.”
8. miscellaneous offenses with located persons
- 8.1. Palo Alto: shoplifting (11/27, “an Alameda woman”; 11/28, “a Mission Viejo man”; 12/11, “an East Palo Alto woman”), trespassing (12/13, “a Palo Alto man” - self-location)
 - 8.2. Menlo Park: vandalism, resisting arrest (12/13, “a 47-year-old Menlo Park woman” - self-location)
 - 8.3. Mountain View: forgery (12/31, “a Santa Clara woman”)
 - 8.4. Atherton: loaded firearm in vehicle (1/2, “a 20-year-old East Palo Alto man”)
9. only two self-locations (in 8.1 and 8.2)
10. where the action is for located persons: DUI, in Atherton and Menlo Park
- 10.1. Atherton: 10 located persons (2 each East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, San Jose; 1 each Milpitas, South San Francisco, Turlock, Massachusetts) - and more since 1/5 (Idaho man on 2/11) - vs. 4 non-located persons
 - 10.2. Menlo Park: 4 located persons (2 East Palo Alto, 1 each Redwood City and Vallejo), vs. 2 non-located persons
 - 10.3. Mountain View: no located persons, 4 non-located
 - 10.4. Palo Alto: no located persons, 7 non-located
 - 10.5. Los Altos: no located persons, 14 non-located
 - 10.6. East Palo Alto: no DUI citations
11. highlighting DUI offenders in Atherton (and Menlo Park) as outsiders
12. “suspicious person/vehicle/circumstances” reports: very frequent in Atherton
- 12.1. 11/17/01: “Suspicious person asked resident for an interview for a communication class.”
 - 12.2. 11/21/01: “Someone in a 1999 white Subaru hatchback was watching passers-by.”
 - 12.3. 11/24/01: “Suspicious man walking toward El Camino Real out of a driveway.”
 - 12.4. 12/1/01: “8:40 a.m.: Suspicious person staring at a house.”
 - 12.5. 12/3/01: “A man with scruffy facial hair and wearing a flannel shirt was seen in the area. Caller is afraid he may be trying to break into someone’s property. Police checked the area.”

- 12.6. 12/8/01: "4:56 p.m.: Suspicious person driving up to someone's driveway."
- 12.7. 12/12/01: "A UPS truck had been parked in a vacant lot for the past hour with no driver inside. The driver was out helping another UPS truck with deliveries."
- 12.8. 12/14/01: "5:02 p.m.: Suspicious white van driving slowly through neighborhood."
- 12.9. 12/18/01: "4:52 p.m.: A suspicious man was walking around carrying a balloon."
- 12.10. 12/21/01: "12:55 a.m.: Suspicious vehicle."
[same day in PADN, Los Altos: 6 "suspicious vehicle" reports, 2 "suspicious person" reports]
- 12.11. 12/22/01: "3:51 p.m.: Suspicious circumstances of someone leaning against a fence and squatting."
- 12.12. 2/11/02: "9:10 p.m.: A white Ford van drove by a house earlier and took pictures of the residence. The perpetrator may have taken the pictures to place on greeting cards with nasty words of board members and CEOs' houses."
[other occasions: people sitting in cars or trucks - usually contractors eating lunch]

13. effect of so many suspicious person/vehicle/circumstances reports: constant threat (from outsiders)

14. bare-bones vs. narrative reporting (with interpretation): events reported 12/10/01

- 14.1. East Palo Alto: "Burglary." "Burglary." "Convicted sex offender registered." "Burglary." "Assault."
- 14.2. Los Altos: "Unlicensed driver." "Suspicious circumstances."
- 14.3. Menlo Park: "Noninjury accident." "Abandoned vehicle towed." "Suspended license." "Noninjury accident."
- 14.4. Atherton:
 - a. "Juveniles were reported to be under the influence of alcohol."
 - b. "Juveniles from outside the area were reportedly walking in a threatening manner. Police settled the situation at the scene."
 - c. "Someone dumped the contents of a student's backpack out."
 - d. "The victim of an earlier assault might have had a broken nose and swelling. The victim was transported to Kaiser-Redwood City by a roommate. Police filed a report."
 - e. "A dog named Maggie was found. Owner [finder] contacted dog's owner."
 - f. "An odor of electrical fire was reported. The odor was caused by the interior transformer, and police assisted fire crews."
 - g. "Someone drove over a lawn in an apparent act of vandalism."

15. effect of narrative reporting: vividness of offenses, whether small or large

16. it's always something, and in Atherton it gets in the PADN

- 16.1. 11/13/01: "Greenhouse door open. Police checked it out."
- 16.2. 11/13/01: "House was toilet papered."
- 16.3. 11/14/01: "An officer checked on two juveniles standing at the side of the road. They were waiting for a ride."
- 16.4. 11/28/01: "5:58 p.m.: A possible solicitor knocked on the door."
- 16.5. 12/3/01: "11:46 a.m.: A ski mask was found near a pool area. It does not belong to anyone in the house or any members of the construction crew."

- 16.6. 12/5/01: "7:33 a.m.: Resident requested police officer presence while he picked up his dog at his ex-wife's house."
- 16.7. 12/5/01: "A fence fell on a resident's property."
- 16.8. 12/6/01: "A bicyclist was stopped and warned about not wearing a helmet."
- 16.9. 12/6/01: "6:23 p.m.: A father and son got into a verbal altercation."
- 16.10. 12/11/01: "11:41 a.m.: An unknown type of bird was caught in the vent above a kitchen."
- 16.11. 12/14/01: "9:06 a.m.: A loose black Chow."
- 16.12. 12/18/01: "Someone wanted police to check if she had left her Christmas tree lights on."
- 16.13. 12/19/01: "4:42 p.m.: Riders in a black limousine were seen urinating in bushes. Police were unable to locate the limo."
- 16.14. 12/21/01: "2:23 p.m.: Two juveniles were trying to tie someone to a telephone pole."
- 16.15. 12/21/01: "Female refusing to eat for three days was taken to see a doctor."
[plus many barking dog complaints and many complaints about construction work out of hours]

17. effect of reporting so many police calls: police presence made very visible

18. serious occurrences: theft, burglary, fraud, traffic accidents, vandalism, fallen trees, etc. (as well as DUI)

19. another effect of reporting so many police calls, minor as well as serious: minor occurrences gain significance by occurrence along with serious ones