

The jargon of policemen is very colorful and bizarre. Few professionals are required to be familiar with so much slang, cant, argot, double-talk, nay-words, macaronics and general gobbledegook as are policemen (see "They Talk Their Language," SPRING 3100, March 1955).

Although keeping the peace and enforcing the law are the common objectives of all police organizations, no two law enforcement groups use the same "shop talk" in accomplishing these. The blue-coated tongue spits off a surprising mumbo-jumbo of its own—so surprising, in fact, that some of it is not recognizable to other police officers.

With a view of bringing police fraternities closer together, SPRING 3100 wrote to 75 police departments in the United States and throughout the world requesting their equivalent terms for New York City police slang words.

The results more than lived up to expectations.

While only 29 selected slang-equivalents were requested for comparative purposes, several correspondents mailed very detailed compilations of police cant. For instance, the Scottish Police College in Clackmannanshire submitted over 175 slang terms from Scotland; the New Jersey State Police Academy contributed 33 underworld words

in the field of narcotics; the Police College at Ryton-on-Dunsmore, England, chipped in with 50 instances of unusual police terms, and the City of London Police topped all with 240 entries of criminal slang.

COMMENTS

Despite differences in slang, police officers throughout the world read and understand the problems of law enforcement agencies other than their own. SPRING 3100 is one of the publications that enables information to be disseminated; it gives the picture of police work in New York City. The following comment from the Leicestershire and Rutland Constabulary, England indicates the importance of such understanding, despite slang and jargon, among police officers.

"SPRING 3100 is an education to us. One reads so much fiction and sees so many films that it is difficult for us to visualize the actual conditions of work in your Force. The type of work of your Force and that of our own cannot properly be compared. As we read your magazine we are staggered at that with which you have to contend. But it is obvious that our fundamental aims are the same."

The POLYGLOT of POLICEMEN



To illustrate how catchy police cant can be, consider the manner in which Sgt. Peregrine Pickle, 21st Pct., recently turned out his first platoon after a year's leave-of-absence spent in inspecting other police departments:

"Men, the new Skipper's walking the black hat, so shape up for cold buckwheats. Stay out of the howf and groin the box of tricks in the nick. Rozzers will pair with old sweats to help snatch the scats and snowbirds.

"O'Toole, since the clotch-sleuths are batting zero and the beaks are raising hell, ditch the five-point and blues. Put a chime on the cat chat and take a peek at the boo-boo boys.

"Crusher, try to salt that short story writer on 2nd Street. The griff is he chums with a peterman and a cannon who pulls a bogus pieplate.

"Johnson, you've got prairie 25 out in the toolies.

"Mascarelli, stop making like Sam Spade. Click and beaver at the see, or I'll have blue-eyes make out a fizzer.

"Lupowitz, since Valinsky scapas to the 48th, you'll have to do a straight eight on the Mary Anne. The stiffs await, forthwith.

"The rest of you will do Dan O'Learys. Spit on your espantoons, since I've heard the teddy boys roll tonight. Scratch Willie Subtle who was on the trot. He's come the lot and is doing 13 clean shirts.

"Remember, glimmericks, the skipper's on the prowl, so let's keep a tidy bobby 'ole."

TRANSLATION:

"Men, the new captain will make the rounds on the late tour, so remain on your posts. Don't take any personals and ring the station house regularly. Probationary policemen will be assigned to veterans to assist in handling psychos and drug addicts.

"O'Toole, since the detectives are not making vice pinches and the magistrates getting impatient, get into plainclothes and check the brothels, and watch for marihuana users.

"Crusher, see if you can book that forger on 2nd Street. Information is he hangs around with a safecracker and pickpocket who flashes a phony police badge.

"Johnson, you've pulled the spical post, No. 25.

"Mascarelli, stop looking like an amateur. Salute the sergeant while on post, or I'll have the clerical man make out a complaint.

"Lupowitz, since Valinsky transferred to the 48th, you'll have your hands full as station house attendant. A couple of D.O.A.'s are in the back waiting for the medical examiner.

"The rest of you will pound heavy beats. Warm up your nightsticks, since I heard the young punks have a gang fight brewing tonight. Cancel Willie Subtle on the alarms. He confessed and was sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment. Remember, the captain's walking, so let's stick by the rules and regulations."



"Crusher, try to salt that short story writer on 2nd St. . . .



"Johnson, you've pulled the prairie 25 out in the toolies. . . .

POLICE CANT

Continued

The commandant of the Scottish Police College adds this note: "I think it is an interesting fact that there are so many variants of each term according to the district concerned and this is something of which I was not aware until this collection was made."

Apparently the Town of Greece (Rochester, N. Y.) police force is slang-free. They write: "This is a department of seventeen men, and has been in existence for 25 years, and we call a complaint a complaint; nightstick, a nightstick". Well, that's calling a Sam Spade a Sam Spade.

ABNORMAL PERSON. *Psycho.* Spook (1); head case (6); round the bend (5); crackers (6); scat (3); half (4); lilywaver (8); mesjogge (7).

ARREST. *Pinch.* Bust (9); sneeze (10); feel his collar (3); claim (11); habeas grabbus (8); kitchen (12).

BATON. *Nightstick.* Espantoon (13); bat (14); truncheon (15); staff (4); rapper (8); radiergummi (12); knupel (7).

CALL SERGEANT ON SWITCHBOARD. *Ring.* Signal 100 (16); pull (10); blow (17); tinkle (2); 10-22 the station (18); birl (6).

HOUSE CLERK. *124-man.* Wheel (13); pencil (19); wallah (5); office bod (17); blue eye (2); paper tearer (11).

CHESTY COP. *Hairy.* Moxie (19); hard-rock (13); strong as acid (20); spunky (17); bollo (6); bulle (12).

DRUG ADDICT. *Hophead.* Snowbird (11); junkie (19); snuiver (7); kokser (12).

FAVOR. *Contract.* Tee-hee (4); perk (6); bludge (5); boler (12).

FORGER. *Paperhanger.* Short-story writer (14); wrangler (17); scratchman (9); versierder (12).

IMPRISONMENT. *Canned.* Joyed (4); salted (4); brigged (19); nicked (3);

up the line (2); bucketted (18); stewed (22); in de lic (7).

12-8 AM TOUR. *Late One.* Owl (9); the black hat (4); dogwatch (23); nacht schuit (7); witchwatch (9).

OFFICIAL COMPLAINT. *Rip, Dido.* Little One. Fizzer (17); squawk (19); greensheet (24); a 34 (3); steamer (6).

PATROL ONE SIDE OF STREET. *One-arm post.* Lopsider (16); straight-away (13).

PATROLMAN. *Cop.* Bull. John Pounder (4); foot slogger (17); P.C. (3); patroleo (10); slop (6); glimmerik (7); flic (25).

PERSON FOUND DEAD. *DOA.* Stiff (19); ripe one (26); B.I.D. (3); peiger (7); braxie (6).

PHOTOGRAPHED. *Mugged.* Finished (1); tin typed (14); plaatis gemarkt (7).

PICKPOCKET. *Cannon.* Light finger (19); dip (13); slicky (21); fingers (14); whizzer (3); lichter (7); P.P. (6).

POLICE STATION. *House.* Night club (19); salt mine (26); John (27); bull-house (21); bobby 'ole (22); kit bazaar (7); krachwinde (12); cop shop (6).

POLICEMAN'S BREAST SHIELD. *Potsy.* tin. Pie Plate (19); 5-point (21); buzzer (14); flasher (28).

PROBATIONARY PATROLMAN. *Rookie.* Softie (2); fish (14); rozzer, ham-mertail (4); sprog (6); red burn (5).

RECOGNITION BY SUPERIOR. *See.* Brownie (16); O.K. (10).

SALUTE. *Slam, highball.* Throw one (13); lifter (21); one-two (14); tossed him off one (17); whipped him up one (22); chuck one up

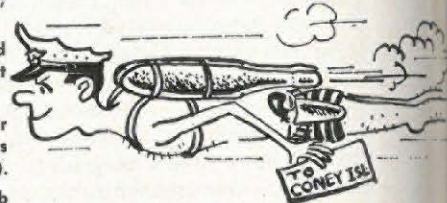
(2); heaven (11); five-throw (5); tabee (7).

STATION HOUSE ATTENDANT. *Broom.* Flunkie (13); Mrs. Mop (17); Door-man (27); Mopper Upper (4); Fatigue Man (5).

SWITCHBOARD. *Boxes.* Buttons (21); speechbox (14); box o' tricks (17); burley (6).

SHELTER FROM ELEMENTS. *Coop.* heave. Swing the lead (2); bunk (16); strawbox (11); lay up (17); howf (6).

TRAVEL TO ANOTHER DISTRICT. *Fly.* Lam (9); scapas (2); sneak (14); jag (17); hops it (22); do a bunk (6); do a mike (5).



VETERAN POLICEMAN. *Hairbag.* Old Sweat (2); old un (22); grumpy (4); krumper (12); aftandse (7).

UNIFORM. *Bag.* Blues (19); monkey suit (16); formal (14); gear (2); kit (3); pakkie (7); Syd's sport suit (5); kluff (12).

WORK EVERY MINUTE OF TOUR. *Do a Dan O'Leary.* Buckwheats (24); bender (17); 100 percentor (16); a goer (2); slog (4); conscie (5).

It will be entertaining speculation to see how long it takes the local 81 precincts to absorb some new gen-darmese.



A GLOSSARY OF NEW YORK CITY POLICE ARGOT

SPRING 3100 presents herewith what is believed to be the first extensive glossary of police slang as used by N. Y. C. bluecoats. The glossary

is somewhat selective, for obvious reasons. However, members of the department are invited to contribute bonafide slang terms not already listed in the interest of developing a definitive lexicon for historical purposes.

A-MEN. Policemen of Auto Squad.
ABORTION. Gun made up from parts of many guns.
APPLE. Also sucker, mark, Mr. Bates, A victim.
BAG. Uniform.
BAG OPENER. Also mollbuzzer, A pickpocket who preys on women's handbags.
BANG. A shot of narcotic.
BATON. A nightstick.
BATTING AVERAGE. Arrest and summons activity.
BEAN. One dollar.
BEEF. A victim reports crime to the police.
BENT CAR, SLIGHTLY. Giving impression that a car was once a wreck and rebuilt, but car is actually stolen.
BIG CON. A confidence game with an elaborate build-up.
BITE. Type of con game in which perpetrator secures a loan from victim.



BLAST A WEED. Light up marijuana.
BLAST PARTY. Get-together of marijuana smokers.
BLOTTER. The official log of a station house.
BLOW A SCORE. Fail in an attempted larceny (pickpocket or con game).
BLOW JOB. Safecracker's work.
BLOW OFF. Get rid of a sucker after a score.
BLOW UP. Also money-making machine. A con game in which the victim believes a gadget can reproduce genuine currency.
BOODLE. Pieces of newspaper tied up in handkerchief to represent a bundle of money.
BOOST, ON THE. Shoplifting.

BOOSTER. Shoplifter.
BOTTLE BABY. A derelict; Bowery bum.
BOXES. Telephone switchboard in station house.
BRAINS. Detectives.
BREAD. Money.
BROOM. Also mop. Attendant in station house.
BUFFALO, YOUNG. Rookie.
BURN. A suspicious look.
BURN A POKE. When con man cheats or stalls out a share of his score.
BUST-OUT. High point of a con game when the swindle occurs.
BUSTED. Also sneezed, dropped, fell, nailed, collared, bagged. Arrested.
BUTTON. Detective's shield.
C. Cocaine.
"C" NOTE. \$100 bill.
CAKLE BLADDER. A fragile device broken in mouth or on body to simulate bleeding.
CAN. A cell.



CANNON. A Pickpocket.
CARRY. Any stretcher case (person aided).
CATCH. Assignment of a detective to the complaint-receiving desk.
C.C. CASE. Potter's Field case (City Cemetery).
CHANGE CAR. Stolen car with motor number removed; new numbers stamped in, car resold.
CHEMICAL. Pathologist's examination of body (missing person).
CHIPPYING. A narcotics beginner (not a mainliner).
CHIRP. A signal by pickpocket to stall; let victim out of frame.
CHOPPER. Also eggbeater, copter. Police helicopter.
CHOPPER COPPERS. Aviation Bureau police.

CLEAN. No stolen property or weapons.
CLIMBED ON HIS TAIL. Placed pursuing vehicle in clocking position (motorcycle police).
CLIP THE MARK. Successful picking of a pocket or stealing money in con game.
CLUNKER. Also beat, cruller. A gun in very poor condition.
COLD POKE. An empty wallet.
COLD SHORT. An empty bus (pickpocket).
COLD TURKEY. Withdrawal from narcotic habit.
CON GAME. A scheme to separate a victim from his money, in which the victim displays larceny.
CONTRACT. Any favor one policeman does for another.
CONVINCER. That phase of a con game in which the victim's confidence is completely attained.
COOL OUT. Pacify a con game victim after fleeing.
COOP. Also heave. A policeman's shelter from the elements.
COWBOY. A motorist who flagrantly violates traffic laws.
CRIB. Also pad. A place where narcotics are used.
CUT IN. To break into a conversation a thief is having with intended victim.
CUT UP THE SCORE. Divide the proceeds of a larceny.
CUTIE. Motorist who speeds with eye constantly on rear mirror.
DEWEY. Two dollars.
DIDO. Also small one. Charges and specifications against a member of the Department.
DO A DAN O'LEARY. To work every minute of a tour of duty.
DRAG. Also pigeon drop. A pocketbook dropped as bait in a con game.
DROPPED DEAD. Action of motorist's auto when motorcycle officer is spied in rear of car.
DUCATS. Tickets.
DUKE. Hand.
DUKE MAN. A stall who blocks view as pickpocket removes wallet.
DUMP IT IN. Rapid acceleration of a motorcycle.

END. A piece of the take (pickpocket).

FAN JOB. Burglary via a transom.

FANNING. Touching victim's pockets to locate wallet or "scratch".

FIFTY-SIX. Time off between swings of duty.

FIGURES. Numbers racket.

FILL IN. To join a team of thieves.

FIXER. A strike or special post.

FLIM FLAM. A con game.

FLOP. A sleeping drunk.

FLYING. Duty which carried policeman to another command.

FLYBOY. A division or boro captain or lieutenant.

FORTHWITH. An order to report immediately.

FRAME. Placing a victim in a position to have his pockets picked.

FRONT THE BREAD. Pay before getting narcotics.

GAG. Sentence to an indefinite term in prison.

GOLD BRICK, THE. A confidence game.

GOULASH. Also tip house. A hangout for pickpockets and con men.

GRIFF. People.

GRIFF SENSE. Knowing the psychological moment to pick a pocket.

GROUNDER. Easy arrest.

H. Heroin.



HAIRBAG. A veteran policeman.

HAIRY. A chesty cop, usually young.

HANGER BINGER. A thief who picks a type of ladies' handbag.

HEIST. A hold-up.

HEAVY FOOT. Speedy motorist.

HIGH. Under influence of narcotics.

HOLE. Subway.

HOMBRE. Narcotic detective.

HOOK. Also tool, wire mechanic. One who actually removes a wallet (pickpocket).

HOOKED. The narcotic habit.

HOOP SELLER. Selling cheap jewelry as genuine, especially rings.

HORSE. Heroin.

HOT ONE. Excessively speeding auto.

HOT SHORT. A full bus (good for pickpockets).

HUSTLE. To be on the street looking for a victim.

HYPE. A short change artist.

INSURANCE JOB. Stripping car of parts and buying car from insurance company for low price, then replacing parts in car; thus obtaining title.

IRON. Key for place being burglarized.

IRON'S GETTING HOT. Keyman in casing the place.

JACKET. To stop a suspect.

JUG. A bank.

JUICE. Whiskey.

JUICEHEAD. One who drinks whiskey.

JUMPER. Person who jumps or attempts to jump from bridge or building.

JUNKIE. Narcotic seller.

KEISTER. Suitcase.

KICK A HABIT. Narcotic recuperation.

KING KONG. Wood alcohol which is imbibed.



KISS THE DOG. Also front a sucker. Face victim while picking his pocket.

KITE. To raise the amount of a check.

LAMSTER. One wanted by the police.

LEND-LEASE JOB. A rented gun.

LICENSE. Also patsy, tin. Policeman's shield.

LILY WHITE TIP. A crowd consisting of white people.

LOOKOUT, THE. Watcher for police while confederate steals.

LUGGER. Also roper. The first con man to approach a victim.

LUSH WORKER. Also flop worker. Picks pockets of drunks.

MADE. To get a promotion.

MACK MAN. A pimp.

MAKE. To recognize (pickpocket).

MAN, THE. Narcotic detective.

MARK. Also sucker. Mr. Bates. apple. A victim of con men.

MECHANIC. Stolen car number changer (Auto Sqd.) One who removes a wallet (pickpocket).

MEET. A. An appointment.

MICHIGAN BANK ROLL. Also phony sting. Phony roll of money.

MOLLBUZZER. See bag opener. A pickpocket who preys on women's handbags.

MOONER. A mentally disturbed person who is activated during a full moon.

MOTOR JOB. Buys a wreck with good motor, steals another car, puts motor in a stolen frame, sells for rebuilt car.

MR. BATES. A victim of pickpockets.

MUD. Opium.

MUGGED. Photographed by Police Department.

MULE. Narcotic seller within own group.

MUTT. A young burglar.

OIL. Whiskey.

OLD MAN. Police captain.

OLD ONE-EYE. Auto with one headlight.

ON THE BUTTON. A speeding auto.

ONE-ARM POST. Post on one side of street.

ONE LUNGER. Automatic shotgun that jams after first shot.

PACK IT IN. Enough work for one day.

PAD. Narcotic users' hangout.

PAPER HANDER. Check forger.

PHONEY BALONEY. Felonious assault.

PHONY STING. Phony roll of money.

PICK-UP. An arrest not previously reported to police.

PIT. Inside pocket of man's coat.

PLANT. A large cache of narcotics.

POCKETS. L. & R. side trouser pockets—britch or slide; L. & R. rear trouser pockets—Pratt; side jacket pockets—tail pits or street; women's coat pockets — patch; change pocket—fob.

POKE. Also okus. Wallet.

POP OUT. Wallet sticking out of pocket.

POST. An autopsy.

POT. Marijuana.

POTSY. Also tin. Policeman's shield.

POUND. Five-year sentence. Also, five dollars.

PP. Pickpocket.

PROS. Also prosties. Prostitutes.

PUPS, MAKING. Buying a car and stealing others of same year, make and model, then changing motor and serial numbers to fit purchased car.



PUT HIM IN THE SATCHEL. Issue summons to motorist.

PUT ONE'S PAPERS IN. To retire from the force.

PUT UP. To stall.

REEF. To bring up the lining of a britch pocket.

RIDING. Superior officer cruising in police car.

RIGHT FALL. Also bang up fall. To charge pickpocket with grand larceny.

RIP. A fine imposed for infraction of police regulations.

RIP AND TEAR. To take off a number of touches (victims) in one place.

ROACH. Small marijuana butt.

ROLL. Pick pockets of a sleeping man or drunk.

ROLLER. Also whiz cop. A pickpocket detective.

ROUSTER. Gain the confidence of a drunk and then pick his pocket.

RUMBLE. A youth gang fight. Also, victim becomes suspicious (pickpocket.)

RUN. Radio call for police car.

SATCH. A piece of cotton used in cooking narcotics.

SCARF. To eat.

SCAVENGER. A gun recovered in sewer.

SCHMECK. Narcotics.

SCORE. Also sting, touch. Proceeds of picking pockets.



SCRAMBLE. Immediate take off (Aviation Bureau).

SCRAMBLE EGG JOB. Cannibalizing a stolen car, making it difficult to identify.

SCRATCH. An entry in a memo book. Also, paper money.

SCRATCHMAN. An expert forger.

SEAT TIPPER. One who steals women's handbags in movie houses.

SEE. Recognition from a superior officer.

SEND, THE. A victim is sent to a bank for his money.

SHADE. A confederate standing behind the pickpocket and hiding his hand.

SHADING THE DUKE. Covering the fingers during a pickpocket effort.

SHAKEDOWN. Search a suspicious person.

SHEET. A criminal record.

SHILL. A steerer.

SHOOFLY. A plainclothes superior who watches behavior of other policemen.



SHOOTING GALLERY. A place where a narcotics user can get an injection.

SHORT. An automobile. Also, a bus.

SHORT CON. A confidence game perpetrated in a short time without an elaborate build-up.

SICK. In need of narcotics.

SIDEKICK. Patrolman on adjoining post.

SKELLS. Bowery derelicts.

SKIN HEAD. Person with no hair.

SKIPPER. Police captain.

SLAM. Also, highball. A salute to a superior.

SLAVE. Also, sledge grift. Working people (pickpocket).

SMACK MAN. A coin matcher.

SMOKE. White liquor.

SNEAK. A thief out stealing alone and with the knowledge of his friends.

SNEAKER. A criminal no one can catch.

SNEAKY PETE. Wine.

SNORT. Inhaled narcotics.

SOUND A SUCKER. Kicking a lush

(reclining person) to see if he is awake.

SPIKE. A hypodermic needle.

SPOT. Place where gambling is suspected.

STASH. A large amount of narcotics.

STICK. Stall holding victim.

STICK, HAS THE. Desk duty.

STIFF. Also, shade. Newspaper used by pickpocket to shield action.

STOOL. An underworld informant.

STRIDE. Street.

STRAIGHTEN OUT A SUCKER. A thief returns money to victim to avoid his reporting it to the police.

STUFF. Any narcotic.

STUFF BOY. Also, Murphy man. Type of con man.

SUCKER. Same as mark.

SWINGING. Days off, after completing a set of tours.

SQUEAL. A complaint.

TAIL. Follow.

THAT MAN. A policeman.

THROW OUT ANCHOR. Apply brakes of auto (Motorcycle).

TIN. Also potsy. Policeman's shield.

TIP. Crowd.

TIP HOUSE. Also, goulash. Hangout for pickpockets and con men.

TOG. A jacket or coat used by pickpockets to shield action.

TOOK A DIVE. Have an accident (Motorcycle).

TRACKS. Marks of hypodermic needle.

TRANQUILIZE. To subdue a violent suspect or prisoner.

TROUPE. A group of pickpockets working together.

TWEEZER. Change purse.

UPSIDE DOWN GUN. A gun that can only be fired in an inverted position.

WALKING OUT. Man walks out from home and does not return (Missing Persons).

WEED. Marijuana.

WEED A POKE. Empty a wallet.

WHEEL, ON THE. Motorcycle duty.

WHIP. Lieutenant of detective squad.

WHIZ. The pickpocket profession.

WINO. Person who gets drunk on wine.

WIPE. A handkerchief used by pickpockets.

WIRE. Pickpocket who removes wallet.

WORKING PLANT. A small amount of narcotics.

WORKS. Team of pickpockets.

XMAS TREE. Busy switchboard.

