

**Meet one of the NYPD masterminds driving down
NYC's already historically low crime rates¹
Criminal Justice
Mr. Krieger**

Homework Assignment

1. Read the article below that appeared in the New York *Daily News* on August 27, 2017.
2. Imagine you were in Chief Shea's office at 1 Police Plaza in New York City. The chief said you could ask questions about his work and crime in New York City. What questions would you ask? For homework, *your assignment is write five (5) quality open-ended questions you would ask Chief Shea.* You may type or handwrite your questions. Open-ended questions are questions that cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." The questions should be more complex. You don't need to answer the questions. **Make sure you include indications in your questions providing evidence you read the entire article.**



Chief Dermot Shea sleeps on a cot in his office at Police Headquarters every Wednesday night. The 48-year-old NYPD veteran spends the night at his desk, wading through pages of detailed crime stats and poring over case files before closing his door just before midnight.

About five hours later, he hoists his 6-foot-4 frame off the folding cot and cracks open the door in the cavernous, 14-floor building that will fill by 8 a.m. with scores of borough commanders dressed in crisp blue uniforms. He's ready for the weekly CompStat meeting. "My wife is used to it at this point," he chuckles. So are their three kids, ages 18, 20 and 22.

¹ <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/meet-masterminds-driving-nyc-record-crime-rates-article-1.3444932>

Shea — who rose through the ranks working in narcotics, investigations and plainclothes units in Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx — is officially known as the NYPD’s chief of crime control strategies. But inside 1 Police Plaza, he’s earning a reputation as one of the behind-the-scenes masterminds responsible for driving down already record-low crime levels — “at a time when everyone said it couldn’t get any lower,” he notes.

In the five years since Shea joined crime control strategies, cops have been called to 20% fewer murders citywide, down to 335 last year from 419 in 2012. Shootings dropped 27%, with 998 recorded last year compared to 1,374 in 2012. “We’re completely changing the trajectory of how we police,” he explains. “We’re making fewer arrests, but we’re targeting individuals that are committing the most crimes.”

‘Keeps you up at night’

Shea had been a cop for just three years in 1994 when the NYPD, led by then-Commissioner Bill Bratton, became the first department in the nation to launch CompStat, a revolutionary stat-based system for fighting crime that’s now the norm in big-city departments. Since then, crime in New York City has plummeted 73%. Shea’s job is to nudge it even lower. “We’re not really in a profession where you can pat yourself on the back,” he says.

Shea grew up in Sunnyside, one of five kids in an Irish-American family. His brother, James Shea, retired two years ago from the NYPD as a deputy chief. He remains focused on holding onto New York’s title as the safest big city in America by expanding the NYPD’s trademark method of precision policing in the post stop-and-frisk era while concentrating greater resources in crime-heavy areas.

He points to the opioid crisis as a key policing challenge, and speaks passionately about his aim to drive down gun violence. “I would like to think, before I leave, we make significant progress on how we process guns in New York City,” he says. Cops, he believes, need to be more than a step ahead. They need to be “three blocks ahead and around the corner.” With his eye on that prize, he’s been known to send emails while most other people are sleeping.

“I can count probably four people paralyzed by gunshots in the last month and a half. So it’s hard to sit up and say, ‘You know what, we’re at levels never seen before in New York City,’ which is true. “Well, at the same time you have an 18-year-old kid paralyzed,” he said. “Every one of those incidents keeps you up at night.”

‘A straight shooter’

Blue and red scribbles on his 11th-floor office whiteboard read "fentanyl," "probation," "parole shooters," "sex trafficking" and "gang intel." Papers spread across a table show a link analysis, a confidential web of gangs, weapons, ballistic evidence and mug shots. If Shea had a mantra, it would be balance. “We don’t want to throw a million people into prison,” he explains. “But we definitely don’t want someone with three sealed gun arrests walking the streets.”

A rare glimpse into a three-hour CompStat meeting earlier this month showed Shea putting all his prep to use, questioning commanding officers from Brooklyn North precincts who had been called to the hot seat that week. The leader of one Brooklyn precinct was grilled on why his detectives had dropped the ball, failing to test DNA from a gun. "If I'm wrong, tell me and I'll publicly apologize," Shea barked at the officer. "But I'm not wrong on this."

In a shooting arrest that didn't result in a conviction, Shea demanded more info. "Now he's out? How does he get out with shooting someone in the head? Can you get back to me? I mean, this person is crying to get off the streets." When detectives failed to re-question a convict who was fresh out of an upstate prison because the ex-con claimed he didn't have an address, Shea cried BS. "He's currently on parole and he tells us he's homeless? We talk to parole on this?" Shea asked.

Shea can talk numbers — they've always come easy, he says — but his real power comes from his time on the street. "He's in a position where he's respected for crime stats, but he's walked that beat," said Roy Richter, president of the Captain's Endowment Association. He's even taken his own career lumps, bounced from a post as a Bronx precinct commander to a desk job after clashing with an internal affairs boss over the disciplining of a lieutenant in 2011. Charles Campisi, former head of IAB, declined comment for this story.

Shea instructs the department's 37,000 uniformed cops to think beyond the arrest: Did you get a conviction? Are you communicating with other precincts? Are you in contact with the district attorney from the start? "We have six pieces of evidence here. Maybe we needed eight," he offers by way of explanation. "What good is it if he spends one night in jail?" It's that focus on "intelligence-driven prosecution" that draws kudos from Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance Jr. "Dermot really understands that it's all about the end result, and that if police officers are only focused on clearing cases and not getting convictions, that's going to put them at odds with DA and the communities," Vance told the Daily News.

'Nobody is immune'

The 2015 fatal shooting of Brian Moore, a 25-year-old police officer, changed Shea's thinking about gun convictions. "It struck me: We can't keep having cops put their life on the line, making gun arrest after gun arrest, and nothing happens," he says. Knowing firsthand how difficult it can be to get witnesses to talk in shooting cases, Shea reminds cops to use all new technology at their disposal, including cameras, phones, electronic footprints and DNA testing.

Although Shea is a big-picture thinker, he can also zoom way in, recalling stats, dates and details with Rain Man-like accuracy. He'll remember, for example, the street intersection of a particular shooting, and that the suspect was wearing a gray hoodie and that there was surveillance video from the fire escape. "His understanding of the many complex issues that contribute to crime and disorder, as well as the most effective strategies for dealing with these issues, is as good as it gets in policing today," NYPD Commissioner James O'Neill told The News.

Another uphill battle that keeps Shea tossing and turning in his cot is the opioid epidemic. According to Shea, nearly 1,400 New Yorkers died last year from unintended overdoses. "We have a serious problem, obviously," he said. "Give me plain old robberies, burglaries and shootings any day. This is infinitely difficult ... It could very possibly get worse before it gets better. Nobody is immune."

"I'm not happy with the narcotics structure," he told the officers gathered. "I see people with drug habits," he said. "That is not helping the NYPD or the people of Coney Island. We're arresting crackheads. We arrested the same person four times in a month. " The three-hour meeting was a mix of criticism and praise. "We ask a hell of a lot from people and we realize that," he told the room. "This process is not always pretty and it's not always comfortable. But it works. Don't think you're not appreciated."

'I love catching criminals'

"I think people take for granted the crime declines," says Shea, who does not. Department officials credit Shea with specific policy and procedural changes that have helped chip away at crime: Guns are now routinely swabbed for DNA. The name of every occupant in cars stopped by police are now recorded, providing useful investigative leads if that license plate pops up at a crime scene. Computer systems were overhauled to create efficiencies. The chief also keeps a "multi-hit list," a log of bad actors connected to three or more shootings, and he's made it so that every precinct has access to the intel.

Shea remains realistic, saying the work is relentless and "every day is a battle." So what keeps him at it? A smile washes across his face. "I love catching criminals."

#####

Write or type your questions on a separate sheet of paper.

#####

Write or type your questions on a separate sheet of paper.

#####