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A Durkheimian analysis of Anomie and deviance in the National Football League: an exploratory case study

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A Durkheimian Analysis of Anomie and Deviance in the National Football League: An Exploratory Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine whether Durkheim's concept of anomie applies to National Football League players. This study was an attempt to discover if and why NFL players are more likely to commit deviant acts. Why do these players that seemingly have everything throw their lives away by committing crimes? This study attempts to address these questions by linking Durkheim's classic anomie theory with the deviance in the NFL.

In Durkheim's book, *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893), anomie emerges through society's transition from mechanical to organic solidarity. In this, economic change is too fast for the growth of moral regulation to keep pace with increasing differentiation and specialization. With this, an abnormal or pathological division of labor occurs. Something similar to this is happening in today's NFL. Benedict and Yaeger's (1998) recent study showed that twenty-one percent of the players in the NFL have committed serious crimes. Because of the professionalization and commercialization of American sport, today's professional athletes are suddenly making unbelievable amounts of money. With this instant wealth and power, comes a state of anomie, or an absence, breakdown, confusion, or conflict in these athlete's lives. This, in turn, creates a more likely situation for deviance to occur.

The sample for this study was composed of in-depth interviews and personal conversations with current and former NFL players. The data acquired were used to assess if NFL players, after obtaining wealth and power, fall victim to a state of anomie. These players vividly described the NFL lifestyle and reinforced the very purpose of this study. The results of this study suggest that, indeed, the players of the National Football

League, that let the fame and fortune take over their lives, are more prone to commit deviant acts.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

One need only listen to television or radio media, read the newspaper, or engage in casual conversation to find the topic of sport to be a "common language" for much of America. Sports have become a microcosm of national life (Davies, 1994). Once relatively isolated from national issues, sports in recent decades have lost whatever innocence they might have once enjoyed and moved into the mainstream of national life (Coakley, 2001; Sage, 1998).

Sport, a seemingly trivial pursuit, is important. Sport is a fantasy—a diversion from the realities of work, relationships, and survival. Sport entertains. Why then do we take it so seriously? (Eitzen, 1999; Overman, 1997) First and foremost, sport mirrors the human experience:

> Sport elaborates in its rituals what it means to be human: the play, the risk, the trials the collective impulse to games, the thrill of physicality, the necessity of strategy; defeat, victory, pain, transcendence and, most of all, the certainty that nothing is certain—that everything can change and be changed (Why sports, 1998; p. 3).

Second, sport mirrors society in other profound ways as well. It shares with the larger society the basic elements and expressions of bureaucratization, commercialization, racism, sexism, homophobia, greed, exploitation of the powerless by the powerful, alienation, and ethnocentrism. American sport embodies American values—striving for excellence, winning, individual and team competition, and materialism. Parents want their children to participate in sport because participation

teaches them the basic values of American society and builds character (Eitzen, 1999; Sage, 1998).

Third, sport is compelling because it combines spectacle (there seems to be a universal human social tendency to combine sport and pageantry) with drama (the outcome is not perfectly predictable), excellence (the physically most able compete), and clarity (we know exactly who won, by how much, and in what manner). We also know who lost and why.

Finally, there is the human desire to identify with something greater than oneself. For athletes, this is being part of a team, working and sacrificing together to achieve a common goal. For fans, identifying with a team or a sports hero bonds them with others who share their allegiance; they belong and they have an identity (Eitzen, 1999).

Sport is a pervasive aspect of American society. Participation rates are high. Most children are involved in organized sports at some time in their lives. Sport is the subject of much conversation, reading material, leisure activity, and discretionary spending. Over one-tenth of the *World Almanac* is devoted annually to sport, more than is allotted to politics, business, and science. *USA Today*, the most widely read newspaper in the United States, devotes one-fourth of its space to sport. Even the *Wall Street Journal* has a weekly sports page. Several cable television networks provide twenty-four hour sports coverage. Annually, the most watched television event in the United States is the Super Bowl (Coakley, 2001). The amount of sports betting is staggering, with unknown billions waged legally and illegally (Leonard II, 1998).

Sports fans read the daily sports page with a keen interest in the latest scores, win-loss records, favorite athletes, and possible new college recruits or trades that improve

their beloved professional teams. We know a great deal about sport. We know point spreads, current statistics, play-off probabilities, biographical information about athletes and coaches, and more. As children, many of us learned sports information and memorized incredible amounts of trivia. Moreover, most of us play sports, whether as individuals or on organized teams, throughout much of our lives (Eitzen, 1999; Sage, 1998).

But do we truly understand sport? Can we separate the hype from the reality and the myth from the facts? Do we question the way sport is organized? Why are professional athletes paid millions of dollars? Why do these professional athletes that seemingly have everything commit deviant acts? Why do they assault women, rape, murder, steal, and abuse drugs and alcohol? Unfortunately, many fans and participants alike have a superficial, uncritical attitude that takes much for granted. We need to ask more probing questions about sport.

Although no single event is responsible for the corporatization of American sport, both economic and political factors have contributed to its development. The nature of sports today is the child of monopoly capitalism (Leonard II, 1998; Sage, 1998). Sport began to take on its present appearance in the 1930's, when the economy began to recover from the Depression, and the bureaucratic nature of sport became well entrenched during the early 1950's. In elaborating on these points, Nixon wrote:

> This was a time when those in control of professional sport were forced to confront the dual dilemma of decreasing attendance and the unknown impact of television. In this context, a new sports entrepreneur stepped into the picture, one with less concern for the esthetic aspects of sports and more for sound business practices and the maximization of profits. These organization persons have fundamentally transformed the character of sports (cited in Leonard II, 1998; p. 320).

During the past fifty years, sports has become an industry in American society. Commercial sport is associated with urbanization, industrialization, improvements in transportation and communications technology, the availability of capital resources, and class relations. This growth can be traced back to Emile Durkheim's distinction between two types of unity in society, "mechanical solidarity" and "organic solidarity" (Durkheim, 1893). Durkheim argued that traditional societies are integrated by so-called mechanical solidarity, in which emphasis is placed on the values and cognitive symbols common to the clan or tribe. Individuals and institutions are thus relatively undifferentiated. Modern societies, he claimed, require the development of organic solidarity, in which beliefs and values emphasize individuality, encourage specialist talents in individuals, and the differentiation of activities in institutions (Marshall, 1997). When societies become more complex, or organic, work also becomes more complex and differentiated. In American society, people are no longer as closely tied to one another and social bonds are increasingly impersonal. This means that rules on how people ought to behave with each other break down; thus people do not know what to expect from one another. With this, a state of anomie occurs, a situation in which norms are confused, unclear, or not present (Durkheim, 1893).

According to Durkheim, the sphere of trade and industry is actually in a state of chronic anomie (Durkheim, 1897). Rapid technological developments and the existence of vast, unexploited markets excite the imagination with seemingly limitless possibilities for the accumulation of wealth (Cloward, 1959). As Durkheim said of the producer of goods, "now that he may assume to have almost the entire world as his customer, how

could passions accept their former confinement in the face of such limitless prospects" (Durkheim, 1897; p. 247-257)?

In developing the theory, Durkheim characterized goals in the industrial society, and specified the way in which unlimited aspirations are induced (Cloward, 1959). He spoke of "dispositions...so inbred that society has grown to accept them and is accustomed to think them normal" (Durkheim, 1897; p. 247-257), and he portrayed these inbred dispositions: "It is everlastingly repeated that it is man's nature to be eternally dissatisfied, constantly to advance, without relief or rest, toward an indefinite goal. The longing for infinity is daily represented as a mark of moral distinction" (ibid). And it was precisely these pressures to strive for infinite or receding goals, in Durkheim's view, that generate a breakdown in regulatory norms, for "when there is no other aim but to outstrip constantly the point arrived at, how painful to be thrown back!" (ibid)

Purpose and Significance of the Study

Professional football fits the earlier discussion in every way. From the moment most players sign their first contract, they become instant millionaires and celebrities. They are thrown into the middle of America's spotlight. Whether they like it or not, they become role models for today's youth and heroes for their cities (Currie, 1998).

While this study cannot fully answer the important question of why NFL players who have everything commit deviant acts, it can only begin to recognize the dilemma of deviance in the National Football League. This study is an exploratory look at whether Durkheim's concept of anomie applies to NFL players and the deviance that is seemingly rampant thoughout the league (Macionis, 1997).

This study was conducted during the fall of 2000 and the spring of 2001. Data were collected through the use of intensive interviews and personal conversations with former NFL players. Using Durkheim's anomie theory (Clinard, 1964), a review of the literature, and the personal and perceptual accounts of former NFL players, this study seeks to understand why NFL players who have so much going for them commit devious acts, blow their careers, lose their families, and sometimes end up in jail.

Much controversy has surrounded the deviant off-field behavior of NFL players. This study is important because these players are perceived as heroes. They are put up on a pedestal by today's youth and fans (Currie, 1998). Rather than being stigmatized as are most deviants, these professionals are cheered, idolized, and highly paid because they bring us thrills. Benedict and Yaeger's (1998) study shows that we are not just talking about a few bad apples here when we talk about the players of the National Football League. Their research shows that an astounding twenty-one percent—one in five—of the players in the NFL have been charged with a serious crime. The insular-minded sports industry has been slow to confront both the presence of players who once entering the league are disposed toward violence and the sexually deviant behavior that has become the calling card for a growing number of successful athletes—and this is a serious problem (Benedict, 1997). Why do some of them become criminals, when they have the world in the palm of their hand? This issue needs to be thoughtfully addressed. It is in this spirit that this study seeks to explain a small piece of the puzzle that is the deviance among the players of the National Football League.

Hypothesis

The conceptualization of this study came after many personal conversations with a former NFL player, and also after reading the book *Pros and Cons* (Benedict & Yaeger, 1998). The focus of this study takes an in-depth look at the personal and perceptual accounts of two National Football League players. Along with an extensive literature review and stories of other NFL players told by the respondents, I believe this study can be a stepping block for further research in this area. It is my hypothesis that the sudden wealth and power that NFL players receive as soon as they sign their first contract, leads a significant number of them to commit deviant acts that result from a state of anomie.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Commercialization and Rise of Sport

Since its formative years sport has had a commercial component to its operation (Sage, 1998). As early as 590 BC Greek athletes were financially rewarded for an Olympic victory (Harris, 1964; Slack, 1998). However, in no previous time period have we seen the type of growth in the commercialization of sport that we have seen in the last two decades in America and other parts of the world (Leonard II, 1998). Today, sport is big business and big businesses are heavily involved in sport. Athletes in the major spectator sports are marketable commodities, sports teams are traded on the stock market, sponsorship rights at major events can cost millions of dollars, network television stations pay large fees to broadcast games, and the merchandising and licensing of sporting goods is a major multi-national business (Slack, 1998; Coakley, 2001).

Characteristics of Commercial Sports

Commercial sports are visible parts of many contemporary societies. Their growth is associated with urbanization, industrialization, improvements in transportation and communications technology, the availability of capital resources, and class relations (Coakley, 2001; Leonard II, 1998; Sage, 1998). People's interest in paying to watch sports is encouraged by a quest for excitement in highly organized and controlled societies, a cultural emphasis on individual success, widely available youth sport programs, and extensive media coverage of sports. The recent expansion of commercial sports also has been fueled by sport organizations seeking global markets, as well as transnational corporations using sports as vehicles of global expansion. The global

expansion of commercial sports will continue as long as it serves the interests of transnational corporations (Coakley, 2001).

Commercialization has influenced changes in the structure and goals of certain sports, the orientations of people involved in sports, and the organizations that control sports. Those connected with commercial sports tend to emphasize heroic orientations over aesthetic orientations. Style and dramatic expression impress mass audiences, while fine distinctions in ability often are overlooked, except by those who have deep knowledge about a particular sport. Overall, commercial sports have been packaged as total entertainment experiences for spectators, even spectators who know little about the games they are watching (Coakley, 2001; Sage, 1998).

Commercial sports are unique businesses. Team owners at the top levels of professional sports have worked together to make their leagues into effective entertainment monopolies (Bryjak, 1998; Sage, 1998). Along with event sponsors and promoters, these owners are involved with commercial sports to make money while having fun and establishing good public images for themselves or their corporations. Owners in the major team sports have used monopolistic business practices to keep costs down and revenues up, especially through their collective sale of broadcasting rights to the media. Public support and subsidies, often associated with the construction and operation of stadiums and arenas also have enhanced profits. It is ironic that North American professional sports often are used as models of competition, when, in fact, they have been built through a system of autocratic control and monopolistic organization (Sage, 1998). As Baltimore Ravens team owner Art Modell once said about himself and his fellow owners in the NFL. "We're twenty-eight Republicans who vote socialist"

(Coakley, 2001, pg. 347) What he meant was that NFL owners are conservative individuals and corporations that have eliminated a lot of the free market competition in their sport businesses and have used public money and facilities to increase their wealth and power (Coakley, 2001; Eitzen, 1999; Sage, 1998).

Commercialization has made athletes into entertainers. Athletes generate revenues through their performances. Therefore, issues related to players' rights and the sharing of the revenues generated by their performances have become very important (Sage, 1998). As rights and revenues have increased, so have players' incomes. Media money has been key in this issue (Coakley, 2001).

The Rise of Modern Sport

In 19th-century America, sporting practices were closely related with cultural trends. The economic and cultural transformations provided the infrastructure for the rise of modern commodified sport. In the first few decades of the 19th century, Americans enjoyed essentially the same recreation and sports as they had during the colonial period (Coakley, 2001). But industrial expansion brought about dramatic changes in daily life as the working class accommodated to factory urgencies and difficulties, the long workday, and urban living (Leonard II, 1998; Sage, 1998). As conditions changed from rural to urban population, there was neither the space nor the opportunity to engage in traditional forms of leisure. Urban dwellers, especially the working class (Sage, 1998), turned to watching sports for entertainment, especially horse racing, rowing, prize fighting, footracing, and similar activities. The occasional, informal, and social community form of sport participation diminished as highly organized commercial spectator sports became the structural and cultural principle in the period after the Civil

War, setting the stage for revolutionary developments in leisure pursuits, mass popular sport, and professional sport.

By the latter three decades of the 19th century, expanding industrialization and urbanization, enhanced by the revolutionary transformations in communication, transportation, and other technological advances, provided the framework for the rise of commercial sport (Leonard II, 1998; Eitzen, 1999). No transformation in the recreational scene was more startling than the sudden growth of sports, which diffused from the wealthy and upper classes down to the middle and working classes (Coakley, 2001; Sage, 1998).

In addition to the long-standing interest in horse racing, yachting, and prizefighting, new sports gained popularity. Lawn tennis, croquet, golf, and polo were introduced by the wealthy as games for "polite society." But none of these sports grew as fast as baseball and American football. From an informal children's game in the early 18th century, baseball developed codified rules in the 1840's, and groups of upper-class men organized clubs, taking care to keep out those of the lower social class. The Civil War tended to wipe out this upper-class patronage of the game, and a broad base of popularity existed in 1869 when the first professional baseball team was formed. This was followed in 1876 by the organization of the first major league, and baseball became ingrained as a popular spectator sport—the national pastime—by the end of the century.

American football owed its origins and popularity to higher education (Eitzen, 1999). Intercollegiate athletics began in 1852 with a rowing match between Harvard and Yale, but it was not until the 1870's and 1880's that intercollegiate sports became an established part of higher education and contributed to the enthusiasm for athletic and

sporting diversions (Leonard II, 1998). During this era, football was a sport for the upper classes rather than for the masses because it largely reflected the interests of the college crowd. Nevertheless, the sport developed into a national one by 1900 (Sage, 1998).

Towns and cities were national centers for organizing sports. The wealthy who took up yachting, young ladies of upper and middle class who turned to cycling, and prizefighting enthusiasts who backed their favorite challengers were largely from urban areas (Coakley, 2001). In the cities, better public transportation, a higher standard of living, more available funds for the purchase of sporting goods, and the greater ease with which leagues and teams could be formed all contributed to the rise of commercial sport

One of the ways city dwellers replaced some of the traditional social functions of the village community and the church was through voluntary associations, in which they could interact and form friendships with people of common interests (Overman, 1997). The sport club, as one type of voluntary association, was one of the main ways certain groups established subcommunities within the larger society (Leonard II, 1998; Sage, 1998). Sport clubs were, then, an important catalyst to the growth of organized sport (Sage, 1998).

Some of these urban sport clubs were founded and patronized by ethnic groups—the Scottish Caledonian and the German Turner societies are examples—and others were organized on the basis of social status and patronized by the wealthy commercial, professional, and social elite (Coakley, 2001; Sage, 1998). These latter clubs were the predecessors of country clubs, which began to flourish in the early 1900's. Although men overwhelmingly dominated clubs, these were also in the forefront of providing

expanded sport opportunities for women. There were, of course, a very restricted variety of sports for women—golf, tennis, archery, and croquet (Sage, 1998).

One major purpose of the metropolitan sport clubs was social rather than competitive (Eitzen, 1999), but during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they became a dominating force in amateur sports. The Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and the U.S. Olympic movement were both primarily under the sponsorship of socially elite members of sport clubs (Sage, 1998).

Opportunities for participatory sport and leisure for the growing urban working class were restricted in several ways. Space was at a premium; city buildings closed off open play areas at an alarming pace. Long workweeks left little time for physical recreation. Ideological discourse by religious and capitalist leaders often promoted hostility toward the concept of free time for the working class. Local laws often prevented the playing of sports at certain times (Sage, 1998).

As more and more people became involved in sports, mass production of goods and corporate organization developed in sport just as in other industries. Albert G. Spalding, a former pitcher for the Boston and Chicago baseball clubs formed the first major sporting goods corporation, in 1876. Beginning with baseball equipment, he branched out into various sports, and by the end of the century, the A.G. Spalding and Brothers Company had a visual monopoly in athletic goods. Spalding was the king of the business in the latter years of the century, but department stores also began carrying sporting goods on a large scale in the early 1880's, led by Macy's of New York City. Sears, Roebuck & Co., one of the largest department stores in the latter 19th century,

devoted eighty pages of its 1895 catalog to sporting equipment (Coakley, 2001; Sage, 1998).

The Commercial Imperative in 20th-Century Sport

The prosperous years before World War I and the tumultuous 1920's are considered the takeoff years in the rise of commercial sport. The growth of the city and the rising standard of living were important social forces that combined with numerous other conditions to promote the expansion of organized sport at an unprecedented rate. Shorter working hours and higher wages resulted in discretionary time and money for leisure pursuits, one form of which was sport (Sage, 1998).

Commercial spectator sports became some of the most engrossing of all social interests. By the 1920's, it was a bandwagon around which rallied business and transportation interests, students and alumni, advertising and amusement industries, and the mass media. The 1920's are still looked upon by some as sport's golden age. A number of America's most famous athletes were at the height of their careers during those years: Babe Ruth in baseball; Knute Rockne in college football; Jack Dempsey in boxing; Bill Tilden in tennis; and Bobby Jones in golf.

From the 1920's onward, the objective character of modern sport is its existence as a commodity (Coakley, 2001; Leonard II, 1998; Sage, 1998). That is, it is made by wage labor, and its purpose is exchange value, thus uniting it with almost everything else in capitalism. Two major trends have characterized recent commercial sport development: the phenomenal expansion of amateur and professional spectator sports and the boom in participatory sports (Sage, 1998).

Youth sport, high school sport, and college programs are the backbone of amateur sport. Although these programs are all classified as amateur, they are closely tied to the spread and penetration of capital production, and they have all grown at an astounding pace in recent years (Coakley, 2001). Baseball and football were once about the only sports sponsored for kids, but there are now more than twenty-five organized youth sport programs, and it is possible for children as young as age six to win national championships. And high school and collegiate programs once limited to a handful of sports for males only have expanded to twelve to fifteen sports for both males and females (Sage, 1998).

Participatory sport, the second major trend of the past generation has been the product of increased leisure and income and of a concerned awareness of inactive lifestyles and related health problems. National polls report that approximately seven in ten American adults engage in some form of exercise or sport each week. It is estimated that fifty-six million people exercise walk, sixty-one million people swim, forty-seven million bicycle, almost twenty-three million play golf, and forty million bowl (Eitzen, 1999; Sage, 1998). Other sports have their devotees as well. Perhaps the most remarkable is the running boom that has swept the nation during the past two decades. It is estimated that twenty million to twenty-two million participate in this activity regularly (Sage, 1998).

The growth of sport participation is also closely linked to the commodified world of goods and services (Eitzen, 1999). Equipment, facilities, and various services are provided for participants by sport industries as diverse as sporting goods manufacturers and conditioning spas. Participatory sports have been penetrated by diverse and

aggressive businesses whose primary goal is selling their products and generating profits, and they have been successful. Approximately $104 billion is spent annually in leisure and participant sports (Leonard II, 1998). This commercialization of participatory sport is one aspect of the wider consumer culture, structured in accordance with the priorities of capitalist interests that promote and profit from it (Sage, 1998).

Professional Team Sports as an Industry

The professional sport industry has been one of the most successful growth industries in recent decades (Coakley, 2001; Eitzen, 1999). Professional team sports comprise a commercial industry with a commanding place in contemporary American life. They dominate significant portions of our lives through radio, print, television, and just daily conversation. Following the fortunes and misfortunes of one's favorite teams is one of the most popular forms of leisure and entertainment for many Americans. Seventeen million people attend National Football League games each year, and seventy-one million attend Major League Baseball games; the National Hockey League has averaged sixteen million in recent years and the National Basketball Association, nineteen million (Sage, 1998).

But television is the medium through which most people are directly involved with professional sports. Up to forty hours of professional team sports are transmitted to home television sets per week by the major networks, and hundreds of additional hours are provided by cable networks and satellite dishes spread across the country. Some of the most popular programs are professional sport events—the Super Bowl, the World Series, the Stanley Cup playoffs, and the NBA Finals. The Super Bowl is usually the highest rated single television program each year (Sage, 1998).

Professional athletes and coaches are some of the best known celebrities in the United States, and many people, young and old admire them as role models. Becoming a professional athlete is something to which millions of young boys and girls aspire because pro athletes are viewed as society's heroes by many.

The industry of professional team sports is a very powerful force in the modern American economy. The overall logic of professional sports is grounded in the principle of buying and selling goods, services, and labor. The premise of capital accumulation is the foundation on which this industry is built: professional team ownership is privatized, and team owners want to make money. In many ways, professional team sports reflect, but also promote and legitimize, the material and ideological foundations of capitalism in American social and economic life. Thus, the sport industry is both an economic and an ideological force (Sage, 1998).

Competition within this industry, though present, is primarily against other forms of popular entertainment. In effect, competition among team owners within a league is intentionally muted so that franchises within a professional league do not compete directly against one another. Professional team sport leagues and team owners want a minimum of government interference, while at the same time they lobby for and receive unique local and national government protections of their controlled competition with one another (Eitzen, 1999).

In understanding the professional team sport industry, it is important to recognize that it is a business—a component of the economic processes of production and consumption. Professional sport franchises are incorporated enterprises whose major purpose is the accumulation of profits. A sport corporation like the New York Yankees

or the Cleveland Browns is as real a business as General Motors, Exxon, or Warner Brothers, and the profit motive that drives the automobile industry is the same profit motive driving professional sports, the products in the case being sporting events. In owning and controlling the means of athletic production, team owners, commissioners, and league organizers represent the interests of the dominant class, through acting as agents of it as well as belonging to it (Coakley, 2001; Eitzen, 1999; Sage, 1998).

Conclusion

In summary, commercial sports grow and prosper best in urban, industrial societies with relatively efficient transportation and communications systems, combined with a standard of living that allows people the time and money to play and watch sports. Class relations are involved in the process through which sports have become commercialized. Spectator interest is grounded in a combination of a quest for excitement, ideologies emphasizing success, the existence of youth sport programs, and media coverage that introduces people to the rules of sports and the athletes who play them. Sport organizations and powerful transnational corporations have fostered the global expansion of commercial sports that can be marketed profitably (Coakley, 2001; Eitzen, 1999; Sage, 1998). This expansion will continue into the foreseeable future as corporations continue to brand athletes, teams, events, and sport places (Coakley, 2001).

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The theoretical perspective used in this study was developed from selected components of anomie theory (Durkheim, 1893; Merton, 1968; Passas & Agnew, 1997; Ritzer, 1996). Emile Durkheim introduced the concept of anomie in his book *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893). He used the term anomie to describe a condition of deregulation that was occurring in French society. Anomie theory focuses on a breakdown in the social regulation of societal and individual conduct and argues that this breakdown creates pressure for societal and individual deviance. This pressure stems from the inability of individuals to satisfy their desires through legitimate channels (Durkheim, 1893 & 1897; Passas & Agnew, 1997).

Emile Durkheim's Conception of Anomie

Durkheim's *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893) was concerned with the problem of how a society with a high degree of social differentiation, such as France in his day, was able to maintain a sufficient degree of social cohesion. The concept of a "division of labor" in a society (Durkheim, 1893) contributed greatly to our understanding of social differentiation. He maintained that an increasingly complex division of labor would make social relationships so unstable that society could only be held together by some external mechanism or form of social control such as the state (Durkheim, 1893).

Types of Unity in Society

In assessing this theoretical problem, Durkheim (1893) distinguished between two types of unity in a society, "mechanical solidarity" of the simpler societies and "organic solidarity" of the contemporary, more complex societies, as found in Western Europe. Organic solidarity was a natural consequence of the complementary nature of people's relationships in a society having an extensive division of labor, based on specialization of function and resulting differences among individuals. It was essential, however, that extensive and prolonged contacts between various groups in a society emerge in order to achieve a degree of organic solidarity. One would associate this type of society with industrialization and the increasing urbanization of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In undifferentiated societies characterized by mechanical solidarity, a single "collective conscience" (Durkheim, 1893) based on likeness, common interests, and feelings directs all individuals. Such societies were more rural and agricultural in nature. Durkheim believed that in the more differentiated societies, where the division of labor and organic solidarity prevail, the collective conscience diminishes and individual differences are encouraged (ibid).

Anomie: The Concept

Underlying these developments, Durkheim distinguished three abnormal forms of the division of labor, in connection with which he introduced the concept of anomie. One such form was the forced division of labor, in which the distribution of occupations does not follow the distribution of talent. For example, where in another type of situation the division of labor does not produce solidarity because the functional activity of each worker is insufficient. In this situation the worker does not develop a sense of

participation in a common enterprise. The third and predominant abnormal condition, however, he termed "anomic" (Durkheim, 1893). This signified a lack of integration or mutual adjustment of functions growing out of industrial crises, conflicts between labor and capital, and the increasing specialization of science. Anomie arises because the division of labor fails to produce sufficiently effective contacts between its members and adequate regulation of social relationships. In other words, as worker specialization increases and economic changes continue, people feel "without regulation;" life itself has changed and appears to be in constant change (Durkheim, 1893).

The concept of anomie played a fairly small part in Durkheim's total theory of the division of labor. Yet, the concept has had tremendous explanatory power in examining the effects of social change on modern societies (Giddens, 1971). For Durkheim, it was simply a description of one of the abnormal forms, which resulted in imperfect organic solidarity. It was in his classic study of suicide (1897), that the concept of anomie took on its importance in Durkheim's theoretical presentation, but in a considerably revised form. In his earlier work, he had briefly alluded to the possible relation of rates of suicide to anomie. In *Suicide* (1897), he made his case for the explanatory role of anomie (Clinard, 1964).

Anomie and Suicide

Government data from the French government were available to Durkheim in formulating his idea of the relation of anomie to suicide. From statistical data available to him it seemed clear that the great variations in the rate of suicide were associated with the business cycle. However, while the rate of suicide during an economic depression might appear easy to explain, the increase of suicide during periods of unusual prosperity

was a much more difficult problem. Durkheim explained both sets of facts as the result of large numbers of people suddenly thrown out of adjustment with their typical ways of life, sudden economic prosperity being as disastrous as sudden loss. In both cases, there is a sense of confusion and people become disoriented. Under these conditions, most people no longer feel that they are getting anywhere with reference to what they desire (Durkheim, 1897). This important insight, that the rate of social change, and not its direction, was responsible for currents of anomie, set the tone for years of research concerning social change and the effects of anomie (Giddens, 1971; Ritzer, 1996).

Parsons (1937) pointed out that sudden prosperity, with a consequent increase in suicide, results in a situation where "a sense of security, of progress toward ends depends not only on adequate command over means, but on a clear definition of the ends themselves" (p. 335). When a considerable number of people achieve sudden prosperity, which they had thought impossible to achieve, they tend no longer to believe in the impossibility of anything. Thus, the breakdown of controls over human desires in a society and of socially approved norms and standards, particularly when the change is abrupt, gives rise to situations which may lead to suicide. It was this type of suicide that Durkheim termed "anomic suicide." He showed that there was a high rate of such suicides among those who are wealthy. Sudden upward changes in the standard of living put norms in flux. Such situations become the functional equivalents of depressions, in which the regulatory functions of the collective order break down (Durkheim, 1897).

The Collective, not the Individual

To Durkheim, suicide in general, as well as its various forms, was not an individual phenomenon but was related to certain features of the social organization

(Durkheim, 1897). This is, no doubt, one of Durkheim's greatest contributions to sociology. The features that were included were the degree of control or regulation in a society, the amount of group unity, and the strength of ties binding persons together (Durkheim, 1897). A unified and well-regulated society diminishes both egoistic and anomic currents according to Durkheim (1897). Such "social facts" as Durkheim referred to them, are to be explained with reference to society and not with reference to the individual. As Durkheim stated, "Society is not only something attracting the sentiments and activities of individuals with unequal force. It is also a power controlling them. There is a relation between the way this regulative action is performed and the social suicide rate" (Durkheim, 1897; p. 241). Durkheim's ability to see the social power of the group helped to establish sociology as a separate science, which could contribute to the study of human social behavior (Ritzer, 1996).

Suicides arising from a situation of anomie were, therefore, products of the failure of social restraints on what might be termed overweening or arrogant ambitions. As Durkheim (1897) put it, "human activity naturally aspires beyond assignable limits and sets itself unattainable goals" (p. 247-248). This idea of the nature of man, while questionable, reflected the prevailing view of the time that man was filled with certain innate desires which needed to be fulfilled, and that society either restrained or encouraged them. Man's natural needs must be regulated by the moral needs defined and regulated by the collective order (Durkheim, 1897).

For Durkheim, anomie is a social state that results from an inability of society (conscience collective) to hold in check naturally boundless human aspirations and demands. The society is temporarily not in a position to exercise control and set limits

when it is disrupted, either by a severe crisis or by desirable, but sudden, transformations (Marks, 1974). A state of deregulation or anomie then follows, and it is only enhanced by the fact that passions are less disciplined precisely when the times require a stricter discipline. Put another way, Durkheim says that because individuals by nature wish to have more and more, the breakdown of the regulatory system sets free exaggerated aspirations; "needs and appetites are normal only when restrained," he wrote (Durkheim, 1928; p. 211). Anomie, therefore, makes for a disjunction between ends and the available legitimate means. So, extravagant or unrealistic aspirations are thought to be a consequence of an anomic breakdown (Adler & Laufer, 1995; Abrahamson, 1980).

Durkheim suggested that in the context of French society at the turn of the nineteenth century, the rapid industrial growth, combined with a less speedy growth of forces that could regulate it, was a source of anomie. Among many anomic characteristics (consequences of anomie), he pointed to greed, competitiveness, status-seeking, limitless aspirations, and emphasis on consumption and pleasure that ensued from the state of anomie (Durkheim, 1897; Lukes, 1977).

According to Durkheim, all healthy societies set limits on the goals that individuals pursue. These limits are set so individuals have a reasonable chance of achieving their goals: those individuals with greater social resources have higher limits (Passas & Agnew, 1997; Marks, 1974). Such limits make people, "contented with their lot while stimulating them moderately to improve it" (Durkheim, 1897; p. 250). Under certain conditions, however, societies may lose their ability to regulate individual goals. When this happens, goals become unlimited or at least unattainable. This occurs because individuals are inherently unable to set limits on their desires. The needs of non-human

animals are naturally limited: they simply need enough to satisfy their physical requirements. Once satisfied, they do not want any more. Most human needs, however, are not strongly tied to the biological body (Passas & Agnew, 1997). In humans, "a more awakened reflection suggests better conditions, seemingly desirable ends craving fulfillment" (Durkheim, 1897; p. 247). But according to Durkheim, "nothing appears in man's organic nor in his psychological constitution which sets a limit to" these desires (Durkheim, 1897; p. 249). People will restrain their desires only in response "to a limit they recognize as just," which means that this limit must come from "an authority which they respect" (ibid). That authority is society or, "one of its organs" (Durkheim, 1897; p. 248). When society fails to play this role, goals become unlimited or unattainable (Marks, 1974). As Durkhiem states, "to pursue a goal which is by definition unattainable is to condemn oneself to a state of perpetual unhappiness" (ibid).

Durkheim describes several situations in which societies are unable to regulate individual goals adequately. The first situation occurs during periods of economic crisis. Many individuals are suddenly, "cast into a lower state than their previous one" (Durkheim, 1897; p. 252). As such, they must lower their desires (Agnew, 1980). "But society cannot adjust them instantaneously to this new life and teach them to practice the increased self-repression to which they are unaccustomed" (ibid). Consequently, they are unable to achieve their limited goals. The second situation occurs during periods of economic boom. During such booms, the standard by which goals are regulated becomes obsolete (Marks, 1974). A new standard, taking account of the "abrupt growth in power and wealth" must be imposed (Durkheim, 1897; p. 253). But such a standard cannot be imposed immediately, and so there is no restraint on aspirations for a period of time

(Willis, 1982). "The limits are unknown between the possible and the impossible, what is just and unjust, legitimate claims and hopes and those which are immoderate" (Durkheim, 1897; p. 253). Aspirations increase in the absence of societal regulation. The prosperous are "no longer resigned to their former lot" (ibid), and the jealousy aroused by their good fortune prompts others to increase their aspirations—particularly in the context of normative deregulation (Agnew & Passas, 1997; Marks, 1974; Willis, 1982).

In the third situation, Durkheim argues that anomie has recently become a chronic state in one sphere of life—industry and trade. He argues that economic activity is now largely free of all regulation, including regulation by religion, government, and occupational groups (McCloskey, 1976). Economic prosperity has become the ultimate end, and, "appetites thus excited have become freed of any limiting authority....restraint seems sort of sacrilege" (Durkheim, 1897; p. 255). "From top to bottom of the ladder, greed is aroused without knowing where to find ultimate foothold. Nothing can calm it, since its goal is far beyond all it can attain" (Durkheim, 1897; p. 256). In his discussion of the economic sphere, Durkhiem suggests that heightened aspirations not only are a result of the absence of societal restraint but are also positively encouraged (Marks, 1974). "These dispositions are so inbred that society has grown to accept them and is accustomed to think them normal. It is everlastingly repeated that it is man's nature to be extremely dissatisfied, constantly to advance, without relief or rest, toward an infinite goal. The longing for infinity is daily represented as a mark of moral distinction....The doctrine of the most ruthless and swift progress has become an article of faith" (Durkheim, 1897; p. 257). Finally, Durkheim speaks of conjugal anomie, noting that

marriage functions as a regulator of sexual relations—both physical and emotional (Agnew & Passas, 1997).

For the student of the history of ideas, there is an important connection to be noted in Durkheim's work between erotic luxury and economic excess. This connection was frequently made in a France suffering from a profound reaction to the economic boom and bust of the Second Empire. In his novel *The Kill* (*La Curee,* published first in 1871) Zola provided this account of the inflation in its earlier and then later stages (Simon & Gagnon, 1976):

> Men's enervated minds turned towards pleasure and speculation. Those who had money brought it forth from its hiding-place, and those who had none sought for forgotten treasures in every nook and cranny. And underneath the turmoil there ran a subdued quiver, a nascent of five-franc pieces, of women's rippling laughter, and yet faint clatter of plate and murmur of kisses. In the midst of the great silence, the absolute peace of the new reign of order, arose every kind of attractive rumour, of golden and voluptuous promise....From the very beginning Aristide Saccard felt the advent of this rising tide of speculation, whose spume was in the end to cover the whole of Paris. He watched its progress with profound attention. He found himself in the very midst of the hot rain of crown-pieces that fell thickly on to the city roofs (Zola, 1963, p. 56).

> Meanwhile the fortune of the Saccards seemed to be at its zenith. It blazed in the midst of Paris like a colossal bonfire. This was the moment when the eager division of the hounds' fee filled a corner of the forest with the yelping of the pack, the cracking of whips, the flaring of torches. The appetites let loose were satisfied at last, in the shamelessness of triumph, amid the sound of crumbling districts and fortunes built up in six months. The town became a sheer orgy of gold and women. Vice, coming from ahigh, flowed through the gutters, spread out over the ornamental waters, shot up in the fountains of the public gardens to fall down again upon the roofs in a fine, penetrating rain. And at nighttime, when one crossed the bridges, it seemed as though the Seine drew along with it, through the sleeping city, the refuse of the town, crumbs fallen from the tables, bows of lace left on couches, false hair forgotten in cabs, banknotes slipped out of bodices, all that brutality of desire and the immediate satisfaction of an instinct flung into the street bruised and sullied. Then, amid the feverish sleep of Paris, and even better than during its breathless quest in broad daylight, one felt the unsettling of the brain, the golden and voluptuous nightmare of a city madly enamoured of its gold and its flesh (Zola, 1963; p. 120).

Durkheim's debt to this overheated and enriched literary style is evident in this passage dealing with sexual anomie (Simon & Gagnon, 1976):

> The lot of the unmarried man is different. As he has the right to form attachment wherever inclination leads him, he aspires to everything and is satisfied with nothing. This morbid desire for the infinite which everywhere accompanies anomy may as readily assail this as any other part of our consciousness; it very often assumes a sexual form which was described by Musset. When one is no longer checked, one becomes unable to check one's self. Beyond experienced pleasures one senses and desires others; if one happens almost to have exhausted the range of what is possible, one dreams of the impossible; one thirsts for the nonexistent. How can the feelings not be exacerbated by such unending pursuit? For them to reach that state, one need not even have infinitely multiplied the experiences of love and lived the life of Don Juan. The humdrum existence of the ordinary bachelor suffices. New hopes constantly awake, only to be deceived, leaving a trail of weariness and disillusionment behind them. How can desire, then, become fixed, being uncertain that it can retain what it attracts; for anomy is twofold. Just as the person makes no definitive gift to himself, he has definitive title to nothing. The uncertainty of the future plus his own indeterminateness, therefore, condemns him to constant change (Durkheim, 1897; p. 271).

Today most sociologists would say that what Durkheim referred to as anomie can be otherwise termed a state of normlessness (Adler & Laufer, 1995). This condition arises when disruption of the collective order allows peoples' aspirations to rise beyond all possibility of their fulfillment. If discipline is not imposed by society, there are no social norms to define the ends of action. People aspire to goals that either they cannot attain or that they find difficult to reach. Seeming to describe present society as much as the society of his day, Durkheim detailed the characteristics, primarily economic, of a society which produces unlimited aspirations and hence anomie. He described it as follows:

> Actually, religion has lost most of its power. And government, instead of regulating economic life, has become its tool and servant....On both sides nations are declared to have the single or chief purpose of achieving industrial prosperity; such is the implication of the dogma of economic materialism, the basis of both apparently opposed systems. And as these theories merely express the state of opinion, industry instead of being still regarded as a means to an end transcending

> itself, has become the supreme end of individuals and societies alike. Thereupon the appetites thus excited have become freed of any limiting authority....
> Such is the source of the excitement predominating in this part of society, and which has thence extended to the other parts. There, the state of crisis and anomy is constant and, so to speak, normal. From top to bottom of the ladder, greed is aroused without knowing where to find ultimate foothold. Nothing can calm it, since its goal is far beyond all it can attain. Reality seems valueless by comparison with the dreams of fevered imaginations; reality is therefore abandoned, but so too is possibility abandoned when it in turn becomes reality. A thirst arises for novelties: Unfamiliar pleasures, nameless sensations, all of which lose their savor once known. Henceforth one has no strength to endure the least reverse. The whole fever subsides and the sterility of all the tumult is apparent, and it is seen that all these new sensations in their infinite quantity cannot form a solid foundation of happiness to support one during days of trial. The wise man, knowing how to enjoy achieved results without having constantly to replace them with others, finds in them an attachment to life in the hour of difficulty. But the man who has always pinned all his hopes on the future and lived with his eyes fixed upon it, has nothing in the past as a comfort against the present afflictions, for the past was nothing to him but a series of hastily experienced stages. What blinded him to himself was his expectation always to find, further on, the happiness he had so far missed. Now he is stopped in his tracks; from now on nothing remains behind or ahead of him to fix his gaze upon. Weariness alone, moreover, is enough to bring disillusionment, for he cannot in the end escape the futility of an endless pursuit (p. 255-256).

In contrast, Durkheim pointed out that stable societies are ones in which definite goals help the individual to respect collective authority. Economic goals are more clearly defined and fall within the aspirations of the individual (Clinard, 1964).

> This relative limitation and the moderation it involves, make men contented with their lot while stimulating them moderately to improve it; and this average contentment causes the feeling of calm, active happiness, the pleasure in existing and living which characterizes health for societies as well as for individuals. Each person is then at least, generally speaking, in harmony with his condition, and desires only what he may legitimately hope for as the normal reward of his activity. Besides, this does not condemn man to a sort of immobility....For, loving what he has and not fixing his desire solely on what he lacks, his wishes and hopes may fail of what he has happened to aspire to, without his being wholly destitute. He has the essentials. The equilibrium of his happiness is secure because it is defined, and a few mishaps cannot disconcert him (Durkheim, 1897; p. 250).

Toward an Understanding of Anomie

Durkheim's use of the term anomie was far from precise, and a careful reading of his works leaves one with some confusion. For, example, the individual in egoistic suicide suffers from a lack of collective purpose; the anomic individual lacks restraint placed on his or her activities. Egoistic suicide arises because the individual is no longer able to find a meaning for life; anomic suicide results from a lack of regulation of man's basic nature (Clinard, 1964).

Sebastian De Grazia (1948) extended Durkheim's concept of anomie to account for nearly all of the difficulties of contemporary society. He defined anomie as "the disintegrated state of a society that possesses no body of common values or morals which effectively govern conduct....The study of anomie is the study of the ideological factors that weaken or destroy the bonds of allegiance which make the political community." (cited in Clinard; p. 9). He attributed such widely different problems as infertility in women and schizophrenia to anomie (De Grazia, 1948). In the process, he distinguished between simple and acute anomie in a society, a distinction to which Robert Merton (1968) later made favorable reference. Simple anomie is seen in contemporary art and literature, in alienation of the worker who reacts against impersonality and competition, and in the American quest for affection. Adaptations to a condition of acute anomie include mental disorder, suicide, and mass movements (De Grazia, 1948).

Robert Merton's Conception of Anomie

One of the foremost proponents of the use of anomie in recent decades has been Robert Merton. Merton used Durkheim's concept in a new and useful way in his attempt to explain American social problems. In the essay "Social Structure and Anomie," which

first appeared in 1938, Robert Merton set forth his now well known social and cultural explanation of deviant behavior in terms of anomie (Merton, 1968). While derived from Durkheim's concept of anomie, Merton's formulation was at the same time both broader in orientation and more specific in application (Clinard, 1964). Durkheim's view that a situation of normlessness may arise from a clash of aspirations and a breakdown of regulatory norms was reformulated by Merton into a general principle that "social structures exert a definite pressure upon certain persons in the society to engage in nonconforming rather than conforming conduct" (Merton, 1968; p. 132). Merton emphasized normative structures and, like Durkheim, viewed behavior such as crime as a normal response to given social situations; pressures toward deviation in a society could be such that forms of deviant behavior were psychologically as normal as conformist behavior (Clinard, 1964).

While Durkheim confined his application of anomie chiefly to suicide, Merton sought to explain not only suicide but crime, delinquency, mental disorder, alcoholism, drug addiction, and many other phenomena (Merton, 1968). His definition of deviant behavior was never very clear in his two basic essays (Clinard, 1964). In a later writing he said that it "refers to conduct that departs significantly from the norms set for people in their social statuses....and must be related to the norms that are socially defined as appropriate and morally binding for people occupying various statuses" (Merton & Nisbet, 1961; p. 723-724).

Durkheim's Biological vs. Merton's Cultural Influences

Unlike Durkheim, Merton did not consider humans' biological nature to be important in explaining deviation: what Durkheim considered the innate desires of man,

such as ambition to achieve unattainable objectives, Merton felt were induced by the social structure. He pointed out that man is not contending with society, "in an unceasing war between biological impulse and social restraint. The image of man as an untamed bundle of impulses begins to look more like a caricature than a portrait" (Merton, 1968; p. 131). Even if one were to grant some role to biological impulses, there still remained the question of "why it is that the frequency of deviant behavior varies within different social structures and how it happens that the deviations have different shapes and patterns in different social structures" (Merton, 1968; p. 131).

In explaining anomie and deviant behavior, Merton therefore concentrated not on the individual but on the social order. He set what he admitted to be an arbitrary dichotomy between cultural goals and the institutional means to achieve these goals. For analytical purposes he first divided social reality into cultural structures, or culture, and social structure, or society. The cultural structure is, "that organized set of normative values governing behavior which is common to members of a designated society or group" (Merton, 1968; p. 162). The social structural element consists of institutional norms which define and regulate the acceptable mode of reaching these goals. This represents an "organized set of social relationships in which members of the society or social groups are variously implicated" (ibid).

Cultural goals and institutional norms do not bear a constant relation to one another, for, "the cultural emphasis placed upon certain goals varies independently of the degree of emphasis upon institutionalized means" (Merton, 1968; p. 133). There can be many dominant success goals—accumulation of wealth, scientific productivity, religious orthodoxy, and others—which may clash with the means open to those who are socially

disadvantaged in the competitive race for achievement. In fact, any cultural goal that is greatly emphasized in a society is likely to affect institutionalized means. Goals may take precedence at one time over the institutionally prescribed means to achieve them. On the other hand, one can have situations where sheer conformity becomes a central value; the original purpose of the cultural goals becomes forgotten and the institutional means become a ritual to be observed (Merton, 1968). Actually, an effective equilibrium between these two phases of a society is usually maintained as long as individuals secure satisfactions from conforming to both cultural goals and institutional means (Clinard, 1964).

The emphasis on disequilibrium between cultural goals and institutional norms in a society is clear in Merton's definition. Anomie is, "conceived as a breakdown in the cultural structure, occurring particularly when there is an acute disjunction between cultural norms and goals and the social structured capacities of members of the group to act in accord with them" (Merton, 1968; p. 162). He goes on to add that, "cultural values may help to produce behavior which is at odds with the mandates of the values themselves" (ibid). The malintegration of culture and the social structure, one preventing what the other encourages, can lead to a breakdown of the norms and the development of a situation of normlessness.

Merton (1968) assumes that rates of deviant behavior within a given society vary by social class, ethnic or racial status, and other characteristics. His explanation of deviant behavior hinges, then, on the validity of the proposition that the strain toward anomie, or the inability to achieve the goals of society by available means, will be differentially distributed through a social system, and that different modes of deviant

adaptation will be concentrated in varying social strata (Passas & Agnew, 1997). The distribution of deviant behavior will depend on the accessibility of legitimate means to secure the goals and the degree of assimilation of goals and norms by the different social strata of a society. Not all of those subject to pressures to achieve goals become deviant. "The theory only holds that those located in places in the social structure which are particularly exposed to such stresses are more likely than others to exhibit deviant behavior" (Merton, 1968; p. 183). Those who conform despite stresses do so because alternative cultural goals are available to provide a basis for stabilizing the social and cultural systems (Clinard, 1964). Schematically, the relation of anomie to social structure can be summarized (Merton, 1968) in this way: (1) Exposure to the cultural goal and norms regulating behavior oriented toward the goal. (2) Acceptance of the goal or norm as moral mandates and internalized values. (3) Relative accessibility to the goal: life chances in the opportunity structure. (4) The degree of discrepancy between the accepted goal and its accessibility. (5) The degree of anomie. (6) The rates of deviant behavior of various types set out in the typology of modes of adaptation (Merton, 1968).

Merton (1968) confined his analysis of deviant behavior to those societies such as American society, where certain goals tend to be stressed without a corresponding emphasis on institutional procedures to obtain them. American culture is characterized by great emphasis on the accumulation of wealth as a success symbol without a corresponding emphasis on using legitimate means to achieve this goal (Merton, 1968; Weber, 1930). "The culture may be such as to lead individuals to center their emotional convictions upon the complex of culturally acclaimed ends, with far less emotional support for prescribed methods of reaching out for these ends....In this context, the sole

significant question becomes, 'Which of the available procedures is most efficient in netting the culturally approved value'?" (Merton, 1968; p. 134-135).

At the other extreme from American society on the continuum are those societies in which the emphasis is on goals that have been largely subordinated to institutional means and lack their original meaning, and where conformity has therefore become an end in itself. Other, more integrated societies fall between these two types of malintegrated cultures where goals and means to achieve them are in some sort of rough balance.

It is important to recognize from Merton's analysis that the high frequency of deviant behavior among certain classes in American society cannot be explained by lack of opportunity alone or by an exaggerated emphasis on a monetary value attachment. A more rigid class structure, such as a caste system, might restrict opportunities to achieve such goals even more, without resultant deviant behavior. It is the set of equalitarian beliefs in American society, stressing the opportunity for economic affluence and social ascent for all of its members, which makes for the difference (Merton, 1968).

As Merton points out, however, these are idealized goals: the same proportion of people in all social classes does not internalize them. Since the number of people in each of the social classes varies considerably, it is important to distinguish between absolute numbers and relative proportion. Only a substantial number or, "a number sufficiently large to result in a more frequent disjunction between goals and opportunity among the lower class strata than the upper class strata" need to be goal oriented (Merton, 1968; p. 174). It is the restriction on the use of approved means for a considerable part of the population that is crucial to the discussion of adaptations which follows (Clinard, 1964).

It is only when a system of cultural values extols, virtually above all else, certain common success goals for the population at large while the social structure rigorously restricts or completely closes access to approved modes of reaching these goals for a considerable part of the same population, that deviant behavior ensues on a large scale (Merton, 1968; p. 146).

Forms of Adaptation

Perhaps, one of the most important and intriguing parts of Merton's theory is his discussion of the ways in which a person can adapt to a situation where legitimate means to reach a goal are not available to him or her. There are five types of individual adaptations to achieve culturally prescribed goals of success open to those who occupy different positions in the social structure. These adaptations, that are based on roles, are conformity, and the deviant adaptations of ritualism, rebellion, innovation, and retreatism (Merton, 1968). None of these adaptations, as Merton points out, is deliberately selected by the individual or is utilitarian. Since all arise from strains in the social system, they can be assumed to have a degree of spontaneity behind them (Merton, 1968; Passas & Agnew, 1997).

Conformity. Conformity to both cultural goals and institutional means is the most common adaptation, but can be passed in this thesis which deals with non-conformity, although Merton claims that all five forms of adaptation relate to deviant behavior. Conformity or commitment to goals and institutional norms on the part of a large proportion of people, however, makes human society possible. It is not in focusing on conforming or normal behavior that it is possible to find out about the basic stresses of a society but rather by directing attention to deviant behavior (Merton, 1968).

Ritualism. Ritualism is the abandoning or scaling down of the lofty goals of monetary success and rapid social mobility to the point where our aspirations can be satisfied (Clinard, 1964). "But though one rejects the cultural obligation to attempt to get ahead in the world, though one draws in one's horizons, one continues to abide almost compulsively by institutional norms" (Merton, 1968; p. 150). Actually this adaptation seems also to have little direct relationship to deviation, except perhaps to some forms of compulsive neuroses, and Merton himself says that the behavior exhibited by the ritualist is not generally considered deviant. Still, he feels that those who play it safe, who become "bureaucratic virtuosos," who avoid high ambitions and consequent frustration, clearly represent a departure from the cultural model in which men are obliged to strive actively, preferably through institutionalized procedures, to move onward and upward in the social hierarchy (Merton, 1968).

Rebellion. In the form of adaptation known as rebellion, people turn away from the conventional social structure and seek to establish a new or greatly modified social structure. This form of adaptation arises when "the institutional system is regarded as a barrier to the satisfaction of legitimized goals...." (Merton, 1968; p. 156). If it goes on to organized political action, the allegiance of people such as the radical or revolutionary must be withdrawn from the existing social structure and transferred to new groups with new ideologies. In a sense, Merton recognizes this because he points out that rebellion is an adaptation which is on a clearly different plane from the others (Lemert, 1951). "It represents a transitional response seeking to institutionalize new goals and new procedures to be shared by other members of the society. It thus refers to efforts to

change the existing cultural and social structure rather than to accommodate efforts within this structure" (Merton, 1968; p. 140).

In a later paper, Merton (1968) modified his view that rebellion was deviation in the same sense as were the other adaptations. Using different terms, he distinguished between rebellion, on the one hand, and innovation, ritualism, and retreatism, on the other (Clinard, 1964; Merton, 1968). In this paper he divided deviant behavior into two types, non-conforming and devious behavior, on the basis of social structure and consequences for the social system. Non-conformity is quite different from devious behavior such as crime and delinquency. The non-conformist announces his dissent publicly; the deviant acknowledges the legitimacy of social norms he or she rejects. The non-conformist tries to change the norms and may appeal to a higher morality; the deviant merely wishes to escape the sanctioning force of present society. The non-conformist is often acknowledged by conventional society as departing from norms for disinterested purposes; the deviant just wants to serve his or her own interests. Finally, the non-conformist draws upon the ultimate basic values of society for his goals, as distinguished from the deviant, whose interests are private, self-centered, and definitely antisocial (Merton, 1968).

Innovation. Societies in which the culture emphasizes monetary success and the social structure places undue limitations on approved means provide a lot of situations for the development of socially disapproved departures from institutional norms, in the form of innovative practices. The use of such illegitimate means as crime to achieve culturally prescribed goals of success, power, and wealth, therefore, has become common in our society. Such a form of adaptation presupposes that individuals have been inadequately

socialized with respect to cultural goals emphasizing success aspirations (Merton, 1968). As evidence, Merton maintains that unlawful behavior such as delinquency and crime appears to be most common in the lower strata of our society and this is "a normal response to a situation where the cultural emphasis upon monetary success has been absorbed, but where there is little access to conventional and legitimate means for becoming successful" (Merton, 1968; p. 145). These pressures tend to result in the gradual reduction in efforts to use legitimate means and an increase in the use of more or less expedient illegitimate means. The opportunities of the lower class are largely restricted to manual labor, and this is often stigmatized. Consequently, "the status of unskilled labor and the consequent low income cannot readily compete in terms of established standards of worth with the promise of power and high income form organized vice, rackets, and crime" (ibid).

Illegitimate innovations are not restricted to crime among the lower socioeconomic classes. Similar pressures for ever greater monetary status symbols are exerted on the upper socioeconomic groups and give rise to unethical business practices and what has been termed white collar crime. "On the top economic levels, the pressure toward innovation not infrequently erases the distinction between business-like strivings this side of the mores and sharp practices beyond the mores" (Merton, 1968; p. 141). He points out, however, that "whatever the differential rates of deviant behavior in several social strata....the greatest pressures toward deviation are exerted on the lower social strata" (Merton, 1968; p. 144).

In his second essay on anomie, Merton (1968) attempted to qualify his earlier all-embracing explanation of delinquency and crime as a form of anomie. He recognized

that various types of behavior are included in the legal principles of delinquency and crime, and therefore that "the foregoing theory of anomie is designed to account for some, not all, forms of deviant behavior customarily described as criminal or delinquent" (Merton, 1968; p. 178). Except, however, for specifically indicating that a theory of anomie does not account for much of the nonutilitarian character of behavior occurring in delinquent groups, he is vague as to which behavior is covered by his explanation and which is not. Still, it seems clear that he had in mind those cases in which there was a blockage of means to achieve the goals. (Merton, 1968).

The effect of innovative adaptation such as delinquency can be dynamic. Some individuals, because of their disadvantaged positions or personality patterns, are subjected more than others to the strains of the discrepancy between cultural goals and institutional means. They are, consequently, more vulnerable engaging in deviant behavior. This successful adjustment tends to affect others and to lessen the legitimacy of the institutional norms for others. Others who did not respond to the original, rather slight anomie now do so.

> This, in turn, creates a more acutely anomic situation for still other and initially less vulnerable individuals in the social system. In this way anomie and mounting rates of deviant behavior can be conceived as interacting in a process of social and cultural dynamics, with cumulatively disruptive consequences for the normative structure, unless counteracting mechanisms of control are called into play (Merton, 1968; p. 180).

Not all deviations in the form of innovation are dysfunctional for society (Nagle, 1961). Some deviance may form the basis for new institutions better equipped to function than older ones. In any event, innovation, even of a deviant nature, is likely to be dynamic (Clinard, 1964). "Social dysfunction is not a latter-day terminological substitute for immorality or unethical practice" (Merton, 1968; p. 182). In some cases it

may even be, "the norms of the group which are at fault, and not the innovator who rejects them" (Coser, 1962; p. 172-181). Although the extent is unknown, some deviation from current norms is probably functional for the basic goals of a group.

Retreatism. The adaptation to disjunctive means and goals through retreatism is significant in understanding certain specific forms of deviant behavior. In a sense one might say this is not so much an adaptation but a rejection of both cultural goals and institutional means. "The retreatist pattern consists of substantial abandoning both of the once-esteemed cultural goals and of institutionalized practices directed toward those goals" (Merton, 1968; p. 187). The individual has internalized fully the cultural goals of success but finds inaccessible the institutionalized means to obtain them. Under internalized pressure not to obtain the goal by illegitimate means such as innovation provides, the individual finds himself or herself frustrated and handicapped. He or she does not renounce the success goal but instead adopts escape mechanisms such as "defeatism, quietism, and retreatism" (Clinard, 1964; Merton, 1968).

Retreatism constitutes some of the adaptive activities of "psychotics, autists, pariahs, outcasts, vagrants, tramps, chronic drunkards, and drug addicts" (Merton, 1968; p. 153). Their mode of adaptation in many cases is derived from the social structure which, in a sense, they have sought or in many cases been forced to reject. The retreatist form of adaptation is particularly condemned by conventional society because it is nonproductive, attaches no value to the success-goal of a society, and does not use institutional means. The conformist keeps the wheels of society running; the innovator is at least smart and actively striving; the retreatist at least conforms to the mores (Merton, 1968).

Retreatism is a private rather than a collectivized form of adaptation (Clinard, 1964). "Although people exhibiting this deviant behavior may gravitate toward centers where they come into contact with other deviants and although they may come to share in the sub-culture of these deviant groups, their adaptations are largely private and isolated rather than unified under the aegis of new cultural code" (Merton, 1968; p. 155).

Merton (1968) also discussed sociological ambivalence as "incompatible normative expectations of attitudes, beliefs, and behavior assigned to a status or set of statuses in a society," and has related one type to a disjunction between aspirations and socially structured avenues for achieving these aspirations. This type, he says, "is neither cultural conflict nor social conflict, but a conflict between the cultural structure and the social structure. It turns up when cultural values are internalized by those whose position in the social structure does not give them access to act in accord with the values they have been taught to prize" (Merton, 1968; p. 98).

Commenting on Merton's theory of anomie, Albert Cohen (1959) has summarized its important contributions:

> The starting point, let it be noted, is not a definition of deviant behavior, but the specification of two dimensions along which behavior may vary. The class of all points that can be located in these two dimensions defines the full scope of a sociological field which comprehends both conformity and deviant behavior. Furthermore, the varieties of deviant behavior are not described in terms of their unique and incommensurable concrete characteristics but are derived from the logic of the classification itself and stated in terms of the same conceptual scheme. Also, the scheme is a way of classifying actions, not personalities. The widespread use of this scheme testified to the felt need for such a scheme; the near monopoly it has enjoyed testifies to the paucity of original thinking in this field (p. 464).

Anomia as Used by Other Theorists

The term anomie in its varied forms is Greek in origin. When first translated into Latin, it became anomia and in English, anomy (Conrad & Willits, 1990). The concept of anomie refers to a breakdown of social norms and it is a condition in which norms no longer control the activities of members in society (Adler & Laufer, 1995; Clinard, 1964; Durkheim, 1893; Passas & Agnew, 1997). By contrast, anomia refers to a person's state of mind, to the, "breakdown of the individual's sense of attachment to society" (MacIver, 1950; p. 84; Srole, 1956). Since anomie focused on as a quality of groups and societies, MacIver (1950), Reisman (1950), and Srole (1956) advanced a social psychological counterpart which dealt with the extent of self-to-other alienation and the "integratedness" of the individual in the larger social order (Conrad & Willits, 1990).

Merton emphasized that anomie theory, as a sociological formulation, focused on explaining varying rates of deviance between social systems with varying degrees of anomie. However, it is the psychological extension of his theory, developed by other scholars, that helps to explain in greater depth precisely why criminal behavior emerges in response to social system conditions (Adler & Laufer, 1995; Merton, 1968).

The psychological perspective, first elaborated by Robert MacIver (1950) and Leo Srole (1956), investigates how individuals respond affectively and behaviorally to the ambiguity and moral inconsistency characterizing the particular social systems Merton describes. The process may be outlined in the following way: When moral standards and legal norms lose their effectiveness in governing social conduct, system cohesion erodes. Individuals may then begin to feel estranged from the system, experiencing a sense of discouragement and interpersonal alienation. As individuals feel increasingly detached

from the social system, they lose their motivation to behave morally in the context of that system. This psychological experience of social malintegration has been labeled anomia or anomy (MacIver 1950; Srole 1956). These terms are used interchangeably in the literature and parallel the construct of personal alienation studied extensively by social psychologists (Seeman, 1959 & 1975).

MacIver (1950) defined psychological anomia as, "the breakdown of the individual's sense of attachment to society....the state of mind of one who has been pulled up by his moral roots, who no longer has any sense of continuity, of folk, of obligation....responsive only to himself responsible to no one" (p. 84). While anomia may be a persistent condition, it is seen not as a fundamental character trait but rather as a psychological reaction that occurs, "when sensitive temperaments suffer without respite a succession of shocks that disrupt their faith" (ibid). Although anomia may be triggered by objective system conditions, it is, itself, as subjective perception that may vary between individuals (Merton, 1968).

Conclusion

Durkheim, writing over one hundred years ago, saw anomie as a situation of normlessness in which social restraints were unable to deal effectively with the "overweening ambitions" of man (Clinard, 1964; Durkheim, 1897; Ritzer, 1996). Anomie arises when disruption of the collective order allows peoples' natural aspirations to rise beyond all possibility of their fulfillment (Durkheim, 1897).

Merton's original formulation of anomie forty years later, and his subsequent extensions, were much broader than Durkheim's and more specific in application. Unlike Durkheim, Merton felt that status needs were socially induced. Durkheim's view was

that a situation of normlessness arises from a clash of aspirations and a breakdown of regulatory norms; Merton's formulation was that deviant behavior arises where the social structure restricts access to certain common, culturally defined success goals (Merton, 1968). A clash between cultural goals and institutional means results in a strain toward anomie, in that the ability to achieve the goals of society by legitimate means is differentially distributed through the social system, and consequently, different modes of deviant adaptations will be concentrated in various social strata (Merton, 1968; Passas & Agnew, 1997). These adaptations are conformity, ritualism, rebellion, innovation, and retreatism, but in actuality, only the last two appear truly relevant to what is generally thought of as deviant behavior (Clinard, 1964; Merton, 1968).

Although Durkheim originally intended the concept of anomie to be a characteristic of societies, as did Merton after him, other social scientists have used it to describe individuals. To clarify this distinction, some scholars have chosen to use the term anomia in reference to the individual characteristic (Passas & Agnew, 1997). Anomia deals with a person's state of mind, and to the "breakdown of the individual's sense of attachment to society" (MacIver, 1950; p.84; Srole, 1956). In a given society, then, some individuals experience anomia, and others do not. MacIver (1950) and Srole (1956) were very instrumental in providing the conceptualization of anomia as a characteristic of individuals (Adler & Laufer, 1995).

CHAPTER 4

ANOMIE AND DEVIANCE IN THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

The sub-culture of sports (the NFL in particular) has undergone rapid change over the past twenty-five years. With this change comes an opportunity for anomie within this subculture. Some of these players are no match for the allure of the power and women they can have with their large salaries.

It is no secret that NFL teams draft and employ players who have had run-ins with the law, even players who have served time in jail and prison. And why not, the logic goes. This is pro football, the NFL (Benedict & Yaeger, 1998; Currie, 1998). Besides, if you listen to coaches and NFL spokespersons, these "indiscretions of youth" are not serious crimes. Take into consideration Dick Vermeil's comments after drafting Ryan Tucker (who was convicted of aggravated assault prior to the draft). "First off," Vermeil explained to the press, "character guys get in fights from time to time, especially when they did not start it. I like the guys that don't start it but finish it. I like those kind of guys. This is a physical contact game....But we've got a ton of guys in the NFL that have some true character problems. I don't believe this guy does" (cited in Benedict & Yaeger, 1998; p. 5). Of course a coach would not believe or admit to believing that one of his players has any problems. What coach would not try to minimize the negative public exposure that his team may face when drafting a violent criminal?

Together, the 109 players who showed up in Jeff Benedict and Don Yaeger's survey with a criminal history had been arrested a combined 264 times. That is an average of 2.42 arrests per player. Their statistics show that twenty-one percent of the players in the NFL are serious criminals (Benedict & Yaeger, 1998). The authors

consider anything more serious than a minor misdemeanor a serious crime. These 264 arrests involve only the most serious offenses. Although Benedict and Yaeger discovered a substantial number of players who had been charged with minor misdemeanors (credit card theft, shoplifting, urinating in public, disturbing the peace, etc.) and traffic offenses (speeding and driving with a suspended license), none of these offenses are included in their statistics. The intent was to deal strictly with the more serious criminals in the NFL and the serious crimes they commit (Benedict & Yaeger, 1998).

A breakdown of the 264 arrests shows:

2 for homicide

7 for rape

4 for kidnapping

45 for domestic violence

42 for aggravated assault/assault and battery (nondomestic violence cases)

25 for other crimes against persons, including robbery and armed robbery

15 for drug crimes, including intent to distribute cocaine, possession of cocaine, and possession of marijuana

32 for crimes against property, including fraud, larceny, burglary, theft, and property destruction

35 for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs

17 for resisting arrest

40 for other public safety crimes, including illegal use or possession of a weapon and trespassing. (Trespassing was only included when connected to a domestic

violence complaint or an incident involving multiple defendants where someone was charged with a more serious offense. (Benedict & Yaeger, 1998))

Are NFL players more prone to criminal behavior than the general population? According to research done by Benedict and Yaeger, the answer depends on whom you compare them to. If you compare them to their ethnic, demographic, and economic peers—adult males under 32 years of age who have completed college and earn at least six-figure salaries (of the 509 players in the survey, all earn over $150,000 per year—the minimum salary in the NFL—and most earn considerably more, and virtually all attended four years of college)—NFL players would obviously be overrepresented (Benedict & Yaeger, 1998).

However, it is misleading to compare professional football players to others who complete college and earn salaries comparable to those of NFL players. First, unlike NFL players, individuals earning six and seven figure salaries are generally not employed to engage in violence for a living. Second, very few people who obtain college degrees and earn NFL-like salaries come from backgrounds similar to those of many NFL players. To begin with, 78 percent of the 509 players in Benedict and Yaeger's survey are African-American. (This figure is consistent with the overall percentage of blacks in the NFL, which was 67 percent during the 1996-97 season.) Benedict and Yaeger's (1998) research revealed that a fair number of these players come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Yet, some say that it is inappropriate to compare NFL players to men from disadvantaged backgrounds. Most people who grow up in "disadvantaged" circumstances are not given the opportunity to receive a free college education, earn

millions of dollars, and become celebrities. Given that NFL players have extraordinary earning opportunities, conventional wisdom suggests that they would be less likely to commit crimes because they have so much at stake were they to be convicted. Of the 109 players who had been charged with a serious crime, 32 were arrested before entering the NFL, 61 were arrested after entering the NFL, and 16 had been arrested both before and after joining the NFL (Benedict & Yaeger, 1998).

Deviance in the NFL: Some of the Players and Crimes They Have Committed

Ray Lewis turned twenty-five years old in an Atlanta courtroom at his own murder trial: he was not looking much like a hero. He sat there, scribbled notes on a legal pad, and talked to his defense team, barely looking at his two codefendants just ten feet away. It was a humbling posture for Lewis, who, a season ago, had another great year for the Baltimore Ravens, leading the league in tackles, making the All-Pro team, enjoying a new twenty-six million dollar contract. He had been swaggering then, hitting the clubs in a full-length mink coat and a huge limo, surrounded by worshipful friends. But the night of the Super Bowl two years ago, outside a club called the Cobalt Lounge, there was a confrontation and people died. Lewis pleaded not guilty. A defense attorney asked one prospective juror what his initial reaction was when he saw the news reports (Starr, 2000). "I said to myself, 'Oh, no-not another sports figure: It was just something I was tired of" (cited in Starr & Samuels, 2000; p. 56).

So is everybody else tired, alarmed, and angry? We revere our sports heroes, pay them millions, and build a good part of our culture around their exploits. Our children want to emulate them. We expect the world of them. Are these expectations unfair? Maybe. But one thing is sure: now more than ever, these athletes are crashing and

burning in front of our eyes. The sports pages are full of crime, drug incidents, and assaults on women. Lewis was not the only Pro Bowler in court that week. Green Bay Packer star Mark Chmura was charged with sexually assaulting a seventeen year old, a regular babysitter for his children, at a post-prom party. His attorney filed a motion seeking to dismiss the charges. He, along with Lewis, were eventually cleared of all wrongdoing. But are we really sure justice was done? Also, at that time, former Carolina Panther receiver Rae Carruth was awaiting trial for allegedly arranging a fatal "hit" on his pregnant girlfriend. He pleaded not guilty. In just the past couple of years, over three dozen athletes have been arrested, while a host of other sports figures have found trouble (Starr, 2000). NFL owners, along with the Commissioner, Paul Tagliabue, have said that the issues of athletes' off field troubles are on the top of their agenda. Tampa Bay Bucs coach Tony Dungy said, "We're in a danger zone" (cited in Starr & Samuels, 2000; p. 56). Tagliabue states his concern in a recent letter. Here is an excerpt:

> Dear NFL fans:
> As you continue to enjoy this NFL 2000 season, we know that you appreciate the tremendous amount of planning and preparation that goes into the performance of our teams and players on the football field. Far less evident, however, is the amount of hard work the NFL and its clubs put into supporting positive player performance off the field....We are encouraged that our off-field programs are having a positive impact as evidenced by the decline over the past three years in the number of players charged with criminal offenses. However, several recent high-profile cases caused us to re-examine our policies and programs to determine what more could be done to prevent this type of behavior....We spent considerable time last offseason discussing the issue with owners, coaches, players, and outside experts. We want you to know that team owners, coaches, club officials, and league officials—recognize our collective responsibility to encourage and support proper player conduct on and off the field. You should know as well that the NFL players as a group strongly support our policies and programs. They don't want to be stereotyped by the misconduct of a few. On behalf of all NFL teams and players, thank you for your tremendous interest and support (Tagliabue apologizes, 2000; p. 4C).

The recipe for trouble has always existed in professional sports: ill-prepared young kids ushered too quickly into the spotlight, bathed in adoration, showered with riches, surrounded by hangers-on. But the money and media attention has intensified the pace of it all. One pro athlete understands it well: "Things come at you so fast sometimes you don't know what to do. We're only human" (cited in Starr & Samuels, 2000; p. 57).

Much has been said, too, about an ever-growing sense of entitlement, fed by our sports-crazed culture (Coakley, 2001). "We've put these people on a pedestal and give them more than what is their due," says Lew Lyon, a psychologist who works with pro athletes. "Everyone tells them how good they are, and they believe it. There's this sense that they're above it all." Among that chorus: the proverbial entourage, the moochers, and predators who bird-dog sports stars. Calvin Hill, the former Cowboys running back and father of the NBA star Grant, says athletes are especially vulnerable. "They don't have the intuition or the skepticism" (cited in Starr & Samuels, 2000; p. 57).

But while many players say their friends are an invaluable support system, for others the presence of a "posse" can bring the violence of the streets back into their lives. Sport has always had its share of athletes with humble backgrounds. But as the industry becomes ever more efficient in discovering and grooming talent, more and more kids are plucked out of the projects and other rough neighborhoods (Coakley, 2001; Leonard II, 1998; Starr & Samuels, 2000). Leo Armbrust, a Roman Catholic priest and team chaplain, screens college players for the Miami Dolphins. Of the seventy-six he interviewed a couple years ago, Father Armbrust says that twenty-seven had no connection to their biological fathers, seven had a member of their immediate family who had been shot, and three had dads in prison—and that is just what they volunteered.

"These young men are not from another planet," he says. "These are the times we live in. Until we understand the environments these young men come from, we don't have a clue about the pressures they're under" (cited in Starr & Samuels, 2000; p. 57). With some of these players coming from families that are not grounded, there is a tendency for them to self destruct after they hit the "big time" and become wealthy—this is true, also, for some of the guys that come from good families (Ray Lewis, as it happens, grew up in a relatively stable environment in Lakeland, Florida)—this is what big money and fame can do to people (Coakley, 2001).

Athletes have not always been honored as heroes, but in our celebrity obsessed culture they have reached a whole new level of visibility—especially if they are towering basketball or football players (Coakley, 2001; Leonard II, 1998). There is no place to hide, not that they would want to anyway. "This is a generation of young men who didn't have much growing up," says psychiatry professor Alvin Poussaint. "So when they get something as adults, they wear it on their sleeve so people can be clear they made it. It's important to prove to everyone they've arrived" (cited in Starr & Samuels, 2000; p. 57).

And the style of proving it is filtered through the flash and attitude of hip-hop culture. Says NFL agent Leigh Steinberg, "The rappers want to be ballers and the ballers want to be rappers." Deion Sanders's jewel-bedecked persona made him an original crossover figure (which in turn almost killed him), and even now that he's a preacher he's still high style. "Maybe the guys back in the day didn't wear diamonds and furs, but it's a different day," he says. "I worked for them, I deserve them. I mean, how can you be young with money, good looks, and fame and not take advantage of it?" (ibid).

The NFL may not admit to a crisis, but in the past couple of years it has invested more money than ever in screening for prospective draftees, from investigations to psychological testing to one-on-one interviews. The league is also putting a little more sting in its response to off field misdeeds. For the first time last season the NFL suspended players for off field criminal activities. While the league conducts a mandatory four-day seminar for all rookies, it is considering requiring special counseling for those with checkered pasts (Starr & Samuels, 2000).

However, programs and seminars are do not always do the trick. Sometimes players need some help from friends—the right kind of friends. Wide receiver Randy Moss, a Marshall University product, was one of the most talented players in the entire 1998 draft. But by the time he joined the NFL, he already had lost scholarships at Notre Dame and Florida State, served time for assault, had a second jail stint after testing positive for marijuana, and had been charged with domestic battery against the mother of his two children. Those charges were eventually dropped, but they cost him millions of dollars when he was not drafted until the twenty-first selection. "You get a lot of attention at a young age, and it can really screw you up," says the Vikings star, who in three seasons has stayed out of trouble and is now arguably the best receiver in the game. "You get into things and you don't know how much they're going to haunt you down the road. It's easy to get caught up in the moment, and one thing leads to another until you can't stop it. Then you deal with the consequences—and boy, do you have to deal with them for a long time" (cited in Starr & Samuels, 2000; p. 59).

Moss had someone to lean on. Even before the first training camp, Vikings star receiver Cris Carter, now a born-again Christian, who says he "dabbled in the gutter,"

was on the phone to Moss volunteering his services as a mentor. The world of athletic stardom can be as insular as the police force—nobody can understand a cop except another cop. "Cris had been there and knew what it was like to go down the wrong path—way down," says Moss. Carter says he believes the best approach is the buddy system, a one-on-one, athlete-to-athlete approach. "The NFL has done all it can with its programs," he says. "At a certain point, it's on the individuals." Moss agrees. "There are a lot of haters out there who want you to screw up, so you have to check yourself. But at the end of the day, it's on you if something goes down." That is certainly true. But because they are athletes, it is on the rest of us, too (ibid).

Among the most recent examples of players in trouble are:

--Orlando Thomas from the Minnesota Vikings was arrested and charged with battery against his wife. He avoided a jail term after a no-contest plea.

--Leonard Little from the St. Louis Rams pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter. He ran a red light and crashed into another car, killing a woman driver in 1998. He was suspended for eight games.

--Jumbo Elliott and Jason Fabini from the New York Giants and Matt O'Dwyer from the Cincinnati Bengals were arrested after a bar brawl in New York. Elliott pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct and harassment. Fabini's disorderly conduct charge was dropped since he stayed out of trouble for six months. O'Dwyer was sentenced to three years probation.

--Denard Walker from the Tennessee Titans pleaded guilty to assault charges filed by his son's mother. He received probation and a two-game suspension.

--Peter Warrick from Florida State, later drafted by the Cincinnati Bengals, was arrested on felony grand-theft charges after a shopping mall episode. It was reduced to petty theft. He pleaded no contest.

--Steve Muhammad from the Indianapolis Colts was charged with three counts of misdemeanor battery against his pregnant wife. He pleaded not guilty.

--Rae Carruth from the Carolina Panthers was arrested for allegedly plotting the drive-by shooting that killed his pregnant girlfriend. He pleaded not guilty to first-degree murder. He is now serving time for that murder.

--Chris Mims from the San Diego Chargers was arraigned for four misdemeanors. The charges were filed by a man who claimed Mims attacked him with a belt at a fast food chain and stole his tacos. He pleaded guilty to only one—assault with a deadly weapon (his belt).

--Lawrence Taylor, retired from the New York Giants and Hall of Famer, pleaded no contest to buying crack cocaine from an undercover cop.

--Cecil Collins from the Miami Dolphins was arrested for burglary after allegedly breaking into his neighbor's occupied apartment. He pleaded not guilty.

--Rod Smith from the Denver Broncos surrendered to police on charges of third degree assault and harassment involving his wife. He pleaded not guilty.

--Fred Lane from the Carolina Panthers, before his unfortunate death, was arrested with three others for allegedly carrying 1.3 grams of marijuana and a .22 caliber rifle.

--Steve Foley from the Cincinnati Bengals was charged with battery on a complaint filed by his son's mother. He pleaded not guilty.

--Sebastian Janikowski from Florida State, later drafted by the Oakland Raiders was charged with bribery for offering three-hundred dollars to police for the release of a roommate in custody. He pleaded not guilty.

--Ray Lewis from the Baltimore Ravens was indicted for murder in the stabbing deaths of two men. He pleaded not guilty and was eventually acquitted.

--Mario Bates from the Arizona Cardinals was arrested on domestic violence charges against his girlfriend. He pleaded not guilty.

--Todd Marinovich from the former Los Angeles Raiders, now in arena football, was arrested on a woman's claim of rape.

--De'Mond Parker from the Green Bay Packers was charged with marijuana possession.

--Dimitrius Underwood from the Dallas Cowboys was convicted of reckless driving at ninety-five mile-per-hour.

--Bam Morris and Tamarick Vanover formerly from the Kansas City Chiefs were arrested. Morris was indicted for drug and moneylaundering activities. He pleaded not guilty. Vanover pleaded guilty to the sale of a stolen vehicle.

--Mark Chmura formerly from the Green Bay Packers was charged with sexual assault against his seventeen year old babysitter who said he had sex with her at a party after a high school prom. He was later acquitted (Benedict, 2000; Benedict & Klein, 1997; Cannon & Glasser, 2000; Melnick, 1992; Starr, 2000; Starr & Samuels, 2000).

A Case Study for Pro-Football: Darryl Henley

Darryl Henley was everybody's All-American. He was a second-round draft pick out of UCLA in 1989. In most drafts, Henley's coverage skills would have made him the

top pick at his position, but he happened to enter the NFL the same year as a flashy young man named Deion Sanders (Benedict & Yaeger, 1998; Sage, 1998).

While Deion was making an immediate impact on and off the field in Atlanta, Henley was drawing praise for his round-the-clock practice and study habits with the Los Angeles Rams (Sage, 1998). In 1989, Henley's rookie season, the Rams played their way into the NFC Championship game. Though Henley's playing time was limited, winning soothed his ego. The next year, Henley earned the starting spot, but the team began a five year spiral under coaches John Robinson and Chuck Knox that turned playing for the team into a miserable experience. As a starter in his third and fourth years with the Rams, Henley led the team in passes broken- up in both 1991 and 1992 and finished fourth on the team in tackles both years. Yet the Rams ended those seasons 3-13 and 6-10 (Benedict & Yaeger, 1998).

With each loss, Henley's attention turned further and further from the field. "At a certain point, I hated going to the stadium," Henley said. "I hated getting in my car and going to practice. I hated it. Everyone started pointing fingers. People said, 'Well the coach was this…' That wasn't it. That wasn't it at all. It wasn't management. It wasn't John Shaw. It wasn't John Robinson. It wasn't Chuck Knox. It wasn't those guys. It was the dudes on the team. They didn't have the desire and the commitment. They didn't have the attitude to win. They weren't staying around practice, working out. You get beat by deep balls, you should be staying after practice, showing up on Tuesday on a day off. Nobody was doing that. My rookie year, when I was screwing up, on Tuesday mornings, on my day off, they had me up there with the coaching staff. I was up there and I loved it. They had my ass working out, going over mistakes that I made to the

point where I started doing it on my own. And then in 1991 and 1992, we didn't have that anymore. Those dudes were getting killed. Crunched. Offensive and defensive. But at the end of every practice, the discussion was 'What are we doing afterward?' After a while it starts to have a real effect on you. A real effect. To the point where I lost my love for football. I allowed myself to become bored with something that I had always wanted to do all my life. How can you get bored with money, women, football, cameras, TV? How can you get bored with that? It's everybody's dream. How can you get bored with that?" (cited in Benedict & Yaeger, 1998; p. 309)

"And when I got bored, when I lost the love for the game. I started listening to people I never listened to before. That was my mistake. I started looking for something else to excite me. And that always leads to trouble" (ibid). As bad as life for Henley was on the field, it didn't begin to fall apart until July 1993, when FBI agents pulled an attractive 19 year old waitress named Tracy Ann Donaho from a line of passengers arriving at Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport. Donaho, who had drawn attention by purchasing her ticket to Atlanta with cash, was asked about a suitcase labeled as hers. With her not knowing, agents had discovered 12 kilos of cocaine in the case. Donaho said the suitcase belonged to a friend and she couldn't open it because she didn't have the key. Agents kept the case, but let her leave. Several hours later, when she and Henley returned to the airport to retrieve it, the police swept in and arrested her. As Donaho was being placed in handcuffs, Henley "expressed shock," according to the police, and made a point of telling them he was a professional football player who spoke out against drug use. The result: Donaho was taken to jail, Henley got in his car and drove home (Benedict & Yaeger, 1998).

Within hours, Darryl Henley's life was in a free-fall. Donaho, a Rams cheerleader, kept quiet the first day after police arrested her. But she would eventually say it was Henley who had arranged for her to carry the suitcase, telling her it contained cash to be delivered to a friend. She said Henley, who she had dated, paid her $1,000 to deliver one suitcase to a friend in Memphis, then more to take the case to Atlanta a month later. In exchange for reducing charges against her, Donaho agreed to become a government witness against Henley. Investigators chose not to arrest Henley, but did begin a full-blown inquiry into his life (Benedict & Yaeger, 1998).

When he found out that Donaho had told on him, Henley immediately called Coach Chuck Knox, who gathered everyone for an impromptu meeting. "They said to put together a team," Henley said. "I needed a lawyer, an investigator, experts, the whole O.J. thing. And they said we had to keep this quiet" (cited in Benedict & Yaeger, 1998; p. 310-311).

The federal government was keeping a close eye on him. The lawyers were calculating his every off-the-field move. The coaches were waiting for their quiet deal to break. With all this going on, Henley surprised everyone in the Rams organization by coming out at the start of the 1993 season and posting near All-Pro numbers through the first five games. Then the secret became public and by December he was indicted. He was named as the kingpin in a national cocaine trafficking ring. He was charged with conspiracy to deliver narcotics along with four others (Benedict & Yaeger, 1998).

No one knew what should happen next. The NFL wanted to suspend Henley based on the seriousness of the charge. Henley's lawyers argued against suspension saying that to cut Henley would be a presumption of his guilt. The Rams were left in the

middle. But when the controversy became a distraction for an already distracted team, Henley voluntarily took a leave of absence. "I wasn't forced to take the leave," he said. "In fact the Rams paid me my full salary that year, that was the deal. It was just better for everyone that I step away" (cited in Benedict & Yaeger, 1998; p. 311).

The next summer, his trial delayed until January 1995, the Rams announced they were bringing Henley back for the 1994 season. A deal between Henley, the Rams, and the court allowed Henley to travel with the team after posting a $1 million bond and agreeing to pay the cost of a court officer to accompany him on road trips. Despite those restrictions, Henley again amazed coaches and critics by leading the team in interceptions. During a November game with Denver, he recorded a career-high eleven solo tackles as the Rams held John Elway to forty yards passing in the first half. For his play, Henley was given the defensive game ball. Though the Denver game was one of the best in his career, Henley consistently played so well that coaches were amazed at his concentration, his ability to block out the distractions and be the team's rock in the defensive backfield (Benedict & Yaeger, 1998).

In late January, Henley's new team (a band of lawyers and investigators) opened his defense in federal court. During the trial, the government detailed an elaborate scheme to move drugs nationwide. "I was always surrounded by groups of people," Henley said. "And those people were always telling me not to worry, 'Okay, man, we're going to get out of this.' Everybody tells you, 'Man, just watch, just wait, it'll be over soon'" (cited in Benedict & Yaeger, 1998; p. 312).

Henley, who was rarely beaten as defensive back, believed all those hangers-on. Confident to the point of appearing cocky, Henley stood when the jury foreman prepared

to announce the verdict eight weeks later. To his surprise, the foreman's response was only one word, not two. "As I heard the word—guilty—my knees buckled" (ibid), Henley said. He was immediately sent to the federal detention facility in Los Angeles to wait for sentencing. Though Henley's attorneys announced an appeal immediately after the conviction, the Rams finally realized they might lose the service of one of their best defensive players. A week after the guilty verdict, the Rams signed Anthony Parker to replace Henley in the lineup.

Then came a twist that was very strange. According to prosecutors, while in federal jail, Henley befriended a guard who provided Henley with a cellular phone. Using that phone, Henley arranged for a $1 million heroin shipment to be sent to Detroit and for cocaine to be moved around Southern California. With the profit he earned from those transactions, Henley offered to pay for the murder of Donaho and U.S. District Judge Gary Taylor, who had presided in the case and would be determining his sentence.

What Henley didn't know was that federal marshals were on to his scheme. An inmate whom Henley had asked to help plan the murders turned out to be a jailhouse informant. The voice on the other end of the phone when Henley ordered the judge's murder belonged to a federal undercover agent. The conversations were all being recorded.

Within days, Henley and a whole new group of defendants were brought before a new federal judge, charged not only with drug trafficking, but with attempted murder. This time, those charged included Henley's brother, along with Henley's girlfriend and mother of his child. The whole family, it seemed, was going down with Darryl. Henley's own parents lost their home in foreclosure after they spent $100,000 on their sons' legal

defense funds. Before the murder-for-hire case could go to trial, Henley and his brother both pleaded guilty to trafficking charges and to Henley's part in plotting the murders.

In one day, March 10, 1997, Henley appeared in back-to-back hearings where federal judges ordered him to spend the next 41 years of his life in the United States prison in Marion, Illinois, one of two "super-maximum-security" prisons in the United States. Where once Henley had proudly proclaimed his inclusion in one of America's most select fraternities (the 1,600 players in the NFL) he now was in even more select company. Only 700 inmates in America are kept in the nation's two super-max federal prisons (Benedict & Yaeger, 1998).

In April 1997, marshals escorted Henley past the twenty-foot-high fences and down the halls of America's toughest prison. His social time, once spent with politicians and world-class athletes, now would be shared with the likes of John Gotti, mass murders, and those convicted of blowing up the National Trade Center. His closet of flashy suits would be replaced by a bright red prison jump suit. His entourage now consisted of two guards, nightsticks in hand, who stay with him step for step every time he leaves his cell. Where once he looked up to see thousands of fans yelling his name, now the same view included towers and snipers (Benedict & Yaeger, 1998).

> Walking into Marion was only the second time in my life—the other was when the jury said I was guilty—that I could barely walk. My knees shook. This was real.
>
> Why do most people want to play professional football? Money. Fame. Women. Cars. Houses. But there are only so many cars you can buy. There are only so many women you can have a night. There is only so much money can buy. Really. I had everything you could want and I still wasn't happy. I don't know if this is part of the message because it's really directed at athletes—the guys who want to become athletes. Everyone likes to say 'Football is not my life.' That's not true. To many players, it is their life. It shouldn't be your life but it is. You should have some other interest—family, to turn to when things aren't working

out on the field. I didn't have those interests. That's what made me the perfect guy to get caught up in these situations. When you allow yourself to become bored, you start looking at other ways to pique your interest. Sometimes you find some things that are totally, totally different from anything you have experienced or done. You're on a plane and are gung ho, you're enjoying what you do. You're enjoying life. Someone comes to you and they slide up under you and they give you a sales pitch and it's not too strong, but you see the mystique and the danger and you know you should say, 'No, I'm cool. Thanks anyway.' Maybe it's a friend. An old friend. We're just talking and kicking back. A sales pitch. An approach. You're comfortable now, with your lifestyle. You go to the left, I go to the right.

But when you're not comfortable with yourself, the sales pitch works. And it works immediately when you don't turn and run. The minute you say, 'What was that? Say that again?' he's got you.

My problems were with me. It was within me. It didn't have anything to do with anybody else. It was Darryl Henley. I lost my interest in football and started listening to other opportunities, dangerous and mysterious opportunities.

From there, from just listening, things snowballed. Next thing, I was in with people I knew I shouldn't be with. Then when things started coming down around me, I was willing to do whatever might get me out of that situation, even crazy stuff, stuff I can't believe today I even thought about. That's when bad went to worse. Suddenly, all I wanted was to be back on the football field. But I was too caught up in saving my ass to get there.

The problem is that everyone believes it can't happen to them, they'll never get caught. And they look at the guys like me who get caught and assume it must be because I had a background that was worse than theirs, or wasn't as smart as they are, or something. But to say that, you've got to know who I am.

All I ask is that before people sit in judgement of me, they need to understand that I'm not some undereducated black guy who came from the ghetto and was banging and shooting people in junior high school. I'm not a 'failure of the system' or a 'product of a bad environment.' Every member of my family has a college degree. My father moved from Los Angeles from the South. He worked his butt off for Western Union. He packed my brother and I on his back while he delivered packages because we couldn't afford babysitters and all that. He worked hard enough to allow us to move to the suburbs and that took everything he had. They spent everything they ever had to get us out of that environment. My father volunteered at Duarte High School—he was a proctor there. He saw what was going on. He didn't want it for us and he moved us away. He enrolled us in a private Catholic school—a great school. Damien High School. We did well there. My older brother, Thomas, became the first black athlete to get a scholarship out of there. He went to Stanford University and started on the

football team as a freshman. My younger brother went to Rice on scholarship. We all graduated. Every one of us graduated.

We didn't have a crack in our family. Never had handcuffs on. Never been in jail. Never had a problem. I didn't drink my first beer until I graduated from high school. Never had anything like that. It wasn't attractive to me. Never smoked a joint. I remember when I was leaving college some friends and I got together and went to the mountains—it was a girl, she invited me, and her friends and that type of thing. Me and one of my teammates were there and I just did the drug-testing thing for the NFL Combine. I knew that the draft was coming up and then you've got to report to mini-camp. I was upstairs and I knew they were smoking dope downstairs and I panicked. I'm like, 'Y'all wet some towels and put it all under the door.' I was like, 'Secondhand smoke. I ain't trying to get none of that stuff.' That was my attitude. That was my response (quoted in Benedict & Yaeger, 1998; p. 315-318).

With twenty-three hours a day alone in a small cell, Henley has a lot of time to think through how his fall from grace began. As a result, he gets mad when he reads about another athlete headed down the same path that put him in Marion.

I couldn't believe it when I saw that another Ram was being investigated for drugs. Remember, I'm just recognizing who I am, and it's not all pretty. And then I saw that. It made me so angry I just had to write John Shaw. I didn't even know James Harris. Didn't know anything about James Harris, but I was so angry that his name even came up—especially with the Rams. Everything was too close to home. Just his name, the Rams, I couldn't believe it. My first reaction was maybe that I should talk to this dude, tell him what he needs to do. But I was so angry that I couldn't do it. I was angry because I kept thinking: 'Am I just wasted, that this has happened here? Is this just a waste? People don't even recognize what the hell is going on? This ain't no joke. This is real.' This is not attractive. This is far different than what you could ever imagine.

If you flirt with danger, it will find you. You want the message? That's it. If I can get caught up with the bad guys, with all that I had going for me, there better not be anyone out there who believes it can't happen to them. We're all vulnerable, just not all of us get caught (quoted in Benedict & Yaeger, 1998; p. 318).

A Case Study for Pro-Football: Deion Sanders

Deion Sanders grew up in Fort Myers, Florida with his mom and sister, in a public housing project, a neighborhood so riddled with crime it came with it's own jail. Deion stayed busy while growing up by playing three sports: basketball, baseball, and football. In 1988, the Atlanta Falcons picked him in the first round of the NFL draft. He signed a contract for more than four million dollars. He was now the highest paid defensive back in NFL history. He later played for the San Francisco 49ers, Dallas Cowboys, and, now, with the Washington Redskins (he also played professional baseball for the Atlanta Braves, New York Yankees, and now currently with the Cincinnati Reds) (Angotti, 2001).

Deion was a man who was determined to escape the poverty of his past. "I wanted to be rich," he said. So he transformed himself into a larger than life figure that he dubbed "Primetime." As "Primetime," Deion got everything he wanted, both on and off the field. He said, "My thing was sex, with many women. I didn't discriminate. And the money. Life was wonderful, life was great, life was financially fantastic." The more successful Deion became, the more he lived a lifestyle of his self-centered alter ego—"primetime." But Deion's fame came with a price. As Deion' good friend, M.C. Hammer put it, "fame works two ways, I'll pay you and you pay me" (Angotti, 2001).

Along the road to fame and fortune, Deion's dreams turned into nightmares. "The night we won the Super Bowl in San Francisco, I was the first one out of the locker room, the first one home, the first one to bed, and I thought to myself, this, it ain't what I thought it was. I'm not even happy," said Sanders. But still, Deion thought with more championships, more money, more fame, more women, and more power, he would find

happiness. Eugene Parker, Deion's attorney and friend, said, "He thought, well, maybe if I accomplish a little more, maybe if I do a little more, I can find this happiness, but it wasn't there. It began to get hollow for him." Later, Sanders moved on to Dallas. They won the Super Bowl, but like the year before with San Francisco, for Deion, it was a hollow victory (Angotti, 2001).

According to Deion's pastor, " 'Primetime' was slowly killing Deion Sanders." Wild ways and his obnoxious behavior cost him his wife, his children, and his will to live. "You got women everywhere, you still ain't happy, you got clothes galore, you still ain't happy, you got everything you ever wanted, but you're still not happy. How can a man who has everything be contemplating, is tomorrow worth it," said Sanders. Despite two Super Bowl trophies and millions in the bank, Deion was on the brink of suicide (Angotti, 2001).

In the Spring of 1997, on a dark Ohio road, Deion was driving on a suicide mission, wandering what people would say about him when he was gone. "I got in that car and drove off that cliff, and when I got to the bottom of that fall and was still alive, that was something," said Sanders. He realized that it was not his time to go and he got lucky, unlike so many others that fall into the same trap—thinking they are some type of god, letting their fame and fortune go to their heads—and that there is more to life than the big money and all the women. Deion is now happily remarried and a re-born Christian (Angotti, 2001).

Longtime sportscaster Bob Costas probably sums it up best when he states, "We just don't tolerate, we celebrate people for acting like egotistical obnoxious horse's asses" (Angotti, 2001).

Conclusion

Professional football players have an enormous amount of power and most make millions, while the media makes them heroes. But just ask Darryl Henley and Deion Sanders what this leads to for a lot of today's young athletes (Benedict & Yaeger, 1998; Davies, 1994; (Angotti, 2001). Along with the fame and fortune, much of the time there is an absence, breakdown, confusion, or conflict within the norms of their life and society. This appears to be the anomie that Durkheim explained so well in his day—that still very much exists today in America's commercialized sport industry (Durkheim, 1893; Sage, 1998; Coakley, 2001).

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This is an exploratory case study designed to determine whether Durkheim's concept of anomie applies to National Football League players. In order to assess the validity of interpretations from the secondary data, I conducted two in-depth interviews with former NFL players. They discussed not only their individual experiences as athletes, but also the experiences of fellow players with whom they were intimately familiar. The data acquired were used to assess if NFL players, after obtaining fame and fortune, fall victim to a state of anomie. These two men tell all—about the fast and fascinating lifestyle of the NFL. I began data collection through the use of an intensive interview process, whereby I spoke to these two NFL players and also listened to stories about many other current and former players. Through these conversations and the review of literature, I designed a qualitative interview guide. The guide was composed of five questions and a brief section on demographic information. The five questions were:

1. Let's begin with talking about the NFL. Tell me about the NFL and the lifestyle that comes with it.
2. Do you feel as if the big contracts/quick money (fame and fortune) have anything to do with the downfall of a lot of the players in the league?
3. Do you think that a player's background has anything to do with whether or not he succeeds in the NFL and life?
4. How prominent is drug use in the NFL?
5. What would you be doing if football was not a part of your life?

For the sake of confidentiality, I will refer to the two respondents as Bob and Jerry. Bob currently works in urban ministry for Fellowship of Christian Athletes in Cincinnati, Ohio. He works with inner city children, trying to help and guide them in their quest for a normal life. Jerry is currently working as a motivational speaker. His goal in this is to try to help kids make the right decisions and not go down the wrong path as he did. He also is an actor, and coaches several youth and AAU basketball teams in Houston, Texas.

Bob grew up in Wooden Terrace, which is now considered to be one of the roughest places in Cincinnati. He tells it as, "In Wooden Terrace, they said people don't make it out. I was blessed with good parents though. They said don't let anyone steal you dream, that you can do anything you set your mind to." Jerry grew up in Seattle, Washington in a fairly normal family. He also said that he was blessed with a good upbringing.

After high school, Bob received a full scholarship to play football at the University of Tennessee. "In my first year, my dad died. I decided I didn't want to play football anymore, so I left school. When I did come back, I decided that I didn't want to be in a big environment anymore, so I decided to transfer to Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee, where I played three years." Jerry went to school at Utah State University, where he said that he had a good experience and stayed fairly grounded due to the religiosity of the town and campus.

Bob said, "I got drafted into the NFL by the Buffalo Bills. I played in their first Super Bowl in 1990. After that I left and went to New England, and then I was blessed enough to play a couple of more years after that." Jerry was drafted by the Houston

Oilers in the third round of the 1984 NFL draft. He did not play for another team during his stay in the league.

A Case Study Using Personal and Perceptual Accounts from Two Former NFL Players

As stated earlier, anomie is a social state that results from an inability of society (collective conscience) to hold in check naturally boundless human aspirations and demands. The society is temporarily not in a position to exercise control and set limits when it is disrupted by desirable, but sudden, transformations (Adler & Laufer, 1995), transformations such as suddenly getting drafted into the NFL and having a lot of power and wealth (Sage, 1998). A state of deregulation or anomie then follows, and it is only exacerbated by the fact that "passions" are less disciplined just when the times require a stricter discipline (Passas & Agnew, 1997). Put another way, Durkheim says that because individuals by nature wish to have more and more, the breakdown of the regulatory system sets free exaggerated aspirations. Anomie, therefore, makes for a disjunction between ends and the available legitimate means. So, extravagant or unrealistic aspirations are thought to be a consequence of an anomic breakdown (Adler & Laufer, 1995). When some players sign that first big contract and have an immense amount of expendable cash and power, their regulatory system breaks down and sets free exaggerated aspirations. This is why they are more prone to deviant behavior (Adler & Laufer, 1995; Sage, 1998). This analysis is based on personal and perceptual accounts of deviance in the NFL from the two respondents participating in the study.

The results reveal and confirm the initial interviews I conducted as well as the working hypothesis of the study. Both Bob and Jerry seemed to think that players in the NFL are definitely more likely to commit deviant acts. Some of the deviant acts they

mentioned are as follows: drug abuse, alcohol abuse, spousal abuse, assault and battery, adultery, homosexuality, theft, sexual assault and rape, and murder. Bob and Jerry talked as if these acts would not have been committed had the players been grounded and not let the fame and fortune go to their head.

Bob started off by talking about the NFL lifestyle.

> Let me tell you about life in the NFL. N stands for not. F stands for for. And L stands for long. It's very quick. It's a big lie if you buy into it. Lifestyle in the NFL, if you're not careful, if you're not rooted and grounded and know who you are, it can consume you. As you well know, if you look at the guys I played with and even the guys that are currently playing today, they believe they are bigger than life and the reason they believe they are bigger than life is because people put them up on a pedestal and make them believe that they are some type of god. And if you buy into that then you buy into the negativity, you are buying into a big lie, you are buying into all the untruths, and once it consumes you, you're done. Take for instance the trial of Rae Carruth. He thought he was bigger than life. I don't know if he did it. I prayed that he wasn't the spearhead as it said, but that's just an example to show you how if you let it consume you—you can think that you can do anything and get away with it. The thing that as I sit back and reflect on it—everybody wants to give you something. So those guys that get consumed, once they are through with the game, they still feel that everybody owes them something, and I tell you, it's a three headed monster that's so big that a lot of people don't understand what lies behind it.

Jerry added that,

> NFL does stand for Not For Long, you know why? My first year, it was a huge change—coming from a small college. It was wild back in 84. My first day, I walked into camp—the veterans were sitting around drinking beer, smoking cigarettes, and watching soap operas. And when I say veterans, I mean guys that have been in the league for more than 2 or 3 years. Everyone of those guys thought he was some type of god—and, damn, the women, the women that would come around, I mean, they weren't your average women. These women were gorgeous, every one of them—all looking like swimsuit models and all looking to get with me or one of my teammates. I'm telling you, damn, it's hard to resist those temptations. With all the fine ladies, drugs floating around, and inflated egos, damn, it's hard to stay straight. It's hard to stay in such a demanding league very long when you're out partying every night. And let me tell you, these are just some of the reasons why the NFL stands for Not For Long—hell, I could go on and on with stories and reasons why guys self destructed, but, damn it's the money, the power, the fame. That's what brings these guys down, and, shit, it almost got me good.

Bob went on to say,

> The nightlife was crazy. Like I said earlier, guys were given everything. They go to the clubs, everybody opens the door for them, they don't have to stand in lines, if they drink they don't have to buy their own drinks, and then the women—it's just crazy.
>
> I had an appearance at a place on a Monday night to watch football. It was a bar and grill, and I went there, and watched my teammates… Most of these guys were doing whatever they wanted just because they were football players. Well, the women that hangs around most football players are only after one thing. It's to be seen with that man and they will do anything it takes to be with that man. They don't care if that man is married. They will break up families, and that's a part of that life that I was talking about being consumed. If you buy into that, the nightlife loves you because everybody wants to be seen with a professional athlete.

Jerry added that, "The women are everywhere, all gorgeous, all wanting to be with a football player—be seen with somebody famous." Jerry went on to tell me that the fast life cost him his wife and a lot of his family. Finally after going to a drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility, Jerry got his life back in order.

Bob said,

> Most guys go out, and I know we done saw it on television where they got caught for drinking and driving and they want to get away with it, and that's because society lets them get away with it in most cases. I know a lot of instances where police have pulled over a couple of my teammates and allowed them to go on home just because they knew who they was. I'll tell you about a couple of cases that I know of down in Dallas. One, I was playing in a golf scramble down in Dallas and a guy was speeding. When the cops pulled him over, they recognized who he was and the cop told him to go on and have a nice day, and that's just one of the things that I witnessed down in Dallas. And the other one was that a lot of guys were getting in trouble with spousal abuse, and the cops would come and they would just leave when they found out who was there.

Jerry also commented that he had been pulled over on numerous occasions and let go just because who he was. He talked about this as being one of the many reasons pro

athletes get the big head. He said, "Some of these guys think they can do whatever they want and get away with it. They think they are bigger than life itself."

Bob went on to say,

> So it's a big myth. It's a lie, and if you get caught up in the night scene, the only thing that's going to get you out is God's hands being on you. And the nightlife, I mean you can talk about everything. You can talk about from the drugs on down. I played with guys that were using cocaine, any kind of drug you can think of, those guys were doing it. So it's not a big lie when you hear that so and so and so and so is doing it, and maybe he is, maybe he's not, but he may be around the wrong people. A part of the NFL is about if you get around the wrong people, and the wrong people are plentiful, then you may come into that circle that you don't want to be in. Because there are two different circles. There's the haves and the have-nots, and the ones they call the have-nots are mostly men that believe in God. They call them the have-nots because they call them squares. They mean they don't have no life, they don't go out, they don't do what everybody wants them to do, so those are the have-nots. But the haves are the ones that have 3, 4, 5, 6 women on their plate and believe into the bar scene, staying out all times of the night. For instance, I'll say this on record, I know this to be true in my heart—I believe the reason why the Cincinnati Bengals, the reason I believe they can't get anywhere is because they are all out at the night clubs, constantly, every night, and when you're doing that you're lacking somewhere else. Because if you're tired physically, mentally you're done. So that's why they can't understand what a team is doing to them on Sunday. That's why they can't get in there and break down film, because when they go in there on Monday morning, Tuesday morning, Wednesday morning, Thursday morning, and Friday morning they're tired and especially on Saturday mornings, if they are going out on Friday nights—they're tired and when you get on the field, football is 85% mental, 15% of it is the physical part. That's why the smart guys are not necessarily your best athletes, but because they can think and they know how to be in the proper position at the right time, they last a little longer, and it seems like they're the best. But nine times out of ten, your best athletes are walking on the streets today because they can't sit down—they get consumed by the lifestyle—they can't slow down and study the game enough to get by with just their athletic ability.

Jerry told me that one of the reasons he didn't have a longer career was because he couldn't slow down. He got caught up in the nightlife, hanging out with the guys, drinking a lot, always with different women. He got consumed by the lifestyle.

Bob stated,

I believe drug use is a lot, a lot of it is hidden. I went out one night with some of my teammates, and as I was sitting there watching, seeing what was going on—it's ugly, most of the guys are married and they're cheating on their wives. They're using drugs. It's nothing to see it. And the quick money, the big contracts, is one of the things that I think leads to this consumption that I have been talking about. You see, what happens is, a lot of people will let money be their ruler, will let money be their god. Money doesn't make a person. There's only two things that money can do for you. One, it can make you seem to be on high, or two, it can cause you to lose everything around you. That's the two things it can do for you because, see, money can't make you happy. Money, if it becomes your god and you're happy because you get it then that money becomes your god and that's what you serve, and when you're serving money, you can't be a good person. The reason why you can't be a good person is because you're always trying to figure out a way to keep yours or go and get somebody else's, and you're going to do it by any means necessary. A lot of people around me changed because of the myth of being in the NFL. I can give you a whole list of guys that money changed. It even changed their families. A close friend of mine right now—my dad always told me, it's easier going up but it's harder coming down—see, when people get in the NFL, on their way up, they forget about the people that was there with them and on their way up they step on them and as they step on those people, they build up barriers and you get higher and higher and higher, but as you go up, you can only go up so far. But when you come down, great will be your fall. As you come down, each person that you stepped on—those are the people you're going to start seeing and they're going to remember how you were, and, all the sudden, you're going to find yourself by yourself. And the reason why I say that is because there's a lot of people that lose themselves trying to find themselves, and on their way up they're stepping on people, and on their way down, those are the same people that are there. Now, for my friend, it's hard. He tried to kill himself. There are so many cases like in the NFL that you don't hear about. People trying to kill themselves. People robbing people because, you know what, they bought into the myth. They got consumed, and when you get consumed, it's hard because once you get up, when you fall you're going to fall great and mighty. And the young man has lost his family, friends that he thought were friends are not there, and it's just hard. Even family members turned on him. I've seen it a lot where a young man makes it and his family thinks that he needs to take care of them and that's just not the case. There's a big myth that if you play in the NFL, you're a millionaire. That's the biggest lie going because when I came up, my salary, I started out at 65,000 dollars. But, you know, people think that because I played that I'm suppose to be up there, but that's a big myth. And it all depends on, like, today, in today's game, if you're vested, now you're making money because you're making about 495,000 dollars if you're vested. If you're not vested, the minimum salary is 225,000 dollars, so the game has really changed since I left, but, I tell you man, I've seen a lot of guys that struggled. I had good close friends of mine to leave

their wives for strippers. Now that hurts. There are so many stories I can tell you—we'd be here forever. I mean this is a good friend of mine, he left his wife for a stripper and I, just, for the life of me, I don't understand that. I just don't understand it. I have friends that were married and having babies by other women. I mean, we can go on and on and on about, but I just, for the life of me, I don't understand it because I believe that they got consumed and when you get consumed, as I said earlier, great will be your fall.

Jerry also commented on the fact that at first he didn't sign a huge contract, but he also said that it was still big money back then. He said that he always carried around five or six thousand dollars in his pocket at all times. He talked about going out to strip clubs and blowing ten thousand dollars in a single night, just because he couldn't think of anything better to do.

Bob went on to say,

Money, they say money is power, right, and with money comes prestige. If a lot of guys are not grounded, by their parents, they know who they are and understand that they must treat people the way they want to be treated. When they start growing up with the money and they don't know foundation to understand that as quick as you gain it you can lose it the same way, and when they don't have that foundation or no good upbringing, or principles on how to maintain what they have—then it causes them to go to the left and when you go to the left, sometimes you go to the left, you can't get back because you get consumed. Because in the NFL, it's like a vacuum, and in a vacuum, if you think about how a vacuum sucks you up, you can get sucked up and it's hard to get up out of that vacuum because the force of it pulling in is greater, negative—see that's negative, something pulling in is negative. Something blowing out, that means it's always giving, right. Well, I'd rather be on the giving end than consumed with that vacuum and sucked up into a little spot. And once you get sucked up, as I said earlier, now I keep saying it over and over again, it's hard to get out and you believe the lie that people want you to believe, you're in trouble, and in order for you to keep that status and maintain that, you have to spin, spin, spin in order to keep up with society. And if you try to keep up with society, you in trouble.

The guys that let the money and fame consume them come from all different backgrounds. It's not just the guys that come from poor inner city neighborhoods and grew up without a dad, it's the guys that grew up in good families with a good upbringing too, but let me say the guys with a good upbringing and a good foundation have a much better chance. I think it's 50/50. Let me tell you why it's 50/50. I had a friend from Washington D.C., his dad was a judge and his mom

> was a big lawyer in D.C. He had everything. He didn't have to play football, I mean, the funds that his mom had set for him and his dad, he never had to play football a day in his life. He didn't even have to go to school if he didn't want to. He got consumed, though. I've seen it from both sides, so that's why I say it's 50/50. It doesn't matter. It goes back to how you're grounded and rooted as a young man. Okay, some of them are grounded on good soil, some of them are grounded on sand, and when trials and tribulations come, you know, when the wind starts blowing and the rain starts coming, you know, that sand is going to get muddy or it's going to blow away, and when it gets muddy, don't nobody want to be around nothing that's muddy because it's dirty. So, if you don't have a good foundation and you're building on sand and you ain't building it on a rock, you're going to get consumed. For most of the guys, no matter what background they come from, it's tough to not let the money and power go the their head, to take over their lives. It's tough. It's ugly.

Jerry added that he came from a fairly grounded background, but still got consumed by the NFL life. He bought into the myth, the big lie that Bob talked about.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it appears from the results of this study that players in the National Football League are more likely to commit deviant acts. Deviance is thought, action, or feeling that is contrary to the standards of conduct or the social expectations of a given group or society, and deviants are individuals who engage in rule-breaking behavior (Macionis, 1997). Deviance, in various forms, pervades professional football and society at all levels (Coakley, 2001). Anomie theory, a sociologically rooted explanation of deviance, is useful in explaining deviance in the NFL (Clinard, 1964; Coakley, 2001). Anomie theory, in sum, focuses on a breakdown in the social regulation of individual conduct and argues that this breakdown creates pressure for individual deviance. This pressure stems from the inability of individuals to satisfy their desires through legitimate channels (Passas & Agnew, 1997).

With this case study approach, this study links Durkheim's conception of anomie with the players of the National Football League (Macionis, 1997). Bob and some of the

other players whom he and Jerry talked about are good examples of what happens when guys let the fame and fortune be their rulers. After they let the fame and fortune control their life, that is when a state of anomie occurs (Macionis, 1997). As Bob said, if you buy into the myth, the big lie, and let the NFL lifestyle consume you, eventually "great will be your fall."

Implications for Further Study

A suggested problem of this study was that there were only two respondents, however I did have personal conversations with several other NFL players, which were not included in this study due to time constraints and inadequate audio equipment. A probable explanation was that it was harder to get interviews, while the football season was going on and also the short length of time the researcher had to do the study. A possible follow up study would be to conduct more in-depth interviews and pass out questionnaires that included Leo Srole's (1956) five-item anomia scale and one item from Neal and Seeman's (1964) powerlessness scale. This scale provides a good measure of anomia as experienced by individuals (Srole, 1965). It consists of five statements that subjects are asked to agree or disagree with.

1. In spite of what some people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse.
2. It's hardly fair to bring children into the world with the way things look for the future.
3. Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself.
4. These days a person doesn't really know who he can count on.
5. There's little use writing to public officials because they aren't really interested in the problems of the average man (Srole, 1956).

The question from the Neal and Seeman's (1964) powerlessness scale is:

1. More and more I feel helpless in the face of what's happening in the world today (Neal & Seeman, 1964).

These six items would consist of a unidimensional measure according to a factor analysis. Each respondent would be given a composite factor score on the anomia factor. In order to construct composite measures of the gratification and attainment orientations, a large and equal number of items relating to each dimension would be subjected to a variety of factor analyses. Those items that greatly overlapped both dimensions would be systematically removed until items that related to the two constructs were eventually distinguishable from each other.

The first factor, which would include gratification items, would focus on people's perceptions of, and their approval or disapproval of, contemporary patterns of indulgence: alcohol consumption, drug use, and sexual standards. More specifically, this factor would be built on the degree to which people generally condemn what they perceive as the styles that are popular. The second factor would focus on people's general commitment to strive for future attainments: build a marriage, become wealthy, or simply excel at whatever they do. The third item would deal with the enjoyment of wealth. Its inclusion would require additional interpretation (Abrahamson, 1980).

It would also be beneficial to conduct this same study if there was access to more players, along with coaches and league officials. One would need full cooperation from the NFL in order to conduct a study that would truly yield some benefits and answers. There really needs to be more research done in this area. While this study provides some

information for addressing some of these issues, there are still numerous questions that need to be answered.

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APPENDIX

Below is a partial list of the players who were discovered to have a criminal history.

Player	**Team**	**Charge**	**Disposition**
Adams, Mike (WR)	Pittsburgh	Assault	Charge dismissed
Alexander, Elijah (LB)	Indianapolis	Theft	Charge dismissed
Armstrong, Tyji (TE)	Dallas	Aggravated battery	Acquitted
Bates, Patrick	Atlanta	Assault Criminal trespass Kidnapping Aggravated assault False imprisonment Reckless conduct	Charge dismissed Charge dismissed Pled to reduced charge Pled to assault Pled to reduced charge Pled to damage to property
Beamon, Willie (DB)	NY Giants	Assault	Convicted
Bennett, Cornelius (LB)	Atlanta	Rape Sodomy Unlawful imprisonment Sexual abuse	Pled to reduced charge Pled to reduced charge Pled to reduced charge Pled to reduced charge
Bieniemy, Eric (RB)	Cincinnati	Disorderly conduct	Convicted
Blades, Bennie (DB)	Seattle	DUI	Acquitted
Blades, Brian (WR)	Seattle	Homicide DUI	Acquitted Pled to reduced charge
Bradley, Freddie (RB)	San Diego	Statutory rape	Acquitted
Brandon, Michael (DE)	San Francisco	Robbery	Charge dropped
Brown, Derek (RB)	New Orleans	Violating restraining order Trespassing Domestic violence	Charge dropped Charge dropped Charge dropped
Brown, Gary (OT)	Green Bay	Concealed weapon DUI	Pled no contest Pled no contest
Brown, Gilbert (DT)	Green Bay	Domestic violence	Pled guilty
Cain, Joseph (LB)	Seattle	Carrying concealed gun	Charge dismissed with prejudice

Player	Team	Charge	Disposition
Carter, Dale (DB)	Kansas City	Assault Possession of a gun Weapons probation violation Assault	Convicted Convicted Convicted Charge dismissed
Carter, Dexter (RB)	San Francisco	Trespassing after warning Assault Assault	Pled no contest Convicted Convicted
Chamberlain, Byron (TE)	Denver	Domestic violence	Pled to reduced charge
Christy, Jeff (OL)	Minnesota	Boating while intoxicated	Pled guilty
Clavelle, Shannon (DE)	Green bay	Domestic violence	Charge dismissed
Cobb, Reginald (RB)	NY Jets	Resisting arrest	Charge dropped
Copeland, Russell (WR)	Philadelphia	Domestic violence	Pled guilty
Cothran, Jeff (RB)	Cincinnati	DUI DUI Felony theft	Convicted Pled guilty Charge dropped
Craver, Aaron (RB)	San Diego	Grand theft property Making false statements	Convicted Convicted
Darling, James (LB)	Philadelphia	Assault Burglary Theft DUI	Pled guilty Pled guilty Convicted Pled to reduced charge
DeLong, Greg (TE)	Minnesota	Boating while intoxicated	Pled guilty

Player	Team	Charge	Disposition
Dillon, Corey (RB)	Cincinnati	DUI	Pled to reduced charge
		Possession stolen property theft	Pled guilty
		Intent to sell cocaine	Convicted
		Reckless endangerment	Pled guilty
		Obstructing public servant	Pled guilty
		Resisting arrest	Pled guilty
		Obstructing public servant	Pled guilty
		Assault	Convicted
		Criminal trespass	Convicted
		Assault	Acquitted
		Malicious mischief	Convicted
Dowden, Corey (DB)	San Francisco	Prostitution solicitation	Pled no contest
Everitt, Steven (OL)	Philadelphia	Possession drug paraphernalia	Charge dropped
Fenner, Derrick (RB)	Oakland	Resisting arrest	Charge dismissed
		Disorderly conduct	Pled to reduced charge
		Murder	Charge dropped
		Attempted murder	Charge dropped
		Unlawful use of gun	Charge dropped
		Possession of a gun	Pled to reduced charge
		Possession of cocaine	Pled to reduced charge
Fields, Mark (LB)	New Orleans	DUI/drugs in vehicle	Pled to reduced charges
Floyd, William (RB)	San Francisco	Fraud	Charge dismissed
		Resisting arrest	Charge dismissed
		DUI	Acquitted
		Gun possession	Convicted
Footman, Dan (DE)	Baltimore	Dealing in stolen property	Charge dismissed

Player	Team	Charge	Disposition
Fuller, Corey (DB)	Minnesota	Domestic violence Resisting arrest w/ violence Petty theft Larceny	Pled no contest Charge dropped Entered pretrial diversion program Entered pretrial diversion program
Garner, Charlie (RB)	Philadelphia	Cocaine possession	Juvenile record unavailable
Gaskins, Percell (LB)	St. Louis	Assault	Charge dropped
Grasmanis, Paul (DT)	Chicago	Battery	Charge dismissed
Harris, James (DE)	St. Louis	Domestic violence Domestic violence Conspiracy to sell cocaine	Pled guilty Pled guilty Charge dismissed
Heyward, Craig (RB)	St. Louis	Disorderly conduct Public drunkenness Assault	Pled guilty Pled guilty Charge dismissed
Irvin, Michael (WR)	Dallas	Marijuana possession	Charge dismissed
Jennings, Keith (TE)	Chicago	Domestic violence	Convicted
Jervey, Travis (RB)	Green Bay	Marijuana possession	Charge dropped
Johnson, Bill (DL)	Pittsburgh	DUI DUI	Convicted Convicted
Johnson, Leon (RB)	NY Jets	DUI DUI	Convicted Convicted
Johnson, Melvin (DB)	Tampa Bay	DUI	Convicted
Jones, Damon (TE)	Jacksonville	Manufacturing and placing a bomb Vandalism	Pled guilty Convicted
Jordan, Charles (WR)	Miami	Murder Robbery Auto theft Threatening a witness	Charge dismissed Exonerated Pled no contest to reduced charge Pled guilty
Kennedy, Cortez (DT)	Seattle	Domestic violence	Charge dropped
Lewis, Ray (LB)	Baltimore	Domestic violence	Charge dropped
Lynch, Lorenzo (DB)	Oakland	Assault	Convicted

Player	Team	Charge	Disposition
Mack, Tremain (DB)	Cincinnati	Battery on police officer Resistion arrest w/violence DUI DUI DUI	Pled guilty Pled to reduced charge Convicted of reduced charge Pled to reduced charge Convicted
Malamala, Siupeli (OL)	NY Jets	Property destruction Trespassing Reckless endangerment	Deferred sentence Deferred sentence Deferred sentence
Malone, Van (DB)	Detroit	Burglary	Completed deferred adjudication
Martin, Kelvin (WR)	Dallas	Carrying a weapon	Completed pretrial diversion
McCoy, Tony (DE)	Indianapolis	Sexual assault Aggravated assault Sexual battery Kidnapping Aggravated battery	Charge dismissed Charge dismissed Charge dismissed Charge dismissed Charge dismissed
McGinest, Willie (LB)	New England	False imprisonment Battery	Acquitted by jury Acquitted by jury
Meggett, David (KR)	New England	Sexual assault Prostitution solicitation Domestic violence	Charge dropped Acquitted Acquitted
Mickell, Darren (DT)	New Orleans	Grand larceny	Convicted
Mims, Chris (DE)	San Diego	DUI	Acquitted
Moon, Warren (QB)	Seattle	Domestic violence	Acquitted
Morris, Byron (RB)	Baltimore	Marijuana possession	Pled guilty
Moulds, Eric (WR)	Buffalo	Domestic violence Assault	Pled guilty to harassment Pled guilty
Neal, Lorenzo (RB)	NY Jets	DUI	Pled no contest
Newton, Nate (OL)	Dallas	Sexual assault	Acquitted
Nunn, Freddie Joe (LB)	Phoenix	Lomestic violence	Charge dismissed

Player	Team	Charge	Disposition
Perry, Gerald (OL)	St. Louis	Aggravated rape	Acquitted
		Prostitution solicitation	Pled guilty
		Prostitution solicitation	Convicted
		Assault and battery	Acquitted
		False imprisonment	Acquitted
		Impersonation police	Acquitted
		Assault	Acquitted
		Sexual assault	Pled guilty
Peter, Christian (DL)	NY Giants	Sexual assault	Pled no contest
		Assault	Pled guilty
Phillips, Lawrence (RB)	St. Louis	DUI	Pled guilty
		Domestic violence	Convicted
		Assault	Entered pretrial diversion program
		Disorderly conduct	Pled no contest
		Assault	Pled no contest
		Trespassing	Pled no contest
Plummer, Jake (QB)	Phoenix	Sexual abuse	Pled no contest
		Sexual abuse	Pled no contest
		Sexual abuse	Pled no contest
		Sexual abuse	Pled no contest
Pritchard, Mike (WR)	Seattle	Vehicular assault	Pled guilty to reduced charge
		DUI	Pled guilty
Randle, John (DT)	Minnesota	Domestic violence	Charge dropped
		Domestic violence	Charge dropped
Rison, Andre (WR)	Green Bay	Disorderly conduct	Paid a fine
		Aggravated assault	Charge dismissed
		Gun possession	Charge dismissed
		Discharging a firearm	Charge dismissed
Rucker, Keith (DT)	Washington	Domestic violence	Charge dropped
Ryans, Larry (WR)	New England	Disorderly conduct	Pled on contest
		Resisting arrest	Pled on contest

Player	Team	Charge	Disposition
Sanders, Deion (DB)	Dallas	Aggravated assault Disorderly conduct Battery Trespassing Resisting arrest Leaving accident scene	Pled to reduced charge Pled no contest to reduced charge Pled no contest Convicted Acquitted Acquitted
Sapp, Warren (DL)	Tampa Bay	Marijuana possession	Charge dropped
Sawyer, Corey (DB)	Cincinnati	Fraud Perjury	Entered pretrial diversion program Pled no contest
Shelling, Chris (DB)	Cincinnati	Marijuana possession	Convicted
Shepherd, Leslie (WR)	Washington	Assault Assault	Pled guilty Acquitted
Sylvan, Nilo (WR)	Tampa Bay	Statutory rape	Charges dropped
Simmons, Wayne	Green Bay	DUI Assault and battery	Convicted Charge dropped
Smith, Bruce (DE)	Buffalo	DUI Refusing blood alcohol test	Convicted/ overturned Convicted
Smith, Fernando (DE)	Minnesota	Concealed weapon	Convicted
Smith, Lamar (RB)	Seattle	Vehicular assault Sexual assault	Pled guilty Charge dropped
Spellman, Alonzo (BL)	Chicago	Gun possession	Charge dismissed
Spikes, Irving (RB)	Miami	Domestic violence	Pled no contest
Strong, Mack (RB)	Seattle	DUI	Convicted of reduced charge
Stubblefield, Dana (DT)	San Francisco	Assaulting police officer Resisting arrest	Charge dropped Charge dropped
Stubbs, Daniel (DE)	Miami	Evading detention	Convicted
Thomas, Broderick (LB)	Dallas	Gun possession	Charge dropped
Thomas, Lamar (WR)	Miami	Aggravated battery Aggravated battery Battery	Pled guilty Pled guilty Charge dropped
Tuaolo, Esera (DT)	Minnesota	DUI	Charge dismissed

Player	Team	Charge	Disposition
Tucker, Ryan (OL)	St. Louis	Aggravated assault Assault	Pled no contest Paid a fine
Tuinei, Mark (OT)	Dallas	Assault	Convicted
Walsh, Christopher (WR)	Minnesota DUI	DUI	Pled to reduced charge
Warren, Chris (RB)	Seattle	Assault	Charge dropped
Watkins, Kendell (TE)	Dallas	Carrying a gun	Nonadjudication of guilt
Wheeler, Mark (DT)	New England	Aggravated assault Battery	Entered pretrial diversion program Entered pretrial diversion program
Wilkenson, Dan (DT)	Cincinnati	Domestic violence	Pled no contest
Williams, Dan (DE)	Denver	Threatening a woman	Charge dropped
Williams, Erik (OL)	Dallas	Sexual assault DUI	Charge dropped Pled no contest
Williams, Harvey (RB)	Oakland	Aggravated assault Domestic violence Assault Domestic violence	Pled to reduced charge Convicted Acquitted Charge dropped
Williams, Moe (RB)	Minnesota	Rape Battery	Charge dropped Charge dropped
Williams, Tyrone (DB)	Green Bay	Assault Unlawful use of a gun	Pled guilty Pled guilty
Woodson, Rod (DB)	Pittsburgh	Battery Aiding battery	Acquitted Acquitted
Wooten, Tito (DB)	NY Giants	Domestic violence Larceny Domestic violence Theft Battery of police officer Disorderly conduct	Charge dropped Pled to reduced charge Paid a fine Charge dropped Pled guilty Charge dropped

Benedict & Yaeger, 1998