Going the Distance: Field Approaches to Researching the Rural – A Research Note

Rashi K. Shukla (ORCID: 0000-0002-4608-2529)
Professor of Criminal Justice
School of Criminal Justice
University of Central Oklahoma, United States of America

Melissa Inglis (ORCID: 0000-0001-6058-451X)
Associate Professor of Criminal Justice
Assistant Dean
Col. Tom A. Thomas Endowed Chair
East Central University, United States of America

Correspondence: Rashi K. Shukla; RShukla@uco.edu

Acknowledgements

This project was partially funded by the University of Central Oklahoma Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Special thanks to numerous Undersheriffs, Sheriffs, Chiefs, Lieutenants, Deputies, Chief Agents and Special Agents who participated in this study. The authors also thank Ferdinand Muniz, Nikita Muniz and others including those who remained anonymous. The authors also thank Dr Nicole Warehime, Fleur Eggink, Jessica Hartline and research assistants Danielle Stoneberg, Kenzi Lockwood, Carley Dancer, Paige Copple, Mandy Dorman, Jennifer Holley Brown, Bethany Holley Griffith, Hongming Zhao, Chance McCollum, Kaylan Peterson, Amanda Raper and Sheridan Self.

Abstract

Studies of crime in rural settings have expanded in recent years. Seldom discussed are the challenges associated with conducting rural field research. This research note describes the methodological approaches utilized in a multi-year study of rural law enforcement across Oklahoma and a nearby state in the United States. Research aims and methodology evolved over time in line with the flexibility inherent within ethnographic approaches. Interviews and field visits were conducted with 39 individuals from 2017 to 2019 for the purpose of understanding rural communities, crime and policing. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, field visits, ride-alongs, observations and photographs. Owing to the nature of the subject matter, researchers had to maintain flexibility throughout the research process. This research note discusses the range of approaches utilized to gather data, obstacles encountered and insights discovered through the process.

Keywords: rural; policing; ethnography; crime; drugs

There is a growing body of research on rural policing and the unique challenges posed for those operating in rural settings. Qualitative approaches are suited for understanding rural issues and the contexts in which officers work. Scholars are able to immerse themselves in research settings to gain a deeper knowledge of the topic of interest. Sociologists, anthropologists, criminologists and other scholars have long understood the importance of ethnographic methodologies for studying culture and settings among difficult to access populations (see Boeri & Shukla, 2019; Bourgois, 1995, 2009; Contreras, 2012).

Within criminal justice and criminology, there is a need for research in rural settings (see Donnermeyer & DeKeseredy, 2008, 2014; Weisheit & Donnermeyer, 2012). Few scholars have studied rural law enforcement extensively (for example, Cain, 1973; Maguire et al., 1997; Mawby, 2004; Mawby & Yarwood, 2016; Payne et al., 2005; Shukla et al., 2019; Thurman & McGarrell, 2005; Weisheit et al., 1994; Weisheit et al., 1995, 2006). Much of what is known is based on research conducted outside of the United States (US) (see Barclay et al., 2007; Buttle et al., 2010; Eman & Bulovec, 2021; Jobes, 2002; Masuku & Motlalekgosi, 2021; Mawby, 2004; Mawby & Yarwood, 2016; Ruddell, 2017). Recently a great deal of emphasis has been placed on the methodologies utilized in rural research (see Weisheit et al., 2022; Peterson, 2022a; Smith, 2022; Statz & Garriott, 2022); recent publications include the 2022 book *Research Methods for Rural Criminologists* (see Weisheit et al., 2022) and research note published in Volume 7, Issue 1 of this journal (see Peterson, 2022b).

Awareness of researcher roles and methods used to interact with participants in field settings is critical for obtaining quality data. There are specific ways to utilize unique researcher roles during field research to maximize data collection (e.g. being an insider, an outsider, or occupational roles) (see Peterson, 2022a). Representing an insider versus an outsider status in rural research can present possible obstacles in gaining rural access. An insider is someone who is a member of the community or has been part of the group being studied. When a researcher is an insider or can identify themselves as close to an insider's status, for example by having insider contacts or knowledge, barriers between researchers and participants may be lowered and result in more accurate and detailed data. On the other hand, when researchers occupy outsider statuses, rather than lowering, barriers may increase and result in more limited data: "In rural communities, this is particularly true when researchers must combat in inherent distrust of outsiders, dense social networks, and higher levels of collective efficacy" (Cebulak, 2004; Donnermeyer & DeKeserady, 2014; Websdale, 1998; Weisheit et al., 2006, as cited in Peterson, 2022a, p. 48).

Researcher positionality such as occupational positionality as former law enforcement, and situational positionality such as currently residing in a rural area, may assist in facilitating data collection due to the commonalities between researchers and participants. In contrast, researcher positionality such as visible status as a marginalized group may pose a liability in some rural areas. In rural ethnographic studies, positionality of researchers and participants may impact initial access to communities, likelihood of subject participation, and type and amount of data collected.

This research note describes methodological approaches utilized in a field research project situated in Oklahoma with one field visit to Missouri. It expands what is known about ethnographic approaches to the study of rural policing by drawing from experiences during a multi-year study of rural law enforcement. This study is unique in that it evolved over the course of more than a decade. Data for the broader project was collected over an extended period of time, allowing for a problem driven ethnographic approach. Research questions and participant selection changed as the study progressed. The fact that research questions and foci developed over time differentiates this project from other studies of rural policing. Methodological approaches at various stages and key challenges encountered are described. A typology of approaches utilized is presented.

The Study: Rural Settings and Approach

Data were gathered through 39 interviews and field visits conducted between 2017 and 2019. These field visits were part of a broader ethnographical project that started in 2004. Whereas the project initially focused on methamphetamine (see Shukla & Bartgis, 2008, 2010, 2011; Shukla et al., 2012; Shukla, 2016; Shukla et al., 2016; Stoneberg et al., 2018), it matured to examine rural policing (see Shukla et al., 2019) and rural crimes (e.g. cattle rustling, equipment theft, arson). Data were gathered via multiple approaches including qualitative interviews, field visits, observations (e.g. attending training, trials, conferences), and surveys (i.e. in person, mail, email). The project was approved by the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) Institutional Review Board. Research participants were provided with the option of maintaining confidentiality or having their identities linked to their responses.

This study was partially funded by the UCO Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Over several years, internal grant funds were used to support reassignment time for principal investigator, some travel costs, equipment and software and so on. Grants also supported research assistants who attended some field visits, transcribed interviews, and engaged various other research activities. Members of the research team personally financed aspects of this project out of pocket (e.g. hotel costs, meals, travel expenses, copies of a book provided to participants).

A majority of research activities occurred in the state of Oklahoma in the United States, a conservative Midwestern state with a population of approximately 3.9 million people (US Census Bureau, 2022). Oklahoma is primarily rural and divided into 77 counties. The state is diverse with regards to terrain and proximity between populated communities and major highways. It is noteworthy that the culture of Oklahoma includes tribal sovereignty and rural law enforcement with deep historical roots to a locale that lacked formal laws and systems of justice. Historically, justice involved vigilantism and interactions between lawmen and outlaws on tribal and non-tribal lands. In rural communities, law enforcement may be cross-deputized to assist with tribal policing both on and off tribal lands.

With regards to positionality and insider/outsider status, the members of the research team in this project varied. One of the researchers was born and raised in rural Oklahoma and worked as an academic staff member at a university situated in a rural community. This positionality provided pre-existing knowledge about rural culture and connections to members in some of the visited rural communities. The Principal Investigator, however, was a complete outsider with regards to gender, ethnicity and with primarily suburban life experiences; in her case, she had never lived or worked in a rural community or setting.

Entre to the Rural Field: The First Visit

The first field visit occurred more than a decade ago, when the Chief of a small rural police department extended an invitation to visit his community (see Shukla & Bartgis, 2011; Shukla & Boeri, 2019). In response to a mail survey on the methamphetamine problem administered to all law enforcement agencies in Oklahoma, the Chief had returned all of the survey materials (i.e. consent form, blank survey, self-addressed stamped envelope) in a large manila envelope, postage-paid at his expense, with the survey unanswered. The items were stapled to a typed letter in which the Chief described his frustrations working in a small, understaffed, rural department and expressed exasperation at the lack of support he experienced responding to methamphetamine at the local level. It ended with the statement, "I am forced to fight this battle alone. So, to me, your survey is not worth the effort" (Shukla & Boeri, 2019, p. 250).

This 'non-response' sent a powerful message and eventually altered the trajectory of the project and methodologies employed. The situation led to a period of reflection, which included consultation with other scholars. A decision was made to call the Chief directly. The resulting hour-long conversation was rich in detail; the conversation highlighted the Chief's frustrations and the limitations he faced battling methamphetamine in his small town. The Chief, who had served in his role for more than 20 years (as one of the longest serving Chiefs in the state), concluded the conversation with the personal invitation to visit him to personally observe the challenges he faced. The field visit resulted in a better perception of the significance of jurisdictional boundaries, the challenges posed by tribal lands, and the ties that bind those enforcing the law in small town, rural Oklahoma (Shukla & Boeri, 2019). The experience and subsequent encounter was eye-opening and perspective-shifting.

The visit established the realization that driving to remote areas off the beaten path, for the purposes of gathering information from individuals residing and working in said communities, was important. The field visits to rural areas provided context for comprehending the vastness of distances between rural areas, the extensive travel time involved, and unique community characteristics (e.g. types of farming and agriculture) (see Peterson 2022a, 2022b). Additionally, it reaffirmed the value of using an ethnographic approach that combined semi-structured interviews and ride-alongs with rural law enforcement through their communities. While the initial visit was unplanned in that it had not been part of the original research design, making the trip involved a great deal of planning and proved to be very educational. The visit and surrounding circumstances are

illustrative of the uncertainty and flexibility that often accompanies qualitative research.

The Set Up: Preparing for Rural Field Visits

Selecting participants and locations is a purposeful and planned activity which is an essential initial step of the research process. In some instances, field visits were centered around an identified person willing to meet for an interview. In others, the process started with the location of interest (e.g. specific city, county, region), followed by the identification of specific individuals. Other leads were initiated through planned and unplanned interactions with individuals connected to the rural law enforcement community.

Making initial contact with an agency or individual occurred in different ways. Many times, participants were identified via a chain-referral snowball sampling strategy (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). Sometimes, a member of the research team knew an individual and researchers made contact with that individual. Other times, individuals with contacts assisted by arranging field visits. In one instance, a research assistant (RA) knew a rural Chief through her place of employment. The RA facilitated the initial contact and scheduled the face-to-face meeting. In this case, researchers unexpectedly completed an interview with a second knowledgeable individual who happened to be present when researchers arrived.

At times, researchers cold-called individuals at specific agencies in areas of interest to inquire about an interview and set up a visit. Sometimes this would be based on the identification of a geographical area of interest, while other times leads would be facilitated by other situations or events (e.g. drug bust reported in the news). Researchers purposefully sought out rural communities across diverse parts of the state. All cold call field visits were initiated via an initial phone call to a law enforcement agency. Field visits were set up if officials agreed.

Approaches also involved utilizing multiple diverse strategies, as was the case with making arrangements for a multi-day visit to the Oklahoma Panhandle. Having local connections was essential for facilitating contacts with law enforcement in this part of the state. The Oklahoma Panhandle is a relatively tight-knit community that is culturally and geographically unique.

Local connections were crucial for arranging initial interviews in the Panhandle. The first contact occurred via assistance from a colleague who was a community insider. She provided introductions to two officials in different counties. Another local Sheriff was connected to one of the researchers via the sibling of a childhood friend who worked with his wife. Interviews were scheduled with the three officials. Cold calls were then made to other law enforcement officials in the vicinity. During the cold calls, local connections and scheduled interviews with others seemed to provide a sense of legitimacy. Gaining the trust of a few officials was helpful for opening doors and gaining access to others.

Attending training sessions and other events centred around rural law enforcement also proved to be beneficial. In the state of Oklahoma, the majority of law enforcement agencies are located in rural communities. Relative to general law enforcement training, rural crime investigations training is rare and highly specialized. The professionals hosting these types of classes have a great deal of experience and an extensive understanding of crime in rural spaces (e.g. domestic violence in rural areas) and rural crimes specifically (e.g. timber theft, cattle theft).

Typically, researchers are not allowed in specialized law enforcement training. However, due to the rapport built with rural law enforcement officials during the data collection process, researchers were invited to attend an advanced rural crime investigations class. This enabled researchers to gain valuable training details and contextual information about rural crime challenges. Further, it facilitated contacts with others who later participated in lengthy field visits and ride-alongs that sometimes crossed multiple counties. Engaging in multiple rapport building and networking strategies was helpful in obtaining better quality data and in obtaining more interviews with law enforcement. These types of experiences served dual purposes; they allowed researchers to learn about rural crimes and investigations within rural contexts while providing them with networking opportunities for subsequent field visits. All of the noted activities helped researchers establish credibility and legitimacy within the rural Oklahoma law enforcement communities within which they interacted.

On the Road: Logistics and Planning in Rural Settings

A number of 'pre-field' planning steps preceded fieldwork in this study. These logistical planning steps varied depending on a number of factors including, but not limited to type of visit, travel distance, and length of stay. While the logistics involved in planning the field visits were not unique to rural research, specific and unique challenges arose due to the large and remote areas being covered (see Peterson, 2022a, 2022b).

For field visits with an overnight stay in small, rural communities, securing accommodations presented unique challenges. The lack of familiarity with an area combined with limited options made this process tricky. Finding safe and secure places in relatively close proximity to scheduled locations, or in the case of multi-day, multiple-interview visits between distant locations, was difficult. In some cases accommodations were selected based solely on online reviews, while in others law enforcement officials suggested local hotels, motels, or bed and breakfasts. As outsiders, researchers had limited to no knowledge of which locations, of the very limited options available, were safe and secure. In the most remote area included in this study (i.e. Oklahoma Panhandle), there were only two accommodations within a 60-mile radius, one of which offered only outdoor bathrooms.

Planning visits also involved a number of other considerations. These included: determining who would go, who would drive, how many vehicles would be driven (i.e. when research team members are leaving from different cities), when and where to meet for the

trip, and planning for the duration of trip (e.g. meals, breaks). Planning travel also involved a great deal of time coordination between members of the research team and participants.

Ensuring that all relevant research materials and travel information was packed for the trip was important as well. Typical research materials were recording equipment, extra batteries, interview storage devices (e.g. secure digital (SD) cards, USB flash drives, cassette tape and so on), notebooks, pens, and copies of informed consent forms and interview instruments. Other materials included travel directions between research sites, physical maps, and Global Position System (GPS).

In the Field: Interviews & Ride-Alongs in Rural Areas

Extensive amounts of rich data were captured during each visit. Data were collected through participant observations, semi-structured qualitative interviews, and via ride-alongs with law enforcement officials in the communities of interest. Data, including photographs, hand written notes, and audio recordings, were stored on password protected computers and on storage devices in a locked cabinet in the Principal Investigator's office. The benefits of field visits and ride-alongs cannot be underestimated. Taking time to travel to distant locations to meet law enforcement officials in their own communities was critical. Data quality was enhanced by the physical presence of and interactions between researchers and law enforcement.

A great deal of information was obtained during the ride-alongs. Periods of time spent with law enforcement in their vehicles, be it for 30 minutes or several hours, were invaluable. Information gained not only provided context for information obtained during formal in office interviews, but expanded on what was being shared and learned in meaningful and significant ways.

Ride-alongs proved essential for grasping community characteristics, population density, the importance of ‘space’, and the range of geographical constraints rural officers face (see Peterson, 2022a, 2022b). It was only by riding along with officers that researchers developed meaningful insights into some of the unique challenges of rural policing. For example, officials knew where offenders lived and often knew offenders personally due to the size and cohesiveness of the communities. It was also striking to witness firsthand how community members recognize and respond to the presence of law enforcement in communities even when in unmarked vehicles. It is likely that these insights would not have been truly understood or appreciated without the ride-alongs.

A great deal of storytelling, also known as crime talk (see Pytlarz & Bowden, 2022), occurred during the course of ride-alongs. Storytelling was used to provide historical and geographical context. Shared time in officers’ vehicles was necessary not only for collecting rich data, but for building rapport and strengthening relationships between law enforcement and the research team.

During each field visit, researchers provided participants with a criminal justice university coin and/or copy of the principal researcher's book, *Methamphetamine: A Love Story* (Shukla, 2016). The timing of these visits following the publication of the book provided the research team with a unique opportunity to show appreciation to officials for their time and professional courtesy. Law enforcement were very receptive to receiving these items and sometimes asked for the book to be signed.

A Typology of Approaches: Rural Ethnographic Field Visits

All field visits involved driving to a specific community to gather information and understand context firsthand. Data were obtained from observations, in-person interviews and ride-alongs, with and without law enforcement. These field visits can be generally categorized according to the following typology.

1 Trip, 1 Interview Field Visit – Short
Visits to a single location for an interview with a law enforcement official. Interviews were conducted in an office and sometimes followed by a ride-along in the officer's vehicle (i.e. marked or unmarked). In cases when no ride-along was offered, researchers sometimes independently drove around the community.

1 Trip, 1 Interview, Multiple Interviewees Field Visit – Short
Visits to a single location for interviews with multiple interviewees. Researchers would schedule a field visit with a specific official. Upon meeting the interviewee, another individual would be present. Typically, the individual was a co-worker (e.g. drug investigator, undersheriff, other employee) invited by the interviewee to participate in the interview. Sometimes these visits would be followed by ride-alongs.

1 Trip, 1 Interview Field Visit – Extended
Extended visits involved spending hours riding along with officers while they responded to questions. Researchers met officials and left their vehicles parked in a public location. During these visits, researchers would have extended time (e.g. five hours) with the officers. Interactions included formal interviews and informal conversations (e.g. during lunch).

1 Trip, Multiple Interviews Field Visit
Researchers sometimes scheduled two interviews in locations in close proximity to one another, back to back. Researchers would meet at a location for the first interview. They would then drive to another location to conduct the next interview.

Multiple Day, Multiple Interviews & Field Visits
Scheduled multiple interviews over multiple days in a specific region of the state. This involved researchers driving to one location, conducting multiple interviews in separate locations during the course of the day. This was followed by an overnight stay and additional interviews in separate locations the next day(s). This was the case

in the Oklahoma Panhandle, when seven interviews were conducted over a three day time span during which the research team drove over 1,000 miles (over 1,600 kilometres).

All methods proved useful. Field visits were crucial for interpreting context. Visiting rural communities provided researchers with an experiential understanding of the remoteness of rural communities and the vast distances between populated areas in rural Oklahoma. Further, direct observations of geographical characteristics including types of agriculture being grown and the proximity between known offenders in the community and law enforcement (i.e. law enforcement offices & personal residences) allowed researchers to gain a better awareness of the unique contexts within which rural law enforcement officials operated. During encounters where researchers accompanied law enforcement officials into communities, they also provided researchers with an opportunity to see how community members reacted to officials in public settings. Whereas uniformed law enforcement officials are likely to be publicly recognized in any community, in smaller, rural towns and communities, community members often know law enforcement officials by name – and sometimes exactly where they live.

During some field visits researchers were taken to observe specific rural crime settings. For example, in an extended field visit, researchers were escorted to a livestock auction to witness firsthand the 'setting' in which both illicit and legitimate cattle sales occurred; they also were able to observe how officers gather investigatory information (e.g. via thick paper, logbooks). During a short field visit, researchers were taken to a house where a recent methamphetamine lab bust had occurred. Other times, researchers were presented with unexpected experiential encounters (e.g. an opportunity to field test a sample of methamphetamine in the Chief's office). Although researchers planned and hoped for rich data collection during field visits, they were typically unaware of what would happen until arrival at a location.

A limitation of conducting multiple interviews during a limited period of time was the time restriction on opportunities for interviews and ride-alongs. Estimating time was extremely difficult. In rural areas, the distance travelled to field visit settings and between them can be both extensive and time-consuming. In addition, the length of time needed for interviews and ride-alongs were unknown. From a financial standpoint, the strength of conducting multiple interviews during a single field visit was the maximization of resources (e.g. fuel, time) (see Peterson, 2022a, 2022b).

Insights for Rural Ethnography: Lessons Learned

Reflections on the ethnographic approach utilized here lend a number of insights. These include: the importance of research teams; planning; flexibility; following leads; building rapport; engaging in networking strategies; the importance of meeting people where they are; preparing for uncertainty with regards to time; and dealing with expected and unexpected obstacles and challenges. Each is briefly described next.

First, the importance of attending field visits in research teams of two or more persons was helpful. For the principal interviewer it was useful to be the passenger rather than the driver. This allowed an opportunity to mentally focus and conduct a final check of materials prior to arrival at a field site. Multi-member research teams were also preferable for long distance field visits as they provided multiple note-takers to document information.

Second, planning is of critical importance. Have a plan, but don't rigidly adhere to it. Planning applies to each stage of the process: pre-field; going into the field; data collection/gathering; leaving the field; and data analysis. Those who 'go the distance' must plan for and stay on top of a number of things simultaneously before, during and after each field visit.

Third, stay flexible. No matter what researchers think will happen or plan for, things may not work out as expected. Multiple instances occurred over the years where researchers would arrive on scene to find themselves in unanticipated situations. The flexibility inherent in this study is what truly enriched the data. Flexibility applied not just to members of the research team, but more importantly, to participating officials. Allowing flexibility with regards to law enforcements' level and nature of participation was essential.

Fourth, (learn to) follow the lead. Let the data, research findings, interaction with professionals, and connections guide you from where you are, to where you need to go or be next. Researchers engaged with rural law enforcement in a multitude of ways, taking advantage of every opportunity to interact and network with them in formal and informal settings. For example, researchers attended a specialized rural crime training class and observed a trial dealing with feral hog hunts, which provided a lot of insight into the culture of the south-eastern corner of the state. These strategies were useful for multiple purposes including making contacts with others as well as providing contextual details for interpreting the data being gathered. Such interactions enhanced working relationships between officials and the research team.

Fifth, meet people where they are. Take advantage of opportunities to interact with rural law enforcement (or other parties of interest) in settings and at events where they spend time. Taking the time to engage in activities that are not specifically data-driven (e.g. not focused on data collection) can lead to connections and knowledge, providing invaluable context from which to interpret and understand information provided by participants along the way.

Sixth, prepare for the uncertainty of time. Assessing lengths of time needed were tricky at every stage of the process. Researchers often started by determining the estimated travel time to rural communities and worked backwards to schedule departure times to ensure arrival in time for interviews. Total travel time was often much lengthier than the time needed for the field visit itself. In some cases, researchers would drive several hours one way to a location, spend hours at the location with participants, then drive several hours home. 'Time'

involved the time it took to get to the location, the unknown length of time for the interviews and ride-alongs, time allotted to take a break or get lunch between field visits, and travel to the next field visit.

Seventh, be prepared for expected and unexpected obstacles and challenges (see Peterson, 2022a, 2022b). Expected obstacles in research settings involved the following: getting to locations on time; technical difficulties (e.g. recording failure, misplaced forms); challenges associated with making it to the next location on time when multiple interviews occurred in a single day. Unexpected obstacles unrelated to research included: hitting a deer while driving home; getting a flat tire on the way to a field visit during a tornado; waiting through emergencies (e.g. waiting for a sheriff to be available following a suicide attempt by a jail detainee); responding to opportunities for unplanned interviews; finding a place to eat in a food desert; potential dangers of being in the middle of nowhere being outsiders in a closed rural community (e.g. being followed out by a truck until researchers left the community).

Researchers were never quite able to precisely plan for what would occur during field visits to distant communities. Officials often did not commit to what would occur during a field visit, outside of the interview. Once trust was established during the interview, other opportunities sometimes occurred, such as ride-alongs and jail tours. This had the potential to pose challenges in instances where sufficient time was not allotted for extended time at a field visit site. Researchers rarely knew exactly what would occur during the field visit.

Conclusion

This research note contributes to what is known about rural research methodologies by specifically focusing on ‘successful’ strategies utilized over a 15-plus year ethnographic project. In this study, ethnographic fieldwork was essential for understanding rural policing and the challenges faced by law enforcement within their working contexts. Researchers never knew exactly what would occur during field visits. Maintaining flexibility and being prepared to adapt to uncertain situations are of key importance in this type of research. Various methods were utilized due to diversities inherent in subject expectations, the nature of the type of work being carried out, and the types of settings. This project exemplifies the heterogeneity of ethnography (Shukla & Boeri, 2019).

This research note ends with a few words of advice for those who may be interested in engaging in this type of field research. In this type of fieldwork, uncertainty abounds and often unplanned events and encounters are sometimes the most revealing. Be prepared for the expected and unexpected with regards to how things might play out. Allow participants to lead and guide research efforts. Last but not least, enjoy these once-in-a-lifetime experiences and encounters; although ethnographic field studies can be expensive, they are priceless.

References

Barclay, E., Donnermeyer, J., Scott, J. & Hogg, R. (Eds.) (2007). *Crime in rural Australia*. The Federation Press.

Biernacki, P. & Waldorf, D. (1981). Snowball sampling: Problems and techniques of chain referral sampling. *Sociological Methods & Research, 10*(2): 141-163. https://doi.org/10.1177/004912418101000205

Boeri, M. & Shukla, R.K. (2019). *Inside ethnography: Researchers reflect on the challenges of reaching hidden populations*. University of California Press. https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520970458

Bourgois, P. (1995). *In search of respect: Selling crack in El Barrio*. Cambridge University Press.

Bourgois, P. (2009). *Righteous dopefiend*. University of California Press.

Buttle, J., Fowler, C. & Williams, M.W. (2010). The impact of rural policing on the private lives of New Zealand police officers. *Journal of Police Science & Management, 12*(4), 596-606.

Cain, M.E. (1973). *Society and the policeman's role*. NY: Routledge.

Cebulak, W. (2004). Why rural crime and justice really matter. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology, 19*(1), 71-81. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02802576

Contreras, R. (2012). *The stickup kids: Race, drugs, violence, and the American Dream*. University of California Press. https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520953574

Donnermeyer, J.F. & DeKeseredy, W. (2008). Toward a rural critical criminology. *Journal of Rural Social Sciences, 23*(2), 4-28.

Donnermeyer, J.F. & DeKeseredy, W. (2014). *Rural criminology: New directions in critical criminology*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203094518

Eman, K. & Bulovec, T. (2021). A case study of rural crime and policing in Pomurje region in Slovenia. *Journal of Rural Studies, 85*, 43-51. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.05.012

Jobes, P.C. (2002). Effective officer and good neighbour: Problems and perceptions among police in rural Australia. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management, 25*(2), 256-273. https://doi.org/10.1108/13639510210429365

Maguire, E.R., Kuhns, J.B., Uchida, C.D. & Cox, S.M. (1997). Patterns of community policing in nonurban America. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 34*(3), 368-394.

Masuku, S.C. & Motlalekgosi, H.P. (2021). Community policing and stock theft in selected rural areas of the Mpumalanga province of South Africa. *Technicum Social Sciences Journal, 24*, 667-668.

Mawby, R.I. (2004). Myth and reality in rural policing: Perceptions of the police in a rural county of England. *Policing: An International Journal, 27*(3), 431-446. https://doi.org/10.1108/13639510410553158

Mawby, R.I. & Yarwood, R. (2016). *Rural policing and policing the rural: A constable countryside?* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315607191

Payne, B.K., Berg, B.L. & Sun, I.Y. (2005). Policing in small town America: Dogs, drunks, disorder, and dysfunction. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 33*(1), 31-41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2004.10.006

Peterson, J.R. (2022a). Gaining access to rural communities. In R.A. Weisheit, J.R. Peterson & A. Pytlarz (Eds.). *Research methods for rural criminologists* (pp. 43-54). Routledge.

Peterson, J.R. (2022b). Notes for the rural criminologist: Conducting field research with rural law enforcement. *International Journal of Rural Criminology, 7*(1), 148-160.

Pytlarz, A. & Bowden, M. (2022). Crime talk in the Countryside. In R.A. Weisheit, J.R. Peterson & A. Pytlarz (Eds.). *Research methods for rural criminologists* (pp. 91–102). Routledge.

Ruddell, R. (2017). *Policing rural Canada: Police, partners, and public safety*. de Sitter Publications. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315755885-44

Shukla, R.K. (2016). *Methamphetamine: A love story*. University of California Press. https://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520291010.001.0001

Shukla, R.K. & Bartgis, E.E. (2008). An analysis of clandestine methamphetamine laboratory seizures in Oklahoma. *Crime Prevention & Community Safety, 10*(2), 97-110.

Shukla, R.K. & Bartgis, E.E. (2010). Responding to clandestine methamphetamine manufacturing: A case study in situational crime prevention. *Criminal Justice Policy Review, 21*(3), 338-362. https://doi.org/10.1177/0887403409352209

Shukla, R.K. & Bartgis, E.E. (2011). Methamphetamine: The resurgence of manufacturing after Oklahoma House Bill 2176. *Law Enforcement Executive Forum, 11*(4), 71-90.

Shukla, R.K., Bell, K., Maier, E. A. & Newton, D.C. (2016). Forensic evaluations of drug endangered children: "My house caught on fire; my cat jumped out the window." *Children and Youth Services Review, 67*, 67-75.

Shukla, R.K. & Boeri, M. (2019). Conclusions: Looking back, moving forward. In M. Boeri & R. Shukla (Eds.), *Inside ethnography: Researchers reflect on the challenges of reaching hidden populations* (pp. 249-264). University of California Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvqmp20g.18

Shukla, R.K., Crump, J.L. & Chrisco, E.S. (2012). An evolving problem: Methamphetamine production and trafficking in the United States. *International Journal of Drug Policy, 23*, 426-435.

Shukla, R. K., Stoneberg, D., Lockwood, K., Copple, P., Dorman, M. & Jones, F.M. (2019). The interaction of crime and place: An exploratory study of crime and policing in non-metropolitan areas. *Crime Prevention & Community Safety, 21*, 200-214.

Smith, K. (2022). Interviewing in rural areas. In R.A. Weisheit, J.R. Peterson & A. Pytlarz (Eds.). *Research methods for rural criminologists* (pp. 156-167). Routledge.

Statz, M. & Garriott, W. (2022). Ethnographic research: Immersing oneself in the rural environment. In R.A. Weisheit, J.R. Peterson & Pytlarz, A. (Eds.). *Research methods for rural criminologists* (pp. 168-179). Routledge.

Stoneberg, D.M., Shukla, R.K. & Magness, M.B. (2018). Global methamphetamine trends: An evolving problem. *International Criminal Justice Review, 28*(2), 136-161. https://doi.org/10.1177/1057567717730104

Thurman, Q.C. & McGarrell, E.F. (2005). *Community policing in a rural setting*. Anderson Publishing.

US Census Bureau. (2022, March). Quickfacts – Oklahoma; United States. http://census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/OK,US/INC110219

Websdale, N. (1998). *Rural women battering and the justice system: An ethnography*. Sage.

Weisheit, R.A. & Donnermeyer, J.F. (2012). *Change and continuity in crime in rural America*. Createspace Independent Publishing Platform.

Weisheit, R.A., Wells, L.E. & Falcone, D.N. (1994). Community policing in small town and rural America. *Crime & Delinquency, 4*(4), 549-567. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128794040004005

Weisheit, R.A., Falcone, D.N. & Wells, L.E. (1995). *Crime and policing in rural and small-town America: An Overview of the Issues*. Washington DC: Department of Justice.

Weisheit, R.A., Falcone, D.N. & Wells, L.E. (2006). *Crime and policing in rural and small-town America*. Waveland Press.

Weisheit, R.A., Peterson, J.R. & Pytlarz, A. (Eds.) (2022). *Research methods for rural criminologists*. Routledge.