

For the New Boss

As a police department we do a great job of supervising and managing but I think that we forgot what leadership is all about. Think about it. The past administration's goal was to reduce murders through the strategy of addressing gangs, guns and drugs. In the meantime many Districts saw increases in the crimes of robbery, burglary and theft. But many of these trends were pushed aside for missions in the DOC. Missions – now there's a concept that's overdone. Everything we do is a mission of some type. And make sure an event number is assigned. Does anyone really believe that these missions are accomplishing anything? Really?

Many districts had their manpower depleted to increase the size of various citywide units like TRU. Many officers were worn thin by having to be detailed throughout the city on weekends and to suffer numerous cancellations to their days off whether they wanted to work or not. Is this leadership? I think not. Sure there was a reduction to murders, but at what cost?

In my quarter of a century on the job I can't remember morale being lower. No one *wants* to police anymore. Everyone wants to just get through their day as easily as they can. Ask any cop why and he will tell you without hesitation that he fears the department will sell him out. And the public despises us. Everything we do, right or wrong, is questioned by the community groups and the media. Who's standing up for us? Where are our leaders? I would be thrilled to have just one top boss stand up in the limelight and make the following statement: "Folks, here's how we can prevent all these people from being shot: *obey the law!* Let's also remember, please, that a police officer has the right to defend himself, his partners and anyone whose life may be in jeopardy. If people would obey the law; not carry guns and sell drugs; not run or fight the police, then these shootings would not be happening. Period. End of story." That's a leader.

We also need to reinstall discipline. We have gone from a paramilitary organization to a fraternity. Just attend a roll call and look at all the uniforms present. Ties, no ties, dickies; baseball hats, police hats, knit skullcaps; dress pants, field pants, cargo pants and shorts; 3 or 4 different types of jackets; sweaters; various colors of outside vest covers...my God we look just like a roll call out of Hill Street Blues! How can you be the police when you don't look like the police? Sometimes it seems that no one cares what they look like anymore. Nail polish, earrings, long hair, goatees and unshaven faces are all covered in an order. But is it ever enforced anymore? Now IAD tells you that a male can have hair of any length *as long as he can pin it up above his collar like the females?* What? If you don't care about yourself, how can you care for others? Also, I'm sure that every white shirt out there has the horror story about telling someone to perform a task and getting back the infamous retort: *Why? Why? Because it's your job, that's why.* This department is not, nor should ever be like a college fraternity.

I also hope that whoever takes over the reins of CPD reads the article about San Diego Police Chief Williams Lansdowne in the Police Executive Research Forum where he says:

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"The most difficult, dangerous, complex job in the police department is the patrol officer that answers calls every day. Everybody else is support to that patrol person. What we have traditionally done in law enforcement is we've overspecialized. We have SWAT teams, negotiator teams, robbery teams, homicide teams, sexual assault teams, and there's a belief that we need more investigative teams, we need more task forces, fugitive task forces – and we've always drained patrol....

I've reversed that. I've taken people out of specialized units and put them in patrol, so we have enough people to be over the minimum staffing levels..." *

Wow! What a concept!

Whoever takes over, I hope that he or she takes the time to sit down and look back to where we have been, where we are now, and where we can go in the future. I hope he or she brings us true leadership, builds morale and discipline, and supports the cop on the street who needs it most. After all, that person will become the Superintendent of the finest police department in the United States.

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