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# American Policing 2054



Advancing Community Policing  
over the Next 30 Years

Edited by Nazmia E.A. Comrie and Shanetta Y. Cutlar



**COPS**

Community Oriented Policing Services  
U.S. Department of Justice



# American Policing 2054



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over the Next 30 Years

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Recommended citation:

Comrie, Nazmia E.A., and Shanetta Y. Cutlar, eds. 2024. *American Policing 2054: Advancing Community Policing over the Next 30 Years*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

Published 2024

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# Letter from the Director of the COPS Office

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Colleagues:

Today's law enforcement is nimble and resilient, but it isn't psychic. No one can predict with complete confidence what the field will look like in 30 years.

And yet the last 30 years of law enforcement, in a way, has been a constant attempt to learn how to predict the future, through a wide range of innovative approaches with the shared premise that we can use our knowledge of past and present conditions to make predictions about how crime and disorder arise and what works to mitigate or prevent them. In the course of my career as a law enforcement executive, I pushed my agency to continually refine and redefine its approach, from community policing to data-driven policing to evidence-based policing, seeking for a surgical response to systemic criminal issues using data and technology.

Law enforcement leaders have always had to be forward-thinking—informed not only of what their community needs and wants, but of how it is changing. In a way, the law enforcement leaders and experts who contributed to this book were tasked with doing what they have been doing their whole careers: looking ahead at the challenges the future holds and thinking about how to face them.

Their answers covered an incredible range of topics, but nearly all of them converged on the same four areas that will be critical—even determinative—to how agencies, and the field as a whole, meet those challenges: technology, staffing, public trust, and law enforcement mental health.

These are four areas in which the COPS Office has been a thought leader. On many of the specific areas discussed in these essays—from unmanned aerial systems and facial recognition, to hiring and consolidation, to data transparency and procedural justice—you can find resources and training on the COPS Office website, <https://cops.usdoj.gov/>. (And on the others—give us time.)

We can't perfectly predict the future. Policing will continue to be complex. But I feel confident promising that law enforcement leaders who institute pragmatic approaches and provide their workforce with the tools, resources, and support they need will always be able to rely on COPS Office best practices, training, and publications—as they have for the last 30 years—to prepare their agencies for the challenges to come. And I am equally confident that the agencies that will thrive will do so in the way they always have: by listening to their communities and setting common goals that they can strive for as true partners in creating public safety.

Sincerely,



Hugh T. Clements, Jr.  
Director  
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

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On September 13, 1994, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act was signed into law and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) was created.



# Foreword

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Thirty years. Three decades. It's a generation; it's the length of an average law enforcement career. It's a substantial amount of time that can seem to pass in a blink of an eye.

It was 30 years ago, on September 13, 1994, that the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act was signed into law and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) was created. Thirty years is a milestone that invites reflection. But for an organization like the COPS Office, how do we reflect? From the beginning this has been an ever-forward-looking endeavor. The COPS Office has dedicated its time and its efforts to developing training and technical assistance and distributing them, as well as grant funding for hiring and other needs, across the country in ongoing pursuit of one goal: to advance the practice of community policing in the nation's state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement agencies. It is an organization that champions and promotes organizational change to build safer and healthier communities. So perhaps to honor 30 years of looking ahead, the only logical exercise is to reflect on where the field might yet go.

Back in 2012, there was tremendous interest in where the policing field might go in the 21st century, and for many it felt like a time of opportunities to improve the profession, capitalize on rapidly evolving technologies, and applaud the growing institutionalization of a community-based focus to solving public safety challenges. The Great Recession a few years earlier had led to officer layoffs and reduced police services, but now it felt like a page was turning. It was in this atmosphere that the COPS Office published *American Policing in 2022: Essays on the Future of a Profession*. We asked leaders in the field to think just a decade ahead as to what the future could hold for policing, and the popularity of the final publication far exceeded our expectations.

As the co-creator of that project and co-editor of the *American Policing in 2022* book (along with my then-colleague Debra R. Cohen McCullough), I must admit, on the other side of 2022, that collectively we were not good prognosticators. There is now a law enforcement officer Near Miss Safety Initiative as a direct result of one essay, and investment in community building, as discussed in another, has repeatedly demonstrated success in reducing crime; but for the most part, the collection missed on predicting the future. The contributors could not have foreseen the events that would truly transform both law enforcement practice and public discourse on crime and safety in that decade after publication. But one thing they did consistently get right was their acknowledgment that service to the community should be at the heart of everything law enforcement officers do, both now and in the future. Or, as former COPS Office Director Joseph Brann wrote—in a nod to Sir Robert Peel—in his contribution, “policing always has been and will be about the people.”

Despite the low success rate of our 2012 predictions, I nonetheless believe the exercise of reflecting forward still has merit. And that is why I am gratified to be a part of this new effort, led by my colleagues Nazmia E.A. Comrie and Shanetta Y. Cutlar, to ask that leaders in the field once again reflect forward as the COPS Office celebrates 30 years. What

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2028 might the *next* 30 years bring to the provision of public safety in the United States? How  
2029 will community policing continue to evolve and lead the way in ensuring that all of us work  
2030 together to address our most important crime challenges? How will we grow the commit-  
2031 ment to building trust and mutual respect between communities and those who are sworn  
2032 to protect them?

2033 I hope you will enjoy reading this new collection of visions from leaders across the country  
2034 and find both inspiration and motivation in it. And 30 years from now—or in a generation,  
2035 or at the end of your career—in addition to identifying key action items, let’s pledge to take  
2036 a look back and see how well this collection does at envisioning the future. Hopefully we’ll  
2037 undertake that exercise as part of honoring 60 years of COPS Office service to the field.

2038 But whether this publication is or is not more successful at prognosticating than the work  
2039 that inspired it turned out to be, I know that there will be much to learn—both from the  
2040 accurate predictions and from the misses—as we all continue our work to advance the  
2041 COPS Office’s central idea: that policing is not something done *to* communities but rather  
2042 *for* and, most importantly of all, *with* them.

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**Deborah L. Spence**

Assistant Director, Training and Partner Engagement

co-editor, *American Policing in 2022: Essays on the Future of a Profession*

# Introduction

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The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), is excited to celebrate 30 years of advancing community policing. Reflecting on the work of the COPS Office over the last three decades calls to mind the changes in crime-fighting techniques, accountability measures, and technology and the evolving role of police in civil society in that time. Throughout all these changes, the COPS Office has continued to support reducing crime and building trust between law enforcement and the communities served.

When the conversations began about how we could best document this COPS Office milestone, we wanted to push the boundaries by creating a resource that went beyond a retrospective—not just looking back at the last 30 years but also looking forward to the next 30. We recognize that this COPS Office achievement is a shared accomplishment and wanted to include the field in the celebration. With these goals in mind, we created *American Policing 2054: Advancing Community Policing over the Next 30 Years*.

This publication is designed to be a companion to the COPS Office's previous milestone publication, *American Policing in 2022: Essays on the Future of a Profession*, envisioned and edited by COPS Office staff members Debra R. Cohen McCullough and Deborah L. Spence. While that publication asked contributors to consider what policing would look like in 10 years, this one expands its scope to include a vision for the next 30 years.

## The concept

We used the framework created by our colleagues in 2012 to compile a list of leaders in law enforcement, public safety research, and civil rights, as well as community members, to contribute to this publication. Knowing that there are so many more thought leaders, perspectives, and voices than we could fit in this publication, we especially considered contributors to the 2022 publication as well as thought leaders from all ranks and agency types. We curated our list to ensure we had diversity in thought, experiences, and voices. The interest and excitement from the field in response to our invitation was remarkable.

We asked contributors to think as boldly and as broadly as they liked. We encouraged innovation and assured contributors they were limited only by their informed imagination about the future of law enforcement in the United States. Most importantly, we told contributors that there were no wrong answers for their vision of the future of policing.

The COPS Office received essays from current and former law enforcement leaders and officers, researchers, practitioners, and civic and civil rights leaders, and these contributors did not disappoint.

## Essay themes

Contributors covered topics such as technology, community engagement, crime-reduction strategies, training, accountability, and transparency. Some of the contributors envisioned drastic changes in the future, while others saw more subtle refinements to policing. The majority of the essays converged on the importance of technology and the need for technology policies and procedures that balance privacy and accountability. In the end, all of the articles touched on one or more principles of community policing—organizational change, problem solving, and partnerships. As such, we used those principles to create the themes for this publication.

### Problem solving

Problem-solving techniques and strategies should be infused with evidence-based practices. Identifying, collecting, cleaning, and analyzing data needs to be part of the techniques and strategies agencies deploy. The 12 contributors under the Problem Solving section all touch on the use of technology, the need for a shift in training, the importance of transparency, and the need for innovative approaches for the future of policing. Former COPS Office Director Barney K. Melekian discusses shifting approaches and enhancing the role of communication centers (“Alternative Response Center—The Future of Public Safety Communications”), while Professors Tamara Herold and Jerry Ratcliffe explain the need for evidence-based approaches (“Not So Fast” and “Evidence-Based Policing”).

Retired Chief Billy Grogan and Future Policing Institute founder Jim Bueermann tackle problem-solving approaches to crime fighting with the use of technology (“The Tech-Driven Future of Law Enforcement” and “Rightful Policing in the Age of AI”) and Macomb County, Michigan, Executive Mark Hackel discusses a problem-solving approach to addressing individuals with mental illness (“It’s More than a Jail”). Expert Ganesha Martin introduces human-centered policing (“Creating a Framework for Transformational Human-Centered Policing”), while former COPS Office Director Phil Keith explores problem-solving approaches to creating confidence and trust (“Law Enforcement Leadership and Communities Working Together to Create Confidence and Trust”). Poarch Band of Creek Indians Public Safety Director Bruce Lee emphasizes the importance of storytelling as part of his problem-solving essay (“Looking to the Future by Turning to the Past”), while Drs. Rachel and Roberto Santos approach the essay from their work in the area of calls for service (“Let’s Keep it Simple”). Finally, retired Chief Darrel Stephens and Professor Maureen Quinn McGough discuss innovative approaches to public safety and staffing (“Community Safety as a Bedrock Mission of Policing” and “Police as Catalysts for a More Perfect Union”).

### Partnerships

Meaningful partnerships and relationships are paramount to policing. Partnerships and collaboration should include all stakeholders in the community and should be actively nurtured and sustained by regular communication and engagement. The five essays under

the Partnerships section all delve into engagement with internal and external stakeholders. Arizona Department of Public Safety Director Jeffrey Glover explains the value of partnerships and trust building to address the complexity of society (“Shifting Approaches to Function in a More Complex Society”). Charleston (South Carolina) Lieutenant Anthony Gibson and Sergeant Terry Cherry address partnerships and collaboration with the media (“Empowering Accuracy and Ownership”). National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE) President Gina Hawkins discusses collaboration around diversity, hiring, and wellness efforts (“The Evolution into a Public Safety Holistic Approach”), while Professor Laurie Robinson discusses collaboration with government entities to support violence reduction and public safety (“Police Leadership”). Finally, Dr. RaShall M. Brackney discusses internal and external collaboration when stepping into a new agency (“Your Inheritance Does Not Have to Be Your Legacy”).

### **Organizational transformation**

Organizational transformation is one of the hardest aspects of community policing, but just as critical as the others for infusing an agency with community policing. The 10 essays that examine transformation touch on topics ranging from small shifts all the way to major system overhauls. Dr. Cedric Alexander discusses the need for a shift in training and leadership (“Meaningful Change in Policing”), while The Dalles (Oregon) Chief Tom Worthy imagines more technologically advanced policing operations (“What’s Past Is Prologue?”). Professor Robin Engel explores the need for agencies to transform into learning organizations (“Preparing Our Officers and Agencies for the Challenges Ahead”), while expert Nola M. Joyce compares fiction with futuring (“Futuring and Fiction”). Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights President and Chief Executive Officer Maya Wiley introduces a paradigm shift for public safety (“The Leadership Conference is Building a New Paradigm for Public Safety”), and Professor Tom Tyler expounds on legitimacy-based policing (“Community Vitality as a Goal for Policing”). Professor David Kennedy supports the need for professionalism (“Looking Forward 30 Years”), while the Legal Defense Fund Director of Strategic Initiatives Jin Hee Lee argues for policing to take a page from civil rights attorneys—work themselves out of a job (“A Collective Responsibility for a Shared Vision of Public Safety”). Finally, Tennessee Bureau of Investigations Director David B. Rausch discusses the need for a change of terminology (“The Need to Shift Our Lexicon”) while Professor Michael S. Scott delves into three different visions for the future (“The Good, The Bad, and The Hopeful”).

We invite you to join us on this journey of exploring where policing may go over the next 30 years. The essays can be read in any order; we have grouped them by thematic section (Problem solving, Partnerships, and Organizational transformation), but you can also choose any topic from the index beginning on page 108.

**Shanetta Y. Cutlar**  
Senior Counsel to the Director

**Nazmia E.A. Comrie**  
Sociologist, Policing Assistance and Reform



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To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 138,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.

# *Problem Solving*

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# Alternative Response Center—The Future of Public Safety Communications

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**Barney Melekian**

When writing about the challenges facing American law enforcement, we nearly always focus on the uniformed patrol function. While that role is critically important, as it always will be, I would like to turn our attention inward. The two most significant challenges facing American law enforcement over the next decade are the restoration of public trust and the response to critical staffing shortages. I believe that in response to those challenges, the current communication centers will evolve to become alternative response centers (ARC), a far more intricate and robust operation.

Private industry has always recognized that their corporate image is shaped by how people are treated on the phone, because that interaction will likely determine whether the customer ever shows up at the store or makes repeated purchases online. Similarly, the police department's image is shaped by how community members are treated when they call and are first served by dispatchers. The critical role played by call takers in our communication centers has been overlooked and undervalued since the process of converting that operation to nonsworn personnel began. The reality is that for every call that comes into a communication center resulting in the dispatch of a law enforcement unit, five to seven calls will be answered and dealt with by other means. For years, dispatchers have displayed the same paradox as field officers: They are excellent at handling high-stress, critical emergencies but far less adept at handling day-to-day interactions with the public in the spirit of public relations. As law enforcement agencies recognize this challenge, it will become critical to invest training dollars toward rectifying this situation. This first challenge will ultimately be solved by a concerted response to the second challenge, which is dealing with critical staffing shortages in the field.

In the aftermath of the summer of 2020 and its extensive protests following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, there was a great deal of public discussion about alternative responses. Unfortunately, most of the models suggested were not feasible because of their required increase in staffing and training requirements. They were also unimaginative in that they did not change the relationship between the call center and the field personnel. The proposals simply suggested putting more people in the field with different skill sets and authorities. Given the thousands of law enforcement agencies in this country, such an approach will never be successful. In the future, a shortage of uniformed field personnel and the challenges of having unarmed specialists available for in-field call response will increase the need to have these resources housed in one place, either physically or available via remote connection.



ARCs will incorporate a wide variety of technology that will enable highly trained call takers or embedded specialists (or both) to deal via remote communication platforms (e.g., Zoom) with members of the public. This evolution is already underway. The use of unmanned aerial systems as first responders, the incorporation of shot-spotter technology, and the use of embedded mental health specialists in larger regional centers are already realities in some jurisdictions. However, the process of incorporating these methods into dispatch is on the verge of taking a quantum leap forward, driven both by staffing shortages and liability concerns.

Every call that comes into the ARC will require more sophisticated training and greater expertise than what dispatchers have or have access to now to determine whether a field response is warranted. If no such response is required, then the call taker will need to quickly shift into a customer service model with a relentless focus on solving the problem for the person on the phone. This response will involve a complete change in basic assumptions, in that nonemergency calls will now need to be dealt with to completion rather than simply moving the person along so that the dispatcher will be available for a true emergency. To achieve this complete handling of nonemergency calls effectively, the ARC must have sufficient and sufficiently trained personnel with access to relevant information—and ideally with the ability to communicate face-to-face with the caller via the use of technology.

In those cases where officers are dispatched, they will have a critical need for greater amounts of information, such as pending legal cases and medical and mental health histories; they will need access to mental health counselors to help defuse volatile situations. In such complex cases, the officer in the field will have a lifeline in the form of a dedicated dispatcher with the ability to access this information and focus exclusively on the call being dealt with: a trademark of the new ARC.

In our current operating model, the communication center exists as an extension of the field officer. Dispatchers' role is to acquire the minimal amount of information necessary to frame the officer's initial response and to provide answers to direct questions. In the future, the center of call resolution will be in the ARC, and the field officer will be an extension of that center. If the ratio of calls resulting in the dispatch of uniformed personnel versus those not requiring such direct response holds, the public perception of the law enforcement agency will be shaped by the ARC rather than by the actions of the officer in the field.

This change in thinking will in no way diminish the importance or nobility of the field officer, but it will shift the locus of responsibility. Most field officers are aware that many of the calls they respond to could have been handled without requiring their presence if adequate resources were available. I would submit that the creation of an ARC is the way to address this challenge in the future.

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2028 For this evolution to take place, the leadership of both the law enforcement agency and the political body will need to reevaluate the role of call takers and dispatchers and recognize that in this new model their role will be far more critical than it already is. There must be adjustments in training and salary and an acknowledgement that the ARC operators will need to be seen as public safety agents, every bit as much as firefighters and law enforcement personnel. In addition, it is likely that these alternative centers will be regional in nature, as it is not feasible for most small and mid-size agencies to create their own centers.

2029  
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2033 It has long been my belief that dispatchers and call takers are among the most undervalued and underappreciated members of the public safety family. This is about to change.



**Bernard "Barney" Melekian** has nearly 50 years of local law enforcement experience, most recently as the Interim Police Chief in Santa Barbara, California, for 17 months. He also served as the Assistant Executive Officer for Public Safety in Santa Barbara County and the Undersheriff for the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office from 2015 to 2018. He was also the police chief for the city of Pasadena, California, from 1996 until 2009. In 2009, Chief Melekian was selected as the Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) by Attorney General Eric Holder. He served in that capacity until March 2013. He has served as a consultant to law enforcement agencies throughout the country, including the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office, the city of Seattle, and numerous smaller jurisdictions. In 2021, he received national recognition with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) Leadership Award for career-long service to the law enforcement profession. In 2022, he received the Alan W. Sill award for leadership and service to California law enforcement. He holds a bachelor's degree in American history and a master's degree in public administration, both from California State University, Northridge. In 2012 he was awarded a doctorate in policy, planning, and development from the University of Southern California for his project on Values-Based Discipline in Law Enforcement Organizations. His thesis was selected as the recipient of the Sol Price award for the best dissertation in 2012.

# Not So Fast

## Removing Police Is Not the Answer

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**Tamara D. Herold**

Well-meaning interventions to improve or save lives can cause unintended and undesirable consequences. Many historical examples come to mind: Large-scale public housing projects offered affordable housing for low-income families but led to deplorable and socially isolating living conditions. Ethanol subsidies intended to promote renewable energy and reduce fossil fuel dependence increased demand for corn, drove up food prices, and led to greater global food insecurity. Urban renewal projects revitalized declining urban areas but also displaced residents, eliminated housing options, and destroyed established communities.

The medical field uses a term to describe inadvertent adverse treatment effects: *iatrogenesis*. Evidence of medical iatrogenesis is everywhere. Some patients die during routine surgeries. Screening tests produce false positives, leading to unnecessary and risky procedures. Cancer risks increase from radiation exposure experienced during imaging procedures, like MRIs and CT scans. Lists of drugs' possible harmful and life-threatening side effects are featured prominently in advertisements and prescription packaging.

In pursuing justice, we must look for, acknowledge, and address the unintended consequences of our interventions. Growing research evidence of justice iatrogenesis (e.g., the devastating effects of mass incarceration), coupled with high-profile instances of injustice (e.g., avoidable in-custody deaths), have strengthened calls for system reforms. As we seek, following the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, to bend our moral arc toward greater justice, we are wise to carefully consider the possible adverse effects of well-meaning, newly proposed solutions to the harms associated with existing policies and practices.

Yet removing people or prohibiting practices causing unintended harm does not always improve outcomes. Banning DDT pesticides to protect the environment and public health contributed to malaria's resurgence and increased illness and deaths. Laws to save endangered species and wildlife increased poverty and hunger in local hunting communities and increased criminal syndicates' poaching and violence. Such experiences offer important lessons for assessing proposals to improve public safety.

I argue that proposals to reduce policing's footprint in society will not improve public safety. Solutions that decrease police engagement demand scrutiny and cautious consideration. Experience and evidence suggest at least three likely unintended consequences of removing or distancing police from the communities they serve.

## Unintended consequence #1. Growing public distrust

Much has been said about the negative, unintended consequences of technological advancements in policing. Dial-911 emergency response systems and vehicle patrols replacing foot and horse patrols have undoubtedly increased police efficiency. Yet greater efficiency extracted an unforeseen and devastating cost. As noted by John P. Skinner, “With little time to spend on interaction, relationship-building, and problem-solving, modern day police officers are less of a partner with the neighborhoods they serve and more like a rapidly moving force, separated from the community by a high-speed cage of glass and steel.”<sup>1</sup>

We have drawn similar conclusions after adopting other technological advancements. Body-worn cameras increase accountability, enhance evidence collection, and enable quick community complaint resolutions. Yet in pursuing transparency, their use has created victim and bystander privacy concerns, dampened effects on honest and open communications, and reduced officer discretion in ways sometimes leading to less just outcomes. Cameras and the design of other officer safety equipment (e.g., exterior body armor) have inadvertently created reflexive public misgivings about the role and nature of police in our communities.

We must remain mindful when technological solutions drive officers away from rather than toward public engagement. As we entertain nontechnological solutions to policing problems, including those advocating less police interaction with the public (e.g., fewer officers, alternative responses), we must recognize the costs of failing to replace eliminated interactions with opportunities for other positive exchanges. Lack of interaction breeds distrust among people. Our most promising solutions will increase an officer’s ability to build public trust through regular engagement and act as “a thread woven throughout the communities that [they] serve, helping to hold together the very fabric of democracy,” as envisioned by Charles Ramsey.<sup>2</sup>

## Unintended consequence #2. Increased victimization among vulnerable populations

There are striking parallels between medicine and policing. For example, groups with low socioeconomic status—such as persons in poverty, LGBTQ+ populations, persons experiencing disabilities and homelessness, and racial and ethnic minorities—suffer on average from poorer health than other populations and need more access to health care but tend to have less. These populations are likewise more likely to suffer crime victimization and to have greater safety needs but fewer resources.

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1. John P. Skinner, “The Future of Policing Can Be Found in the Past,” in *American Policing in 2022*, Debra R. Cohen McCullough and Deborah L. Spence, eds. (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2012), 7–10, <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-p235>.

2. Lauren McCutcheon, “Police Reform with Charles Ramsey,” *The Philadelphia Citizen*, October 26, 2023, <https://thephiladelphiacitizen.org/ideas-we-should-steal-festival-2023-police-reform-with-charles-ramsey/>.

Problems with medical practices, including practitioner biases, lack of cultural competency, and historical patient exploitation (such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study),<sup>3</sup> closely resemble problems identified with policing practices. Yet, without health care, more people would suffer illnesses and die; without a justice system that can enforce the rule of law and protect constitutional freedoms, more people would suffer victimization and the loss of rights and liberties. Consider the health impact of failing hospitals on rural populations or the safety outcomes associated with too little or no police intervention (e.g., the 1970s–80s New York subway Guardian Angels and the 2020s Seattle Autonomous Zone).<sup>4</sup>

While health advocates demand better training and more patient access to doctors, justice advocates have proposed solutions that would provide less funding for training and lessen police contact with more vulnerable groups. The wealthy can afford access to medicine and safety (e.g., private and home security). The most vulnerable among us, who are most at risk, disproportionately suffer the costs of restricted public access to these services. To improve justice outcomes, we must consider how reducing access to police might increase safety resource disparities and victimization among disadvantaged and marginalized groups. Our most promising solutions will instead involve holding police leaders accountable for knowing the science behind what works (and what does not) to most ethically and equitably reduce crime. Like doctors, police need training, resources, and incentives to recognize and address unintended harms stemming from policing practices.

### **Unintended consequence #3. Deteriorating officer wellness**

An accomplished police officer, challenging the idea that police should not respond to less serious calls for service, stood up at a conference and remarked, “I didn’t sign up to work in a combat zone!” During the same conference, an academic colleague and I vehemently disagreed about whether a police officer should respond when people witness animals injured by vehicles and call 911. I thought they should. My colleague thought this was not “real police work.”

Egon Bittner defined the role of police as responding to “something that ought not to be happening and about which someone had better do something now.”<sup>5</sup> When other social institutions (e.g., education, family, economic, health care, community, religion) fail and people face danger or suffering, police offer a last line of defense. They are uniquely equipped to stop harm as it is happening, regardless of its cause. And they do so by responding to a wide range of calls for service.

3. “The Untreated Syphilis Study at Tuskegee Timeline,” Centers for Disease Control Office of Science, last updated December 5, 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/tuskegee/timeline.htm>.
4. Maura Ewing, “The Volunteer Vigilantes of New York City,” *The Atlantic*, December 3, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/12/guardian-angels/547310/>; Martin Kaste, “What It’s Like Inside the ‘Autonomous Zone’ Near a Seattle Police Precinct,” *National Public Radio All Things Considered*, June 13, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/13/876628274/what-its-like-inside-the-autonomous-zone-near-a-seattle-police-precinct>.
5. Jean-Paul Brodeur, “An Encounter with Egon Bittner,” *Crime, Law and Social Change* 48 (2007), 105–132, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10611-007-9084-2>.

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Some police calls end positively with help provided, relationships forged, and issues resolved (e.g., missing child found, tire changed, ducklings saved). Others involve extreme danger and negative outcomes, with lives or freedoms sacrificed (e.g., shootings, suspect pursuits, homicides, suicides). Science shows that, conservatively, we need three uplifting, positive experiences for every distressing, negative emotional experience to remain thriving, highly functioning people (i.e., 3-to-1 positivity ratio).<sup>6</sup> Rejecting Bittner’s argument and restricting police response to only the most dangerous calls threatens officer wellness. To predict the unintended consequences of this approach, we might consider the profound and long-lasting psychological effects of military combat deployments. Our most promising solutions will involve restructuring police work to create more, not fewer, non-crisis interactions that allow public interactions that increase officers’ emotional well-being.

In sum, we should seek changes that broaden and improve officers’ interactions with the public. This perspective aligns with attempts to augment and strengthen police response (e.g., co-responder and holistic models) but asks us to maintain and improve police-community engagement to circumvent unintended harmful consequences. Future proposals that increase police-community interactions; help officers learn about ethical and equitable evidence-based strategies; and encourage positive, non-crisis community connections (e.g., sabbaticals to engage in volunteer work) offer a road map for increasing public safety while reducing iatrogenesis in existing police practices.



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6. B.L. Fredrickson, *Positivity: Top-Notch Research Reveals the 3-to-1 Ration That will Change Your Life* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2009).

# Evidence-Based Policing

*The Future, Whether You Want it or Not*

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**Jerry Ratcliffe**

A 2012 predecessor to this volume opens as follows: “During a presentation to the American Society of Criminology in 2011, Jim Bueermann displayed a PowerPoint slide with this prediction: By 2022, every police department will have a resident criminologist.”<sup>1</sup> That clearly has not happened, and I am not going to argue that it has. But every police department is going to need a resident *police scientist*, whether they want one or not. Let me explain why.

The world is awash with data, and policing is no different. In the past, the police held the few existing strands of law enforcement data and could release them strategically or not at all. Today, politicians, activists, and journalists have demanded increased data transparency and use it to hold police chiefs accountable. Focus areas for hot spots policing are discussed in city councils, end-of-year crime numbers are a media frenzy, and patterns in race and ethnicity data for police stops are the bread and butter of editorials. The minutiae of performance across everything from tactical choices in crime reduction to the outcomes of internal investigations have become a staple of public discussion.

Many agencies have data warehouses or even online dashboards where anyone with a computer can download years of crime and police activity information. This foundational knowledge, on which a department’s data-driven strategy and focus rest, is now out in the open. But downloaded datasets do not come packaged with a set of ethical values. Journalists and activists do not check a box where they promise to analyze information fairly and with consideration for nuance and context. Without their own internal analysis, police leaders are finding open data can become a perpetual walk of shame in which the failings of the department are regularly paraded in public.

This is not a diatribe against open data and transparency. Far from it. Openness is a fundamental concept of American transparency and accountability of government, and it is a shining example for the rest of the world. This is, however, a case for every department to have their own police scientist.

**What is a police scientist?** Some departments will be familiar with crime analysts—professionals who are dedicated to helping an agency become more effective through better decision-making information, often with a focus on patrol operations and investigations. Think of a police scientist as a crime analyst on steroids. The term might seem a little alien, but don’t get hung up on the title. We could just as easily use terms like crime scientist, police scholar, pracademic, or policing researcher (the term I usually use to describe

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1. Debra R. Cohen McCullough and Deborah L. Spence, eds, *American Policing in 2022: Essays on the Future of a Profession* (Washington DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2012), 1, <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-p235>.

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2028 myself). Whatever they are called, the police scientist is someone who can not only help a  
2029 police department use their data to benefit the entire spectrum of police business but also  
2030 help the agency understand and use evidence-based policing.

2031 Evidence-based policing is the future, whether you want it to be or not. The two decades  
2032 since the turn of the millennium have generated a wealth of public safety knowledge, and  
2033 the science around what works and what is less reliable in policing grows every day. A  
2034 knowledge base, increasingly written in plain language rather than academic-speak, has  
2035 made it even more accessible. This knowledge base is slowly being adopted by law enforce-  
2036 ment leaders. But it is also empowering their critics, now armed with the same information.  
2037 Police leaders must be versed in evidence-based policing practice and knowledge for fear of  
2038 embarrassment (or worse) at the hands of better-prepared adversaries.

2039 **What is evidence-based policing?** In an evidence-based policing approach, police officers  
2040 and staff create, review, and use the best available evidence to inform and challenge pol-  
2041 icies, practices, and decisions.<sup>2</sup> This means a police department should use the available  
2042 knowledge not only to drive effective and procedurally just practice, but also to develop  
2043 its own evidence. Imagine having an innovative idea and being able to establish how well  
2044 it is working without needing to rely on outside evaluation help! Having at least one inter-  
2045 nal person that a chief can call upon to (1) understand and explain the department's data,  
2046 (2) research the existing evidence for a policing problem, and (3) design a study to help  
2047 the department test its own innovations and ideas will become an essential asset to future  
2048 police leaders.

2049 One particular area where this skill set will benefit departments is the increasing tendency  
2050 for police agencies to face civil lawsuits. Defending an agency from unwarranted outside  
2051 criticism can help to fend off more detrimental action. I cannot help but wonder if an  
2052 in-house police scientist would have enabled many departments to better anticipate and  
2053 prevent damaging litigation.

2054 **Why a police scientist and not a criminologist?** While criminologists can be effective survey-  
2055 ors of academic literature, that helps only with item 2 in the earlier list. It is no guarantee  
2056 that a criminologist is trained in data analysis or experimental methods. Many are qual-  
2057 itatively trained, which is a valuable scholarly orientation; however, police departments  
2058 generate vast repositories of crime and incident data, Global Positioning System (GPS)  
2059 vehicle location coordinates, and investigative information. These big data sets necessitate  
2060 a quantitative analytical slant. Scientists from other disciplines (such as economics or psy-  
2061 chology) may have some of the requisite skills, but they are usually unfamiliar with policing  
2062 or unwilling to work with police on change and reform. Many academics have been trained  
2063 in a tradition of researching *on* the police, not *with* or *for* the police.

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2. Jerry H. Ratcliffe, *Evidence-Based Policing: The Basics* (London: Routledge, 2023), 10.



A police scientist is therefore not the same as a criminologist. Who can be a police scientist? Supportive external researchers, researchers embedded with police departments, and increasingly homegrown talent within the police service (sworn or nonsworn) can all serve this police scientist role. The development of internal evidence-based policing roles and practice is actively supported by government agencies such as the National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Assistance; professional associations such as the International Association of Chiefs of Police; and grassroots organizations like the American Society of Evidence-Based Policing, started by and led by serving police officers.

The data genie is out of the lamp, and that is not going to change. The police officer's gut instinct is no longer a reliable source of inspiration for decision-making when anyone can be armed with a spreadsheet and an agenda. As many police leaders have told me, this brave new data world is daunting.

But it is also an opportunity. A police scientist can help a department leverage its own data in its defense. They can help the department develop a nuanced and data-driven response to criticism and provide the public and policymakers with a different perspective on public safety. And they can also help generate the decision support evidence around piloting new technologies and ideas, potentially saving a department from wasting funds on things that do not work. Finally, departments with police scientists contribute to the profession of policing, adding to the knowledge bank used by colleagues worldwide.

So look around. Somewhere in your department is a budding evidence-based policing scholar, your next police scientist just waiting to help the agency embrace data, knowledge, and research; summarize an academic report for you; or design a study—and put you and your department on the map.



**Jerry Ratcliffe** is a British former police officer, college professor, and host of the Reducing Crime podcast. He works with police agencies around the world on crime reduction, evaluation, leadership, and criminal intelligence strategy. After an ice-climbing accident ended a decade-long sworn career with London's Metropolitan Police, he earned a first-class honors degree and a PhD from the University of Nottingham. He has published more than 100 research articles and 10 books, including *Reducing Crime: A Companion for Police Leaders* and *Evidence-Based Policing: The Basics*. Ratcliffe has been a research adviser to the FBI and the Philadelphia Police Commissioner and an instructor for the ATF intelligence academy, and he is a member of the FBI Law Enforcement Education and Training Council. He is a professor in a Department of Criminal Justice in Philadelphia and a scientific advisor to the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

# The Tech-Driven Future of Law Enforcement

## *Revolutionizing Crime Fighting*

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**Billy Grogan**

Ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining police officers have prompted many law enforcement agencies to rely more and more on advanced technology as a force multiplier. This strategic shift aims to bridge the staffing gap and effectively meet operational needs. In an era where the demand for public safety is rising and the number of available officers is dwindling, leveraging cutting-edge technology has become essential.

These technologies not only enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of existing personnel but also provide critical support in various aspects of policing, from crime prevention and investigation to community engagement and emergency response. By adopting innovative solutions, police departments can ensure that they continue to protect and serve their communities despite the constraints posed by staffing shortages.

In the past decade, law enforcement has experienced a seismic shift in advancing technologies that help prevent crime and catch the offenders who target their communities. Two of the most prominent and widely available technologies are fixed automated license plate readers (ALPR) and facial recognition. Looking forward, integrating these technologies into daily operations holds significant promise for law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. Advanced analytics and artificial intelligence have enhanced the capabilities of ALPRs and facial recognition systems, making them more accurate and efficient. This means quicker identification of stolen vehicles, faster apprehension of suspects, and more effective monitoring of public spaces for potential threats.

But despite their effectiveness in enhancing public safety and aiding in crime prevention, both technologies have faced significant scrutiny because of privacy and civil rights concerns. Critics argue that the widespread use of fixed ALPRs and facial recognition software can lead to unauthorized surveillance, data breaches, and potential misuse of personal information.

The concern is that if not properly regulated, these technologies could infringe on individuals' rights to privacy and lead to discriminatory practices. Therefore, it is imperative to address these issues through stringent regulations, transparent policies, and community engagement to ensure that the deployment of these technologies respects civil liberties and maintains public trust.

The journey of ALPR technology began in the United Kingdom in 1976 to combat terrorism. Since then, the subsequent widespread adoption of this technology is a testament to its effectiveness. ALPR technology is now more affordable, even for small departments, and its use has dramatically expanded since the mid-2010s.

Although arrests or crimes cleared by the use of ALPR technology are not tracked nationally, it is evident that the widespread deployment of fixed ALPR devices has resulted in thousands upon thousands of offenders being arrested and cases being solved. Despite its effectiveness, not everyone is convinced of the benefits of using ALPR technology: Frequently cited concerns include the inaccuracy of the data collected, the lack of regulations governing ALPR, and the collection and storage of data that violate individuals' privacy.<sup>1</sup>

Law enforcement agencies must take a proactive stance in addressing the concerns about ALPR technology. This can be achieved by implementing clear policies restricting access to the ALPR database, acknowledging the technology's data accuracy challenges, and setting limits on data retention. A policy that ensures the responsible use of ALPR technology is critical to maintaining public trust and addressing privacy concerns. Agencies can also adhere to the 13 key recommendations for accountability, responsibility, and transparency drafted by the ALPR Working Group of the Major Cities Chiefs Association.<sup>2</sup>

Another key piece of technology is facial recognition, which was first used by law enforcement on crowds at Super Bowl XXXV in 2001.<sup>3</sup> The 2010s ushered in the modern era of facial recognition technology, which was used to confirm the identity of Osama bin Laden in 2011, has been used by Facebook as photo-tagging software, and was rolled out by Apple as Face ID on the iPhone X introduced in 2017.<sup>4</sup>

Today, facial recognition technology is used extensively by private businesses and government agencies, including law enforcement. Advances in this technology have significantly improved the accuracy and reliability of the data it produces, making it a valuable tool for various applications. As a result, the adoption of facial recognition technology has proliferated across law enforcement agencies nationwide.

Law enforcement agencies leverage facial recognition to enhance their capabilities in identifying suspects, solving crimes, and ensuring public safety. This technology allows for the rapid comparison of facial images against vast databases, enabling officers to quickly identify individuals involved in criminal activities or locate missing persons. Moreover, its

1. Justin Klawans, "Automatic License Plate Readers," *The Week*, December 17, 2023, <https://theweek.com/tech/automatic-license-plate-readers>.
2. MCCA (Major Cities Chiefs Association) ALPR Working Group, *Automated License Plate Reader Technology in Law Enforcement: Recommendations and Considerations* (Salt Lake City, UT: Major Cities Chiefs Association, 2023), <https://majorcitieschiefs.com/resources/>.
3. Thorin Klosowski, "How Facial Recognition Works," *The New York Times: Wirecutter*, July 15, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/blog/how-facial-recognition-works/>.
4. Klosowski, "How Facial Recognition Works" (see note 3).

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implementation has proven effective in preventing potential threats and maintaining security at significant public events and critical infrastructure. However, the widespread use of facial recognition technology also raises important considerations regarding privacy and civil liberties. Critics argue that without proper safeguards, this technology could lead to intrusive surveillance practices and potential misuse of personal data.

To address these concerns, law enforcement agencies must establish robust policies and oversight mechanisms. These policies should include clear guidelines on data collection, usage, and retention and regular audits to ensure compliance. By implementing these measures, agencies can ensure that the technology is used responsibly, transparently, and in a manner that respects individuals' rights and freedoms. Furthermore, it is crucial to emphasize that facial recognition technology should never be relied upon as the sole identifier of an offender; its inherent limitations and potential for errors mean that it must be part of a broader investigative process. Facial recognition should serve as an investigative lead, providing a starting point for law enforcement to gather additional evidence. To build a comprehensive and reliable case, this approach requires corroboration from other sources, such as eyewitness testimony, physical evidence, and other investigative techniques.

By adopting a balanced approach that combines the strengths of facial recognition technology with traditional investigative methods, law enforcement can maximize the benefits of this powerful tool while minimizing the risks associated with its misuse. This strategy enhances the effectiveness of criminal investigations and upholds the principles of justice and due process.

The future of facial recognition technology in law enforcement looks promising, with ongoing advancements expected to enhance its capabilities further. As the technology continues to evolve, agencies will need to balance the benefits of its use with the need to protect civil liberties, fostering a relationship of trust and cooperation between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve.

The implementation of ALPRs and facial recognition technology has significantly enhanced law enforcement's ability to combat crime. These technologies have proven to be invaluable tools in identifying suspects, solving cases, and apprehending offenders who might have otherwise eluded capture. Their positive impact on public safety is undeniable, with numerous crimes being solved more swiftly and efficiently because of these advanced systems.<sup>5</sup>

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5. Tim Dees, "Research Review: Identifying the Benefits of ALPR Systems," *Police1*, November 4, 2019, <https://www.police1.com/police-products/traffic-enforcement/license-plate-readers/articles/research-review-identifying-the-benefits-of-alpr-systems-wYft41yw4ONt5Wqv/>.

Moreover, the benefits of these technologies extend beyond immediate crime-fighting efforts. They also contribute to a broader sense of security within communities, as residents feel reassured knowing that law enforcement agencies are equipped with state-of-the-art tools to keep them safe. As technology evolves, its potential to aid in crime prevention and resolution will only grow, further solidifying its role as an indispensable asset in modern policing.

However, addressing the privacy and civil rights concerns associated with these technologies is equally important. By implementing stringent regulations, maintaining transparency, and engaging with the community, law enforcement can ensure that the deployment of ALPRs and facial recognition systems respects individual rights while maximizing public safety benefits.

In conclusion, the careful and responsible use of these advanced technologies represents a significant step forward for law enforcement. By balancing their advantages with a commitment to ethical practices, law enforcement agencies can continue enhancing their crime-fighting capabilities while fostering trust and cooperation with their communities. The future of public safety is undoubtedly intertwined with technological innovation, and by embracing these tools judiciously, we can build a safer, more secure society for all.



Chief **Billy Grogan** recently retired after a distinguished career in law enforcement. His 43-year journey culminated in his role as the founding police chief of the Dunwoody (Georgia) Police Department, a position he held with distinction for 15 years. His leadership and dedication to public safety have left an indelible mark on the community. Chief Grogan holds a Master of Public Administration from Kennesaw State University and a Bachelor of Science in political science. His commitment to professional development is evident in his extensive training and education, which includes graduating from the 193rd session of the FBI National Academy, the Georgia Command College, the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Seminar (LEEDS), and the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange (GILEE) program. Chief Grogan's impact on the law enforcement community is not confined to his department. His leadership has been recognized statewide, evidenced by his selection as the 2023 Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police Outstanding Chief of the Year. He has also served as the president of the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police. He has been an active member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Human and Civil Rights Committee since 2006. Chief Grogan has demonstrated a commitment to improving law enforcement practices and fostering positive community relations throughout his career. His legacy of service and leadership continues to inspire law enforcement professionals and communities alike.

# Rightful Policing in the Age of AI

*In Search of our Guiding Principles*

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**Jim Bueermann**

When I agreed to write this essay, I envisioned addressing trust and confidence in the police, the true purpose of policing, or perhaps the challenges of hiring the right people for the next 30 years. Each of these topics is crucial for the future of policing. However, as I started writing, I realized that virtually every aspect of future policing will be affected by what many consider the most impactful technology ever created by humanity—artificial intelligence (AI). Like most of us, police leaders, policymakers, and community members have a limited understanding of what AI is today and, more importantly, what it will become in the next 30 years. As we grapple with this increasingly advanced technology, our challenge is to ensure police use of AI is *effective, empathetic, and just*.

When the people developing AI don't completely understand it, how are the rest of us going to manage its implications—especially as it changes in the future? This is precisely why it is so important that we develop a set of guiding principles to help us all better advance and guide policing's use of AI. With these principles, we'll have timeless, universally applicable, ethically based, and community-led guidance on what policing should or shouldn't do with AI.

Some people may think AI in policing is as mundane as in-car computers, records management systems, or word processors. I hold a different view. Very soon, it will be as ubiquitous in policing as body cameras and handcuffs. There hasn't been a more impactful technology in policing since cars were integrated into patrol officers' worlds. I can't imagine a technology that will equal the impact AI will have on policing. Whether its effects will be positive or negative, widespread AI adoption is inevitable—and we need to prepare for it.

To understand why AI is going to be so important to the future of policing, it is essential to first understand the forces that will impact this issue in the coming years. In my view, there are a few critical drivers of the rapid adoption of AI into policing.

First, the development of the software and hardware necessary for AI to advance is accelerating at a breathtaking rate. Academic and industry research into software code, computer hardware, and the technology needed to meet the insatiable appetite for energy to power AI machines is making stunning progress, leading us toward the Holy Grail of computer science—Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). AGI is the ability of AI to understand, learn, and apply knowledge at the same level as human beings. This will yield spectacular benefits in fields as diverse as health care, agriculture, aviation, and finance. However, it will also produce potentially severe pitfalls if we're not careful. What we think of as AI today only scratches the surface of what it will become in the very near future.

Related to this is the race by manufacturers to integrate AI into everyday things we depend on—from appliances to cars to every form of electronic device imaginable. Soon, these will all come standard with AI “hard baked” into their electronic brains. The number of use cases for AI is increasing exponentially. If you doubt this, attend just one day of the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) held annually in Las Vegas. CES is the world’s largest event of its kind, and its most recent iteration was wall-to-wall AI integration into all things big and small (want to buy an AI-equipped toaster or cappuccino machine?). So, “Yes, Virginia, there is an AI for everything!” Clearly, we are rapidly normalizing the existence and use of AI everywhere, all the time.

The ongoing efforts of transnational megatech corporations to beat the competition in bringing AI-centered products and services to market also contribute to the thrust into the AI of everything. To get a sense of this, one simply needs to review some of the recent announcements by the biggest players in this space.

OpenAI keeps teasing its release of ChatGPT 5, which promises to advance its game-changing large language model in the same way a PhD advances the educational value of a high school diploma. Microsoft has announced its AI-enabled laptops and AI integration into software applications like Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Google publicized its new AI search functions that create new meaning to the phrase “Just Google it.” And Apple just unveiled its upcoming integration of AI into its entire digital ecosystem. As this “AI race” accelerates, we are quite literally experiencing the dawn of the AI Era.

If we look closely, we’ll see that there is an AI tsunami about to come ashore. The “AI of Everything” world we’re rushing into is not a temporary experience. It is how humans will experience technology in the very near future. As broader society adopts AI as a foundational technology, so too will the police (in fact, they already are). We cannot afford to ignore the many signs right in front of us about the coming adoption of AI as an all-encompassing enterprise framework in policing. In the blink of an eye, AI will form the foundation of the police technology ecosystem.

What we think of today as AI will bear only a vague resemblance to what it will become in the future. We must strive to understand what this really means to the United States and specifically, to policing. And we must attempt to control our own AI destiny by deciding how we will advance and guide policing’s use of AI.

Second, the persistent shortage of qualified police candidates will continue into the foreseeable future. Until policing reinvents itself so that people who would make great cops see it as a profession worthy of their commitment and sacrifice, police leaders will struggle to fill officer vacancies and achieve labor-intensive public safety outcomes. This is exacerbated by the increasing cost of policing. Like most things in life, policing is not becoming less expensive. The most effective way to significantly reduce police costs is to reduce the number of

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cops employed. But then how do you achieve policing and public safety outcomes when you don't have enough cops to begin with? Some leaders will turn to AI for answers. AI's promise of increased effectiveness and efficiency will be too compelling to ignore.

We can reimagine policing and find alternative methods of responding to critical issues like mental health, homelessness, and substance abuse. But we still need cops to do certain things. So, finding a way to leverage the available time of police officers will inevitably lead us to the integration of AI into the police operating environment. (This is what Axon's *Draft One* AI product is about. Its body-worn cameras record a police-community interaction, and then its AI creates a transcript of it and writes a report for officers to review and submit. It promises significant savings in officer time and better reports.)

Finally, advances in AI and police technology companies capitalizing on those advances are stimulating the evolution of a "police-industrial complex." This is similar to the military-industrial complex that has been part of the military procurement system for decades. When police leaders are challenged to "do more with less," and they lack the organizational capacity or the technical knowledge necessary to truly understand AI and all its ramifications, they will take what they consider to be a logical step. They will rely heavily on the "expertise" of police technology vendors to help them make "informed" decisions about the acquisition and integration of AI into police operations. Relying on the same people who are driven by a profit motive to provide crucial advice on AI is a very slippery slope for police leaders to negotiate. This speaks to the pressing need for policing to develop in-house AI expertise.

Now is the time for us to develop a set of guiding principles for the safe and responsible use of AI before it's too late. Clearly, AI can produce some stunning and beneficial outcomes in public safety. But without national coherence and guidance about police AI, the law of unintended consequences is likely to pay some of us an unwelcome and potentially devastating visit.

So, what would a set of guiding principles for policing's safe and responsible use of AI look like?

First, the foundation for these principles should be rooted in the understanding that police AI must be *safe and responsible*. This means the police must use AI in a manner that minimizes risks and harm to the very people they're paid to protect. It also means AI must be used by the police in an ethical, socially beneficial manner that is aligned with our national values and those of the communities they serve.



Second, the use of AI by the police must be *effective*. It must facilitate the realization of the public safety outcomes we seek. The concept of effectiveness means different things to different people. Understanding this and finding a way to synthesize diverse perspectives so that community consensus about policing goals and outcomes are achieved speaks directly to the art of police leadership. While related research in leadership, community engagement, and consensus building is vitally important to determining effective use of AI by the police, it is in the creative, almost artistic handling of this issue where police leaders will earn their pay.

Third, the police must be *empathetic* in their use of AI. They must listen without preconceived ideas to community concerns about broad public safety outcomes and the use of police AI to achieve those outcomes. Just because the police think they can use AI for something doesn't mean they should (e.g., person-based predictive policing). This empathetic listening is the essence of a community-led policing philosophy. Not surprisingly, gaining an understanding of what the community wants from the police is a complex process because the police serve multiple communities, many of which have competing expectations of the police.

People can easily become afraid of what they don't understand. Most people don't understand police AI, and quite frankly, won't care about its more mundane uses like report writing. But they will care about strategies like person-based predictive technologies. For many, this evokes images of the 2002 movie *Minority Report*. This is why it's crucial for the police to involve key stakeholders (cops, policymakers, and community members) so they better understand stakeholder sentiment and can empathize with them about their concerns regarding police AI.

Finally, the police must use AI in a *just* manner. Being constitutionally correct is the first step. But most people aren't well versed in the constitutional mandates and nuances with which the police must grapple. Most people consider what they believe the police do, or have done, and ask themselves the straightforward question, "Is that right?" They use a common-sense standard to gauge the just nature of police behavior. Transparency, self-reflection, taking responsibility for missteps, and the ability to simply say "We're sorry" all further the public's ability and willingness to ascribe legitimacy to police actions.

Clearly, there is subjectivity attached to each of these concepts. That's why it is so important for the police to involve the community in the journey to understand AI, its public safety benefits, and its potential pitfalls. The collective decision to use police AI will result in enhanced public trust and confidence in the police. The collaborative process builds ownership among all involved. This is the difference between "your" guidelines and "ours." This also increases the likelihood that AI's pitfalls can be avoided, or at least identified and corrected sooner rather than later.

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2028 To summarize, technological advances and private sector interests are facilitating the  
2029 normalization of AI in society. Policing's use of AI will track with the broader adoption of  
2030 AI. The pressure on policing to do more with less will not abate. And the public's trust and  
2031 confidence in the police use of AI will be furthered by a set of guiding principles developed  
2032 in concert with the community and their elected representatives. These principles must  
2033 guide policing's perspective on AI to ensure it is *effective, empathetic, and just*.

2034 In the finality of police leaders' careers, the true measure of their success will be how well  
2035 they prepared their agencies to deal with uncertainty and instability long after they've  
2036 left. This includes the future of AI—whatever that may be. History will ultimately judge  
2037 their leadership not by the number of awards and accolades they accumulated during their  
2038 tenure but by how well they prepared their agencies for the coming uncertain future. This is  
2039 what it means to be a truly great police leader.



2040 Chief **Jim Bueermann** (ret.) is a 45-year veteran of policing. He is the founder and president  
2041 of the Future Policing Institute (<https://www.futurepolicing.org>) and the Center on Policing  
2042 and Artificial Intelligence (<https://www.futurepolicing.org/center-on-ai>) (that includes  
2043 related model policies; [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ElnywSo1aHhMjOytmfV\\_NhyzU5wvhNpy5/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ElnywSo1aHhMjOytmfV_NhyzU5wvhNpy5/edit)). From 1978 to 2011 he served with the Redlands (California) Police  
2044 Department. He had the honor of serving in every unit in that department. For the last 13  
2045 years of his career, he was the Chief of Police and Director of Housing, Recreation and Senior  
2046 Services, leading a unique policing organization whose mission was to control crime before  
2047 it occurred by focusing on the identification and mitigation of community risk factors. After  
2048 his retirement in 2011, he served as an Executive Fellow at the National Institute of Justice  
2049 for a year. In 2012, he was appointed President of the National Police Foundation (now the  
2050 National Policing Institute), where he served until his retirement at the end of 2018. He  
2051 continues to serve as a consultant to community and governmental organizations and a  
2052 police leadership coach with the nonprofit organization Police2Peace.

# It's More than a Jail

## *Law Enforcement Collaborating with Community Resources to Overcome Ravages of Mental Illnesses and Substance Use Disorders*

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**Mark A. Hackel**

Virtually every law enforcement officer throughout the United States is keenly aware of the dire need for behavioral health services in their community. They have had direct experience with individuals experiencing mild to chronic forms of mental illness or substance use disorders. Such individuals can not only be found homeless trying to survive in large metropolitan cities but are also increasingly prevalent in rural communities as well. Mental illnesses and substance use disorders are not as commonly understood or even acknowledged by most of the public as are physical diseases such as cancer. However, for the sake of future generations, Macomb County, Michigan (along with the state of Michigan), has taken a leadership role by investing \$238,000,000 to counteract the insidious consequences of mental illness and substance use disorders by patient inmates of the Macomb County Jail with construction of an adjacent Central Intake and Reception Center (CIAC).

The pain and suffering of people with, for example, psychosis, neurosis, combat fatigue, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), schizophrenia, delirium tremens, or depression—even if they have a diagnosis we are aware of—are still not as obvious as those of patients pleading for medical help for open wounds, heart attacks, or broken limbs. Those suffering from acute or subacute mental illnesses and substance use abnormalities typically do not ask for help or seek behavioral health treatment. Much too frequently, police officers, deputy sheriffs, and other law enforcement are confronted by individuals exhibiting assaultive or other illegal behaviors as a direct or indirect consequence of their mental illness or substance use disorder, resulting in suicide or the deaths of others.

Because mental illnesses are not as obvious as the circumstances of those in dire physical need, they are often neglected—because some people do not care about others or, hopefully more often, they simply do not know what to do to help because they are not trained in behavioral health. Most every law enforcement agency throughout the nation has at least one detention cell in a municipal police department, while some have more than 1,000 jail cells in a county facility. These cells are hopefully staffed by officers trained to manage and console patient inmates in a calming environment, both before a diagnosis is made and after treatment commences. It is increasingly apparent, however, that the societal prevalence of serious mental illnesses and substance use addictions in the past four decades has become so great that county jails and prison facilities have become known as “the new asylums.”<sup>1</sup>

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1. “Serious Mental Illness Prevalence in Jails and Prisons,” Treatment Advocacy Center, accessed July 15, 2024, [https://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/reports\\_publications/serious-mental-illness-prevalence-in-jails-and-prisons/](https://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/reports_publications/serious-mental-illness-prevalence-in-jails-and-prisons/).

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The Treatment Advocacy Center reported in September 2016 that the Los Angeles County Jail, Chicago’s Cook County Jail, and New York’s Rikers Island Jail each holds more inmate patients with mental illness than any remaining psychiatric hospital in the United States.<sup>2</sup> In Michigan, the state of mental health care was adversely affected in 1997, when then-Governor John Engler closed more than a dozen psychiatric hospitals, shifting treatment back to communities without sufficient funding. Consequently, local municipalities and counties in Michigan assumed responsibilities formerly held by the state to provide hospitalized mental health care or do nothing. According to a report issued by the Altarum Institute of Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 2019, more than 650,000 Michiganders with mental illnesses and more than 500,000 with substance use disorders receive no treatment for their conditions.<sup>3</sup> The data may be similar in all other states. It is readily assumed the untreated Michigan population with mental illnesses and substance use disorders struggle because of job loss, divorce, financial upheaval, homelessness, and increased criminal behavior. The general population and law enforcement communities nationwide are adversely affected in many ways by a concomitant increase of costly crime, suicides, overdosing, etc. The relationship of criminality and insufficient funding for treatment of mental illness and illicit substance use continues to be a topic of intense debate that has negatively impacted American society and is in dire need of resolution.

It is often not considered by the public sector—but it is very much known by the law enforcement community—that incarceration itself can have lasting damage to mental health and exacerbate substance use disorders. People incarcerated in jails are disconnected from their families and communities at large, causing depression, distress, or guilt. They have no control over their surroundings while institutionalized and are subject to their environment’s unpredictability, rules, negative influences, good or bad inmate-staff relationships, etc. Furthermore, they can be living in the harsh, unhealthy, and abnormally punitive environment of solitary confinement—many of which facilities are overcrowded and understaffed. It is quite likely they have experienced or witnessed violence that has had lasting effects and collateral consequences, even in relatively humane correctional environments. This can haunt them while incarcerated and for a long period following release, which can worsen their mental illness and contribute to prolonged substance use addictions. Such violence is a keystone of the punishment mindset that underlies both prison and much of society outside it, for example, in the socialization of young children. Activists call this punishment mindset *carceral logic*: “the variety of ways our bodies, minds, and actions have been shaped by the practices of imprisonment—even for people who do not see themselves as connected to prisons.”<sup>4</sup>

The current Macomb County Jail dates to 1954, with four additions since. The aging facilities no longer meet the needs of law enforcement and the criminal justice system. More specifically, these facilities house a growing number of people with mental health and substance use issues who are in need of treatment while incarcerated and preparing for release.

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2. “Serious Mental Illness Prevalence in Jails and Prisons” (see note 1).

3. Corwin Rhyan et al., *Access to Behavioral Health Care in Michigan, 2019 Data Update* (Novi, MI: Altarum, 2022), <https://altarum.org/news-and-insights/access-behavioral-health-care-michigan-2019-data-update>.

4. “Frequently Asked Questions,” Rochester Decarceration Research Initiative, accessed July 16, 2024, <https://www.sas.rochester.edu/rdri/about/faq.html>.

The mission of the CIAC which will adjoin the Macomb County Jail is to identify, diagnose, and begin treatment of incarcerated persons suffering from mental illness, severe disabilities, and substance use addictions for subsequent referral to community-based resources upon release from incarceration. In collaboration with well-established community correction diversionary programs and a wide variety of community-based resources consisting of hospitals, behavioral health clinics, and nonprofit organizations such as churches and Alcoholics Anonymous, the CIAC will be staffed 24/7 by mental health professionals, interdisciplinary case workers, volunteer mentors, and specially trained correctional staff seeking to inspire transformational lifestyle changes in those serving sentences. This transformative approach places Macomb County in the forefront of the field as a national leader addressing a decades-long gap in jail behavioral health services with an intervention that will reduce the costly risk of recidivism in the community.

Looking to the next 30 years, law enforcement needs to work collaboratively with other stakeholders including their local elected officials and behavioral health providers to come up with solutions for individuals impacted by mental health and substance abuse issues. What we are doing in Macomb County could be a model.



**Mark A. Hackel** serves as the County Executive of Macomb County, Michigan, since the countywide elected position was established in 2011. Hackel is a lifelong champion of Macomb County who began his career in law enforcement in 1981 as a dispatcher with the Office of Macomb County Sheriff and in a 30-year period rose through every rank to become the elected sheriff. In addition to earning an associate degree from Macomb Community College, a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Wayne State University, and a master's degree in public administration from Central Michigan University, Mark attended the FBI National Academy and U.S. Secret Service Dignitary Protection School.

# Creating a Framework for Transformational Human-Centered Policing

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**Ganesha M. Martin**

If you go back to the Peelian principles, how policing should be done has been clear for decades. The police are the community. The community is the police. The underlying principle is that if we care for one another, all other things that flow from that mutual care will be for the good of all.

While I believe this is fundamentally true, I am not sure that Sir Robert Peel's theories were able to grapple with several prevalent and pervasive issues that pervert that ideal, including systemic racism, classism, gender roles, and overall societal norms and expectations. These issues afflict society daily, and as a result, they show up in the work of public safety in a myriad of ways. Public safety does not sit outside of society in some bubble. It is at the intersection of every known societal ill and must contend with fulfilling its stated role of "maintaining order" in the middle of human-made mess. This role is further complicated by the way Americans deal with the threat of safety related to crime and violence. How Americans ask to be kept safe seems to me like a reckless pendulum that swings back and forth, hurting and confounding police and thereby hurting the communities they serve—one minute it's "lock everyone up," and the next it's "let everyone go."

Many people prefer to discuss these issues with a bullhorn, blaring out hyperpolarized messages because they make the best sound bites. It's either "defund the police" or "back the blue." Existing in the nuanced, complicated center won't earn you much attention.

In addition, everyone wants to fit the entire landscape of policing and all its complexities into a neatly defined box. We try to meet hard questions with easy answers that too often prove inadequate. Is police use of excessive force the result of improper training? Give more training. Do officers abuse their authority because they lack appropriate supervision? Strengthen civilian oversight. Do specialized units lead to greater risk of violence against the community? Dismantle the units. Knee-jerk reactions without real interrogation and introspection.

Sadly, it's not that simple. And if we continue to pretend it is, we will keep having the same results.

Both the 2014 shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and the 2020 murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis opened up a time-space continuum where it seemed like something historic could be done to change many of these things for the better for police and community. And while some progress was made following both events, we have regressed in many ways. Policing, within its traditional power structures, is moving at a slug's pace, without really delving into the sticky issues . . . what I call the “messy middle.” We need a movement. We need a third rail. We need another way forward that stops treating police like widgets and expecting them to be Officer Friendly. The new way, the new rail, focuses on their HUMANITY first—humanity-centered policy, procedure, and training.

In order to start that pathway forward, I have laid out My Policing Truths. These are evolving.

**TRUTH ONE.** The structures that make up the public safety system, specifically policing, do not support the humanity of the people in them—both police and community.

- Policing is a profession in which you witness the worst in human beings—tragedies and violence involving the most vulnerable among us, babies, the elderly, the impoverished, the developmentally or physically challenged.
- No matter who the officer is when they join the force, witnessing this level of trauma affects them.
- Police are asked to “do the right thing” for their communities within structures that are fraught with bias and dedicated to maintaining control. I am not just referring to the policing structures; I am referring to all structures that guide our society: Who has money, who has education, who lives in certain areas, who has safe or livable housing, who has transportation, who has safe water and air.
- The folks in power demand safety from those who create crime and violence, often as a result of the disinvestment they have seen in their families and communities for decades, and the police are given firearms and electronic control weapons to carry out the mission of controlling these people. The good officers grow tired and weary, and the bad ones grow in number and strength.
- The would-be-better ones do not even bother to apply.
- These are the people we send out every day to communities in need and expect good things to happen.

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2028 **TRUTH TWO.** Community policing frameworks do not work to eradicate and replace these structures.

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- 2030 • Community policing frameworks focus on relationships, which are important, but they do not get at the root of the problem. Beyond that, community policing usually only involves self-selected people who show up to meetings and events with cops. It is generally a very small group in many marginalized communities.
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- 2033 • What can be done to address these issues? What changes can be made to police/ community structures that effectuate sustainable change that addresses the whole human?
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2035 I have developed the Meet Me in the Middle Methodology: Activate Voices and Set Up Systems Using Data and Technology to institute new structures of activity to assist with performance improvement and to ensure adherence.

2036

2037 1. Activate Voice.

2038 Define what the community and police believe is safety in their city, in their neighborhoods, in their districts or beats, on their streets, in their homes and cars— these create your data points.

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2040 2. Imbue your policies and training with these tenets.

2041 Training in police academies across the country is sub-par. Trainers are usually law enforcement with no background in teaching or best practices in adult-based teaching methods, and trainings are not created by professional curriculum writers. In addition, academies are often outdated without prime equipment. Much anti-bias training feels politically motivated and not crafted for the experience of cops, and there is no way to measure impact.

2042 Policies are becoming longer and more convoluted as people focus on building best practices for the sake of liability or to say they did so instead of building best practices into a curriculum that teaches the officers in the most effective way.

2043 It is widely understood in the field that sergeants—first-line leaders—are the backbone of the department. It is also understood that many of them lack the experience, training, ability, capacity, will, or numbers to adequately supervise, train, correct, and guide their patrol officers.

2044 It is becoming increasingly hard to pull cops off the street for training. Given the current recruitment and retention crisis, all these things continue to deteriorate.



3. Set Up Systems Using Data and Technology to institute new measures of activity to assist with performance improvement and to ensure adherence.

Police and community identify and define goals. Do they want decreased crime? Do they want increased trust and legitimacy? From there, they collaboratively establish a baseline and define activities and behaviors that need to change to attain those goals. During the implementation phase, we need to teach officers through body-worn camera analytics and other technologies to measure the change in actual behavior and perceived behavior. Technology can help us identify insights to move this work forward.

We must do things differently or we are bound to continue to make the same mistakes. That, as Albert Einstein is supposed to have said, is the definition of insanity.



**Ganesha Martin**, Esq., is a police reform expert who recently joined Mark43, the leading cloud-native public safety software company, as Vice President of Public Policy and Community Affairs. In her role, Martin focuses on Mark43's ongoing commitment to innovation in technology designed to empower police to better serve their communities through accountability, transparency, and trust-building. Prior to this role, she served in several positions in Baltimore City government. Most recently she was the Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ). She has overseen collaborative criminal justice efforts that included the Baltimore Police Department, Baltimore State's Attorney's Office, Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, U.S. Attorney's Office, the judiciary, and several community groups. A highly sought-after expert on police reform, Martin regularly speaks on DOJ consent decrees, police reform and accountability, and public safety. She is a member of the Council on Criminal Justice, an invite-only, nonpartisan organization and think tank for leaders in the criminal justice field. She was recently elected to the Board of Directors for the National Criminal Justice Association. In 2019 she was one of 40 community policing experts invited to Nairobi, Kenya, to share community policing strategies during the convening on Civilian Police Reform by Open Society Foundations. She was also awarded their Securing Open Societies Fellowship in 2019. Martin's expert commentary has been featured in the New York Times, the Baltimore Sun, USA Today, and the Washington Post, among others. Martin is a co-founder of Educated Exposure Foundation and a board member of Year Up Baltimore, Teach for America, Outward Bound, Baltimore Community Mediation Center, and Overcoming Poverty Together; her philanthropic endeavors reflect her commitment to advance social justice issues that directly impact the quality of life for historically underserved communities. A Leadership Maryland and Greater Baltimore Committee's LEADERship program alumna, Martin has been recognized in recent years by the Baltimore Sun in its Top 25 Women to Watch, the Daily Record in its Top 100 Women, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) in its Top 40 Under 40 list.

# Law Enforcement Leadership and Communities Working Together to Create Confidence and Trust

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**Phil E. Keith**

In a free society, citizens have a reasonable expectation of safety and security as they travel the journey of life. As I have often said, without public safety all other institutions will fail. Securing the fundamental rights to be free from harm by others, be safe in one's home, and maintain the integrity of one's property have been the goals of many acts of governance. Historically, the responsibility for providing public safety has fallen largely on law enforcement. This responsibility has evolved as law enforcement has been held to changing standards of accountability—standards that are arguably unique to that institution. Such shifts in public values will continue to redefine public order and reframe the context of what community members want from their public safety providers, ushering in opportunities for improvements in public safety services and duties.

Our democracy is deeply rooted in justice, fairness, and common good, however in so many cases when other institutions fail, law enforcement is called on to manage what often is outside its fundamental function of public safety. Complex issues not addressed by leadership or legislative guidance are often handed off to law enforcement as the last stop on the social conveyor belt. Examples of this handoff include dealing with students' behavioral and disciplinary issues in schools; individuals in the midst of mental health crises or with drug addiction or substance abuse problems; and general public health issues.

What, then, are the most important themes facing law enforcement over the next 30 years? Three of the most important are (1) technological change, (2) staffing challenges, and (3) community engagement.

Technological change is the most significant. Many of these changes will be within the greater context of developments in technology striving to improve quality of life, medicine and health, military capacity, as well as public safety. Technologies such as artificial intelligence, unmanned aerial systems (UAS), sensor technology, and data use in predictive analysis are just a few examples of advancements likely to make a substantial impact in the business of law enforcement and public safety. Technology in law enforcement historically accelerates at a slower pace than in the private or military sectors, meaning that technologies being developed today will take time to make their full impact on the field. In the future, law enforcement will make critical shifts to adopt and adapt to technology to assist

in combating crime, thwarting complex criminal enterprises, accomplishing information exchange, and applying technologies to improve responses to a variety of challenges with greater speed.

The evolution of law enforcement in the past 30 years has been largely driven by the creation of the COPS Office. In the early 1990s, COPS Office funding was provided to improve technology, and many law enforcement agencies were quick to secure funding to bring new equipment to their agencies. I was serving as a chief of police during this era and took advantage of the resources provided by the COPS Office to bring my department assets such as mobile data terminals, analytical crime analysis, forensic evidence collection and analysis, and other resources to combat crime, create community interest and trust, and allow hiring of additional officers. Not surprisingly, during this same period crime reduction and community engagement improved dramatically. Reported crime declined for more than a dozen years, in part because of the resources from the COPS Office. The initial momentum of the COPS Office created opportunities not available or realized since the 1967 Johnson Commission created the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. Similarly, the COPS Office worked directly with state and local law enforcement agencies and facilitated engagement between those entities and the U.S. Department of Justice. Funding to assist agencies in hiring, acquiring technologies, and implementing best practices for policing created a unique partnership with significant impact on public safety.

More recently, the COPS Office has continued to take on compelling technological issues, such as the application and accountability of UASs. The COPS Office developed a guidance document to promote the application, use, and accountability of this tool. Future COPS Office funding will likely see similar results on a wide range of challenges including searches, tactical operations, prevention, and detection.

Another critical variable for law enforcement is staffing. While some agencies have aggressively approached this challenge, most do not follow best practices in staff deployment, causing ripple effects in areas ranging from community confidence to agency wellness. Leaders in all sizes and types of agency must understand staffing and deployment for patrol and investigative functions as well as other specialized components that are increasingly necessary. Understanding how best to deploy officers will require agencies in the future to grasp the dynamics of staffing, as recruitment and hiring will remain a significant challenge for decades.

Understanding deployment will also require an understanding of the purpose of police response. Since the turn of the millennium many agencies have initiated strategies of not responding to certain types of incidents impacting public safety. For example, many agencies have implemented policies of not responding to traffic accidents without implementing other ways to collect critical data for predictive analysis to prevent future crashes. Other agencies have chosen not to respond to property crimes without a solution to address

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2028 criminal accountability and resolution, community confidence in crime resolution, or  
2029 community trust in law enforcement. This no-response strategy has gone without sufficient  
2030 public input on its long-term implications.

2031 Also related to policing's current and future staffing and deployment challenges is the issue  
2032 of data analysis. Predictive data analysis requires reliable and accurate data. Agencies  
2033 must develop the capacity to make strategic adjustments to policies and actions to increase  
2034 reporting of data and refine their understanding of local public safety issues, whether those  
2035 be crime, public order, or traffic safety.

2036 Law enforcement must also embrace community engagement—and not just cosmetically  
2037 or as a specialty unit function. The research and case studies funded and managed by the  
2038 COPS Office are rich with successes and strategies to sustain community engagement.  
2039 These 30 years of case studies will provide a best practice blueprint for agencies to improve  
2040 the quality and quantity of their community engagement initiatives. A true partnership  
2041 with accountability gets at the heart of Sir Robert Peel's ethical policing principles, as  
2042 both the community and the organized law enforcement component share responsibilities  
2043 for public safety. The successful partnerships of the future will include community public  
2044 safety planning functions designed to establish priorities for combatting crime, creating  
2045 public order, resolving problems, identifying individuals who harm the community, and  
2046 providing accountability for the criminal justice component, alongside other priorities,  
2047 issues, and challenges.

2048 Prior to the COPS Office's work in advancing community policing, many community  
2049 engagement efforts were limited to crime prevention models with limited measurements  
2050 for success and often confined to specialized units, an approach that absolves the patrol  
2051 and investigative functions of their responsibility for the primary delivery of services and  
2052 responses. The holistic approach supported by the COPS Office focuses on identification  
2053 of offenders, reducing opportunities for crime, and safeguarding vulnerable populations.  
2054 As information technology and data-driven predictive analysis improve law enforcement's  
effectiveness, partnership with the community will improve mutual trust between the  
community and the police. This community engagement will serve as the foundation for  
improved public safety as research provides improved models for community policing to  
adopt. Community policing as a term should not be considered "soft on crime," but rather  
the opposite—holding offenders accountable and building public trust.

2048 Perhaps one of the most complex issues facing law enforcement in the future will be changes  
2049 to the criminal justice system. For public safety community engagement to be successful,  
2050 all components or functions of the criminal justice system must be active participants.  
2051 Law enforcement is the most visible and most accountable of those components; it is the  
2052 public face of the criminal justice system and is often held responsible by the community  
2053 for actions and decisions adversely impacting or perceived to impact communities. In the  
2054 past century, numerous commissions, task forces, and investigations have led to many of

the improvements law enforcement enjoys today. Decisions and strategies implemented, adopted, or created by legislative acts impact law enforcement on a number of levels—arguably, all other functions, from prosecution to judicial actions to victim assistance, feel their impacts primarily by way of law enforcement. To have measurable impact, planning for community safety cannot be done by any one component or stakeholder in isolation; all must build trust among one another. In future, the COPS Office’s historical efforts will serve as a pathway for improvements, and the formal adoption of community public safety planning initiatives will create better understanding among all partners.

The future of public safety will depend largely on its leadership working together with the communities they serve to create a partnership of confidence and trust. No society can exist without social and behavioral norms. Public safety in the future will depend largely on the application of the rule of law and the collective efforts of the criminal justice system partners to instill ethics and promote community control and safety.



**Phil E. Keith** was appointed in April 2018 by President Donald J. Trump and Attorney General Jeff Sessions to serve as the sixth Director of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. In 2020, the president and Attorney General William Barr appointed him to serve as the Chair of the historic President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, the first such commission since the 1967 presidential commission appointed by President Lyndon Johnson.

He has more than 54 years of experience in the fields of criminal justice, public safety, and business administration. During his career, he held numerous high-level policy-making positions in law enforcement, public safety, and emergency management preparedness. These policy-making positions include being appointed by President George W. Bush to the Senior Advisory Council for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Commissioner for the Commission on Law Enforcement Accreditation, Commissioner for the Tennessee Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission, U.S. Conference of Mayors Advisory Task Force on the Crime Control Act of 1993, National Community Policing Resource Board for the COPS Office (1996), DOJ Intelligence Coordinating Council, and the National AMBER Advisory Committee for DOJ/OJP.

He has 34 years in active law enforcement service, with nearly 17 years as Chief of Police for the Knoxville (Tennessee) Police Department (KPD). Mr. Keith served as the principal project director for the Major Cities Chiefs Association and has influenced law enforcement and public safety policy development and implementation throughout the United States. His experience in operational studies and activities includes conducting more than 15 trauma-based victims’ roundtables for the U.S. Department of Justice and conducting numerous patrol staffing studies in large and small agencies including Los Angeles; Charlotte, North Carolina; Delray Beach, Florida; and many others. He served as the principal author for the

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2028 Bureau of Justice Assistance Law Enforcement Leadership Initiative and published numerous  
2029 other articles and technical reports. Mr. Keith has also performed more than 150 organiza-  
2030 tional assessments for law enforcement agencies and served as a principal consultant with  
the firms of ABS and Ridge-Lane, LLC.

2031 Throughout his career he has been recognized for contributions and leadership, includ-  
2032 ing being recognized as Officer of the Year for the KPD, as Law Enforcement Educator of  
the Year by the Southeastern Criminal Justice Educators Association, as Law Enforcement  
2033 Planner of the Year by the International Law Enforcement Planners Association (an award  
subsequently renamed in his honor), for Excellence in Public Service by the American Society  
for Public Administration, by the Frederick Douglass Family Foundation as the first recipient  
2034 of the Human Rights Award for national leadership in combating modern-day slavery, with  
the John and Revé Walsh Award by the Governor of Florida, and with the law enforcement  
2035 leadership award by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

2036 Mr. Keith earned his undergraduate degree in criminal justice and business administration  
2037 from East Tennessee State University and an MS degree in education from the University  
of Tennessee.  
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# Looking to the Future by Turning to the Past

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**Bruce Lee**

In my 38 years in the policing profession, I have found that one thing is clear: Stories have power. We need to listen to these stories. We need to take the time to hear these stories. We need to learn from these stories. We should never disregard the value of storytelling. To look to the future, we need to consider the past.

We are in the people business. When I first started out in this profession back in the 1980s, one of the first lessons and stories passed down to me from senior officers was that you never drive past a stalled car. In an age of no cell phones, we stopped and made sure that the driver and passengers were cared for, even if that meant changing tires or batteries or running to the gas station. This was just something we did. Our primary role is to ensure we care and protect our community members. This caring and protection extends to how we talk and interact with the public as well as our employees. We need to be respectful and just. As policing progresses into the future, we cannot lose sight of our role, and even when new or repackaged concepts are introduced, we have to remember our primary mission.

Our ability to prevent crime and disorder is dependent on public approval of our actions. This statement is still valid 200 years after the Peelian principles were unveiled and should remain true in the next 30 years. We have to be responsive to our community needs because being responsive to the needs of the public goes to the heart of community policing. If something is not working, we have to listen and try to find a solution; as long as we are willing to try, we will find solutions, but we have to be open to considering all possibilities. This was modeled to me by the first sheriff I worked under. When the community had a concern, the sheriff stopped to listen. I think that you will find that this is especially true when your boss is elected.

We need to treat both our public and our employees well and foster good relationships. It is also important to remember that people want to be heard. We need to take the time to listen and truly hear people. Sometimes just asking people what they want to have happen, when listening to a complaint from a community member, works wonders. Allowing community complaints, concerns, and distrust to fester is not good policing.

Discussing the future of policing cannot avoid the conversation on technology. Technology is wonderful. We have gotten so much smarter with technology and the way we can use it as a force multiplier; however, it can also become a crutch. Technology should not replace the human element because we are in the business of people. Technology is not going to solve all of our crimes for us, nor is it going to make a crime victim feel better. Artificial intelligence (AI) is the newest buzz phrase in society and policing. Within policing there are always buzzwords; some become engrained in our profession and others are fleeting. AI is



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2028 not going to save us. What is going to save our profession is how we deal with people and  
2029 one another. What is also going to save us is the need to remember that we have to practice  
2030 internal procedural justice with our staff.

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2032 When I do my daily afternoon walkabouts around the agency, my stories to my team often  
2033 revolve around respect and listening. Some of my stories include lessons on the fundamen-  
2034 tal principle that if you mess up, you fess up and then clean up. For example, I may tell a  
2035 story of an event that occurred many years ago where I had two officer complaints occur  
2036 close together involving excessive force. In one case, the first officer was brutally honest  
2037 about what happened. In the second case, the officer lied about their conduct. Although  
2038 both officers were disciplined, the severity of the discipline came down to the integrity of  
2039 the officer. In so many incidents, the lying and covering up is always far worse than the  
2040 original transgression. In sharing these types of morality stories I endeavor to pass down  
2041 hard learned lessons to the next generation. As we look to the next 30 years, we have to  
2042 learn from where we have been and keep these lessons learned as we progress in policing.

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2044 Finally, my last lesson that I share is around retention of officers and knowing if you are  
2045 cut out for this work. The two pieces of advice I give newer officers are these:

- 2046 1. This job will never love you back, no matter how hard you try.
- 2047 2. As your career progresses, you will still need to find your passion, and if you don't  
2048 love the work you're doing by year five, get out.

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2050 The first two years of the job is a whirlwind of trying to learn policing and trying to stay  
2051 alive. For most of my career, we have focused on teaching officers and deputies how to stay  
2052 alive during traffic stops and potential ambushes, but not so much from a wellness perspec-  
2053 tive, although I do see that changing. My hope for the future is that we continue to empha-  
2054 sify the health and wellness of our employees. By year three, officers and deputies finally  
2055 come into their own (they are serviceable). By year five, if there isn't a love for the mission,  
2056 if you are just punching the clock, already starting your retirement countdown clock, you  
2057 need to leave. Good law enforcement professionals are those who love the work and love  
2058 the people in their communities. This is what we need to remember for the next 30 years  
2059 and more.





**Bruce Lee** has more than 38 years of experience in law enforcement and public safety. He began his career as an FBI support employee in Washington, D.C., and became a security police officer at Quantico, Virginia. Bruce returned home and spent the next 27 years as a member of the Mobile County (Alabama) Sheriff's Office. During this time, he enjoyed 22 years of progressively more responsible positions of leadership and supervision. This includes 12 years as captain with multiple command assignments, including each of the main divisions in sequence (Criminal, Patrol, CID, Administrative). Bruce has been the Public Safety Director for Poarch Band of Creek Indians for the past nine years. From this experience, Bruce developed a strong belief that it is important to train and develop talent within your agency and that your legacy as a leader will always be the people you leave behind not the individual accomplishments. Bruce has proudly watched as a large number of deputies who worked and trained under his command have gone on to be chiefs of police around Mobile County. Bruce holds a Master of Science degree in criminal justice with a concentration in emergency management and bachelor's degrees in criminal justice and in history and is an FBI National Academy Graduate (179th session). He has been an adjunct instructor for Faulkner University and is also currently providing support as a subject matter expert for a COPS Office Collaborative Reform Initiative – Technical Assistance Center project.

# Let's Keep it Simple

## *Crime Reduction Shared through a Stratified Approach*

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**Roberto G. Santos and Rachel B. Santos**

One thing is for certain: Answering calls for service and investigating crimes are not the sole drivers of the systematic reductions in crime and victimization that have occurred in the last 30 years, nor will they be in the next 30 years. However, the truth is that these functions are the overwhelming majority of what police do and are the primary expectation of communities that police serve. These priorities have been the same for decades and will likely not change decades from now, so how can police become more effective in reducing crime and victimization proactively?

The last 30 or more years of testing strategies and evaluating their implementation in the field have shown that police have an important role in this reduction. Strategies include partnering with the community to apply the problem-solving process to places and people. A sustainable combination of these partnering and problem-solving strategies is required for police to be as effective as possible. However, police leaders have had a difficult time infusing evidence-based crime reduction strategies throughout their organizations in any real systematic way. It is often left up to specialized units or achieved through ad hoc operations.

Any successful company is driven by a strong business model specific to achieving an expected outcome. Moving forward, police leaders should place greater emphasis on adopting a clear and robust business model that operationalizes evidence-based strategies for crime reduction. Importantly, this business model should not supplant but must be folded into the current responsibilities of police, because even as policing continues to evolve, answering calls for service and investigating crimes will remain its central function and priority.

What does a crime reduction business model look like? Among other things, it should be straightforward, realistic, and focused on systematically doing effective strategies extremely well to achieve a specific outcome. That is, stick to fundamentals, what works, and keep it simple. Ultimately, a business model should drive individuals to be more willing to play their role and do their job in crime reduction. This business model should create slight modifications and successfully balance proactive crime reduction with the current strong police culture of answering calls for service and investigating crimes.

Consider the creation of a crime reduction business model analogous to what we already know works in policing as an effective process—response to calls for service. While the processes, technology, and expectations have evolved, the fundamental way police answer

calls is consistent across police organizations today and has survived the test of time. Why? Because it is a business model that works and achieves its expected outcome—efficiently and effectively addressing large volumes of differing types of calls for service from the community. A business model for proactive crime reduction should look like this long established model that individuals are accustomed to.

The comprehensive system of calls for service response incorporates many layers of involvement from diverse ranks, investigations, and units. Everyone in the organization understands what needs to be done, what their role is, and what other people are expected to do. There are established expectations that everyone respects and both informal and formal accountability. At the heart is the seriousness of the call for service, which dictates everything about how a call is handled—how many officers, supervisors, commanders, and units are on scene; whether Investigations shows up; which responses are necessary; what strategies come next; and who is accountable. As the situations become larger and more complex, higher ranks and additional resources become involved and directly responsible. These expectations are so ingrained within the organization that responses become automatic, are not optional, and even supersede other activities. The process and the responsibility of addressing calls for service are shared through a stratified response: Patrol officers are never expected to address every type of call for service with no help from anyone else, no matter the circumstances.

Mirroring calls for service response, a crime reduction business model can be built upon a similar stratification to create robust processes and accountability. “Seriousness of the call for service” is replaced by “seriousness of the crime and disorder problem.” Concentrations of crime and disorder are distinguished as immediate (significant incidents), short-term (repeat calls and crime patterns) and long-term (areas, locations, offenders) problems and dictate how the process and responsibility are shared through a stratified response to ensure the right people, strategies, and resources are involved. To make sure the crime reduction business model aligns and coexists with fundamental police business, individuals participate based on what is realistic and within the scope of their current day-to-day responsibilities. Their rank and role within the organization determine the tasks they do for crime reduction. Like calls for service response, depending on how serious a crime and disorder problem is, higher ranks are responsible for leading crime reduction efforts, coordinating and communicating appropriate evidence-based strategies, and directly participating in the strategies themselves. The work of individuals builds and intersects and ultimately results in a comprehensive, multifaceted approach that is infused into established organizational practices.

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In the last 20 years, we have partnered with police organizations around the United States and internationally to create, establish, and enhance a proactive crime reduction business model based on these concepts—Stratified Policing,<sup>1</sup> which was developed to do the following:

1. Provide police leaders a clear path for implementation and institutionalization of proactive crime reduction modeled after current police processes.
2. Incorporate practical theory and evidence-based practices from place-based, problem-solving, person-focused, and community-based approaches.
3. Use crime analysis to identify and dispatch crime and disorder problems and evaluate outcomes.
4. Incorporate small changes by rank, division, and unit into daily activities that all contribute to achieving the expected outcome of reducing crime and victimization.
5. Use time from individuals throughout the organization as a resource and become more efficient.
6. Ensure that individuals, units, and divisions in the organization contribute based on what is realistic.
7. Incorporate multifaceted formal and informal accountability that is fair and transparent.
8. Raise the expectations for everyone in the organization to contribute to crime reduction.

In closing, the future success of policing will require a shared, evidence-based vision of policymakers, police leaders, and communities to achieve the desired outcome of systematically reducing crime and victimization. A strong crime reduction business model is necessary to operationalize this vision. Our ultimate purpose in creating Stratified Policing has been to provide police with one possibility to assist in this endeavor.

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1. Roberto Santos and Rachel Santos, *Stratified Policing: An Organizational Model for Proactive Crime Reduction and Accountability* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020).



Dr. **Roberto G. Santos** is a professor of criminal justice as well as co-director of the Center for Police Practice, Policy and Research (<https://www.radford.edu/cp3r>) at Radford University in Virginia. He retired as a police commander from a large police agency after 22 years. He partners with police agencies nationally and internationally and conducts evidence-based and practice-based research to translate research to practice and vice versa. Dr. Santos focuses on proactive crime reduction approaches for police, accountability, crime and place, crime science, criminal investigations, organizational change and leadership, proactive community engagement, and police/community partnerships.

Dr. **Rachel B. Santos** is a professor of criminal justice and co-director of the Center for Police Practice, Policy, and Research (<https://www.radford.edu/cp3r>) at Radford University in Virginia. She started her career in policing as a crime analyst in a large police department. After five years, she took a position as a senior research associate at the National Policing Institute in Washington, D.C. She conducts practice-based research—implementing and evaluating evidence-based strategies in practice. She focuses on crime prevention and proactive crime-reduction efforts by police, problem solving, proactive community engagement, crime analysis and criminal intelligence, crime science, as well as police/crime data and technology. Dr. Santos provides technical assistance and partners with police departments across the United States and internationally in these areas.

# Community Safety as a Bedrock Mission of Policing

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**Darrel Stephens**

Trying to describe policing in 2054 is a perplexing exercise. Some things have changed so rapidly in the past 30 years—technology is one—that it would be almost impossible to imagine what policing will look like 30 years from now. Other areas—such as the way police are structured (local, state, federal)—have not substantially changed since formal police departments were created in the 19th century. So, I have chosen to focus on five areas that I believe are important issues and challenges for policing as they navigate the stormy waters they will face in the next 30 years.

**1. Police agency consolidation.** There are too many local police agencies in America. A 2020 survey by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that there are 14,677 local police departments and sheriffs’ offices staffed by 647,001 officers and deputies.<sup>1</sup> Of the 11,788 of these agencies that were local police departments, 6 percent had 100 officers or more and 94 percent had fewer than 100 officers.<sup>2</sup> Although officers in these agencies meet state training requirements for certification, these departments cannot provide the full range of services and specialization required in today’s policing environment, let alone as we progress through the next 30 years.

This approach to policing is unique to the United States and has its roots in our founding fathers’ fear of strong centralized government. But it has long been recognized that the way this approach has developed contributes to the inefficiency of the police. The U.S. National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement (Wickersham Commission), which sat from 1929–1930, concluded that the “multitude” of police forces contributed to the “general low grade of police performance” and suggested a system of state-level policing be established.<sup>3</sup> The President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice (Katzenbach Commission) recommended in 1967 that metropolitan areas should

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1. Sean E. Goodison, *Local Police Departments Personnel, 2020* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2022), <https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/local-police-departments-personnel-2020>.

2. Goodison, *Local Police Departments Personnel* (see note 1).

3. U.S. National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, *Report on Police* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1931), <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/wickersham-commission-reports-no-14-report-police-police-conditions>.

take steps to consolidate police.<sup>4</sup> In its 1973 report, the National Advisory Commission on Standards and Goals recommended that police departments with 10 or fewer officers be consolidated.<sup>5</sup>

In the past 50 years there has been some consolidation of police agencies and support services such as communications centers. The challenges the police face in the next 30 years will hopefully stimulate greater interest in consolidation. Policing is under the control of state government, but the Federal Government could play an important role in providing incentives for widespread consolidation initiatives.

**2. Technology.** Advances in police technology in the past 30 years have been exponential, and there is every reason to believe that will continue through 2054. Police and communities face enormous issues in the adoption of new technologies. Some communities have adopted policies that prohibit the use of technology such as facial recognition and license plate readers because of privacy concerns. The increasing cost of acquisition, maintenance, and refresh are formidable challenges for the police. The growth in cybercrime has outpaced the ability of the police and prosecutors' ability to respond.

Despite its challenges, however, technology advances offer police the best opportunity to be able to maintain safe communities. There are three developing technologies that will make a substantial difference in police effectiveness in the next 30 years. The first is artificial intelligence (AI). AI algorithms will be used to analyze vast amounts of data to identify patterns and anticipate where crimes might occur. AI will also be used to assist in conducting criminal investigations, writing reports, and more quickly bringing closure to unsolved crimes. The second is robotics supported by AI. Autonomous unmanned aerial systems (drones) and robots equipped with cameras and sensors could be deployed for tasks such as surveillance, crowd control, and even apprehending suspects in dangerous situations. Robots might be used for routine patrols, guarding facilities, or to handle nonviolent incidents, freeing up human officers for more complex tasks. The third is less-lethal weapons. The largest manufacturer of electronic control devices has established a goal of reducing gun-related deaths between the police and public by 2032. By 2054 there is good reason to believe that technology will advance to the extent that police will exclusively be armed with non-lethal weapons that will be more effective than firearms.

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4. The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1967), <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/challenge-crime-free-society>.

5. National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, *Police—Report of the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, 1973* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1973), <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/police-report-national-advisory-commission-criminal-justice>.

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**3. Private security.** The intersection of private security and public police providing safety and security services has become complex. In recent years private security has continued to grow while public policing has remained static or declined because of the inability to fill vacant positions or budget restrictions. Labor statistics indicate there are more than 1.1 million private security guards in the United States,<sup>6</sup>—almost twice as many as local sworn officers and deputies.<sup>7</sup> Private security has taken on a policing role in many communities and may play an even greater role than public police in areas such as cybercrime, organized retail theft, and fraud. The evolution of the changing and overlapping roles of police and private security raises important questions on coordination, oversight, and accountability. In the next 30 years, partnerships between the police and private security will include more formal relationships. Changes in laws will authorize written agreements between public police and private security that address confidentiality, accountability, and transparency in collaborative community safety initiatives.

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**4. Staffing.** Police staffing has been a challenge since 2008, when the Great Recession contributed to reductions in both sworn and nonsworn personnel. COVID-19 and negative public perceptions of the police that intensified beginning in 2020 exacerbated the staffing problem as police experienced higher than expected retirements and resignations along with the inability to hire replacements. A Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) survey of police agencies showed an increase in hiring and a reduction in resignations in 2023 compared with 2021 and 2022.<sup>8</sup> Although a positive sign, demographic trends are not encouraging. By 2034, immigration will drive population increases and will be the source of all growth in 2040 and beyond.<sup>9</sup>

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The police and other employers will have to look outside their traditional recruiting pools and consider innovative ways of doing their work. As mentioned earlier, technology offers numerous opportunities for enhancing productivity to reduce the need for personnel. Some police agencies are already hiring candidates older than the historical cutoff of 35 years old. Initiatives like 30x30 (30 percent of police officers are female by 2030) aimed at increasing women in policing should consider increasing the goal to 50 percent in 2030.

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Effective collaboration will progressively become a requirement in the next 30 years. To mitigate the need for more officers, police will have to develop strong relationships with other service providers, private security, and the community to ensure public safety.

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6. Jonathan Earles and Matteo Pazzona, “Law Enforcement versus Private Security in the United States,” *Security*, last modified September 29, 2021, <https://www.securitymagazine.com/blogs/14-security-blog/post/96189-law-enforcement-versus-private-security-in-the-united-states>.

7. Goodison, *Local Police Departments Personnel* (see note 1).

8. “New PERF Survey Shows Police Agencies Have Turned a Corner with Staffing Challenges,” *Police Executive Research Forum*, last modified April 27, 2024, <https://www.policeforum.org/staffing2024>.

9. “The Demographic Outlook: 2024 to 2054,” *Congressional Budget Office*, last modified January 18, 2024, <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/59697>.



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**5. Climate change.** “The scientific evidence is unequivocal: climate change is a threat to human well-being and the health of the planet.”<sup>10</sup>

The police are already dealing with the impacts of climate change; these demands will significantly increase in the next 30 years. Stronger hurricanes, heavy precipitation and flooding, rising sea levels, drought, and heat are all a part of the landscape for policing in the future. These events will demand more time from police and other first responders as the globe continues to warm. Climate change will affect everything from operational strategies to resource allocation to community engagement and will require significant adaptations on the part of the police.

Community safety will continue to be the bedrock mission of the police in the future as they wrestle with the unprecedented issues they face. Success will require the flexibility to collaborate, rapidly adjust to changing conditions, and place a high premium on innovation. Success will require leadership that understands that law enforcement is not the sole mission of the police: It is an important part of the mission.



**Darrel Stephens** is the Co-Director of the Policing, Security Technology and Private Security Policy Research Institute at Florida State University’s College of Criminology and Criminal Justice. He is an accomplished police executive with more than 50 years of experience in policing. His career began as a police officer in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1968. He has 26 years of experience in a police executive capacity, including nine years (September 1999 to June 2008) as the Chief of the 2,100-member Charlotte-Mecklenburg (North Carolina) Police Department. In addition to his police experience, he served for two years as the City Administrator in St. Petersburg, Florida. In addition, he served as Executive Director of the Major Cities Chiefs Association (2010–2017) and the Police Executive Research Forum (1986–1992).

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10. “The Effects of Climate Change,” National Aeronautics and Space Administration, last modified March 26, 2024, <https://science.nasa.gov/climate-change/effects/>.

# Police as Catalysts for a More Perfect Union

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**Maureen Quinn McGough**

Policing has become hyperpoliticized and polarized to the detriment of the profession and the people it serves. Problematic messages include *If you work with or for the police, you must be a racist; If you criticize an officer's actions, you must be an anarchist; If Black lives matter, blue lives don't (and vice versa); The only answer to better public safety is either abolishing the police or hiring more cops.* None of these is categorically true, but we can sometimes be stuck at the extreme edges of politics and public opinion.

This is not exactly fertile ground on which to sow seeds of change. My dear friend and colleague Ganesha Martin said it best in her 2023 op-ed in *USA Today*: “Before progress is possible, we must agree to meet in what I call the ‘messy middle,’ a place of tension and trauma but also great potential . . . [I]t is in these rooms that real work is done, answers are born and, ultimately, lives are saved.”<sup>1</sup>

I’ve been lucky to spend most of my career in that messy middle, and the clearest lesson I’ve learned is this: *the vast majority of people want the same thing.* Police leaders and communities want the public and the officers who serve them to be safe, and they want public safety services that are fair and equitable.

Too often, however, conversations—especially conversations about fairness—focus on what police *can't* or *shouldn't* do. This makes some sense; the founders wrote the Constitution to form a more perfect union, in large part by restricting government power. But reinforcing the limits of police authority is simply not enough.

Police can be—must be—at the forefront of creating the more perfect union the Constitution promises. They—more than any other profession—are poised to become proactive catalysts for safety *and* equity at a time where some communities view them as a major threat to those democratic ideals.

To get there, we must meet in the messy middle to collaboratively develop two key premises: what police *do* and who police *are*.

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1. Ganesha Martin, “How Do We Stop Police from Killing Black Americans? We Must Meet in the ‘Messy Middle,’” *USA Today*, March 1, 2023, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2023/03/01/police-reform-united-states-break-through-fear/11339679002/>.

**What police do. In a safer, fairer future, we all have a shared, evidence-informed understanding of what police should do and how they should do it.**

There are no national standards for policing. There are important reasons why—federalism chief among them. But the lack of clarity about what police should do and how they should do it leaves municipal leaders, police leaders, and community advocates pushing in different and at times inconsistent and counterproductive directions. I recall a conversation with a police leader in the summer of 2020 who reflected, “We’re trying to do the right thing here. But at this point, someone’s gotta tell us what that is.”

We may not have national standards, but we do have a growing sense of what matters and what works to keep people safe. There have been huge advancements in the development and application of police research to practice in the last decade alone, with the establishment of the National Institute of Justice’s Law Enforcement Advancing Data and Science program, the American Society of Evidence-Based Policing (and its counterparts in Australia and New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Canada), the continued growth of the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy at George Mason University, and the development of the Excellence in Policing & Public Safety Program at the University of South Carolina Joseph F. Rice School of Law (which I was fortunate to join last year as Executive Director), to name a few.

And we even have a lodestar that largely defines what effective and fair policing looks like and how it is best achieved. The American Law Institute recently concluded its seven-year effort to establish principles for police practice that reflect the latest scientific research, legal precedents, industry best and promising practices, community priorities, historical context, technological developments, and ethical considerations.<sup>2</sup> These *Policing Principles of Law* were developed by a nonpartisan stakeholder group of police leaders, community advocates, legal scholars, scientific researchers, and policymakers—the messy middle in action. The *Principles* address a broad range of critical issues in policing and, if leveraged properly, could define our shared understanding of what police should do to advance a safer, fairer future.

But there is a lot of tough, intentional work that needs to be done to distill the *Principles*’ 14 volumes and translate hundreds of pages into implementable policy, training, data, and accountability frameworks. Like the *Principles*, these frameworks must be developed in the messy middle, with meaningful input across all stakeholder groups. And they must be mindfully created to ensure they are useful and effective regardless of an agency’s size, mission, or geographic location.

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2. “Principles of the Law, Policing Is Approved,” American Law Institute, press release, May 18, 2022, <https://www.ali.org/news/articles/principles-law-policing-approved/>.

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This collaboration will require significant support from a broad range of funders who must be willing to invest in stepwise, nuanced, and, at times, painstaking work. The work won't be quick or sexy. It doesn't lend itself to headlines or soundbites, and it won't appease everyone—especially people on political extremes. But it is needed. And it may be our best shot.

***Who police are. In a safer, fairer future, departments are staffed by the most qualified people for the job and reflect the communities they serve.***

I co-founded the 30x30 Initiative to improve the representation and experiences of women in policing with Chief (ret.) Ivonne Roman in 2021. A strong body of scientific evidence demonstrates the unique value of women officers in creating a safer, fairer future. Research suggests women officers use force and excessive force less often than men, get better outcomes for crime victims, are named in fewer complaints and lawsuits, and are perceived as more trustworthy and compassionate.

Despite these obvious benefits, women still make up just shy of 13 percent of sworn officers in this country and only 3 percent of police leaders. One of the major factors that drives this lack of representation is that we, as a nation, have done a poor job of understanding and assessing what it takes to be an effective and fair police officer. Many departments use extremely outdated assessments designed by a homogenous group using little, if any, scientific rigor. Most officer candidate assessments have yet to be validated to show they reflect or accurately assess what is required to do the job well, and some may amount to constitutional violations by disproportionately excluding certain groups—including women.

These flawed assessments mean departments are losing otherwise qualified candidates in the middle of a nationwide hiring crisis. This isn't about lowering standards to bring more people in the door; it's about developing accurate standards to bring the best people in. And it is not enough just to get those people in; departments must intentionally create inclusive cultures that ensure all officers an equitable shot at thriving at every stage of their career.<sup>3</sup> Improving assessments and reducing inherent bias should result in a more diverse and representative workforce with a variety of life experiences, viewpoints, and priorities that will improve public safety outcomes.

Given the incredible importance of policing in a democratic society and the broad range of responsibilities we impose on our officers, it is almost unthinkable that there is so little research on who our officers should be. The Federal Government and other funders could and should invest in empirically identifying and assessing the most important officer

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3. The 30x30 Initiative lays out a comprehensive framework for addressing inherent biases and ensuring the unique needs of women officers are met across the lifecycle of an officer's career, from recruitment to assessment, hiring, promotion, and retention. We anticipate that implementing the tenets of 30x30 will result in improvements of other underrepresented groups as well. For more information, visit <https://30x30initiative.org/>.

attributes. Police leaders and the communities they serve deserve to know that the people in uniform are the ones best suited for the job. It's hard to imagine a safer, fairer future without those insights.

A diverse workforce also improves agencies' access to the perspectives of the people they serve, closing the distance between officers and the people who need them most. It's a lot easier to meet in the middle when the middle is closer to where you stand.



**Maureen "Mo" McGough** is the co-founder of the 30x30 Initiative to advance women in policing and the Executive Director of the Center for Excellence in Policing and Public Safety (EPPS) at the University of South Carolina School of Law. She is the former Chief of Strategic Initiatives at the Policing Project at NYU Law, and spent much of her career with the Federal Government in various roles with the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of State, including Senior Policy Advisor to the Director of the National Institute of Justice, counsel on terrorism prevention to the Deputy Attorney General, Special Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, and coordinator for federal AIDS relief efforts through the U.S. Embassy in Kigali, Rwanda. Maureen is an attorney and earned her JD from the George Washington University Law School.



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Since 1994, the COPS Office has been appropriated more than \$20 billion to advance community policing.

# Partnerships

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# Shifting Approaches to Function in a More Complex Society

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**Jeffrey Glover**

Looking forward 30 years into the future, the law enforcement profession will be transformed in three primary ways: (1) rapid advances in technology, (2) a shift away from traditional and established practices, and (3) an evolution in societal values that will impact laws and public policy. The last of these is the most important. Traditionally, law enforcement has primarily focused on maintaining public order, enforcing laws, and ensuring community safety. However, as our society evolves, the requirements of crime suppression often come into conflict with changing social attitudes. This conflict necessitates a broader, more nuanced approach to the maintenance of public order and public safety. In the next 30 years, law enforcement's success will increasingly depend on its ability to recognize these shifts and demonstrate the flexibility to function within a much more complex society. This flexibility in turn will require recognizing the need to work with public health and social services organizations, public works, nongovernmental organizations (NGO), and other entities.

Genuine commitment to this broad-based approach will also require coordination with lawmakers and input into the laws and policies that will be essential to addressing systemic societal issues comprehensively, creating the opportunity for success, and gaining the trust and approval of the community. Law enforcement agencies that are successful will use holistic problem-solving approaches, leveraging the strengths and expertise of various sectors in their communities. This approach addresses the underlying causes, rather than just the symptoms, of criminal behavior—leading to more sustainable outcomes.

At present, emphasis has been placed on community policing, where officers collaborate closely with community members to solve problems and build trust. These are effective approaches, but more is required. Law enforcement agencies will need to invest in training their officers to understand and respect cultural differences; improve conflict resolution and de-escalation skills; and develop closer ties with community members, churches, and other stakeholders.

Some of this training may include technical innovations that help agencies and communities come together for the shared responsibility of ensuring community safety. Technology presents an opportunity to stay current, provided law enforcement leaders are capable of continuously assessing their environment and adjusting to an evolving world. The integration and effective use of technology will play a significant role in the future of policing and holds enormous potential to enhance law enforcement capabilities.



But these advancements also bring significant challenges, particularly in the realm of investigating technology-based crimes. Addressing these challenges will require continuous training and adaptation, international collaboration, and a balanced approach to security and privacy. This last requirement is key; policing philosophy and approaches often do not keep pace with societal change, but they must take into account community members' expectations of privacy to effectively address crimes involving social media and other new technologies.

Technology evolves faster than laws and regulations can keep up. This rapid pace creates gaps in legal frameworks and enforcement capabilities, making it difficult to address new types of tech crimes effectively. Continuous legislative updates and international cooperation are necessary to create adaptable and comprehensive legal frameworks to address issues arising from societal and technological changes. Quantum computing will revolutionize data processing, enabling the solving of complex problems and cryptographic challenges that are currently intractable. This increased data processing capability will enhance predictive policing, optimize resource allocation, and improve cybersecurity measures. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is expected to play a significant role in predictive policing, helping to identify crime hot spots and allocate resources efficiently. Machine learning algorithms will analyze vast amounts of data from various sources such as social media, public records, and surveillance footage to predict, prevent, and interdict criminal activity. In addition, advances in biometric technology such as voice and facial recognition, retinal scanning, and DNA sequencing will improve identity verification and suspect tracking and enhance security at public events and critical elements of our infrastructure.

Autonomous robotics and surveillance technology are already in place and will help improve traffic safety, provide enhanced response to in-progress crimes, and identify suspects. These advancements increase the probability of identifying and capturing offenders and solving cases that previously may have gone unresolved. Technology advancements will also reduce risk to the public and law enforcement officers in hazardous tasks, such as bomb disposal, high speed pursuits, and surveillance operations.

Accompanying this evolution will be a new wave of challenges related to cybersecurity and data breaches. Policymakers and technologists must develop new encryption methods to safeguard sensitive information. Regulations will need to be stringent to prevent unauthorized access to that information and ensure the ethical use of such technologies. In addition, clear stringent oversight guidelines must be established to answer the ethical concerns regarding the use of force by robots; these guidelines must address documentation and determine how the courts will treat such cases.

Cybercrimes often cross international borders, complicating jurisdictional authority and responsibility. International cooperation is often required, but it can be slow and bureaucratic. To address cross-border tech crimes more effectively, law enforcement will have to continue strengthening international partnerships and frameworks for information

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2028 sharing and joint operations. Integrated communication systems will allow for better  
2029 coordination among different law enforcement agencies nationally and internationally.  
2030 Technology will enable real-time sharing of information, leading to faster and more effi-  
2031 cient responses to criminal activities.

2031 Lastly, community engagement will become even more critical to establishing mutual  
2032 respect and trust and creating an environment where community members are willing  
2033 to report crimes, provide feedback, and participate in decision-making processes. The  
2034 increasingly critical community demand for communication and transparency will make  
2035 social media platforms a major tool for rapid dissemination of information in a format the  
2036 public understands and uses.

2035 Collaboration with the health care and social service sectors, places of worship, and local  
2036 employers can enhance the acceptance and trust of law enforcement agencies within com-  
2037 munities. Seeing law enforcement officers working alongside health professionals, social  
2038 workers, and community organizations reinforces the notion that the law enforcement  
2039 agency is genuinely committed to the community's well-being.

2038 Such collaborations should include a framework that enables law enforcement agencies to  
2039 police differently and apply intervention strategies to keep at-risk or vulnerable popula-  
2040 tions from resorting to criminal behaviors or becoming victims.

2040 With all of these factors to consider, efficient resource allocation and deployment will  
2041 become crucial. Regional coordination that enables the sharing of resources is likely to  
2042 become more commonplace. Limited resources to meet the increasing demands on law  
2043 enforcement by the public will almost certainly result in more coordination or consolida-  
2044 tion of law enforcement agencies, creating challenges in ensuring continuity and consis-  
2045 tency of operations and merging of technology.

2044 The next 30 years present an opportunity for law enforcement to transform and thrive  
2045 within a larger ecosystem of public health, social services, public works, legislation, NGOs,  
2046 and other entities. An integrated approach offers a balanced and appropriate response  
2047 to systemic issues, leading to greater societal success and community satisfaction. By  
2048 embracing collaboration and holistic problem-solving, law enforcement can more effec-  
2049 tively address the root causes of crime and contribute to building safer, healthier, and more  
2050 resilient communities.



Governor Katie Hobbs appointed Colonel **Jeffrey D. Glover** as Director of the Arizona Department of Public Safety on January 17, 2023. Colonel Glover began his career with the Tempe (Arizona) Police Department and has more than 25 years of law enforcement experience. He worked his way through the ranks, serving the Tempe Police Department in a variety of capacities. Colonel Glover worked as a Field Training Officer, Narcotics Detective, Crime Prevention Detective, Media Relations Sergeant, Patrol Lieutenant, Mobile Field Force Commander, Detention Manager, Acting Commander over 21st Century Policing, Professional Standards Commander, and Commander over both Criminal and Special Investigations Divisions including Homicide, Narcotics, and the SWAT team. In February 2020, Colonel Glover retired from the Tempe Police Department with more than 20 years of service. He returned to the department later that year as Interim Chief of Police and was appointed as permanent Chief of Police in August 2021. Colonel Glover is currently the National First Vice President for the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE). He is a National Board Member for Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and is the co-chair of the MADD Traffic Safety Committee. Colonel Glover also serves on the Board of Directors for the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). In addition, Colonel Glover serves as a commissioner on the Governor's Commission for African-American Affairs. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in education from Northern Arizona University as well as a Master of Public Administration degree through the University of Phoenix. Colonel Glover is a graduate of the Arizona Peace Officers and Standards Arizona Leadership Program (ALP #8), the FBI National Academy Command School session 265, and the Senior Management Institute for Policing (SMIP) session 86. He has also earned certificates from the University of Arizona, Eller School in Government Leadership, and Cornell University in Diversity and Inclusion.

# Empowering Accuracy and Ownership

## *Law Enforcement's Primary Information Sources*

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**Anthony Gibson and Terry Cherry**

### **The role and challenges of traditional media**

The accurate and timely dissemination of information to the public is crucial for upholding a free and democratic society. The right of the press to operate without government censorship is guaranteed in the First Amendment; traditional media outlets—newspapers, radio, and television—have relied on the nearly unrestricted journalistic lens granted by these foundational principles to relay past and current events through their perspective. As a result, what communities have come to expect from journalists is the free flow of news, facts, and opinions.

Traditional media have relied heavily on public safety partnerships to provide content for their coverage while filtering this information for public consumption through their perspective. Recent studies have shown a decline in public trust and perceived legitimacy in the media—a decline that is all too familiar to the law enforcement field. Many people are increasingly questioning the reliability of traditional media and losing faith in journalistic impartiality and autonomy.<sup>1</sup> A 2022 Gallup poll found that fewer than 40 percent of U.S. adults had trust in traditional media outlets.<sup>2</sup>

### **An opportunity: Police ownership of their narrative in the digital age**

The declining public trust in the media is not an indictment of journalists; rather, it presents a timely opportunity for law enforcement agencies to take charge of their own communications. This shift allows agencies to own their organizational narrative.

The rise and accessibility of digital and social media platforms have allowed public safety organizations to establish themselves as primary sources of policing information. Police departments can now communicate directly with the public by offering immediate access to unfiltered, accurate information. This approach reduces reliance on traditional media for disseminating police content while enabling law enforcement to better control the narrative, providing details, timeliness, and the opportunity to support stronger public connections.

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1. Terry Flew, "The Global Trust Deficit Disorder: A Communications Perspective on Trust in the Time of Global Pandemics," *Journal of Communication* 71, no. 2 (2021), 163–186, <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqab006>.
  2. Megan Brenan, "Americans' Trust in Media Remains Near Record Low," Gallup, last modified October 18, 2022, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/403166/americans-trust-media-remains-near-record-low.aspx>.

Direct communication with the public offers numerous benefits for law enforcement agencies. It allows for real-time updates and immediate responses to incidents while reducing misinformation and speculation. Agencies can share positive stories and initiatives that might not receive coverage in traditional media or offer clarification on less-understood events. Many major city police departments, and even some smaller agencies, have dedicated impressive digital media teams to capturing and creating content to engage and inform the public. Law enforcement agencies that have seized the opportunity to communicate directly with the public have normalized social and digital media users following or “liking” the police pages for both entertainment and information.

Unfiltered media engagement expands beyond entertainment and storytelling, however. It also allows for increased transparency and accountability, which remain key components to building public trust. By openly sharing information about policies, procedures, and outcomes with the community, law enforcement agencies can demonstrate their commitment to integrity and ethical conduct. This level of transparency can help address public concerns and fill in the credibility gap caused by missing or misunderstood information.

The evolving role of the Public Information Officer (PIO) is critical in this new communication landscape. Traditionally, the PIO has acted as a liaison between media outlets and the agency—often developing this relationship into one that is purely transactional. However, PIOs and communications professionals in law enforcement now have the opportunity to prioritize direct public communication and increase their online presence and accessibility via the use of social media tools, city websites, and strategic marketing. While maintaining collaborative relationships with media partners remains important, law enforcement PIOs should be the centralized hubs for their agencies’ information. PIOs under this new media model can quickly address and correct misinformation, highlight their departments’ efforts and successes in real time, and engage with their communities through interactive content, such as using Q&A features, reels, and short videos to spread awareness. As more and more agencies move to this model, over time, traditional media outlets and the community will naturally begin to regard the agency as their primary source for policing news.

## **Leveraging business strategies for effective law enforcement communication**

While direct communication offers significant advantages, it also presents challenges that need to be addressed. Effective resource allocation is critical, especially considering the workforce and staffing challenges in the public safety sector. Agencies with already overstretched staffing must still ensure there are enough trained personnel to manage and maintain active communication channels. The importance of appropriate staffing cannot be overstated, as it assures the consistency and accuracy in messaging across all platforms that prevents confusion and misinformation. In addition, staffing is crucial for public engagement via primary source communication: A two-way dialogue between the department and the community requires someone in the agency to receive and, more importantly, respond to public comments or questions quickly and reliably.

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As the law enforcement information and media model evolves, along with shifting perceptions and trust in traditional media outlets, it is important for law enforcement agencies to understand the mechanics of direct communication. This understanding requires a clear grasp of marketing, promotion, branding, and advertising, as well as of how each function impacts public perception and the conveyance of an agency's goals and values.

As agencies adopt the new model of direct communication and establish themselves as the primary sources for law enforcement-related content, they will enhance their connection with the public. Delivering accurate and timely information facilitates a feedback loop of public engagement that fosters community connections, enhancing the organization's public legitimacy and building the trust that law enforcement has been working to gain.

The key to positive advancement in law enforcement is finding the avenues where relationships can be built. Public information is one of the bedrocks to creating, growing, and maintaining meaningful and open police-community connections. As agencies adopt this direct communication model and facilitate information exchange, policing will become more integrated with the community, fostering greater mutual understanding and bridging the divide between the police and the public.



Lt. **Anthony Gibson** serves as the commander of the Office of Public Affairs for the Charleston (South Carolina) Police Department and previously held the position of Public Information Officer. He is a National Institute of Justice LEADS Scholar, Policing Fellow with the National Policing Institute, Partner with the Police Staffing Observatory, and Executive Board Member with the American Society of Evidence-Based Policing. Lt. Gibson has presented nationally and internationally and remains involved with various research and implementation projects, specializing in police staffing and retention strategies. He holds a BS in psychology and a master's in public administration.

Sgt. **Terry Cherry** has been with the Charleston (South Carolina) Police Department since 2012 and is currently serving as a sergeant in the patrol division and on the department's Public Information Team. In 2020, Sgt. Cherry was selected as an NIJ LEADS scholar and was the recipient of IACP's 40 under 40. Sgt. Cherry is recognized as a national expert in police recruitment and retention and has been published in various academic journals, IACP Police Chief Magazine, and Police1. Sgt. Cherry holds a BA from UCLA and an MBA from Pepperdine University and is currently pursuing her doctorate in public administration from Valdosta State University.

# The Evolution into a Public Safety Holistic Approach

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**Gina V. Hawkins**

As an executive in law enforcement for more than 35 years, I think often about our profession and its future. My experience has afforded me the opportunities to work in different communities, different cities, and different states, which has exposed me to other leaders who were similarly passionate about our future. I have been committed not only to law enforcement but also to public safety as a whole, and I believe the United States will evolve with a holistic approach for public safety for our future.

Holistic approaches involve community-based solutions. Public safety requires many stakeholders and partners working together as a community to ensure the Constitution is fulfilled to (as it says in the preamble) establish justice and ensure domestic tranquility. Law enforcement must work directly with the community to resolve public safety concerns. When community members are educated and empowered about their rights and their resources, the community becomes a partner in identifying issues and solving public safety concerns.

Public safety is poised for a transformative evolution as the community begins integrating its perspectives and engaging on many topics including violent crime, societal mental health concerns, and who will be hired in the future to provide law enforcement services. Future law enforcement officers will be focused not merely on enforcing laws but also on fostering a symbiotic relationship between their agencies and the communities they serve. Such a future necessitates a multifaceted strategy that addresses the complexities of modern society and prepares officers for the varied challenges they will face.

The health and well-being of a community will require a paradigm shift from law enforcement, with agencies understanding that not only will the community need resources but officers will also need support, education, and training related to what proactive engagement truly requires. Community well-being requires fostering trust and collaboration among everyone involved. Law enforcement agencies will need to work closely with community organizations, social services, and educational institutions to address the root causes of crime, such as poverty, lack of education, and inadequate mental health support. Holistic public safety goes beyond traditional reactive responses to problems; it will involve community liaisons, mediators, and educators understanding the community, addressing and preventing crime through social intervention rather than mere enforcement.

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A major cornerstone of this future will be the commitment to hiring a diverse workforce that reflects the demographics of the communities it serves. Diversity in law enforcement is not only about gender, race, and culture but also about diverse perspectives and life experiences. A heterogeneous law enforcement force is better equipped to understand and address the unique needs of a multifaceted society.

Recruitment strategies will need to be redefined to attract candidates from various backgrounds. This new approach includes outreach programs in underrepresented communities, partnerships with minority-serving institutions, and mentorship programs that support aspiring officers from diverse backgrounds. By mirroring society, law enforcement agencies can enhance their legitimacy and effectiveness, as officers who understand and empathize with the communities they serve are better positioned than those who do not to foster trust and cooperation.

The intentional recruiting of our future law enforcement officers will need to understand this demanding profession and prepare recruits for the trauma of the future and the significant toll on mental health they will experience. Agencies will need to strategize and prioritize officers' psychological well-being as well as their physical fitness. Comprehensive mental and physical training programs need to start in the training academy and continue annually throughout officers' careers; they should be focused on mental health awareness, stress management, and resilience building.

Agencies will need to provide access to mental health resources, including counseling services, peer support programs, and wellness initiatives. Leaders must be trained to recognize signs of mental distress and create an environment where seeking help is encouraged and destigmatized. By addressing mental health proactively, agencies can ensure that officers are not only physically prepared but also mentally resilient to handle the pressures of the job.

Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is essential for the longevity and satisfaction of law enforcement professionals. Agencies will need to adopt policies that support flexible working conditions, adequate rest periods, and opportunities for personal and professional development. This includes implementing shift rotations that minimize fatigue, offering career breaks for personal growth, and providing family support services. Agencies will need to intentionally develop and listen to the passion of the future officer who may want to obtain specialized training that excites them.

The career nature of law enforcement has changed in the last 30 years, and agencies must adapt to the idea that not all officers will want to serve for 30-plus years. Leaders should instead focus on attracting and retaining dedicated professionals who may only provide 10–15 years of committed service. This goal can be achieved by creating a positive and supportive work environment, offering competitive benefits, and ensuring that officers have opportunities for advancement and specialization. Having 10–15 years of strong commitment is better than 30 years of someone not committed to public safety or not committed to their community.



In summary, the future of public safety and law enforcement in the United States will be one that embraces a holistic, community-based solution with well-trained and -prepared law enforcement officers. It is a future where diversity is celebrated, mental health is prioritized, and work-life balance is valued. Law enforcement will have to foster a collaborative relationship with the community, which will enhance agencies' effectiveness and legitimacy. By embracing diversity and supporting the mental well-being of officers, agencies can build a resilient and dedicated workforce. And by recognizing the changing nature of careers, they can create a sustainable model that attracts and retains committed professionals. This future for law enforcement is not only achievable but also essential for addressing the complex challenges of our future and modern world.



**Gina V. Hawkins** is presently the Assistant Chief Deputy for the Cobb County (Georgia) Sheriff's Office. Prior to joining Cobb County, she served as the Chief of Police in Fayetteville, North Carolina, from 2017 until she retired in February 2023. She has more than 35 years of law enforcement experience, starting her career in 1988 with the City of Atlanta Police Department. She worked in many divisions before retiring as an assistant zone commander in 2006. She then served with the City of Sandy Springs (Georgia) Police Department, which was formed in 2006, as a commander. Chief Hawkins was instrumental in establishing an efficient, forward-thinking police department and commanded many units. In 2013, Chief Hawkins joined the Clayton County (Georgia) Police Department as a deputy chief of police, where she presided at different times over both the Operational Command and the Support Service Command. Chief Hawkins has a Bachelor of Science in criminal justice from Georgia State University and a Masters in management from Johns Hopkins University. Chief Hawkins is a graduate of the 252nd session of the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy and was chosen as a delegate in the prestigious 23rd Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange (GILEE), where she traveled to Israel with other law enforcement executives to study and evaluate the Israeli National Police (INP). Chief Hawkins is a 2010 graduate of the Senior Management Institute for Police, presented by the Police Executive Research Forum. Chief Hawkins is an alumna of the Harvard Kennedy School's Executive Education Program and earned an executive certificate in public leadership by completing the Senior Executives in National and International Security, Leadership in Crises, and Leadership Decision Making Programs. In 2019, Chief Hawkins was awarded the North Carolina Dogwood Award by state Attorney General Joshua H. Stein for pursuing community solutions to North Carolina's most pressing safety issues. In 2020, the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE) awarded Chief Hawkins the Woman Law Enforcement Executive of the Year Award. In January 2020, she was sworn in by the U.S. Attorney General to serve as a commissioner on the Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice. She served on the Executive Board of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) from 2017 to 2021. She currently serves as the President of NAWLEE. She is a member of NOBLE, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association.

# Police Leadership

## *Toward Building Community Safety*

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### Laurie Robinson

Over the 2014 Thanksgiving weekend, Chuck Ramsey—then Philadelphia’s Police Commissioner—and I both received surprising phone calls. President Barack Obama’s White House Counsel called each of us with a major request: Would we agree to co-chair a new task force on 21st century policing in the wake of the shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri? The charge, he said, was to identify ways law enforcement could build public trust. Each of us agreed, and within months the task force, after national hearings, had produced a report<sup>1</sup> with 59 recommendations—almost all calling for actions by police.

In the 10 years since the task force was named, the report has achieved broad acceptance in the law enforcement field. A 2021 study by the National Policing Institute, funded by the Joyce Foundation, found that 51 percent of surveyed police leaders reported the task force recommendations had been “moderately” to “extremely important” in guiding changes in their agency. One chief called it a “road map” for policing.<sup>2</sup>

While it’s clear that policing leaders across the nation in the years since both Ferguson and the 2020 murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis have embraced the need for change, and hundreds of legislative reform measures have been enacted at state and local levels, it has also been clear that more is needed.

After Tyre Nichols’s brutal death in January 2023 at the hands of Memphis (Tennessee) police, Chuck Ramsey and I asked ourselves—along with so many others in both the profession and the public—an obvious question: Why do these killings keep happening? While our task force no longer had any official status, Chuck and I made the decision to call its members (leaders in policing, academia, civil rights, and activism) back together to try to answer this question. At a hastily assembled virtual meeting, members expressed real interest in delving into this difficult issue. After deliberations during multiple virtual sessions, we concluded that while our *original* report made important contributions, we were wrong at that time to focus solely on policing for answers. Instead, there was agreement that—unlike the 2015 report—we needed to declare that the mission of *policing* is not just crime reduction but *community safety*, and that the *whole of government* and *whole of community* have to work together to achieve that.

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1. President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Final Report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015), <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-p311>.
  2. National Police Foundation, *21st Century Policing Task Force Report: The First Five Years* (Arlington, VA: National Police Foundation, 2021), <https://www.policinginstitute.org/publication/21st-century-policing-task-force-report-the-first-five-years-2/>.

In April 2023, we issued a new report—entitled *Renewed Call to Action*,<sup>3</sup> signed by eight of the original 11 task force members,<sup>4</sup> that built on these principles.

The newly issued volume expands on our earlier work to underscore the challenges that poverty and race present in the relationship between police and communities. But, we said, law enforcement can't do this alone. Most fundamental is to help define community safety—i.e., guardians working in partnership with the community. Unlike our 2015 report, here we said the mission of policing has to be not solely focused on crime reduction but on *community safety*. In this vision of future law enforcement leadership, community safety can be an effective framework for policing, with the goal of protecting the public from crime and violence without inflicting harm. Ideally, this framework will align the policing structure toward one of community collaboration, recognizing that the communities to which police are most often called are frequently the ones most often victimized.

At the same time, all stakeholders have to be mobilized behind a comprehensive violence reduction strategy that engages multiple partners across mental health, addiction, and homelessness services, as well as emergency medical services, among others. Key to this, we said, will be collaboration with the community. What does this mean? Drawing on the approach from our 2015 report, police need to play the role of guardians, protecting the community from within. But to achieve this, law enforcement needs to work with local government to address complex drivers of crime and violence. Police chiefs need to engage mayors and city administrators to ensure that they “own” this approach and will champion the work. And, of course, these civic leaders can be valuable allies in its implementation once on board.

Also key to this approach is developing transformational police leaders who can address the importance and the challenge of changing police culture, focusing on resilience and learning, and aligning policing organizational structure, incentives, and strategies to the redefined mission with its focus on community safety. There are good examples of this already in place. Police leaders here should be exploring collaboration with other parts of government that can support the whole-of-government approach—housing, public health, education, and economic opportunity, for example.

The Federal Government can be—and should be—a key partner, collaborating in all of this work. While the efforts of communities need to be locally driven, the “feds” can be key partners in helping fund and support work on the ground. Federally funded research through the National Institute of Justice, for example, can showcase evidence-based

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3. 21CP Solutions, *Task Force on 21st Century Policing: A Renewed Call to Action* (Chicago: 21CP Solutions, LLC, 2023), [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ad62e3aacc4eb7c4b00e03a0/t/644718fc677c5618827f6d40/1682381053513/Task\\_Force\\_Call\\_to\\_Action\\_Final\\_42523.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ad62e3aacc4eb7c4b00e03a0/t/644718fc677c5618827f6d40/1682381053513/Task_Force_Call_to_Action_Final_42523.pdf).

4. All of the original 11 task force members supported the effort and nearly all signed the report. Specifically, in addition to Chuck Ramsey and me, the other signatories were Sean Smoot, Cedric Alexander, Tracey Meares, Sue Rahr, Constance Rice, and Roberto Villaseñor. James Copple served as facilitator for both the original Task Force on 21st Century Policing in 2014–15 and for this task force. Because of unavoidable scheduling conflicts, the remaining three members (Bryan Stevenson, Brittany Packnett, and Jose Lopez) were not able to participate in the meetings and thus did not sign the final report.

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2028 examples of where these strategies are successfully supporting community safety. The  
2029 COPS Office or the Bureau of Justice Assistance may be available to provide technical  
2030 assistance funding or small demonstration grants.

2031 While our first task force report made an important contribution to policing, we were  
2032 wrong to think it—or any steps by police alone, no matter how skilled the leadership or  
2033 how well intentioned—could solve deeply rooted problems. Broader action is needed in  
2034 close collaboration with local, engaged stakeholders—or, very tragically, we will be watch-  
2035 ing videos of *future* George Floyds or Tyre Nichols in the decades ahead.



2036 **Laurie O. Robinson** is the Clarence J. Robinson Professor Emerita of Criminology, Law &  
2037 Society at George Mason University. In 2014–15, she co-chaired the President’s Task Force  
2038 on 21st Century Policing; and for 10 years, in both the Clinton and Obama administrations,  
2039 she served as the presidentially appointed Assistant Attorney General heading the U.S.  
2040 Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Justice Programs, DOJ’s research and grants agency.  
2041 During her first DOJ tenure in the 90s, she oversaw a \$4 billion annual budget and the larg-  
2042 est increase in federal spending on crime-related research in U.S. history. She also spear-  
2043 headed major nationwide initiatives on violence against women, drug treatment courts, and  
2044 law enforcement technology. Her more recent tenure heading OJP was marked by a focus on  
2045 science: She set up a Science Advisory Board and created a national “what works” clearing-  
2046 house for the criminal justice field ([crimesolutions.gov](http://crimesolutions.gov)). She currently serves on the board of  
2047 directors of the National Policing Institute and the Council on Criminal Justice. She is a past  
2048 member of the National Academies of Science Committee on Law and Justice and a former  
2049 co-chair of IACP’s Research Advisory Committee.  
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# Your Inheritance Does Not Have to Be Your Legacy

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**RaShall M. Brackney**

My father retired from the Jones and Laughlin (J&L) Steel mill. After a second career, he moved from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Clearwater, Florida. Dad spent days at the beach, sipping Merlot and secretly smoking Pall Mall cigarettes. A few months after his move, my office phone rang. My 61-year-old father had died from a heart attack. I understood preparations would be emotionally difficult and legally complicated. My father did not have a will. Translation—we had little control over our inheritance or my father’s legacy. The state of Florida would have the final say.

Currently, less than 32 percent of the population has a will or trust.<sup>1</sup> This suggests that the disposition of 68 percent of people’s personal assets could be controlled by the courts. Similarly, more than 708,000 sworn personnel employed by 18,000 policing agencies often have no control over the legacies they inherit.<sup>2</sup> To better understand the hereditary byproducts of policing’s origins and their impact on our collective legacies, consider the following. The foundational principles practiced by law enforcement today are historically rooted in slavery.<sup>3</sup> Slave patrols, “paddyrollers” or “patrollers” first formed around 1700 in the Carolinas.<sup>4</sup> They were cruel, barbaric, and merciless in nature; nevertheless, many Southerners considered participation an essential civic duty.

For the next century, slave patrols flourished as social controls over the minoritized and marginalized were normalized. During that era, the policing phenomenon migrated north. The City of Boston responded to the trend by establishing the first publicly funded police department.<sup>5</sup> The mandate of the Boston Police Department (BPD) was to control the new wave of immigrants whose cultures clashed with the established populations migrating from England and the Netherlands.<sup>6</sup> According to Waxman, the “fears of labor-union organizers and of large waves of Catholic, Irish, Italian, German, and Eastern European immigrants, who looked and acted differently from the people who had dominated cities before, drove the call for the preservation of law and order, or at least the version of it promoted by

1. Rachel Lustbader, “2024 Wills and Estate Planning Study,” Caring.com, accessed July 16, 2024, <https://www.caring.com/caregivers/estate-planning/wills-survey/>.
2. Veera Korhonen, “Number of Law Enforcement Officers U.S. 2004–2022,” Statista, last modified July 5, 2024, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/191694/number-of-law-enforcement-officers-in-the-us/>.
3. Kristian Williams, *Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America* (Chico, CA: AK Press, 2015).
4. Williams, *Our Enemies in Blue* (see note 3).
5. Olivia B. Waxman, “How the U.S. Got Its Police Force,” *Time*, May 18, 2017, <https://time.com/4779112/police-history-origins/>.
6. Waxman, “How the U.S. Got Its Police Force” (see note 5).

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2027 dominant interests.”<sup>7</sup> The political machines argued the new immigrants were the ruination  
2028 of civil society embracing a culture of violence and crime not experienced amongst Boston  
2029 elites. In response, political entities leveraged the police. According to Williams,

2030  
2031 The cops were tools of the machine. As tools they were used, as tools they were  
2032 refined, and as very important tools, they were fought over. Neither the political  
2033 machines nor any part of them invented the police for this purpose, but they were  
2034 well adapted to it, and without submitting to teleological reasoning—we should  
2035 consider the implications of this fact for policing, and for political authority.<sup>8</sup>

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2037 The social and political constructs of policing in the 1700s and 1800s sound eerily familiar  
2038 to many of those police departments experience today. In June 2018, I was appointed Chief  
2039 of Police for the City of Charlottesville. My appointment garnered national and interna-  
2040 tional headlines: I was the first woman to lead that department; I was Black; and I arrived  
2041 in the aftermath of the deadly Unite the Right rally of 2017.

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2043 As the new chief, I inherited a broken police department and a community that was  
2044 distrustful and questioned the legitimacy of my agency. I inherited a department that felt  
2045 betrayed and abandoned by their city and a city that felt betrayed and abandoned by their  
2046 police department. I inherited a fight over contested spaces and monuments that culmi-  
2047 nated in the deaths of three individuals and injuries of many more. I inherited the famous  
2048 or infamous Heaphy Report, detailing all of the failures and missteps of my new depart-  
2049 ment.<sup>9</sup> I inherited a legacy of disparate and disproportionate policing in Black and Brown  
2050 communities. I inherited the former chief’s legacy of performing an arbitrary DNA dragnet  
2051 of more than 200 Black men who “fit the description” of a serial rapist. I inherited a drug  
2052 task force accused of planting confidential informants (CI) in drug courts, rehabilitation  
2053 facilities, and meetings to increase their arrest and charging rates. I inherited an Internal  
2054 Affairs department that had not investigated a single case in three years. I inherited the  
scrutiny every Black or minority woman faces who has risen to the pinnacle of her career—  
accusations that I was an Affirmative Action quota hire turned “desk jockey” who robbed  
a more qualified White man of the position.

My inheritance seemed preordained, but my legacy was not. To fashion my own destiny, I  
needed to create a professional will—a blueprint of accountability anchored in transpar-  
ency, a roadmap outlining concrete steps to move my department forward I would need to  
codify and operationalize 21st century policing concepts to achieve 22nd century outcomes.  
My approach went as follows:

**Step 1. Research your department’s history.** Past incidents impact current relationships.  
What you do not know can hurt you.

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2050 7. Waxman, “How the U.S. Got Its Police Force” (see note 5).

2051 8. Williams, *Our Enemies in Blue*, 87 (see note 3).

2052 9. *Independent Review of the 2017 Protest Events in Charlottesville, Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Hunton & Williams,  
2053 LLP, 2017), [https://www.huntonak.com/media/publication/34613\\_final-report-ada-compliant-ready.pdf](https://www.huntonak.com/media/publication/34613_final-report-ada-compliant-ready.pdf).

**Step 2. Publicly acknowledge and own your agency's missteps and harms.** Do not underestimate the impact or dividends of this step.

**Step 3. Seek help.** Inventory your assets. What resources are readily available to mitigate the harms? I enlisted the Center for Policing Equity (CPE), the Vera Institute, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Community Relations Services (CRS), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE), Sin Barreras / Without Barriers, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), local faith-based organizations, academic institutions, and community activists.

**Step 4. Be inventive.** I created the nation's first—possibly only—Fourth Amendment Analyst position. The analyst was tasked with triangulating body-worn camera (BWC) and in-car camera footage with police reports and calls for service, triangulation focused on deployment of force and investigative detentions. Through objective analysis we were able to determine if officers' detentions, searches, and uses of force were compliant with the laws and best practices. The data and analyses were posted each month on the department's website.

**Step 5. Grant the public access to departmental policies and processes.** If you build transparency, legitimacy will follow. I opened up the internal affairs and investigative detention processes to the public and invited scrutiny. Our reports were more than a compilation of data points: We published summaries of cases, devoid of personal identifiers, but including the allegations, the race and gender of the complainants/officers, our findings, and corrective action. Use of force cases were handled in a similar manner.

**Step 6. Get radical.** Creating an authentic legacy for the 22nd century will require bolder steps. Consider publishing Freedom of Information Action (FOIA) requests and your city's or department's responses. Publish recruiting, hiring, and promotional processes, policies, and general orders. Publish training academy curriculums, lesson plans, and instructors' resumes.

**Step 7. Craft an irrevocable trust.** Conceive a system so transparent it cannot be readily altered, terminated, or rolled back without public consent.

Lastly, create the agency you want to be remembered for, because your inheritance does not have to be your legacy!



**RaShall M. Brackney**, PhD, is a former chief of police with the Charlottesville (Virginia) Police Department, a former chief of police at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and a retired commander with the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police. Dr. Brackney is the Distinguished Visiting Professor of Practice at George Mason University and an Advance Leadership Institute Fellow at Harvard University.



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To date, more than 800,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations and the COPS Training Portal.



# *Organizational Transformation*

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# Meaningful Change in Policing

*What the Future Must Look Like*

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**Cedric L. Alexander**

Meaningful change in any social institution begins with recognizing the root causes of the weaknesses, dysfunctions, and faults that require remediation and, often, wholesale transformation. At the root of what I consider the principal crisis in policing today is the deeply divided condition of our American society. Legitimacy of politics and government is not merely under fire but is the subject of widespread and profound doubt and despair.

How does this impact policing?

For a number of people most of the time, the police *are* the government. When our lives or property are threatened or when a crime has been committed against us and requires investigation, we do not contact the president, a senator, or congressional representative: We call the police, who in the time of our need *are*—for all practical purposes—the government. And while questioning police legitimacy is not new, the broader and deeper questioning of government legitimacy is far more recent. In this new context of cynicism, fear, and denial, how can we hope, let alone expect, that our police agencies will successfully reestablish their legitimacy?

To find the answer, we must get to the root cause of the current division in our society. While, superficially, the fault line appears to be clearly political—Republican vs. Democrat, red communities vs. blue communities—I am convinced that this real but superficial manifestation is symptomatic of a deeper level of tribalism in our nation, a reflexive “othering” that tends to view the world in the harsh terms of *us* and *them*.

Tribalism both runs deeper than and transcends what has proven to be the stunningly fragile solidarity of local and national communities. The root cause of tribal identification is what sociologists and social psychologists call implicit bias, defined by the National Library of Medicine (NLM) as the “subconscious feelings, attitudes, prejudices, and stereotypes an individual has developed due to prior influences and imprints throughout their lives.”<sup>1</sup> As the NLM explains, “Individuals are unaware that subconscious perceptions, instead of facts and observations, affect their decision-making.” There is ample neurological evidence<sup>2</sup> for implicit bias, an othering bias hardwired into our brains.

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1. Harini S. Shah and Julie Bohlen, “Implicit Bias,” National Library of Medicine, last modified March 4, 2023, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK589697/>.

2. Susan T. Fiske, “Look Twice,” Greater Good Magazine, last modified June 1, 2008, [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/look\\_twice](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/look_twice).

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Many police leaders are familiar with the danger innate bias presents in shoot / don't shoot scenarios. For example, psychologist Joshua Correll has demonstrated that police officers (regardless of their own race) "are faster to 'shoot' an armed Black man than an armed White man" in a video game and are also "faster to avoid shooting an unarmed White man than an unarmed Black man."<sup>3</sup> The shoot / don't shoot data suggest that many police officers (as well as many civilian test subjects) reflexively see people in terms of othering stereotypes rather than as unique individual human beings. Likely originating in a subcortical structure called the amygdala, the potentially lethal reflexive response is more immediate than the consciously reasoned response. The reflex is initiated in less than 525 milliseconds; at an interval greater than this, the response becomes less reflexive and more reasoned.<sup>4</sup> This suggests the beginning of a direction for change: We need to counter the reflex at the root of at least one important source of our national division. If reason can overcome reflexive othering, we can learn—we can be trained—to avoid taking actions based on implicit bias. We need to employ more advanced, extensive, intensive, and thoroughly committed fair and impartial police (FIP) training. This training should be a foundational dimension of a universal commitment among law enforcement agencies to the community policing model.

Community policing is time-tested. We have the knowledge and the experience to do it. However, all too many police agencies lack the necessary commitment. Start with a journey back to 1829 and the founding of the world's first modern police force, London's Metropolitan Police, by British Home Secretary Sir Robert Peel. In a single sentence, Peel defined the essence of effective policing in a free country: "The police are the public and the public are the police."<sup>5</sup> With the theory of special relativity,  $E=mc^2$ , Albert Einstein posited the total equivalence of energy and matter; in his straightforward definition, Peel demonstrated the perfect equivalence of police officer and community member, thereby establishing both the essence of community policing and the foundation of police legitimacy.

Commitment always begins at the top. Our police executives must commit to the methodology and the ethos of community policing and make a commensurately profound commitment to the training required. This commitment will not be easy, but it is possible. More difficult is mustering the bold thinking required to reimagine American policing on local and national scales. Such an act of imagination will require nothing less than reimagining American society itself. The legitimacy of both American government and American law enforcement must be restored. The American public must be given compelling reason to trust both. Building this trust is a two-track project—police and government, government and police. Both tracks must proceed simultaneously. What is required is nothing less than the restoration of trust in democracy and a renewed commitment to a democratic social compact.

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3. Joshua Correll et al., "The Police Officer's Dilemma: Using Ethnicity to Disambiguate Potentially Threatening Individuals," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 83, no. 6 (2002), 1314–1329, <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0022-3514.83.6.1314>.
  4. William A. Cunningham et al., "Separable Neural Components in the Processing of Black and White Faces," *Psychological Science* 15, no. 12 (2004), 806–813, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0956-7976.2004.00760.x>.
  5. "Sir Robert Peel's Nine Principles of Policing," *The New York Times*, April 15, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/16/nyregion/sir-robert-peels-nine-principles-of-policing.html>.

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Reimagining and reforming American policing cannot passively await social transformation. In fact, police agencies, police forces, police executives, and individual police officers are critically situated to take the lead in the required transformation of American society. It is yet another journey: this time, to the future. We must move law enforcement beyond its present militaristic model, in which officers are perceived in many American communities as agents of a hostile invasion and occupation. The counter to this adversarial model is a community model, an idea as old as Plato and his *Republic*. The Greek philosopher wrote of a class of citizen he called the guardians. They were not just defenders and protectors of the Republic but also its guides and leaders. The guardians would be physically conditioned—made swift and strong—and they would be mentally cultivated, exposed to the best education the community could give them. A leader and mentor, the guardian is not a tyrant but a servant of their neighborhood, city, and nation. Through intensive and enhanced guardian-style community policing, law enforcement can forge or reforge the bonds of the social compact, ensuring the replacement of reflexive othering with recognition of and respect and reverence for others as human beings in a shared republic, a true *commonwealth*.

Trained as guardians, professionals, well-educated, thoroughly grounded in the essentials of modern sociology and psychology, well-versed in the Constitution and local and state laws, the members of American law enforcement must shoulder the burden of leading our American neighborhoods and our American nation toward the healthful state of a fully functional commonwealth. This is the mission of law enforcement. Refuse or otherwise fail to carry it out, and our society, our very civilization, will inexorably devolve into the hellish condition the cold-eyed Thomas Hobbes painted in his 1651 book *Leviathan*: a perpetual state of *bellum omnium contra omnes*—“A war of all against all.”



**Cedric L. Alexander** Psy. D. is a law enforcement expert with more than 40 years of experience in public safety. He has appeared on national media networks to provide comment on police-community relations and as a CNN, MSNBC, and Fox law enforcement analyst has written numerous editorials including “What’s the plan now, America?,” “The Chauvin trail is holding a mirror up to America’s insufficient police training,” and “Capitol riot a stunning reminder of America’s policing crisis.” Dr. Alexander has also served as Commissioner of Community Safety at the City of Minneapolis, Deputy Commissioner of the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, and as an assistant professor at the University of Rochester Department of Psychiatry. He is a former National President of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE). Dr. Alexander has lectured on police stress and burnout and currently trains on topics of management and leadership, centered around 21st Century Policing. He is the author of *The New Guardians: Policing in America’s Communities for the 21st Century* and *In Defense of Public Service: How 22 Million Government Workers Will Save Our Republic*.

# What's Past Is Prologue?

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**Tom M. Worthy**

Officer Artemis Jax stepped into her fully regenerative, ergonomic police transport and authenticated to her system with a simple “Good morning.” The voice analysis assistant identified her and replied, “How are you today, Artemis? I hope you got some rest. Your last shift was 14 hours long.”

Artemis wasn't in the mood for small talk and simply asked, “Task report?” The vehicle systems customized to Artemis's preferences and the advanced artificial intelligence (AI) assistant reported that there were 72 calls for service pending, three of which were high priority. In addition, she was overdue for one virtual reality (VR) training session, and the inventory system reported her less-lethal options suite was due for service. She had four reports to review; and lastly, it was her former partner Trinity's birthday. Artemis knew the policy and reviewed her reports first. The AI assistant had created the draft reports, and Artemis knew the pitfalls to look for; she skimmed the summaries and endorsed the reports, which she knew would receive a second AI review at the prosecutor's office before any action was taken.

Next, she slipped on her lightweight helmet and left the secure policing facility. Her overwatch drone quietly lifted from the transport's roof and settled into its orbit around her as she began patrol. Her first call was an untaxed, illegally parked car. As she prepared to call the car impoundment service, the owner arrived, upset and threatening. Artemis's heart rate sensor in her tactical vest noted the elevated pace and alerted the communication center, which sent a second officer while monitoring the live drone feed. The supervisor remotely took control of the drone and provided nonlethal cover while Artemis de-escalated the situation. Artemis glanced at the drone and mouthed “Thanks” as she completed the call.

*Change* isn't a strong enough word. Policing will *metamorphose* in the next 30 years. When you say “metamorphosis,” people commonly think of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. It would be hyperbole to think either that policing is as ugly as the caterpillar now or that it will emerge as beautiful as a butterfly in the future; by *metamorphose*, I mean that the change will be massive, and what comes out may not resemble what went in. Technology advancements, urbanization, polarization, economic inequity, migration, and diversification are all here. We can't even imagine the advancements that the future holds, but someone out there is working on the next innovation.

Policing is now—and will continue to be—an interpersonal job. The best of us will use the tools to augment our effectiveness and streamline and simplify our tasks while upgrading our performance through evidence-led and predictive strategies that put limited numbers of officers where they can have the most impact to stop crime and disorder, positioning them in locations where crime is likely to occur. Expect to see real-time crime centers monitoring traffic, social media trends, live camera systems, and other open sources of data to assess and scope response options. As systems integrate and work together to make us smarter,

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2028 the response suite will only grow with system-generated recommendations that may not  
2029 even include police or may recommend a customized response with the appropriate combi-  
2030 nation of skills, tools, and resources.

2031 One of the most common terms in 2020's reform conversations was "accountability," not  
2032 for the criminals we deal with, but for the police. If you are uncomfortable with strong  
2033 civilian oversight, you might want to try and crawl back into that chrysalis, which is getting  
2034 thinner every day. Meaningful civilian oversight moves us forward, while punitive or cyn-  
2035 ical oversight systems breed mistrust and divides. Due process is still essential, and each  
2036 officer deserves a fair and represented opportunity to state their case. Not all is as it may  
2037 first seem, and accountability is a process best engaged slowly. Community oversight is in  
2038 its infancy, and it is yet to be seen what kind of entity this approach grows up to be, but it is  
2039 likely to be large and powerful.

2040 Making the best use of our officers will continue to mean expertly training employees.  
2041 Ongoing, accessible, and meaningful training makes us all better. Skills mastery and  
2042 demonstration will begin to usurp training hours. Officers learn at different rates, so  
2043 why measure training results in how long you sat in class or at a screen? Results-oriented  
2044 training can save time once a skill is mastered. VR will allow officers the opportunity  
2045 to rehearse for events that they have never encountered in real life. Officers can train for  
2046 infrequent cases that they may never encounter and will grow from the experience. Tenured  
2047 officers and operators will be able to capitalize on VR to plan and train for real-world  
2048 tactical scenarios prior to missions. New supervisors can virtually deliver performance  
2049 evaluations or corrective action and train themselves to make the interaction as valuable  
2050 as possible instead of "winging it." VR will train officers in many aspects of the job and  
2051 offer assessment of their performance, ranking them among others who have undergone  
2052 the same scenarios. The possibilities are endless. VR will provide a safe place to fail, give  
2053 officers simulated experience to apply in the field, and lessen anxiety and improve critical  
2054 thinking and outcomes.

2044 But all of this comes at a cost. Even as budgets for law enforcement agencies grow, staffing  
2045 just seems to shrink. Doing more with less appears to be a law of nature. Consolidation  
2046 of services—contracting with regional entities for services like jails or community mental  
2047 health service partners—is a trend that is likely to grow, even amidst Americans' strong  
2048 history of and desire for local control.

2048 Officer Artemis Jax has likely not yet been born. Her tools, tactics, and policies may hold  
2049 only an echo of what we are doing now, but her mission will be the same, and it will con-  
2050 tinue to be a noble, high calling worthy of our respect and appreciation. I wish her well.



**Tom Worthy** has been the Chief of Police in the city of The Dalles, Oregon, since April 2021. He came to the agency from the Oregon State Police following a 29-year career there, culminating at the rank of Major in the Public Safety Services Bureau. Chief Worthy holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Washington State University and a Master of Science in law enforcement and public safety leadership from the University of San Diego. Chief Worthy holds an executive certificate from the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training and is a graduate of the Oregon Executive Development Institute, the Law Enforcement Executive Leadership Institute, and the FBI National Academy session #261. Chief Worthy set three immediate goals for the City of The Dalles Police Department: to (1) become accredited, (2) modernize the department's technology, and (3) cement the department's commitment to 21st-century community policing while developing his staff for future advancement and ensuring their safety and well-being.

# Preparing Our Officers and Agencies for the Challenges Ahead

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**Robin S. Engel**

Without meaningful intervention, history repeats itself. When looking ahead to American policing in 2054, it is important to first reflect on where we were in 1994. The early 90s were an inspirational time when a new federal agency called the COPS Office—dedicated to promoting and supporting the development of community policing across the country—was launched. The primary discussions in policing at that time included (1) addressing the pervasive divide between police and the public (exacerbated by controversial uses of force) through the **proliferation of community policing**; (2) encouraging police executives to embrace research through the emergence of what later would be called **evidence-based policing**; (3) implementing **problem-oriented policing** and other innovative strategies to reduce crime and violence; (4) introducing the **use of crime data** into the managerial oversight practices in police organizations (e.g., COMPSTAT); and (5) nurturing **police executive leadership** through the development of leadership programs, forums, and institutes.

If this narrative sounds familiar, it is because we are still grappling with the same fundamental issues in policing 30 years later despite significant changes. **Policing in 2024 is not failing, but it is also not thriving.** We have experienced many successes—particularly in crime reduction<sup>1</sup>—but we have simultaneously eroded community trust. Concerns about excessive use of force persist, and despite our best efforts, racial and ethnic disparities in policing outcomes endure. In many jurisdictions, community policing and problem solving have been watered down or abandoned altogether as viable strategies, while evidence-based policing is still trying to secure its footing. In 2020, many in policing experienced unrelenting backlash as the demand for police reform reached a feverish pitch. While many things (e.g., technology) will undoubtedly look different and impact the policing landscape in 2054, I contend that the state of the profession and evaluation of its success or failure will hinge on our willingness to address the same fundamental issues from three decades ago.

Policing is, and always will be, a profession centered squarely on interactions between people, with individual police decision-making as the most fundamental aspect of public safety. The relationship between police and the public can be fragile, and every decision can improve or deepen that divide. Every police executive knows the harsh reality that a single decision made by an individual officer could ignite a fuse in their community. The

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1. Alfred Blumstein and Joel Wallman, *The Crime Drop in America*, Revised edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Eric P. Baumer and Kevin T. Wolff, “Evaluating Contemporary Crime Drop(s) in America, New York City, and Many Other Places,” in *Understanding New York’s Crime Drop*, edited by Richard Rosenfeld, Karen Terry, and Preeti Chauhan (New York: Routledge, 2020), 5–38.



centrality of human interactions in policing is unlikely to change in 30 years. What must change is *how we prepare, predict, measure, strengthen, and support officers' decision-making*. It is both that simple and that complex. However, how we have historically approached these issues—through contemporary police reform efforts—is problematic. Previous writings have detailed why police reform has continually failed.<sup>2</sup> So, what can we do as a profession to arrive at the desired outcome by 2054?

First, we must redefine the necessary changes in policing as *opportunities for continuous improvement* rather than *reform*. Police agencies should evolve into *learning organizations* employing *rapid research responses*. This evolution requires partnerships between police executives and researchers to implement evidence-based changes and to prepare agencies for this organizational transformation. As we encounter complex challenges, police agencies must be proactive and innovative. We should be rapidly testing the impact of everything in policing—including changes in policies, training, technologies, and strategies. Nimble learning organizations quickly identify ineffective approaches or unintended consequences and alter course. The more we know about *what* works—and, importantly, *why* and *how* it works—the more efficient, effective, and equitable policing becomes.

Second, we must recognize that new technologies are tools, not strategies. By 2054, officers may respond to calls for service with next-generation unmanned aerial systems (drones), flying cars, or with robotics. They will have access to artificial intelligence (AI)–generated information and comprehensive data at their fingertips (or perhaps in their headsets, palms, or wrists). However, if we focus only on the bells and whistles of the latest technology, policing will continue to underperform. What matters is how we use technology to support policing strategies. For example, improved data access and quality should support the SARA model (scan, analyze, respond, and assess) of problem solving. Acquiring the technology alone will not provide the foresight, skill, and political will necessary to implement the strategy. Faster access to quality data will not provide additional value unless the data are used to test the impact of officers' responses and decision-making. That is why effective police agencies in 2054 must include highly trained professionals who study more than changes in crime patterns—they must examine the impact of internal and external strategies and all aspects of officer decision-making. These results must be readily available to decision-makers through intentional feedback loops and summarized for public release.

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2. Robin S. Engel, Gabrielle T. Isaza, and Hanna D. McManus, "Owning Police Reform: The Path Forward for Practitioners and Researchers," *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 47 (2022), 1225–1242, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-022-09719-z>; Laurie O. Robinson, "Five Years after Ferguson: Reflecting on Police Reform and What's Ahead," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 687, no. 1 (2020), 228–239, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716219887372>.

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Third, we should resist attempts to alter the role of police dramatically. As Egon Bittner observed in 1974, the police handle situations where “something-that-ought-not-to-be-happening-and about-which-somebody-had-better-do-something-now.”<sup>3</sup> Because this all-encompassing role has created unrealistic expectations, giving some territory away in the name of reform may be tempting. However, despite recent calls for other entities and professions to absorb some of the tasks and activities of police, the police role is still unlikely to change much in the next 30 years. Police have an expansive role because they are the only agents of the government who are trained, equipped, and expected to use force (when necessary) to ensure public safety.<sup>4</sup> Any attempt to significantly narrow this role will likely have unintended consequences for police-community relations and public safety. This is not to minimize the need for a more holistic approach for community safety that involves collaboration between the police, other public agencies, and the communities they serve. The police role itself is not the issue, and having additional entities with an invested interest should lead to improved outcomes.

Fourth, significant investments are needed in first-line supervision to develop healthy police organizations. First-line supervisors are among the most critical components of policing, yet their value remains untapped in most police organizations. They have been underused in implementing problem-solving strategies, reinforcing training tenets, and translating executive priorities to officers’ daily activities. Similarly, research has largely ignored how the best supervisors are selected and trained or how they most effectively influence officers’ attitudes and behaviors. Across the country, police chiefs’ tenures are getting shorter, the average age of sworn officers is decreasing, and our newly promoted supervisors are younger. If these trends continue, the quality of first-line supervision in 2054 will be even more critical to stabilize agencies. We should prepare for these changes and heavily invest in our first-line supervisors now.

Finally, training has also been neglected and represents a massive opportunity. A comprehensive redevelopment of police training focused on critical decision-making is needed for academies and in-service. If we begin now, this training could be standardized by 2054—conducted in state-of-the-art facilities that harness the power of AI, virtual reality, and new technologies, built on adult learning principles with scenario-based exercises. Training facilities and instructors could be graded and ranked nationally, providing job candidates with the information necessary to make informed choices about their future employment options. Training should also be embedded with our more recent investment in officer wellness and safety resources. Focus on officer wellness is now reaching the tipping point; enough agencies and leaders recognize its importance to drive adoption by the remaining

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3. Egon Bittner, “Florence Nightingale in Pursuit of Willie Sutton: A Theory of the Police,” in *The Potential for Reform of Criminal Justice*, Sage Criminal Justice Annuals, volume 3, edited by Herbert Jacob (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1974), 17–44, 39.

4. Egon Bittner, *Functions of the Police in Modern Society* (Chevy Chase, MD: National Institute of Mental Health, 1970), <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/functions-police-modern-society-0>.

agencies nationwide. By 2054, I expect the programs, training, and support for officer wellness will be standard practice. Quality training and first-line supervision could have the same trajectory as officer wellness efforts if they receive support now.

The years ahead will bring new and familiar challenges, including the likely significant social upheaval associated with changing demography, diversity of thought, and the proliferation of extremism. These societal changes often result in encounters and events that police are expected to handle. Likewise, technological advances will provide change and opportunities we can't even begin to imagine. Technology will alter how police work and what societal wrongs they must respond to. Gun violence will continue to take lives, and police will need to implement more creative strategies to stem the tide. And undoubtedly, a new drug of choice will replace fentanyl with deadly consequences, similar to how crack gave way to meth, which was replaced by heroin, and so on. While most of these changes are beyond our immediate control, **how we prepare our police officers and agencies for the challenges ahead is firmly within our control.** We should continue the hard work now to create learning organizations that harness the power of technology while embracing the vast and vital role of police, and invest in first-line supervision, training, and officer safety and wellness as the core foundation. I believe we have the fortitude, insight, and political will to take these steps now so our communities and agencies can thrive in 2054.



**Robin S. Engel**, PhD, recently accepted the position of Senior Research Scientist at the John Glenn College of Public Affairs at The Ohio State University, following more than 25 years in academic positions at the University of Cincinnati and Pennsylvania State University. She also serves as a Senior Advisor for 21st Century Policing Solutions (21CP). She received her doctorate in criminal justice from the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at the University of Albany, State University of New York. As an award-winning researcher, she has partnered with dozens of police agencies and communities in the United States and internationally and served as Principal Investigator for more than 100 funded research studies and projects. Dr. Engel has been previously ranked among the top five academics nationally (and the number one woman) in the fields of criminal justice and criminology based on publications in prestigious peer-reviewed journals.

From 2015 to 2019, she served as Vice President for Safety and Reform at the University of Cincinnati, where her role included executive oversight of public safety operations and successful implementation of comprehensive police reforms in the aftermath of an officer-involved fatal shooting of an unarmed motorist. Other previous positions include Director of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)'s Center for Police Research and Policy and Senior Vice President at the National Policing Institute. Dr. Engel has spent her career generating and testing evidence-based police practices, transforming police agencies through reform efforts, and reducing crime and violence in our most vulnerable communities.

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Dr. Engel serves as a four-time governor-appointed member of the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board, consultant on police training for the Ohio Attorney General, and former co-chair of the IACP's Research Advisory Committee. Her team's work in violence reduction has been honored with the 2008 IACP/Motorola Webber Seavey Award for Excellence in Law Enforcement, the 2009 IACP/West Award for Excellence in Criminal Investigations, and the 2008 National Criminal Justice Association's Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Award. She received the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University at Albany in 2017 and the 2022 O.W. Wilson Award from the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. As a top scholar and trusted leading authority in police science, Dr. Engel continues to engage in research designed to make police-citizen encounters safer, reduce harm, and promote best practices through academic-practitioner partnerships that translate and integrate research into practice.

# Futuring and Fiction

## Preparing Policing for Tomorrow's Challenges

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Nola M. Joyce

Policing has always been a dynamic, complex, and evolving field. Today, as a police leader, your role is not just about managing change but also about shaping the profession's future. The critical challenge in this endeavor is to understand the dynamics of today and use them as a springboard to the possibilities of tomorrow. This essay is not a speculative piece on what policing might look like in the future but rather a call to action for you to become a foreseer of future social, political, and technological changes. It is about preparing the profession and its people for the challenges ahead and equipping yourself with the visionary, strategic, and empathetic skills required to navigate these complex and uncertain times and shape the future of policing.

Future studies, or futurology, is not about predicting the future but about understanding potential futures and how current trends, emerging issues, and strategic decisions might shape those futures. It is an interdisciplinary field that seeks to explore, anticipate, and strategically prepare for potential futures.<sup>1</sup> As police leaders, you can harness future studies by fostering a specific mindset in yourselves and your departments—one that is curious, open, flexible, and proactive. This futurist perspective is paramount to providing the forward-thinking and strategic leadership required by 21st century policing.

Science fiction writers have long been at the forefront of exploring the future, using a variety of frameworks that mirror contemporary anxieties, social issues, and speculative futures. Their work can catalyze our imagination, sparking critical thinking about the future of policing and the potential influence of technological and social changes on the profession.

We need only recall a few classic science fiction works to see how these themes and portrayals are presented. The debate about the loss of privacy under constant surveillance is reflected in George Orwell's *1984*, written in 1949. *The Minority Report*, by Philip K. Dick (also in 1949), showed us a future where police predict crimes before they happen, raising the question of free will versus determinism. More recently, Dave Eggers gave us *The Circle* (2013), exploring the ethical themes of digital privacy and the repercussions of losing anonymity in exchange for purported societal benefits. And, of course, *RoboCop* (1987) explores the dehumanization of police officers, corporate control over public safety, and the ethical considerations of integrating humans with advanced technology. These examples highlight how science fiction writers often explore policing through probing narratives about the possible positive and negative consequences of policing actions and strategies and

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1. Jerome C. Glenn, Elizabeth Florescu, and The Millennium Project Team, *State of the Future Version 19.0* (Washington, DC: The Millennium Project, 2017) <https://www.millennium-project.org/state-of-the-future-version-19-0/>.

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2028 their impact on law enforcement practice. These works have influenced current attitudes  
2029 and thinking about government policy. Whether science fiction predicts the future or influ-  
2030 ences its direction, it is a powerful tool for developing a futuristic mindset.

2031 So, what ethical dilemmas might science fiction foretell for future government and public  
2032 safety policy? It suggests that we will continue to struggle with the choice between individ-  
2033 ual privacy and security. Cyberespionage and hacking will prompt more laws and calls for  
2034 enforcement around digital privacy and the responsibilities of law enforcement in a heavily  
2035 networked society.

2036 In particular, science fiction reveals current anxieties around artificial intelligence (AI) in  
2037 policing, which continues to test the limits of confidentiality and the appropriate level of  
2038 autonomous decisions regarding enforcement and justice. Automated enforcement can blur  
2039 responsibility and accountability for critical choices and raise concerns about bias in AI  
2040 and due process. As robots take over more of our mundane, routine tasks and become inte-  
2041 grated into our lives, the ethical treatment of sentient beings, the nature of consciousness,  
2042 and the moral implications of using artificial life forms as law enforcers or combatants will  
2043 make their way into public policy. A future where people choose to spend more time in vir-  
2044 tual and digital worlds could raise questions about the legality and enforceability of actions  
2045 in such worlds. How government and enforcement agencies interact and use virtual reality  
2046 will dominate public policy discussions.

2047 Science fiction writers also explore how future societies may handle social issues like  
2048 ecological sustainability, social stratification based on growing inequality in resources and  
2049 technology, power dynamics, and societal organization. These issues are often probed by  
2050 projecting worst- or best-case scenarios based on today's trends. *The Hunger Games* series  
2051 (2008–2025, by Suzanne Collins), for example, addresses inequality, state-imposed violence,  
2052 and the state's use of force to control public dissent.

2053 The portrayal of the future in science fiction is not just a reflection of our current society  
2054 but also a catalyst for critical thought about the future directions of policing. It stimulates  
2055 readers and viewers to ponder different paradigms' ethical and social implications. This  
2056 contemplation can prompt police leaders to examine these paradigms' impact on policing  
2057 and consider how best to develop the human, social, and technological infrastructure to  
2058 address likely outcomes. These thought experiments or "what ifs" lead to deeper under-  
2059 standing, challenge conventional wisdom, and foster innovative thinking—all abilities  
2060 required of today's leaders.

2061 Policing has been shaken to its core in the 21st century by rapidly changing technology,  
2062 social attitudes, and expectations; increasing demands for accountability from government  
2063 and authority; and growing diversity in communities and resulting cultural conflict. In  
2064 1999, most of us could not imagine using AI to answer and route 911 calls, providing police

service during an international pandemic, losing 20 percent of officers or more in two years, or being the focus of nationwide protests. We survived and are improving because some leaders are flexible and willing to test ideas without fully knowing the consequences.

Science fiction can be a powerful tool for developing these leadership qualities, particularly those needed to navigate complex and chaotic times. Through intentional engagement with science fiction, leaders can develop the visionary, strategic, and empathetic skills required to thrive in complex and uncertain times. The future of policing will be determined by leaders who know how to navigate complex issues and guide their departments through chaotic times. I encourage you, as police leaders, to actively engage with futurism and science fiction and to use these tools to understand and shape the future of policing.

No one can predict the future, but we can become leaders with a mindset that fosters the imagination of possibilities and explores the best approaches by networking with experts, academics, and others who focus on horizon scanning, scenario planning, and strategic foresight. Policing is growing in complexity because of the interplay between fast-paced technological advancements and social and cultural changes. This growth means that the future of policing demands not just a proactive but also a collaborative approach, engaging partners in imagining public safety and working together to create it. Your role in this cooperative effort is crucial, and your contributions are highly valued.



**Nola M. Joyce**, partner and principal consultant for 21CP Solutions, LLC, is a nationally recognized policing expert. She also served as deputy commissioner of the Philadelphia Police Department and held executive positions in the police departments of Chicago and Washington, D.C. She spearheaded significant organizational change efforts in these demanding public safety agencies, demonstrating exceptional ability to drive transformation.

Her achievements and recognition in the field of policing and public safety are extensive and diverse. She served on several prestigious advisory boards, including the American Law Institute's project *Principles of the Law: Policing* and the National Academies of Sciences' panel on *Modernizing the Nation's Criminal Statistics*. Her expertise is widely recognized, as evidenced by her roles on the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Research Advisory Committee and the Police Executive Research Forum's (PERF) Research Council and as a Senior Executive Fellow of the National Policing Institute (NPI). She received PERF's Gary P. Hayes Award and the IACP's Award of Research Excellence, further validating her significant contributions to the field.

Ms. Joyce is driven by a deep passion for helping agencies reach new heights of performance and service. Her advanced degrees in sociology, public policy, and homeland security, coupled with her diverse experiences, bring unique perspectives to her work. This combination of passion and expertise allows her to find unique solutions to complex issues.

# The Leadership Conference is Building a New Paradigm for Public Safety

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**Maya Wiley**

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights is the nation’s oldest and largest civil rights coalition and includes organizations by and for people who are formerly incarcerated and unions that represent uniformed members of service. While viewpoints about aspects of policing differ, the data show that the criminal justice and legal system has failed to protect all communities equally and justly.

We have launched Vision for Justice, a platform with 18 planks across three broad themes, offering concrete solutions spanning every stage of the criminal-legal process, yielding a comprehensive framework for transformation.<sup>1</sup> Vision for Justice ushers in a paradigm shift that can transform a carceral system that too often promotes aggressive policing and the criminalization of poverty over public services and programs. In many instances, police officers themselves are demoralized in the current system, as they are forced to address social problems rather than acts truly requiring police response.

## **We have a Vision for Justice.**

In 30 years, we envision a paradigm shift that ensures public safety is a real, lived experience in every community, particularly low-income communities of color. This vision of public safety shifts functions and means of policing and includes greater transparency and accountability for policing. It begins with the meaningful investment in critical areas where social service, educational, and other needs are met, which in turn reduces calls for a police response. These investments must be made in mental health services, special education programs, community schools with wraparound services for students and their families, jobs programs for high-unemployment neighborhoods, and schools that can identify and address learning disabilities and provide supports—just to name a few.

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1. “Vision for Justice Platform Relaunched to Envision New Paradigm for Public Safety,” The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, last modified April 11, 2024, <https://civilrights.org/blog/vision-for-justice-2024/#>.



## **These investments can achieve a paradigm shift in the nature and role of policing.**

Tactics like stop-and-frisk will be a thing of the past because police activities, including data collection on stops and true transparency around discriminatory stops, will have ended this form of policing. Accountability that includes consequences for such constitutional violations will also have led to reform.

Police will no longer be called into schools, because schools will have the investments necessary—and school staff will have the support, training, and referrals they need—for research-based interventions for students suffering from trauma, experiencing hunger, feeling frustration around undiagnosed learning disabilities, dealing with inadequate supports, or facing a range of other common issues that create disproportionate discipline for children needing help.

Police involvement in mental health emergencies will be replaced with civilian mental health crisis response and calls for police response will be reduced because prevention services are more readily available. Police departments will benefit from being able to focus resources more appropriately and allow trained personnel to determine whether police backup is required. Harm reduction models will have reduced disproportionate enforcement of drug laws against people of color and in urban as well as rural communities.

Smart and appropriate policing practices, including problem-solving policing, which identifies and uses data and prevention expertise, will ensure data collection and reporting on police community interactions, end militarization of policing, and reduce racial profiling and the overpolicing of vulnerable communities.

## **The Federal Government can set the example for constitutional policing.**

True public safety can be achieved in 30 years with the Federal Government modeling and ensuring transparent and accountable policing. Federal programs that provide military equipment to state and local police departments must end, federal spending priorities must be rebalanced, and investments must be made in prevention-oriented programs and services rather than in carceral responses to social needs.

States will be encouraged to adopt transparency and accountability measures thanks to federal grants programs that require uniform use of force policies, data collection, and documented accountability and discipline for violations. Uniformed members of service who lose their jobs based on misconduct will no longer be able to travel to other jurisdictions without their disciplinary records traveling with them.

The Federal Government must ensure the access to accurate data that is a critical component to achieving true public safety. There must be mandates for data collection and reporting of all enforcement-focused police-community interactions, including data about shootings by police, use of force incidents, stops, searches, and arrests. Officer training must be required for de-escalation, crisis intervention, adolescent development, and proper interactions with people with mental and physical disabilities. Data collection must be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, housing status, and other demographic characteristics and made publicly available.

### **Public safety means all people and communities feel safe.**

Public safety is served when all people feel safe and that safety is realized in their communities. However, the nation's current approach to public safety does the opposite: It endangers people and communities. The current system of policing and criminalization has disproportionately targeted Black and Brown communities and disproportionately harmed people with disabilities and other vulnerabilities. As such, we point to the Leadership Conference's Vision for Justice, which can change this broken paradigm into a true public safety system, creating safer, healthier, and more equitable communities.



**Maya Wiley** is the president and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and The Leadership Conference Education Fund. A nationally respected civil rights attorney, Wiley has been a litigator at the ACLU, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Inc., and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York. She has been a program creator in philanthropy, nonprofits, government, and higher education. She helped create a criminal justice program for a major foundation in South Africa. Wiley co-founded and led a national policy advocacy organization, the Center for Social Inclusion, now a part of Race Forward, a national policy strategy organization working to end structural racism. She became the first Black woman to be counsel to a mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio, in which office she worked to protect and expand civil rights, minority- and women-owned business contracts, and broadband access. Wiley became a Senior Vice President for Social Justice at the New School University, where she also founded the Digital Equity Laboratory. While there, she chaired the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB). As chair, she led the release of the hold on proceedings against Daniel Pantaleo, whose illegal chokehold killed Eric Garner, and co-chaired the Mayor's School Diversity Advisory Group that authored two major reports on integrating New York City public schools. Wiley has received numerous awards and has been a public voice for rights, justice, and democracy through written opinion editorials and as a former legal analyst for NBC News and MSNBC.

# Community Vitality as a Goal for Policing

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**Tom Tyler**

Police leaders often say that you cannot arrest your way out of crime. Despite this awareness, police policies and practices are typically directed at the short-term suppression of crime using the threat or actual application of force. Displays of force are effective in lowering crime rates, but they also create a social dynamic that has negative consequences. They motivate defiance and resistance, sometimes leading to tragic levels of force against community members. Further, while deterrence works, it frequently underperforms expectations, leading to pressure to increase the severity of punishments—something known to be ineffective.<sup>1</sup> Finally, they undermine the legitimacy of the police, leading to the continual need to suppress crime by engaging in deterrence because people are not motivated by their sense of responsibility to defer to the police or to obey the law.

Is there another way? Research suggests an alternative model of police authority that is equally effective in lowering the rate of crime, can avoid many of the negatives associated with policing via force, and has clear benefits for the community. This model is legitimacy-based policing. The elements of this model, the evidence that supports it, and its implications for policing are detailed in *Legitimacy-Based Policing and the Promotion of Community Vitality* (2022).

Legitimacy-based policing draws upon social science theories and is supported by research on the police, the courts, and the law. The first finding is that people's adherence to the law and to the directives of police officers is shaped by their judgments about whether police authority is appropriate and reasonable and ought to be deferred to. This is variously referred to as popular legitimacy, democratic legitimacy, or trust and confidence. Studies show that when people view the police as legitimate and entitled to enforce laws, they more voluntarily defer to police directives. They also follow the law more frequently in their everyday lives. Evidence from studies involving interviews with people assessing their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors supports this finding and suggests that the influence of legitimacy on whether people break the law is as strong or even stronger than the effect of fear of being caught and punished that defines force-based models.

These findings about the influence of legitimacy can be turned into policing policy only if there are verified ways of creating and maintaining legitimacy. Fortunately, research also demonstrates that there are. A key antecedent of police legitimacy is judgments about the fairness of the way that the police exercise their authority, something that scholars call procedural justice. The image of self-interested actors is a strong one in American society,

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1. Anthony A. Braga and David L. Weisburd, *Pulling Levers: Focused Deterrence Strategies to Prevent Crime*, Crime Prevention Research Review no. 6 (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2012), <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter/?item=cops-p242>.

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and from that perspective we might expect people to react to encounters with the police based upon the outcomes that they receive. In fact, studies suggest that people are ethical decision-makers and evaluate the police by judging whether they are behaving in accord with their views about what are appropriate and reasonable police actions. This finding means that the police can enforce laws without undermining their legitimacy by acting in a procedurally just manner.

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Research further tells us that people usually define procedural justice through four principles. First, do they have a chance to state their case, present their evidence (**voice**)? Second, are the procedures being applied by officers in a consistent, unbiased, fact- and rule-based matter (**neutrality**)? Third, are they treated with courtesy, dignity, and respect (**respect**)? Finally, do they believe that the officers they are dealing with are sincere and benevolent, i.e., trying to do what is right for the community and good for the people involved (**trustworthiness**)? The latter two ideas are particularly important because, while the police often have to make decisions that lead to outcomes people do not want or feel they deserve, the police can always be polite and seen as concerned about the situation of the people with whom they are dealing. Hence, there is a clear path through which the police can manage crime problems while building their legitimacy.

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As noted, a legitimacy-based strategy is shown by research to be equally as or more effective than a force-based approach in controlling crime. However, the advantages of this strategy go beyond rule adherence. First, the legitimacy-based strategy lessens defiance and resistance because people think police authority is being properly enacted and they more willingly defer to police directives. Further, when community residents think the police are legitimate, they are more likely to cooperate—reporting crime and criminals, testifying in court, and coming to community meetings about policing. Consequently, clearance rates go up. Hence, legitimacy-based policing is a more desirable form of policing.

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Finally, when the police are viewed as legitimate, a climate of security and reassurance is created within a community. It leads people to identify more strongly with their communities, to work more closely with their neighbors, to shop and eat in their communities, and to participate in local governance. In other words, it supports community development on a path toward a more vital community. Research supports this argument by linking feelings of security and reassurance more strongly to judgments about police procedural justice than to estimates of the crime rate or expressions of fear of crime. It is the anticipation of justice from the police that motivates engagement.

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As we noted, force-based policing can suppress crime. However, it also undermines police legitimacy. This means there is no end game. In contrast, legitimacy-based policing enables the police to both manage crime in the moment and at the same time support a model of community development.

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Are there limits to this model? Yes. The police can suppress crime in the short term by flooding officers into a community. Legitimacy has to be built over time; hence it requires a proactive policing strategy. Too often the police are driven by reacting to events of the moment such as issues of perceived high crime in the community, either a general “crime wave” or a particularly visible heinous crime. The community demands immediate action.

Fortunately, studies show that it is possible both to show a police presence to deter crime and to build legitimacy, if the police conduct themselves through the principles of procedural justice outlined earlier. Unfortunately, the actions taken to deal with a crime wave frequently lack these features and consequently undermine police legitimacy. Research suggests that this does not have to happen.

The legitimacy-based policing model is always relevant, but is particularly valuable in an era of low crime. The United States is in an era of low crime,<sup>2</sup> so we might ask what the police should be doing. If the police can, as noted, be agents of community development, then an expanded vision of what the police do to benefit communities suggests they can aid communities to grow their way out of crime. This highlights an important role for the police in any era.



**Tom Tyler** is the Macklin Fleming Emeritus Professor of Law at Yale Law School. He is a social psychologist who studies the dynamics of authority in groups, organizations, and societies. His books include *Why People Obey the Law* (2006), *Why People Cooperate* (2011), and *Legitimacy-based Policing and the Promotion of Community Vitality* (2022). He received the Kalven prize for paradigm shifting scholarship in the study of law and society in 2000, the lifetime achievement award from the International Society for Justice Research in 2012, the lifetime achievement award from the International Compliance Network in 2022, and the Stockholm Prize in Criminology in 2024.

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2. John Gramlich, "What the Data Says about Crime in the U.S.," Pew Research Center, last modified April 24, 2024, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/04/24/what-the-data-says-about-crime-in-the-us/>.

# Looking Forward 30 Years

*Toward a genuine profession of policing and public safety*

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**David M. Kennedy**

The year we are invited to consider in imagining the future of policing, 2054, will mark the 200th anniversary of a signal moment in another profession. The year 1854 was a turning point between a prescientific, ineffective, and often literally deadly approach to medicine and the emergence of modern medical practice. London was in the grip of a deadly cholera epidemic. The conventional medical wisdom was that cholera and other such diseases were caused by miasma: foul vapors and “night air” emerging spontaneously from the ground and particularly, in London, the River Thames. Doubting this analysis, the London physician John Snow produced a pin map of cholera victims in his neighborhood, gave it some serious thought, and concluded that the disease was being carried by water from a central public pump on Broad Street. He successfully lobbied the local authorities to remove the pump’s handle; the epidemic abated; subsequent outbreaks were similarly responsive to similar interventions; and after a relatively short intellectual struggle, the fiction of miasma was replaced by modern germ theory, and Snow’s simple but profound methodology was on its way to becoming the modern practice of public health and epidemiology.

It was on its way, to put it differently, toward becoming a genuine profession. The paradigmatic institution of modern medicine is the teaching hospital: a place that combines and concentrates pure research, applied research, front-line clinical practice, the education of new medical practitioners, and the inculcation and institutionalization of a culture of professional practice intended to elevate patient care and outcomes above all else. Medicine is far from perfect, but despite its harm, mistakes, and errors it is still a *profession*. Doctors are not allowed to practice without foundational education and a demonstrated command of that knowledge; they are required to stay current as that knowledge develops over time; their certification—literally a license to practice—can be removed for cause; there is a constant endeavor to improve treatments; new treatments are subject to formal tests for efficacy; what it means to be a doctor is governed by powerful norms, both formal (“first do no harm”) and informal. One marker of that is the fact that medicine reacted to the once fairly commonplace obscenity of harmful and cruel medical experiments (e.g., the 40-year government-run Tuskegee Syphilis Study)<sup>1</sup> by playing a central role in creating human subjects standards for medical research, which institutionalized—under color of law—attention to the well-being of patients, the obligation of informed consent, and elevated standards for vulnerable populations.

Saying all that directly starkly highlights how different things are in policing. Policing uses the language of professionalism— we routinely say that it is one—but it fundamentally remains a craft, and in many instances not a particularly sophisticated or positive one.

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1. “The Untreated Syphilis Study at Tuskegee Timeline,” Centers for Disease Control Office of Science, last updated December 5, 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/tuskegee/timeline.htm>.

One can reach the highest levels in policing without knowing anything foundational about crime and crime prevention; the notion that police officers should have degrees goes back to August Vollmer, more than 100 years ago, but the field has never even specified what those degrees should be (anything counts); many departments have no such requirement; and at the executive level there is no requirement that chiefs, for example, know anything in particular about the work they are charged with doing. There is no institutional requirement that policing practices actually work; agencies routinely do things they know perfectly well do not work; there is nothing structural to push back against those practices; and the evidence-based policing movement has come largely from academic settings outside policing and is overwhelmingly focused on evaluating existing approaches, with little attention to the critical need for new interventions to important problems. Policing that does enormous harm is not only common but often honored and elevated: The New York Police Department's former practice of "zero tolerance" stop and frisk, for example (which was found to be ineffective, unconstitutional, and racially discriminatory), became a model and a goal for departments across the country. Police culture that is unabashedly toxic is frequently tolerated and even celebrated at the line level. It is impossible to imagine the immediate supervisor for a new doctor saying to her, "Now that you're on the job, forget everything those idiots in medical school taught you." We know perfectly well that that—and much worse—is routine in policing. The murder of George Floyd has not led to an equivalent "human subjects" movement in policing; it is difficult even to say what policing's response has been, despite the massive public estrangement it catalyzed.

John Snow and the Broad Street pump give reason for hope. Medicine looked at his pin map and his accompanying logic—neither all that different from many of the familiar success stories that also populate policing—found them good, and built them into a new field of epidemiology, public health, and modern medicine. Crucially, this came from *within* the field. Policing and police leadership need to do the same. Policing cannot be pushed from the outside—by the relative handful of academics committed to the field, by civilian review boards, even by the COPS Office—into going where it ought to go. We will not have professionalism by consent decree. Policing in the United States needs to, and ought to, define for itself what it thinks it should be, expose that to the public's view, listen and learn, and go there.

If it tackles that challenge, it will have much to draw on. The best in policing is very good indeed. It knows better than anyone else the limits of state power and the futility of addressing critical public issues through ever greater exercise of that power.<sup>2</sup> It is amongst the bravest institution in public life about its past sins, and its legacy of racism<sup>3</sup> and bias.<sup>4</sup>

2. Casey Albritton, "City of St. Pete and St. Pete Police Launch New Program to Help Curb Youth Crime," ABC Action News, last modified June 10, 2024, <https://www.abcactionnews.com/news/region-pinellas/city-of-st-pete-and-st-pete-police-launch-new-program-to-help-curb-youth-crime>.
3. Zoe Mentel, *Racial Reconciliation, Truth-Telling, and Police Legitimacy* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2012), <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-p241>.
4. Erin Blakemore, "Stonewall Riots Apology: NYPD Commissioner Says 1969 Police Raids Were 'Wrong,'" History Channel, last modified June 28, 2019, <https://www.history.com/news/stonewall-riots-nypd-apology>.

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It welcomes those outside policing into the work of creating public safety.<sup>5</sup> It advocates for the profound needs of the communities it serves.<sup>6</sup> It crafts deeply innovative solutions<sup>7</sup> to important problems. It models what should be thoughtful, just, and legitimate relationships with the public.<sup>8</sup> It creates and sustains a culture of care and sacrifice.<sup>9</sup> It believes in evidence and in science.<sup>10</sup> What it perhaps has not believed in is itself: that its critical work both deserves the status of a profession, and—given that—that the field should feel obliged to produce one. It is past time for policing to emerge from its own miasma and do that work.



**David M. Kennedy** is a professor of criminal justice at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City (<https://www.jjay.cuny.edu/faculty/david-kennedy#faculty-publications>) and the faculty chair of the National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay (<https://nnscommunities.org/>). Mr. Kennedy and the National Network support cities implementing strategic interventions to reduce violence, minimize arrest and incarceration, enhance police legitimacy, and strengthen relationships between law enforcement and communities. These interventions have been proven effective in a variety of settings, have amassed a robust evaluation record, and are widely employed nationally and internationally. Mr. Kennedy was a principal in the Boston Gun Project in the mid-1990s, which pioneered a high-level action-research approach to public safety and the groundbreaking “Operation Ceasefire” homicide prevention strategy, and from which Kennedy developed the “focused deterrence” intervention framework. He has developed interventions focused on group and gang violence, individual violent offenders, intimate partner violence, street drug markets, opioid markets, prison safety, and other public safety issues. He has worked with numerous cities and states and with the Federal Government to design and implement the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative and the U.S. Department of Justice’s Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative; Drug Market Intervention Program; and the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice.

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5. Los Angeles Police Department, “Partnerships Matter,” Community Safety Partnership Bureau, accessed July 15, 2024, <https://www.lapdsp.org/partners>.
  6. Sarah Rankin, “Va. PD Chief Advocates for Mental Health Resources as Officers Spend Hours Watching Patients in ERs,” Police1, last modified February 18, 2024, <https://www.police1.com/va-pd-chief-advocates-for-mental-health-resources-as-officers-spend-hours-watching-patients-in-ers>.
  7. Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, “Policing Problems,” Arizona State University, accessed July 15, 2024, <https://popcenter.asu.edu/>.
  8. “About Us,” Watts Gang Task Force, accessed July 15, 2025, <https://www.wattsgangtaskforce.com/>.
  9. Felicia Jordan, “Watch: After ‘Frantic’ Mother’s Milk Dried Up, Miami Twp. Officer Embarks on 3 a.m. Formula Hunt,” ABC 9 Cincinnati, last modified July 2, 2024, <https://www.wcpo.com/news/local-news/clermont-county/miami-township-clermont/watch-after-frantic-mothers-milk-dried-up-miami-twp-officer-embarks-on-3-a-m-formula-hunt>.
  10. “What is EBP?” American Society of Evidence-Based Policing, accessed July 15, 2024, [https://www.americansebp.org/what\\_is\\_ebp.php](https://www.americansebp.org/what_is_ebp.php).



# A Collective Responsibility for a Shared Vision of Public Safety

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**Jin Hee Lee**

It was a cold, wintry day in the middle of December. Roman Jackson was living with his grandmother in his childhood home—a public housing apartment in central Harlem—after graduating from college. He had secured a job at a nonprofit organization, helping Black youth in his old neighborhood. It was freezing outside, so when his friend Kristin Johnson came over to download some music from his computer, they decided to sit on a platform at the top of the stairs near his apartment.

Some time later, two police officers appeared and asked what they were doing. Roman, who had grown up with housing officers patrolling his building, kindly greeted the officers and explained that he was a resident and was simply hanging out with his friend. When the officers accused him and Kristin of trespassing, Roman offered to get his identification from his apartment and thought that would be the end of the encounter. To the contrary, both he and Kristin were handcuffed and taken to the local precinct, where they were fingerprinted, booked, and detained in a cell. Neither had ever been arrested before. Roman was in disbelief—he had been led by police in handcuffs in front of all his neighbors, for trespassing in the apartment building that he called home since he was a small child. Adding insult to injury, even though the trespass charges were eventually dismissed, Roman’s employer was still notified of his arrest because his work involved contact with underage children. Thus, the trauma and embarrassment of what happened in his home carried over to his workplace.

Everything that happened to Roman Jackson and Kristin Johnson reflects the waste and dysfunction of a broken public safety system.

Roman and Kristin were my clients, and they—along with other named plaintiffs—filed a federal class action lawsuit against the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and the City of New York challenging how officers’ enforcement of trespass laws violated the rights of Black and Latino public housing residents and their guests. That case, *Davis v. City of New York*,<sup>1</sup> is part of the current federal court monitorship of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) to reform its stop-and-frisk and trespass enforcement policies

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1. *Davis et al. v. City of New York et al.*, 10 Civ. 0699 (SAS) (S.D.N.Y. 2011), <https://www.naacpldf.org/wp-content/uploads/7-5-11-Opinion-and-Order-78.pdf>. On April 28, 2015, as part of the settlement to end the litigation, the *Davis* case was transferred to join the court monitorship ordered in *Floyd, et al. v. City of New York*, 08-cv-1034 (S.D.N.Y.) and *Ligon, et al. v. City of New York, et al.*, 12-cv-2274 (S.D.N.Y.). The information about the arrests of Roman Jackson and Kristin Johnson provided in this essay were taken from the *Davis* litigation.

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2028 and practices. While important reforms of the NYPD are underway, this essay takes a step  
2029 back to discuss the policy implications of what happened to Roman, Kristin, and countless  
2030 other public housing residents and their guests.

2031 Undoubtedly, it is important for public housing residents to be safe in their homes and  
2032 to prevent unwanted intruders from entering their buildings. Yet, many public housing  
2033 buildings have broken locks and malfunctioning intercom systems that make it virtually  
2034 impossible to regulate and control points of entry. Often, there is also a lack of indoor  
2035 and outdoor common spaces for residents to use outside their apartments, which can be  
2036 cramped with large families or uncomfortable during certain weather conditions. Housing  
2037 officers are tasked with addressing these problems, using their law enforcement training to  
2038 effectively serve as building security guards.

2039 There is, of course, an important distinction between police officers and security guards,  
2040 and that is the authority to restrain a person's liberty and even use force when necessary.  
2041 A security guard would likely try to resolve a problem on their own before calling the  
2042 police. In contrast, encounters with officers have already escalated by the very presence of  
2043 police and the possibility of detention, arrest, or use of force. These distinctions raise two  
2044 important issues: (1) individual officers' understanding that it is not always necessary or  
2045 advisable to conduct law enforcement actions and (2) a police department's commitment to  
2046 overall public safety that may best be achieved through non-police resources.

2047 The officer who arrested Roman and Kristin stated a belief that he was facing a "must  
2048 arrest" situation because he believed the "roof landing" (or the top of the stairwell leading  
2049 to the roof) was off limits to everyone, including residents. But officers always have the dis-  
2050 cretion not to engage in law enforcement actions, even in situations when they technically  
2051 can do so (although they did not in this situation). The officers on that roof landing had  
2052 options available that did not involve an arrest and all its detrimental consequences. Yet a  
2053 priority on hard numbers (i.e., the number of stops and arrests) often drives what is consid-  
2054 ered effective policing to be recognized and rewarded. There are no similar incentives or  
rewards for officers to *decline* conducting a stop or arrest as the appropriate response to a  
given circumstance. And what gets lost in the meantime is a common-sense mind frame to  
determine what will actually promote public safety.

This discrepancy leads to the overall goal of the law enforcement agency itself. Too often,  
public safety is viewed as the sole responsibility of police officers, who are tasked with  
resolving myriad social problems that in actuality are best addressed by other resources.  
In fact, research clearly establishes that a community's economic security can have

tremendous impacts on public safety<sup>2</sup>—perhaps far more than police practices themselves. Yet in those all-too-common instances when governments face significant budget constraints, the agencies advancing economic security—as well as supporting health, education, and housing—are most likely to face funding cut. And in the fight for more funding, advocates for police often pit themselves against those for social services.

But what if police departments had a more holistic view of public safety? What if all of government, as well as the public at large, took on the responsibility of creating the conditions for public safety to thrive? This would mean that public safety cannot—and should not—rest on the shoulders of law enforcement alone, but instead should be a collective responsibility for everyone. In fact, a truly successful public safety system may not even need law enforcement at all if sustainable, community-based resources can prevent the underlying, root causes of crime. Thus, in this collective responsibility for a shared vision of public safety, it would be incumbent upon law enforcement leaders to look beyond law enforcement itself for the most effective, cost-efficient, and comprehensive solutions to public safety problems. And, in so doing, they may realize that, in a better world, their services would not be needed—and that would be a sign of their tremendous success.



**Jin Hee Lee** is the inaugural Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Legal Defense Fund (LDF), where she leads the Strategic Initiatives Department, which houses specific projects and campaigns integrating LDF's multifaceted advocacy tools to maximize advocacy for Black Americans. One of these projects is the Justice in Public Safety Project, which aims to address entrenched racial biases in law enforcement and to reimagine a public safety system that protects and invests in Black communities. One of her individual cases is *Davis, et al. v. City of New York et al.*, a federal class action lawsuit that is part of the court-ordered monitoring of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and seeks systemic changes to the NYPD's discriminatory trespass enforcement practices against Black and Latinx public housing residents and guests. Along with Sherrilyn Ifill, Ms. Lee co-authored the chapter "Do Black Lives Matter to the Courts?" in the anthology *Policing the Black Man: Arrest, Prosecution, and Imprisonment*, edited by Professor Angela J. Davis. Ms. Lee graduated *magna cum laude* from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in 1995 and is a 2000 graduate of Columbia Law School, where she was a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar. She also served as law clerk to Judge Martha Vázquez in the United States District Court for the District of New Mexico. In 2016, Ms. Lee was recognized by Columbia Law School as the Distinguished Public Interest Graduate of the Year.

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2. See, e.g., C. Fritz Foley, "Welfare Payments and Crime," *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 93, no. 1 (2011), 97–112, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23015922> (showing that disbursement of SNAP benefits correlates with reduced crime); Caroline Palmer, David C. Phillips, and James X. Sullivan, "Does Emergency Financial Assistance Reduce Crime?," *Journal of Public Economics* 169 (2019), 34–51, 50, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2018.10.012> (providing temporary financial assistance to people facing adverse income shocks can reduce violent crime up to 51%.); Otto Lenhart, "Earned Income Tax Credit and Crime," *Contemporary Economic Policy* 39, no. 3 (2021), 589–607, 591 <https://doi.org/10.1111/coep.12522> (higher earned income tax credit is associated with increased employment and reduced rates of poverty and violent crime).

# The Need to Shift Our Lexicon

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**David B. Rausch**

I have served in policing for more than 35 years and have seen many changes and advancements in the profession during that time. As I consider the next 30 years, I see this profession ready to advance in many arenas. I trust that my peers will spend time discussing advancing and embracing the fast-paced changes in technology, tools, and training. The patrol car of the future will be as unrecognizable as the ones we use today are from those of 35 years ago. Patrol deployment will be significantly impacted by new ways of responding with unmanned aerial systems (drone) technology. Police reports will be generated by artificial intelligence technology from audio and video connected to the officer and from camera systems that will be a part of the community infrastructure fed into community safety centers or real-time crime centers. Investigative techniques will be impacted by improved rapid DNA technology and improved databases with increased submissions, which will in turn increase the identification rates of suspected offenders. Advanced license plate readers and safety cameras with facial recognition will be commonplace in communities. Training will be enhanced with practical exercises, not in virtual reality, but by engaging holograms in realistic surroundings; these training exercises will use scenarios from the field that are interactive and address current approaches and issues. Firearms will be smarter and potentially less dangerous if they fall into hands other than the owner's. But with all of this improvement, there will still be a need for the officer on the beat and in the community to provide safety and security. The connection with the community will continue to be vital. The human factor will always be present.

Knowing my peers will delve into these critical and interesting areas, I will focus my thoughts more on a philosophical shift that needs to happen, because we will continue to need to connect with the community. We have, as a profession, taken hits during these past 30 years—some well-deserved—for our actions, inactions, and our approaches. As we seek to enhance our profession and positively engage all communities we serve, there needs to be a fundamental and foundational shift in our lexicon. We need to reimage and reimagine our brand.

One aspect of policing that I see advancing is our use of terminology that defines us and impacts how we see ourselves and how the public sees us. Leadership expert Simon Sinek presented at the 2023 International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Annual Conference, and he made a brilliant suggestion: He stated part of the problem in our profession with trust in our communities may lie in what we call ourselves. We call ourselves the law enforcement profession, but in fact law enforcement is only about 10 percent of what we do. He offered that we should call ourselves the policing profession, with the understanding that policing is defined as protecting the vulnerable. Think about what we

do every day on patrol: We work to prevent crime, to protect the vulnerable, and to promote public safety. These actions are rooted in the foundational principles described by Sir Robert Peel in 1829. Yet we call ourselves simply law enforcement.

Consider how we train officers today. We use the law enforcement terminology—not just as an identifier but also as an action. A new officer is taught their role is law enforcement, with emphasis on enforcement. This emphasis is repeated and reinforced throughout their training. Then when they are released and sent to field training and they arrive at their first call, they exit their cruiser looking to enforce the law. That perspective needs to be changed; it may well be the cause of much of the conflict we find ourselves engaged with. But if we welcome these new officers to the policing profession and train them in the core values and understanding that they will be community problem-solvers—as that is what they will do 90 percent of the time—then their approach on that first call will be different. They will approach the situation as a helper, not an enforcer. They will focus on their main role as a problem-solver and a resource provider. We may just find less conflict and more cooperation.

For those who think this is a softer approach, trust that officers will continue to be trained on the hard skills needed for enforcement, as enforcement will always be necessary. To do those main three functions of policing—preventing crime, protecting the vulnerable, and promoting public safety—they will have to use law enforcement as a tool, as needed. But most of their training will need to be on problem-solving, communications, resource management, and preliminary investigations. Shooting, defensive tactics, and driving skills will continue to be critical skills that must be taught. They will still need to be cautious as they approach every scene. But caution and callousness are very different approaches.

This change will require us to change all of the documents, associations, and organizations that we have named *law enforcement* to *policing*. Every conversation we have we will need to use *policing* in place of *law enforcement*. This effort has already been underway at the IACP; IACP has made a conscious effort to make this change and it has been well received. In the effort to show our communities who we are and what our value is, this is a simple step to take, one that will have us thinking about other terms that we use that are not truly representative of what our profession is and does.

While this may not be as exciting to some as the advances in technology and tools that are definitely coming, I believe this will be just as significant, as it will alter the way the police and the community interact. Maybe, just maybe, as Simon mentioned in his keynote, we in policing will be the bridge that brings the divisions in our nation back together.



**David Rausch** has served as the 9th Director of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) since 2018. Prior to TBI he served 25 years in the Knoxville Police Department progressing through the ranks to Chief of Police for his last seven years. He earned his BA in political science in 1986 and his MS in justice administration in 2001, both from the University of Louisville. He is a graduate of the 218th FBI National Academy, 105th Southern Police Institute Administrative Officers Course, Police Executive Research Forum 40th Senior Management Institute for Police, FBI 36th National Executive Institute, FBI Leadership in Counter Terrorism (LinCT) program, and the 80th session of the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Seminar. He served four years in the U.S. Army, earning the rank of sergeant. He has been an adjunct instructor at Bethel University since 2011. He currently serves as the Second Vice President of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and will be President in 2025. In addition, he serves as a CALEA assessor. In 2020, he was appointed by U.S. Attorney General William Barr as a Commissioner on the Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice.

# The Good, The Bad, and The Hopeful

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**Michael S. Scott**

On any given day, if one had to predict what policing would look like tomorrow, the safest answer would be “just like it does today.” With few exceptions, police officers come to work every day and follow much the same routine they did the day before, and community members who call the police for assistance receive much the same service they would have the day before. Obviously, though, string together enough days and that prediction can’t always be true. A community member in the early 1830s couldn’t call the police, not merely because the telephone hadn’t yet been invented but because American police had not yet been invented. American policing has changed in dramatic ways but nevertheless remained remarkably recognizable since 1838 when Boston rolled out the first police force; today’s police officers serve many of the same functions as their 19th-century forebearers.

Technological innovation has been the primary force behind police innovation: It generates both new forms of crime and disorder and new ways of responding to them. The advent of radio communication, the telephone, motorized vehicles, the portable radio, the computer, and forensic science techniques and tools such as fingerprint and DNA analysis have all notably changed the way policing is carried out.

Given a 30-year future horizon—especially one in the current age when the pace of change in most realms of society is faster than ever before and still accelerating—a vision of American policing allows for considerable imagination. Many features of today’s policing will undoubtedly exist 30 years hence, but given the pace of technological change, it seems highly likely that some features of American policing will have been profoundly altered.

Several possibilities can be imagined. The first stems from a dystopian view, one in which social conditions and the policing of them are harsh and grim. The second stems from a utopian view, one in which social conditions have improved so much that police are nearly unnecessary. And the third is a realistic but hopeful view that is neither all bad nor all good.

A dystopian view of American policing in 2054 might entail some of the following features:

- Policing is extremely politicized; control of policing is vested in individual political executives who hire their own police leaders and officers and direct that police actively enforce laws to disadvantage their political opponents and advantage their supporters. Police officers have to swear oaths of allegiance to the political leader or party, rather than to the constitutions to which they currently swear their allegiance.
- All external civilian oversight of police is either abolished or similarly controlled by the political regime.

- Police use force freely and heavily: The policy is to overwhelm all resistance to police authority with superior force.
- Political protest is prohibited and forcefully suppressed.

A utopian view of American policing in 2054 might entail some of the following:

- Police are routinely unarmed because community members have limited access to firearms. This is utopian in the sense that violence is rare and thus police use of violence is rarely needed.
- Arrests are rare because systems of informal social control do nearly all the work of keeping people law-abiding and behaving properly. Parents keep their children law-abiding, religious leaders their flocks, landlords their tenants, employers their employees, coaches their athletes, friends one another, and so forth.
- Crimes are extraordinarily hard to commit successfully because places and products are crime-proofed by design and tightly regulated.
- Most people have sufficient income to purchase what they need to live a comfortable life, so acquisitive crime is rare.
- People are less angry, resentful, hateful, and violent toward one another, so expressive interpersonal and group crime is rare.
- People are more considerate and tolerant of one another, so nuisance crimes are rarely committed and rarely perceived as intolerable.

Mindful that one person's dystopia might be another's utopia, my own more realistic but hopeful view of American policing in 2054 envisions some of the following:

- Police will be more strategic in their approach to their work. They will continue to attend to crime and disorder incidents and do their best to achieve desirable short-term outcomes, but they also will routinely explore whether the incident at hand is part of a larger pattern of similar incidents for which a new strategic approach is needed to prevent their recurrence or reduce the harm they cause.
- Police will emphasize preventing crime and disorder, largely by reducing opportunities for crimes to occur by making them harder to commit, harder to get away with, less rewarding to commit, less easily provoked by others, and less easily rationalized. This emphasis integrates the core principles of situational crime prevention into routine policing.



- Police will base their responses to crime and disorder on careful and routine analysis of crime and disorder problems, not solely on whether they have the capacity and desire to respond in a particular fashion. They will also routinely consult affected communities before launching new strategies and prefer those strategies and tactics that engender public support while also safeguarding minority rights.
- Police will rarely fail to notice emerging public safety and security problems in a timely manner, so problems don't fester and worsen through inattention. They will have developed multiple sophisticated early warning systems that alert them and other government officials that something other than the routine response is required to get ahead of the harm these problems will cause. For example, police and others won't wait until many people have died of the latest drug overdose problem or lost their life savings to fraud before mobilizing prevention resources.
- Police officers will serve more as identifiers and diagnosticians of public safety problems and brokers of responsibility for addressing them than merely as law enforcers, crisis responders, and report takers. Police officers will be genuine servant leaders in the communities where they work.
- Governments, corporations, and community members will routinely accept shared responsibility with police for public safety and security. They will no longer reflexively insist that the police alone "do something" about crime and disorder before grudgingly agreeing to do what lies within their ability to address those problems. Correspondingly, police will push back against efforts to make them solely responsible for "doing something" when that something will be either ineffective or inequitable.
- Police will avoid overuse of invasive surveillance to detect wrongdoing. While it is likely that technological surveillance of people, places, vehicles, and computers will significantly increase across society, police will adopt policies and practices that affirmatively value people's privacy when there is no other reason to suspect them of serious wrongdoing. Police use of surveillance technology such as video surveillance cameras, automated license plate readers, gunshot detection systems, unmanned aerial systems, facial recognition, location tracking, and online surveillance—while useful and recommended in certain circumstances—will not be abused or used to such extent that people lose all sense of privacy. Police will internalize the core principle of respect for privacy that underpins several important Constitutional rights and privileges.
- Police will increasingly become professional guardians of public safety and the Constitution and less society's hired muscle and fixer.

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For better and for worse, the evolution of American policing has always been more gradual than sudden. Its highly decentralized nature inhibits sudden massive overhauls, preferring local experimentation and the slow and uneven adoption of new methods and practices. Its resistance to change is not solely due to subcultural and bureaucratic intransigence, although these do play a role; it is also due to the reality that police are often pushed in diametrically opposite directions by the body politic. The movement toward community policing coincided in time and place with the increased militarization of police. Zero-tolerance enforcement coincided with the development of alternatives to arrest. Immigration crackdowns coincided with greater police outreach to immigrant communities. Indeed, it often seems that police can only move ahead on one reform while simultaneously moving in a different direction on another, appealing to liberal instincts while also catering to conservative ones.

In which of the various directions American policing will turn in the coming decades is, as always, hard to predict, largely because police don't control their own fate. Properly, but sometimes maddeningly, police will be pushed and pulled in various directions by community sentiment, political influence, and sincere disagreement among themselves as to how best to police a heterogeneous society. Perhaps the best we can hope for is that however policing is done in 2054, law enforcement will have arrived there in ways that honor the core constitutional principles on which the United States was founded, namely that we are a self-governing—and by extension a self-policing—people that values majority rule and the protection of minority rights in equal measure.

Two wild cards could significantly compel American policing in directions that are difficult to foresee at this time but which could render the sort of evolution I envision relatively inconsequential. One is artificial intelligence (AI) and its use across society by both the public and the police. The world's brightest minds, including those who are actively developing AI, struggle to predict what good and harm it is capable of, so it's difficult to know whether it will alter policing only marginally or profoundly. Some current police functions might more efficiently and effectively be delivered by AI-driven computers and robots, rendering police either superfluous or free to focus on those functions better performed by humans.

The other wild card is worldwide climate change. If the current trends are not slowed or reversed soon, American police could find themselves preoccupied with being first responders to increasingly common and harmful weather disasters. In addition, if the global impacts of climate change are severe enough to cause mass international migration as people living in regions rendered uninhabitable flee to habitable regions, such sudden mass migration will likely create substantial public disorder that police will be compelled to try to control.

I don't anticipate being around in 2054 to see how my predictions fare, but I base them on my first 65 years of life, 45 of them spent working to make them come true. Most of the time, the Shakespearean notion that what's past is prologue is true—we can foresee from present conditions and actions at least the general outlines of the future—but the next 30 years might prove to be unlike any prior 30 years in human history. We have to hope that we will have learned enough from the first 200 years of American policing to adapt it to whatever changes may come.



**Michael Scott** is a clinical professor at Arizona State University's School of Criminology & Criminal Justice and the director of the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, a research center that produces and disseminates information about how police can effectively and fairly address specific public safety problems. Scott was formerly a clinical professor at the University of Wisconsin Law School; Chief of Police in Lauderhill, Florida; special assistant to the chief of the St. Louis (Missouri) Metropolitan Police Department; director of administration of the Fort Pierce (Florida) Police Department; a senior researcher at the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) in Washington, D.C.; legal assistant to the police commissioner of the New York City Police Department; and a police officer in the Madison (Wisconsin) Police Department. In 1996, he received PERF's Gary P. Hayes Award for innovation and leadership in policing. Scott holds a law degree from Harvard Law School and a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.



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To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than nine million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs and flash drives.

# Conclusion

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The 27 essays in this publication explore the future of policing based on past lessons, current challenges, and potential outcomes. For some, envisioning the future may seem to be an impossible task, but in the end, the work that we do today will influence the field's processes, practices, and strategies for years to come.

The essays were so thought-provoking that we are encouraged that leadership is interested in exploring ways we may be able to support some of these ideas very soon. They generated ideas around guidance and model policies around artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies, training and education for first-line supervisors and public information officers, research into identifying and assessing the most important attributes of officers, and the enhancement of services by call takers in communication centers. These ideas and others in the publication may come back around in upcoming work of the COPS Office.

As we celebrate the 30 years of COPS Office work and influence, we are encouraged by where policing is headed and how the COPS Office can continue to support the field.

This publication was a team effort, and we are deeply appreciative to all of the contributors who committed to this project and dedicated time and effort into thought provoking essays:

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- Terry Cherry
- Robin S. Engel
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- Ganesha M. Martin
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- Barney K. Melekian
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- Michael S. Scott
- Darrel Stephens
- Tom Tyler
- Maya Wiley
- Tom M. Worthy

We also share appreciation for COPS Office leadership and the 30th anniversary committee for their contributions and support. Finally, we thank the COPS Office Publishing, Communications, and IT teams for their work on the editing, designing, releasing, and marketing of this publication.



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# About the COPS Office

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The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When law enforcement and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem-solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community policing officers and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has been appropriated more than \$20 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing. Other achievements include the following:

- To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 138,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.
- More than 800,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations and the COPS Training Portal.
- More than 1,000 agencies have received customized advice and peer-led technical assistance through the COPS Office Collaborative Reform Initiative Technical Assistance Center.
- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than nine million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs and flash drives.

The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, roundtables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement. COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics such as school and campus safety, violent crime, and officer safety and wellness, can be downloaded via the COPS Office's home page, <https://cops.usdoj.gov>.



# American Policing 2054

To commemorate the 30th anniversary of its establishment, the COPS Office invited community members and leaders in law enforcement, public safety research, and civil rights to contemplate the next 30 years in American policing. This publication collects essays by a variety of contributors from all ranks of law enforcement as well as researchers and civic and civil rights leaders, all of whom touch on one or more principles of community policing—organizational change, problem solving, or partnerships—and present varied but ultimately optimistic predictions for the future. As we reflect on 30 years of COPS Office work and influence, we are encouraged by where law enforcement is headed and eager to continue to support the field and the communities they serve.



**COPS**

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Visit the COPS Office online at [cops.usdoj.gov](https://cops.usdoj.gov).

e062427092  
Published 2024