

POLICE PRACTICES REVIEW

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CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT

Portland Oversight Office Issues Annual Report

The Independent Police Review Division (IPR) of the Portland (OR) Auditor's Office recently released its 2003 annual report. The IPR receives all citizen complaints of misconduct by Portland Police Bureau (PPB) members, monitors PPB Internal Affairs Division investigations, launches its own investigations, provides an appeals process of Bureau findings, and makes policy recommendations to the Chief of Police. In the year under review, IPR received 761 complaints (that include one or more allegations), up from 513 in 2002; PPB resolved 92 percent of them within its goal of 150 days, up from 80 percent in 2002. "The overall timeliness in the handling of complaints," IPR noted, "improved substantially between 2000 and 2003."

Rude behavior (215) was the most common complaint received by the IPR, followed by complaints of false charges/citations (100), harassment (98), unjustified behavior, such as inappropriate questions or comments (85), failure to take appropriate action (82), and excessive force allegedly involving hands/feet/knees (77). Though the total number of complaints received by the IPR increased between 2002 and 2003, the number of excessive force complaints of all kinds did not change substantially and decreased as a percentage of the total.

The three most common allegations in complaints IPR forwarded to PPB that resulted in a full investigation by PPB Internal Affairs were, respectively: excessive force alleging use of hands, feet or knees; rude behavior; and profanity. The three most common allegations dealt with as service complaints—not likely to result in sustained findings or imposed discipline—were rude behavior, failure to follow traffic laws, and unjustified behavior. IPR itself completed 70 full

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investigations of citizen complaints, 58 of which were closed with all non-sustained findings and 12 with one or more sustained allegations.

The report showed that the number of IPR requests to the PPB for additional investigations of specific complaints fell from 15 in 2002 to 5 in 2003; it attributed the decrease to improved Internal Affairs self-scrutiny and understanding of IPR's review standards. The report recommended PPB officers participate in the IPR citizen-police mediation program, which resolves complaints without an Internal Affairs investigation, discipline, or a note in an officer's service record. The program is utilized in cases in which IPR and Internal Affairs believe mediation is likely to result in greater citizen satisfaction, improved officer conduct, and improved citizen-police relations. Twenty cases were successfully mediated in 2003, with 96.7 percent of complainants and 85.7 percent of officers saying they would recommend the mediation process to others. The full IPR report can be accessed online at <http://www.portlandonline.com/auditor/>.

Philadelphia Review Agency Suspends Hearings

Philadelphia's Police Advisory Commission (PAC) stopped holding public hearings on individual civilian complaints as of September 1, according to the Commission's web site, due to a shortage of commission members. The volunteer commission, created in 1994, reviews police policies, procedures, and practices and also accepts, investigates, and audits civilian complaints against the police. PAC is supposed to operate with 19 commissioners—seven picked by the mayor from a City Council list of names, eight selected directly by the mayor, and four alternates, two directly appointed by the mayor and two selected from a City Council list—but currently has six active commissioners, two of whom want to leave. In addition to the 15 appointments for which the Commission is waiting, PAC said it also needs two additional investigators to handle its caseload.

While PAC has stopped holding hearings, Commission Chairman Robert Nix said its work goes on. "We will continue to take complaints, and to the extent possible, conduct field investigations, audit complaints filed with Internal Affairs, and do educational work with schools and community groups," said Nix in a PAC press release. For more information about PAC, go to

<http://www.phila.gov/pac/index.html>. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 10, 2004; *Philadelphia Gay News*, August 27, 2004; and *Philadelphia Daily News*, September 13 and 17, 2004.

CONSENT DECREES/ MEMORANDA OF AGREEMENT

Detroit Police Change Off-Duty Gun Policy

Use-of-force reforms required by Detroit Police Department's (DPD) federal consent judgment and concerns over off-duty officer drinking convinced the DPD to end its policy requiring off-duty officers to carry their weapons, according to press reports. DPD officers now have the option to carry their weapons, whereas the old policy required them to be armed at all times except when in places of worship, on vacation, or at sporting events.

A DPD official said that officers are outside of their jurisdiction when they are outside of Detroit's city limits; approximately one third of the Department's officers live in suburbs outside Detroit. The *Detroit Free Press* said the police union suspected the policy was changed to place more liability for problematic incidents on individual officers and less on the DPD and the City. *Detroit Free Press*, September 2, 2004.

COMMUNITY POLICING

COPS Hiring Program In Question

The U.S. Justice Department's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, created through the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, has provided "grants to tribal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to hire and train community policing professionals, acquire and deploy cutting-edge crime-fighting technologies, and develop and test innovative policing strategies." But the COPS Universal Hiring Program, which reports it has helped pay for more than 118,500 new police officers, appears in jeopardy. The hiring program's current funds amount to \$55,000,000, but the Administration's proposed 2005 COPS budget contains no grant money for new officers, according to *The Washington Post*.

The hiring program funds 75 percent of the cost of each COPS officer for three years; the recipient agencies and communities must cover the remaining 25 percent and completely fund the officer beginning in the fourth year. Some police executives, especially in small communities, praised the program for allowing them to expand their forces despite limited financial ability, but the Justice Department found in 1999 that many COPS officers were not kept after grants ended and that some departments had used grant funds for other operations, according to press reports. COPS officials say they will continue providing grants in areas such as new technology and training. Information about COPS and its 2004 budget can be accessed online at <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov>. *New York Times*, July 27, 2004; *Washington Post*, September 29, 2004.

RACIAL PROFILING

Oakland Profiling Study Released

In 2001, the Oakland Police Department (OPD) received a grant from the U.S. Justice Department's Community Oriented Policing Services to continue traffic-stop data collection and analysis that OPD had begun in 2000. With the grant, OPD formed a racial profiling community task force and contracted with RAND and Scantron corporations to: assess community perceptions of profiling; determine whether OPD officers are engaging in profiling; create a collection system; and identify local variables that affect data accuracy. The OPD recently released its findings in *Promoting Cooperative Strategies to Reduce Racial Profiling*.

The task force and RAND first surveyed the OPD and the community to gauge officers' and residents' perceptions of profiling and treatment by police in different neighborhoods. The survey shows "a significant perception disparity between how the Oakland police believe the community feels about them, and how the community reports they are treated by the police." A majority of non-whites believed they are more likely than whites to be stopped or harassed by police and felt that racial profiling is a problem in Oakland. Seventy-two percent of officers, on the other hand, said profiling is not a problem; 100 percent of surveyed commanders said officers rarely engage in the practice.

ACADEMIC RESEARCH

In “Dual Arrest Decisions in Domestic Violence Cases: The Influence of Departmental Policies,” researchers examine whether officer perceptions of departmental policies regarding domestic violence affect arrest decisions. In this context, “dual arrest” means that officers at the scene of a domestic violence call will arrest both disputants. The article, authored by Mary A. Finn, Brenda Sims Blackwell, Loretta J. Stalans, Sheila Studdard, and Laura Dugan, appeared in the October issue of *Crime & Delinquency*.

The authors tested a sample of 299 experienced and rookie officers selected from public safety training centers in North Georgia. Approximately 77 percent of the officers reported completing formal training on the Family Violence Act of Georgia enacted in 1991. Departmental policies regarding domestic violence were placed into three categories: general arrest, dual arrest, and an open arrest policy. Of the officers surveyed, 18.7 percent worked for departments with a general arrest policy, requiring or encouraging arrest if one disputant has visible signs of injury. A dual arrest policy (in 38.5 percent of surveyed officers’ departments) requires or encourages arresting both parties if both disputants have visible injuries. The open arrest policy (42.8 percent of the sample) leaves the judgment to the officer in all domestic disputes.

Participating officers read one of six scripts describing a hypothetical dispute and wrote down their thoughts as they read. They then selected the best method of response, choosing from the following: (a) do nothing and let the couple handle it by themselves; (b) give informal advice; (c) mediate a settlement to the argument; (d) ask one party to leave the premise for the night to cool off; (e) arrest the man; (f) arrest the woman; (g) arrest the man and woman; or (h) other. Scripts contained different injuries and prior abuses. For example:

Script A: Both injured and no prior abuse.

Husband’s injuries: His face appeared flushed. His shirt is torn. On his neck and face are deep cuts and on his chest are red, swollen bruises.

Wife’s injuries: Her shirt is torn and twisted across her shoulder. She has a cut above her left eye, which is red and swollen. Her left cheek is bruised and swollen. Her bottom lip is cut and bleeding.

Script B: Both injured and prior abuse.

Both injured: See Script A for description of husband’s and wife’s injuries.

Prior abuse: Wife responds to sudden movements made by police with shrieks and by covering her face with clenched fists.

The authors found that when both of the disputants were injured, 45.8 percent of officers chose dual arrest, 17.7 percent arrested the husband, and 36.5 percent chose to informally handle the call. When only the wife was injured, 8 percent of officers chose dual arrest, 71.3 percent arrested only the husband, and 20.7 percent chose an informal option.

According to the authors, their data “indicate that officers tend to carry out the policy directives of their agencies. Dual arrest has a higher chance of occurring when police operate under a dual arrest policy, and single arrest has a higher chance of occurring when police operate under a general arrest policy.” A consequence of dual arrest policy is the increasing number of arrests of victims who acted in self-defense. The Family Violence Act of Georgia contains a “primary aggressor” provision that expands the range of factors officers may consider in arrest decisions. The provision describes factors such as severity of injuries, self-defense, prior violence, and future dangerousness to help determine which disputant should be arrested without prohibiting the arrest of both parties. According to the authors, officer arrest decisions vary due to individual police departments’ differing interpretation and implementation of the statute. The authors note that their findings stress the need for more comprehensive training on the objective of primary aggressor language in domestic violence statutes and the creation of departmental policies that apply these intentions. *Crime & Delinquency*, October 2004; Vol. 50, No. 4, 565-589.

RAND then analyzed 7,607 traffic stops made by the OPD between June 15 and December 30, 2003. The analysis adjusted for different groups' exposure to police, given that residents of different races drive at different times and in different parts of the city. The allocation of "additional law enforcement effort in certain parts of the city will naturally expose members of certain races to more law enforcement," the study said. OPD presence is heavier in non-white neighborhoods, RAND explained, and police practices might differ in some neighborhoods. RAND also controlled for driver characteristics and stops made when a driver's race was and was not known in advance—the assumption being that if profiling were occurring, stops of certain groups would comprise a larger percentage when officers could determine a race in advance than when officers could not. Researchers analyzed stops during the day and at night, and also focused on stops at dusk—a time interval during which RAND assumed different groups' proportion of the driving population is most similar to what it is in the daytime but when officers are less likely to be able to identify race in advance.

While blacks were stopped in disproportionately higher numbers, the study found that they were 50 percent of the drivers stopped in daylight and 54 percent of those stopped after dark, when identifying race prior to a stop is less likely. However, during the daylight hours of noon and 4pm, 41 percent of drivers stopped were black when officers could not first identify race compared to 67 percent when officers could positively identify race in advance. Police cited 65 percent of white drivers stopped and 68 percent of black drivers, which RAND said was not a statistically significant difference. Black and white drivers were searched at an approximately equal rate, though "stops involving black drivers were more than twice as likely to result in a probable cause search," when an officer reports having an "articulable" reason for the search and feels an arrest is likely, according to the study. "Probable cause searches should almost always result in an arrest," the study noted, but since OPD "probable cause searches rarely result in an arrest," either officers are incorrectly labeling the searches or "these searches are not up to the standard of probable cause." The study also said race "appears to have the strongest influence on the duration of the stop," as blacks were more likely to be stopped longer than were white and non-black minority drivers. RAND cautioned that traffic-stop underreporting may limit

the findings. Information about the study can be accessed online at <http://www.rand.org/>, and the study itself at <http://www.aclunc.org/dwb/040824-oaklandprofilingstudy.pdf>.

FORCE MANAGEMENT

Boise Ombudsman Addresses Pursuit Policies

In a recent investigative report on an April 2003 vehicular pursuit resulting in an officer-involved shooting of two suspects, Boise Community Ombudsman Pierce Murphy reviewed the Boise Police Department's (BPD) pursuit policies in general. Though Murphy found that nine involved officers had violated policy by engaging in direct pursuit (following in the direct path of the suspect) without proper authorization, he also found that BPD has a past practice of exonerating officers who do not obtain authorization before joining pursuits "in cases that involve extreme danger to officers and/or to the community." The Ombudsman thus decided to issue "exonerated" findings for the nine officers in light of the Department's norms.

Officers initiated the pursuit after they had attempted to apprehend two suspects wanted for two armed robberies. The chase ended in a shootout 15 miles later on an airport runway. Four Ada County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) deputies were also involved in the pursuit, and the Ombudsman found that neither BPD officers nor ACSO deputies knew which agency was in charge, as no uniform policy guiding interagency pursuits exists. The officers and deputies were also on different radio channels. With the lack of communication, ACSO deputies continued the pursuit when BPD officers tried to terminate the chase, causing Boise police to re-join, Murphy explained. His report urged a common, countywide vehicular pursuit policy and an agreed-upon, unified command structure for inter-agency pursuits.

Ombudsman Murphy also expressed concern over the number of unauthorized patrol cars in the two-agency pursuit. He pointed to BPD's pursuit policy, which states, "Only the primary officer and one assist officer shall enter into direct pursuit, unless otherwise ordered by the primary officer or the Incident Commander." He questioned whether the involved officers who were neither the primary or secondary

officer were ordered to join the pursuit. The report recommended that the BPD review pursuit training to ensure understanding of pursuit procedures; establish minimum procedural requirements for officers terminating a pursuit; and provide regular training in extreme tactics that may need to be employed in pursuits. The full investigative report can be accessed at http://www.boiseombudsman.org/investigative_reports.htm. *The Idaho Statesman*, August 12, 2004.

LEGAL AFFAIRS

Pennsylvania Settles In Sexual Assault Case

Pennsylvania State Police agreed in early September to pay \$5 million to settle the federal civil rights lawsuits of four women allegedly sexually assaulted by Michael K. Evans, a former state trooper. The settlement is the most costly paid on behalf of the state police in Pennsylvania history and will avert a trial that would have focused not on Evans, who pleaded guilty to charges of sexually abusing three women and three teenage girls in 2000, but rather on how the state police have handled sexual misconduct cases. Two of the six victims previously settled cases for \$800,000 and \$500,000.

The \$5 million settlement was agreed upon after defense lawyers in separate cases discovered 47 state police internal reports about troopers facing sexual misconduct allegations. The lawyers showed that between 1995 and 2001, the state police disciplined officers in 12 of 13 proven cases of misconduct with unpaid suspensions lasting seven days or fewer. And in a September 2003 report by Pennsylvania's Inspector General, three ranking police officers were found to have ignored sexual misconduct by troopers. Following the release of that report, Governor Ed Rendell hired Kroll Inc. to monitor the state police. The Pennsylvania State Police said a zero-tolerance policy, an early intervention program, sexual harassment and misconduct prevention training, and improved recruit screening have already been adopted. *Morning Call (Allentown, PA)*, September 3, 2004; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 3, 2004.

NEWS BRIEFS

Justice Department Issues Corrections Report

The U.S. Justice Department's latest statistics on the adult correctional population show an increase of persons incarcerated, on probation, or on parole to a record number of approximately 6.9 million in 2003, up 130,700 from year 2002. "About 3.2 [percent] of the U.S. adult population, or [one] in every 32 adults," the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) said, "were incarcerated or on probation or parole at yearend 2003." By itself, the number of adults supervised on probation or parole also increased to a record high of 4,848,575, up more than a million since 1996.

Since 1995, the percentage of probationers convicted of a felony has decreased and the percentage convicted of a misdemeanor has increased. The percentage convicted of a felony dropped to 49 percent from 54 in 1995, while the percentage convicted of a misdemeanor rose to 49 percent from 44 in 1995. Those entering probation after already being incarcerated, comprised 13 percent of all probationers in 1995 and 22 percent in 2003. Kentucky, Mississippi, Nebraska, and New Hampshire had increases of more than ten percent in their probation populations, up 17, 15, 12, and 12 percent, respectively. Minnesota, with a ten percent drop, was the only state whose probation population decreased in the double digits.

The country's parole population grew by 3.1 percent, or 23,654 parolees, last year—the largest single annual increase and "almost double the average annual increase of 1.7 [percent] in parole since 1995," BJS reported. The 1.7 percent average growth rate since 1995 has traditionally made the parole population "the slowest growing correctional population," behind jails (4 percent), prisons (3.4 percent), and probation (2.9 percent). A little less than half (47 percent) of parolees successfully completed parole; 38 percent returned to incarceration because of a parole violation or new offense. Seventeen states showed double-digit increases in parole populations, including North Dakota (53 percent more), Alabama (31 percent), Kentucky (27 percent), New Hampshire (25 percent), and New Mexico (23 percent). Hawaii was the only state that saw a double digit decrease (11 percent) in parolees. The BJS report can be accessed online at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/ppus03.htm>.

Houston Crime Lab Under Scrutiny

The Houston Police Department's (HPD) crime lab has been under scrutiny by law enforcement and civilian officials since December 2002, when the lab's DNA testing unit was closed after an independent audit questioned the accuracy and integrity of the unit's work and staff. The audit found that DNA technicians had misinterpreted evidence and test results, were inadequately trained, maintained poor records, and sometimes used up all available evidence, making verification of results impossible, according to the *New York Times*. HPD and the Harris County District Attorney's Office then began compiling about 380 cases for re-testing evidence out of more than 1,300 that had likely used DNA evidence to secure convictions. Re-testing has already resulted in prisoner releases and is casting doubt on other convictions.

New concerns about the HPD crime lab have now been raised since HPD Chief Harold Hurtt said that evidence from approximately 8,000 cases spanning 25 years had recently been discovered in incorrectly labeled and stored boxes. Hurtt has called for an independent investigation by an outside expert whom he and District Attorney Chuck Rosenthal will select. The investigation is to focus on cases between 1991, when DNA testing began, and December 2002, when the DNA unit was shut down. Rosenthal said he may also file criminal charges against crime lab analysts who may have falsified information. Criminal allegations have been made, but no individual has been charged thus far. The DNA testing unit has remained closed since the end of 2002. *New York Times*, August 5, 2004; *Houston Chronicle*, August 27, 28, and September 1, 2004.

INTERVIEW

Before starting at the *Houston Chronicle* in 2003, Investigative Reporter **Lise Olsen** reported for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* in Seattle and the *Virginian-Pilot* in Norfolk, Virginia. Her more than 15 years' journalism experience includes two years at Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE), a non-profit, membership organization that provides educational services and training to those who work in investigative reporting. She served as the Executive Director of IRE Mexico while at the organization from 1996 to 1998. In Houston, Ms. Olsen has covered criminal justice issues and recently completed

an investigative series on officer-involved shootings in Harris County, Texas. PARC spoke with Ms. Olsen about her series and other policing matters in the Houston area.

PARC: *Please briefly describe your journalism background and how you started covering policing issues in the Houston area?*

LO: I am an investigative reporter with 15 years of experience who has written often about criminal-justice issues as well as on immigration and environmental issues while based in Texas, Washington and Virginia. I recently did a series on officer-involved shootings with Roma Khanna, who specializes in crime and courts coverage and has written extensively about problems with the Houston Police Department (HPD) crime lab and death penalty issues.

PARC: *What are some of the major issues relating to police that you have covered?*

LO: In my year in Houston, I have reported on the credentials of technicians in the HPD crime lab and the issue of city police moonlighting in bars and liquor stores. I have also analyzed trends in police shootings in Harris County. At previous newspapers, I have done stories about unsolved murders, reports on the flaws in tracking systems for missing persons, and an analysis of neighborhood crimes, among other police-related topics.

PARC: *In your investigative special report on officer-involved shootings of unarmed suspects, you found four common situations in which many of them occurred. Could you explain these situations?*

LO: We looked at five years of officer-involved shootings of unarmed individuals in Harris County. Many of the shootings occurred during "buy-busts," while officers were trying to stop suspects in cars or trucks, and while officers were working extra jobs. We also found that mentally ill people who were shot by officers tended to be unarmed or to have had only an object, such as a screwdriver or small piece of wood.

PARC: *Did you find any similarities in the experience, training, or actions of officers involved in these four situations?*

LO: Many of the officers involved in car shootings were deputy sheriffs who generally patrol alone in suburban and rural areas. The department acknowledged that some officers put themselves in harm's way, in violation of procedure. The sheriff's department has now issued a new policy on approaching vehicles, emphasized that officers should not put themselves in harm's way, and said that those who violate these rules will be punished.

In buy-busts, a supervising officer with intimate knowledge of two controversial cases pointed out that several shootings involved officers from different agencies, carrying out the buy-busts together with different training on when it was appropriate to shoot. In some cases, some officers apparently fired because other officers were doing so. He emphasized that the training for interagency task forces should address these issues. He and others emphasized that undercover officers should avoid being involved in the actual arrests to reduce danger to themselves and others.

In extra-employment settings, some of the shootings involved desk-bound officers who had "rusty" or no recent use-of-force training. Many of these involved lone officers pursuing shoplifters and other suspects on their own, instead of calling for a patrol unit to make an arrest.

Shootings of the mentally ill were all very different. Locally, we found only one agency, the Houston Police Department, which had made a strong effort to train officers in handling these situations. Most agencies did not track whether "opponents" injured or killed in shootings were, in fact, mentally ill at all.

PARC: *Why do you believe few of the officers involved in shootings faced any sort of discipline from their departments?*

LO: From our review of personnel records of all officers involved in shootings, we learned that generally officers were disciplined only if they were also indicted

on criminal charges. And even some who were indicted in shootings were not formally disciplined by departments. Some officers ended up being reinstated or being allowed to quietly resign without any formal disciplinary action.

We also found some cases in which officers were found to have lied about the circumstances surrounding shootings. However, internal affairs investigators had recommended no disciplinary action despite determining that an officer appeared to have lied or provided contradictory accounts of controversial shootings. Repeat shooters also did not seem to undergo a higher level of scrutiny in general.

"...generally officers were disciplined only if they were also indicted on criminal charges. And even some who were indicted in shootings were not formally disciplined by departments. Some officers ended up being reinstated or being allowed to quietly resign without any formal disciplinary action."

PARC: *What police practices or policies would you say are factors contributing to the number and kind of officer-involved shootings in Harris County since 1999?*

LO: Police officers and experts suggested that some of the root causes were:

1. Insufficient use-of-force training and drills in realistic situations.
2. Weak or nonexistent policies on vehicle-approach and chases in some departments.
3. Not enough resources for training on handling the mentally ill, especially for smaller departments.
4. Not enough proactive review of shootings to emphasize prevention, rather than punishment.
5. Insufficient enforcement of policies and openness of review.

PARC: *Are there any unanswered questions you have regarding the research you did on the officer-involved shootings?*

LO: We really don't have enough information to say why officers were not disciplined in some of the most controversial cases over the last five years. Often, public records are not released on shootings until long after the fact, obscuring information that could clarify important questions, including whether or not the person shot was armed. And officers themselves are so reluctant to discuss shootings that we could not

include enough first-hand information about situations in our story that might have helped readers better understand some situations.

PARC: *How have police departments responded to your special report about officer-involved shootings and experts' views you described?*

LO: Several local departments were already reviewing policies and the Harris County Sheriff's Department adopted, as mentioned above, a much stricter policy on shooting at vehicles and on vehicle approach. It is also developing refresher training, including use-of-force drills, for deputies who work extra jobs when off-duty. Unfortunately, training changes proposed at the Houston Police Department have been stymied by budget problems, and some officers complain that they actually have fewer training opportunities than before.

We got many calls from individual officers after the series ran. Some were angry about it, but we have emphasized that we were not trying to blame anyone for the problem, but trying to help identify possible solutions. From those calls, we have done further stories, including an interview with a police psychologist who debriefs officers involved in these encounters.

PARC: *How has the public responded to the series?*

LO: We have received a lot of calls, letters and e-mails. Some readers felt we had unfairly criticized police officers, but many said they appreciated the coverage and said they felt that the newspaper had not provided enough attention to this important issue in the past.

PARC: *Could you discuss the current debate surrounding Houston Police Department officers working off-duty in bars as security?*

LO: Houston Police Department Chief Harold Hurtt has said he is continuing to review this issue and a new report on extra employment is due out soon. A study committee recommended officers continue to be allowed to moonlight in bars, but with additional

supervision. Houston is the largest city in the country to allow its officers to moonlight in bars, while many smaller departments in Harris County have banned it, largely because agency leaders say it is dangerous to officers and puts them in situations where they face potential conflicts of interest as peace officers and bar employees.

PARC: *How do you collect and analyze data for special investigations on policing matters?*

LO: In this case, we requested public records from many agencies, including the medical examiner's office, and asked all local police departments for incident and use-of-force reports as well as IAD [Internal Affairs Division] reports and homicide summaries. Not all departments cooperated fully with these requests; only two provided full IAD reports. As we were reporting the series, the medical examiner's office

"Not all departments cooperated fully... only two provided full IAD reports. As we were reporting the series, the medical examiner's office for the first time began to withhold autopsy reports in police shooting cases."

for the first time began to withhold autopsy reports in police shooting cases. We were forced to go to court to fight this and the matter is still pending.

We sent summaries of our findings to every major department in the county and interviewed supervisors about every case included in the series. We also tried to interview the officers who were directly involved, though few agreed to talk on-the-record. And we also spoke to the police union lawyers who represented these officers in disciplinary hearings or other related legal proceedings.

PARC: *When you have written articles critical of police or city/county officials, has that affected your access to those officials?*

LO: At times it has, though others seem to appreciate fair criticism.

PARC: *What do you think of the quality of media coverage of policing issues?*

LO: I'm sure it varies from community to community. In many cases, the police interest in keeping case

information secret affects the completeness and accuracy of the reporting (as do other factors, like the varying nature of eyewitness and criminals' accounts of events). These are difficult to resolve.

I think it is healthy for police agencies—and the media—to analyze criminal justice data—not just the usual UCR [the F.B.I.'s Uniform Crime Reports] crime rate stuff. The day-to-day “violent wallpaper” of newspaper crime accounts often misses more important community issues that can be identified through statistics and databases. And the recent use of auditors by police departments has shed light on how policies and training can help improve community-officer relations and impact issues like police shootings.

CONFERENCES

October 17-20, 2004 – National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement, 10th Annual Conference, Chicago, IL. Online at <http://www.nacole.org>

October 18-20, 2004 – Americans For Effective Law Enforcement, Police Civil Liability and the Defense of Citizen Misconduct Complaints, Las Vegas, NV. Online at <http://www.aele.org/wkspdates.html>

November 8-12, 2004 – International Association of Law Enforcement Planners, Fall 2004 Planner's Course, Newport, RI. Online at <http://www.ialep.org/>

November 11-12, 2004 – International Association of Law Enforcement Planners, Advanced Staffing Analysis Course, Newport, RI. Online at <http://www.ialep.org/>

November 13-17, 2004 – International Association of Chiefs of Police, Annual Conference, Los Angeles, CA. Online at <http://iacp.expoexchange.com/>

November 17-20, 2004 – American Society of Criminology, 55th Annual Meeting, Nashville, TN. Online at <http://www.asc41.com/>

December 1-4, 2004 – Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, 25th Anniversary Conference, Austin, TX. Online at <http://www.calea.org/>

December 2-4, 2004 – International Association of Court Officers and Services, 10th Annual Conference, Orlando, FL. Online at <http://64.176.202.219/IACOS/>

December 6-8, 2004 – Americans For Effective Law Enforcement, Public Safety Discipline and Internal Investigations, Las Vegas, NV. Online at <http://www.aele.org/wkspdates.html>