

# New L.A. police training urges protection over suppression

By Kate Mather  
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — For years, Los Angeles police officers have worked under the shadow of the department's dark past.

The LAPD of the 1970s and '80s acted as a hard-charging, occupying force that raided poor neighborhoods and rounded up anyone in sight. Police stormed suspected crack houses, tearing down walls with battering rams. Officers of that era were trained to think of themselves as soldiers in a never-ending war on crime.

Now the department is using that notorious history as a crucial lesson for its officers.

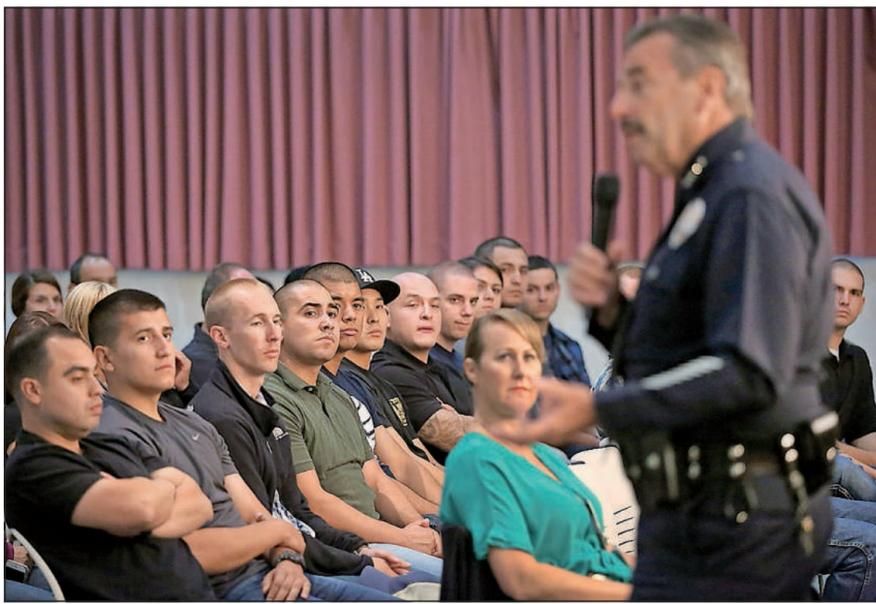
"We were warriors," Deputy Chief Bill Scott recently told a room filled with LAPD rank-and-file officers, a group of fresh-faced rookies watching from the front.

Now, he said, officers need to think of themselves as guardians watching over communities — not warriors cracking down on them.

"That means if we've got to take somebody to jail, we'll take them to jail," Scott said. "But when we need to be empathetic and we need to be human, we've got to do that too."

The message is one the LAPD is drilling into its officers in training that has been rolled out in recent weeks, part of a national movement to change law enforcement at a time when policing tactics are under increased public scrutiny.

Departments across the country are taking steps to replace the warrior mentality with a different approach, one that emphasizes protection over suppression, patience in-



TNS photos

Los Angeles Police Department Chief Charlie Beck addresses LAPD officers at deToledo High School in Los Angeles. LAPD has rolled out new "stand down" training for its officers aimed at de-escalating situations in which they might otherwise use force.

stead of zero tolerance. It's a fundamental shift, one that could affect issues such as how often officers fire their guns and the way they walk down the street.

After decades of training that focused mostly on firearms and force, agencies from Seattle to New York are introducing what they call de-escalation training, which looks at ways officers can reduce tension and potentially avoid using force during encounters with the public.

The LAPD training comes as several police shootings have strained relationships that the department is carefully trying to cultivate with the same communities that bore the

brunt of its old heavy-handed approach.

Some shootings, particularly those of black men, drew international attention, such as the March 1 killing of Charly Keunang in downtown's skid row and the Venice death of Brendon Glenn two months later. The fatal police shooting of Ezell Ford in South Los Angeles last summer prompted protests that have continued a year after his death.

Mac Shorty, chairman of the Watts Neighborhood Council, said the department should have invited residents and local community leaders who have concerns about LAPD officers to the training. Doing so, he said, would have added

legitimacy to the training.

He said many in his neighborhood have lost trust in the LAPD after the recent shootings, adding that he thinks twice before calling 911.

"Right now, the LAPD could never be the guardian of the community because there's too much distrust," he said. "Every time we get to the point we can trust them, there's another shooting."

The five-hour lectures in Los Angeles have covered matters such as the way officers should interact with people who are mentally ill, how they can build community trust, when they are permitted to curse while dealing with the public and why they should

avoid walking with a swagger. Department brass emphasized that public perceptions of police can be influenced by the way officers treat residents during their daily work.

Officers watched videos from recent high-profile incidents, including one showing a South Carolina police officer fatally shooting Walter Scott in the back. Another showed a patrol car recording of the end of a police chase in Alabama in which five officers rushed to an unconscious man who had just been thrown from his van and began beating him.

"Wow," one officer in the crowd said. Others rattled off what they felt the video showed: Ego. Adrenaline. Rage.

"Someone didn't pull them from the back of the neck and tell them to knock it off," Pacific Division Capt. Nicole Alberca said.

But it wasn't always clear that the message sank in.

During another session, some Hollenbeck officers cracked jokes as they watched a video of San Bernardino County sheriff's deputies repeatedly kicking and punching a suspected horse thief.

"That guy got tired," one officer said of a deputy who left the fray.

"Poor horse," said another. "I hear all your guys' comments," Capt. Patricia Sandoval told the crowd. "Think about the guy that's just sitting in front of his TV — has never been an officer, has never been in a fight — and he sees this. It just is very, very alarming."

To quickly train thousands of rank-and-file officers, the department pulled entire divisions from the field at a time and scrambled to find venues large enough — one session

was held in a high school auditorium, another was given in a movie theater.

The training included an introspective look at how the department policed Los Angeles decades ago, when frustration simmered, particularly among black residents who felt mistreated by officers. In some sessions, officers were shown one of the first grainy videos to put the spotlight on policing: the 1991 beating of Rodney G. King.

At a Westchester movie theater, Deputy Chief Bea Girmala recalled the chaos of the riots that came in 1992 after the officers who beat King were acquitted of assault charges. She and her partner spent days trying to quell the violence, she said, but when they tried to buy some coffee, a barista refused to serve them.

"We were so disdained by people, they didn't even want to give us a cup of coffee," she told her officers.

One by one, veteran officers shared their own memories of the riots: Feeling frustrated by command staff members who downplayed the severity of the situation. Writing phone numbers on their arms in case someone had to call their loved ones. Handing rifles to firefighters so they could cover the officers' backs.

The message: Although it took several more years — and a few other scandals — the LAPD eventually realized the importance of engaging with the neighborhoods it policed.

Many officers said the training gave them a chance to reflect on the way they interact with the public. Some questioned the effect the sessions alone would have. The key, they said, was for the conversation to continue.

## EMMETT

FROM PAGE 1C

mother in Chicago. His mother, who had raised him mostly as a single parent, insisted on a public funeral service with an open casket. She was determined to show the world what racism and hatred had done to her child. (I was an adult before I saw photograph of the murdered boy. My imagination had not prepared me for the truth.)

The story of Emmett Till, heard in my grandmother's spotless kitchen, was a defining moment for me. I had seen my grandfather cry maybe a handful of times. While recounting the fate of this child of color, he sobbed. My grandmother explained that although West Virginia and Mississippi were

two entirely different states, they were more alike than different.

There was a huge public swimming pool in Spring Hill named Rock Lake Pool due to the rock walls that surrounded it. I begged my grandparents to let me go. It was only six blocks.

"Now understand why we do not let you go to Rock Lake," my grandmother said. "Many of your friends would not be allowed there because of the color of their skin. If the owner only suspected you were of a different race or religion, you would be unwelcome."

(Even after passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the owners of Rock Lake Pool refused to allow people of color to enter until 1967.)

In 1965, in a small house in West Virginia, my grandparents feared reprisal for letting me sit

beside my black friend at the movies. No doubt they were afraid of what could happen to Junius for being naive and them for condoning miscegenation. Though my grandparents were forward-thinking individuals, involved in political, religious, racial and social diversity, they were wise enough to remember West Virginia in 1965 was not that far from Mississippi in 1955.

The murder of Emmett Till on Aug. 28, 1955, the farce of a trial for five days in early September 1955, which acquitted the murderers, and the audacity of Look Magazine for paying for and then publishing confessions from the acquitted, set the stage for a new chapter in the civil rights movement.

When Rosa Parks was later asked why she refused to give up her seat on the bus, she

quietly answered, "because of Emmett Till."

Medgar Evers, activist with the NAACP, took up the cause of Emmett Till, only to be murdered in his front yard.

Till's murder was one of several reasons the Civil Rights Act of 1957 was passed. It allowed The U.S. Justice Department to intervene and interject when

civil rights are being compromised.

I see Emmett Till's face in that of Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Walter Scott, Michael Brown, in an old photograph I have of my late friend Junius, and in the eyes of countless others who have died simply because of the color of their skin, their religion or their sex-

ual orientation.

Sixty years ago is today in many parts of the United States. Of course, All Lives Matter — but let us concentrate and advocate and voice our outrage for the race that is losing exponentially in every aspect of life in America.

Loren Lynn Rousseau lives at Spring Hill.

## KABLER

FROM PAGE 1C

with an item it included in gift bags given away at the recent Girls Night Out event at the Culture Center.

Walker was a \$1,000 bronze-level sponsor, which among other things, allowed her to place a promotional item in the gift bags given to each attendee.

Originally, the items — colorful wristbands — were attached to cards stating, "Women 'band' together for Beth Walker — Supreme Court — Nonpartisan judicial election, May 10, 2016."

However, the event was put on by the Charleston YWCA to benefit its Resolve Family Abuse program, and as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the YWCA is prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in any political campaigns.

Once that was brought to the attention of the Walker

campaign, the cards were replaced with a generic "Compliments of Beth Walker" card.

However, the card included a QR code — one of those little boxes full of squiggles which, when scanned with one's smartphone or tablet, linked to Walker's Facebook campaign site, which raises issues as to whether the card still constituted campaign material.

In a statement, Walker said, "I was aware that candidates in the past had submitted materials for the gift bags mentioning their campaigns, and thus submitted an insert that referenced our nonpartisan campaign for justice of the Supreme Court. The Girls Night Out organizers immediately informed me that the rules had recently changed and that campaign materials were not permitted. We worked closely with them to submit a new item for the gift bags that complied with their requirements."

...

Finally, speaking of trinkets, a lawyer friend raises an issue, noting that the Ethics Commission's advisory opinion on the new trinkets law went so far as to say public officials could be held liable for violating the new law's prohibition on excessive self-promotion, even for educational materials prepared by third parties using private funds.

The question being, if an independent expenditure committee or a PAC puts out materials during the 2016 campaign promoting certain public officials, with what could be construed as an excessive use of the officials' likeness and name, could those officials be subject to Ethics Act violations, even though election law prohibits any coordination or communication with the operators of those committees?

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## EDUCATION

FROM PAGE 1C

Studies have shown that students who complete a bachelor's degree earn, on average, \$1 million more over a lifetime than those who stop after high school. Likewise, those with higher levels of education are more likely than others to be employed, and college-educated adults are more likely to receive health and pension benefits.

With new research by Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce, we also know that while the national economy is still gaining traction, good jobs — mostly full-time jobs with higher wages, health insurance and

retirement plans — are back. And they are going to college graduates.

According to the report released earlier this month, of the 2.9 million good jobs created since the national economic recovery, 2.8 million have been filled by people with at least a bachelor's degree. In addition, good jobs — namely management positions, science and technology jobs and health care professions — are growing at much faster rates than low- or middle-wage jobs.

Now is not the time to set the bar low. Now is not the time to depress the thinking of our young people and discourage them from the very thing — a college degree — that can lead to a better life.

This is the time to lift them up, inspire them and commit to higher education. This is the time to emphasize the vast importance of postsecondary learning, make forward-looking investments, and send a message to our young people that a college degree is within their reach — and full of life-long benefit.

Though I was the son of a laid-off coal miner, I was fortunate to have parents who believed in the power of education and encouraged me to reach higher. Today, we should be doing the same, together as a state, for all young West Virginians.

Paul L. Hill is chancellor of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.

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