



ISSUE #1 / SPRING 2015
DESIGNS FOR A NEW CALIFORNIA
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
UCLA LUSKIN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

THE NEW SCIENCE OF SAFETY

Research Challenges the Politics of Criminal Justice

EDITOR'S NOTE

WELCOME TO BLUEPRINT

A magazine of research, policy, Los Angeles and California

ON A RECENT MORNING IN ONE OF UCLA's innumerable conference rooms, policymakers and researchers came together — in a way that's all too rare — to fashion a way of making society better.

Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer had made the trek from downtown to confer with Mark Kleiman, Greg Midgette and Brad Rowe, a team of UCLA researchers deeply immersed in Los Angeles criminal justice. The subject was drunken driving and some unexpected findings regarding the relationship between DUIs and violent crime.

The research team had combed through every DUI arrest in 2011 and then culled DUIs that resulted in accidents — 4,320 in all. Then the researchers looked at how many of those offenders had a previous conviction for a violent crime. They numbered about 6%. What was startling, however, is that those offenders accounted for more than 22% of the drunk drivers who were arrested after getting into a second accident.

Feuer quickly grasped the implications. If offenders could be diverted from drug or alcohol use after their first conviction — or even after their first DUI arrest — hundreds of accidents might be prevented every year. Lives might be saved. He left that morning promising to pursue a policy fix.

That's how smart policy is made. The trouble is that this is the exception, not the rule.

And that's where this magazine comes in. I spent more than two decades watching sausage being made in city, county and state government (and occasionally the school board), often baffled by the basis for

decisions. Why doesn't the subway go to the airport? Why does the region capture so little rainwater? Why do some drug offenders spend more time in prison than those convicted of violent crimes? The poison in each case is politics. The antidote is research.

Blueprint hopes to address that. We'll publish two issues this year, with an eye toward ramping up to a quarterly once we have our bearings. Each issue will be built around a theme and will seek to present groundbreaking research — much of it from this university. We'll also feature profiles and interviews, and take stock of the interesting people and ideas at the center of this region's civic life. And we'll grow, too, making changes and adding features as we do.

This is a magazine, not an academic journal. It features the work of journalists — indeed, this issue contains the bylines of some of Southern California's most highly regarded reporters, as well as the work of a talented and creative design team and the brilliant illustrations of Noma Bar. Blueprint's job is to explain academic work, suggest ideas for change and engage readers and leaders in a conversation about how to tackle the most pressing problems of this region and state. It's meant to start conversations, not finish them: Our engagement page at the back of the magazine offers suggestions for how to keep these discussions going. We hope you'll join us. If we succeed, maybe we'll all get a little smarter and the region will run a little better.

Welcome to Blueprint.



JIM NEWTON
Editor in chief

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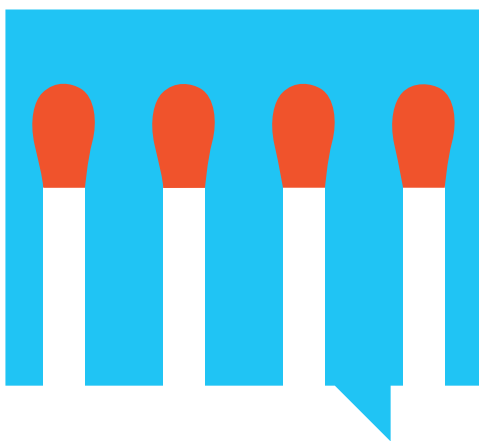
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A CONGRESSMAN IN WINTER

On a frigid Tuesday in early February, congressional Republicans were preparing to pass yet another resolution calling for the repeal of President Obama's Affordable Care Act. About nine miles away, now-retired Democratic Congressman Henry Waxman, one of the law's fiercest advocates, settled into a laminated plastic booth at the Original Pancake House in Bethesda and ordered a small bowl of fruit.

This is the first year since 1974 that the House of Representatives has convened without Waxman. In his four decades, the powerful West Los Angeles legislator and forceful liberal had a hand in pushing through some of Congress' most important legislation. It is largely because of Henry Waxman that our air is cleaner, our access to generic drugs is easier and the risks posed by tobacco are universally recognized. But his achievements, at least some of them, remain contested. Two of his signature causes, the environment and health care, are in the crosshairs of the current House, whose GOP majority increased after November's elections.

"I look at some of the issues and I think, I would like to be there to speak up," Waxman said between bites of a strawberry. "But I also know that what I would do would be to build for the future — hopefully stop some bad things from happening now — but to build for the future to change things. That requires a longer-term horizon, and I've been there, done that."

That's not to say he's moving onto the quiet life of a retiree. The 75-year-old, who plans to split his time between his Bethesda home and Park La Brea apartment, already has a full suite of commitments on both coasts. He will serve as a Regents' Lecturer at UCLA, his alma mater, and will teach at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. He also joined Waxman Strategies, the Washington, D.C.-based communications firm started by his son, Michael, where he will serve as chairman, dispensing advice for shaping opinion around major public policy battles.

"I like working and I like fighting for what I believe in," he said. "Wherever I am, I'm still me."

That includes Waxman's long-standing advocacy for environmental protection. Since leaving Congress, Waxman has worked with the Obama administration to devise strategies in that field to advance the cause without requiring action from lawmakers.

"Happily, a lot of work can be done in this area by President Obama and his administration," he said, "because they have a lot of leeway under existing law to take important steps to reduce the amount of carbon and greenhouse gases we put in the air, and to negotiate with other countries to get them to be working with us to save the only atmosphere and the only planet we have."

Still, he has not been pleased with how the administration has handled some of its environmental decisions. The White House's recent proposal to allow the first oil and gas drilling offshore along parts of the Atlantic coast — which it announced along with new restrictions on northern Alaska's coastline — "doesn't seem to make a lot of sense," Waxman said.

When it comes to politics, however, Waxman believes Republicans are losing the environmental debate. They have "put themselves in an incredible box" by challenging the evidence of climate change even as polls show that most Americans view global warming as a threat that needs to be addressed, he said.

"I would talk to them over the last year or so, and they would say, 'Oh no, no, no, we don't deny the science. We're not science deniers,'" Waxman recalled with wry amusement. "I think they realized it's not a good public approach for them to take. But that's exactly the approach they were taking. So they became not just science deniers — but deniers of being science deniers."

In his many years in Congress, Waxman earned a reputation for ideological steadfastness, but also for fair dealing and decency — and for relationships that transcended politics. As he picked his way through his fruit plate, he reflected fondly on the cooperation he enjoyed with Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch, one of Washington's most conservative lawmakers, while lamenting that such bipartisanship is both rare and somewhat discredited in today's Washington.

"Compromise isn't always splitting the difference," Waxman said. "One of the things I always find very frustrating are my colleagues who want to make it look like they're bipartisan, so they go to the lowest common denominator and they don't stand up and fight. That's not the way to compromise. You fight for what you believe in, and compromise only when you can accomplish something worthwhile."

— **Matea Gold**

CHANGE COMES TO L.A. COUNTY

The theme from “Dragnet” played as Los Angeles County Sheriff Jim McDonnell made his way to the podium. Taken by surprise, McDonnell couldn’t suppress a bashful chuckle before beginning his prepared remarks. “This is, after all, Hollywood,” he acknowledged.

McDonnell’s audience at the annual Empowerment Congress Summit — which drew hundreds of leaders from across Los Angeles, most from the city’s African-American community — cheered lustily, not so much at the TV theme song as at McDonnell’s reaction to it. It was a quick moment, but a telling one: Rarely in recent years have the Sheriff’s Department’s critics had so much hope that change is possible, a theme that today pervades Los Angeles County government, the once hidebound entity suddenly being remade.

Much of the county is hungry for a better, more responsive and more responsible Sheriff’s Department, and for a better relationship with it. Black and Latino residents have long spoken of abuses to their friends, families and acquaintances by deputies on patrol and those staffing the nation’s largest local jail system.

McDonnell’s predecessor, Lee Baca, was sympathetic to those complaints, but they persisted on his watch. After his re-election in 2010, stories in the Los Angeles Times and the online publication WitnessLA chronicled instances of deputies beating inmates at the slightest provocation, or for no reason at all. McDonnell served on a commission that investigated the violence and hinted strongly in its final report that Baca ought to step down. Early in 2014, he did.

Baca’s departure came just as Los Angeles County government was embarking on the most sweeping changes in modern history: Of its eight elected leaders, half are new. In addition to the sheriff, voters last year picked two new members for the Board of Supervisors, thanks to a term-limits measure that was adopted a dozen years ago but is only kicking in now. And for good measure, they elected a new assessor; the previous one was awaiting trial on corruption charges. Add a new district attorney, voted into office just two years ago, and the term-limits ouster of two more supervisors two years from now, and a government once known for the longevity of its elected officials — and the experience, the perspective and not a little of the intransigence that often goes with old-timers — will have no one on board with more than a single term in elected office.

With one exception. Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, representing much of South Los Angeles and the smaller adjacent cities and unincorporated areas, took office as the board’s most liberal member in 2008. He now arguably finds himself in the center after the departure of Democrats (county offices are officially nonpartisan) Gloria Molina and Zev Yaroslavsky and their replacement by more liberal successors, former U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis and former state Senator Sheila Kuehl.

Already, those changes are affecting policy and strengthening Ridley-Thomas’ hand, as the new board has embraced initiatives he’d championed that were scuttled or sidelined by the previous board. Recommendations of a Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Safety, convened on a Ridley-Thomas motion following the apparent torture and high-profile death of an 8-year-old boy left in his home by county social workers, were barely acknowledged before the election but now are getting enthusiastic support from Solis and Kuehl (Michael D. Antonovich, the board’s most conservative member, backs many of the Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations as well). Hearings are moving forward on the size, make-up and function of a civilian oversight commission to monitor the Sheriff’s Department. Ridley-Thomas proposed the



idea, and McDonnell backed it, but the prior board had shelved it, largely because Yaroslavsky had reservations.

For many, the work of the county may seem invisible, but the supervisors and other county leaders wield broad and profound influence over this region. Jails, law enforcement and child safety are fundamental components of the county’s mission, along with programs to aid the poor, homeless and mentally impaired — in short, most programs for residents in need. In addition, the supervisors manage the playgrounds of the wealthy and the middle class — most of the beaches, sprawling parklands and open space, a world-class art museum and the Music Center.

They often are called the “five little kings and queens” because of the power they hold over their huge districts of 2 million people each. How powerful are they? Janice Hahn, daughter of the late Kenneth Hahn — a Los Angeles County supervisor for 40 years — was elected to Congress in 2013, but has found Washington frustrating. She recently announced that she is giving up her seat in Congress to run for a spot on the board. The result: more change at a county suddenly in motion.

— Robert Greene

“BLACK LIVES MATTER”

In the summer of 2014, following the deaths in rapid succession of Eric Garner in Long Island, N.Y., Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., and Ezell Ford in Los Angeles, the words “Black Lives Matter” were so ubiquitous, so seamlessly and naturally part of nationwide protests and rallying cries, that it was easy to believe they arose spontaneously, their author unknown and unknowable.

But there is an author, and her words are an integral part of a movement, now emerging from its infancy, reminiscent in some ways of the civil rights battles of a half-century ago but clearly rooted in 21st-century events, consciousness and communication.

“We are in an exciting time,” said Patrisse Cullors, a 31-year-old artist, activist and organizer. “It’s pretty awesome to be here now, when so much is happening.”

Black Lives Matter was created following the 2013 acquittal of George Zimmerman, the man who shot and killed Trayvon Martin the year before in Sanford, Fla. Cullors was one of thousands who took to social media to express outrage and, in her words, to grieve.

She found her way to the Facebook page of Alicia Garza, special projects director for the National Domestic Workers Alliance. Garza concluded a post with the words “our lives matter.” Cullors tweaked it a bit and added a hashtag; #BlackLivesMatter became a social media platform for discussion and organizing. Cullors and Garza, along with Opal Tometi, executive director of Black Alliance for Just Immigration, made #BlackLivesMatter a nationwide movement — not yet a household name.

“Then Mike Brown was murdered,” said Cullors, speaking of the 18-year-old unarmed black man fatally shot on Aug. 9, 2014, by a Ferguson police officer. “We saw the slogan go viral. We said, ‘Let’s continue to build this narrative.’ It was awesome.”

Cullors speaks with an engaging blend of vocabulary — a hefty dose of political activism peppered with just a touch of her San Fernando Valley upbringing.

She was born and raised in Canoga Park, a West Valley community of relatively affordable housing — and troubled by gang violence. It is surrounded by the wealthier and more privileged areas that a generation earlier

produced the vacuous “Valley Girl” image. Her mother was single and on welfare, her father in and out of jail and prison because of drug convictions. Cullors felt oppressed by homophobia as she came to terms with her own sexual orientation. Living in poverty shaped her.

“I had a significant amount of rage as a child,” Cullors said, but she began to find words to express herself while a student in the humanities magnet program at Cleveland High School in Reseda. She grew intellectually and artistically — but it was not an easy time.

She came out at 15 and was pushed out of her home.

Then her brother, who struggled with mental health problems, was arrested, jailed and beaten by deputies. It was an incident that affected her deeply.

After high school, Cullors began her second education, this time as a volunteer for the Bus Riders Union. The organization is a transportation advocacy group rooted in the political and organizing theory of the Labor / Community Strategy Center. Its activists were most vocal and visible protesting proposed bus fare increases, but behind the scenes they studied the history and manifestation of discrimination, poverty and environmental injustice. For Cullors, it was a heady experience to be able to confront L.A.’s mammoth Metropolitan Transportation Authority — but also enlightening to discover the role that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors plays in running the agency and then the role the supervisors have in overseeing county jails and the deputies who staff them.

Cullors was with the Bus Riders Union for 11 years. She left in 2012 with a virtual graduate degree in power and organizing. She created the Dignity and Power Now/Coalition to End Sheriff Violence in L.A. Jails in 2012, just as a county commission was doing the work assigned to it by a nervous county Board of Supervisors: Get to the bottom of charges by the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California and stories in the Los Angeles Times, WitnessLA and other media outlets about reports that jail inmates routinely encountered the same experience as her brother: physical abuse.

Los Angeles County, with its 10 million residents and its vast geographic spread, also deals with race and class distinctions that generally keep the typical white voter and taxpayer from knowing much about the experiences of the mostly African American and Latino people incarcerated in its jails. The official Commission on Jail Violence made the conditions of inmates — many of whom had not been convicted but were there awaiting trial — harder to ignore.

Cullors made certain that inmates and their families were part of the conversation. She recruited members to her coalition as they left the jail, and made certain they networked into a larger community of inmates that had suffered abuse. She encouraged them to be in the thick of the campaign for Los Angeles County sheriff, to question candidates on their views of civilian oversight, as well as on diversion from jail of people dealing with mental issues and transparency of Sheriff’s Department investigations.

It is fair to say that the participation of Dignity and Power Now played an integral role in shaping the sheriff’s campaign and the positions of the candidates.

In more recent months, as a working group studies the form that civilian oversight ought to take — with Dignity and Power Now members weighing in at every step — Cullors has been traveling across the county, addressing the now 23 chapters of Black Lives Matter, speaking even in Europe about issues of race, gender, class and liberation.

“Given that there’s so much attention around state violence right now,” she said, “we believe we are in a good position to discuss these issues in Los Angeles: demilitarizing the Sheriff’s Department, ensuring significant accountability when law enforcement hurts, harms or kills our loved ones. I think we’ve been really successful. It’s encouraging.”

She added, for good measure: “It’s awesome.”

— Robert Greene

VERGARA, TENURE AND ME

FIRST PERSON

When my former colleagues — I was a teacher for 10 years — first heard of the decision last June in *Vergara v. California*, they did not waste time responding. In posts on Facebook and conversations up and down the state, they were furious and frustrated. The common theme: People outside of education, including the judge, did not grasp the real issues confronting public schools and instead were taking out their anger on teachers.

It's hardly surprising that teachers would feel defensive about Superior Court Judge Rolf Treu's ruling. After examining California's tenure rules — which dictate how quickly a teacher can earn its protections, how strongly those protections insulate teachers from being fired and how forcefully they require districts to resort to "last in, first out" when laying off teachers — the judge then concluded that those rules deprive poor and minority students of their constitutional right to a quality education. The system, he sternly pronounced, "shocks the conscience."

In my years as a high school teacher in a large, diverse San Francisco public school, I saw all those forces at work. I was laid off twice, only to be hired back both times. I then received tenure and was protected thereafter. And I recall my principal openly grousing about how tenure prevented the removal of an undeniably poor and often absent teacher at our school. Tenure clearly has its downsides.

I recognize that a teacher's vantage point can be distorting. Education policy is a vast and complex arena in which teachers in the classroom have an important but incomplete view of larger dynamics at play. Still, learning takes place in classrooms, not courtrooms, and the perspective of teachers matters, too. As policy-makers consider the future of tenure in California, I'd offer a few thoughts:

First, teacher job security shouldn't trump all other educational values. When it discourages innovation and productive experimentation, it has gone too far. As I see it, the rise of charter schools doesn't just reflect the fact that parents are looking for better options, it also demonstrates that teachers are looking for more promising working environments, and are willing to give up some job security in return.

Second, current teacher evaluation systems that emphasize testing are inadequate. They fail to fully measure the value of a teacher and are disruptive to the collaboration that strengthens schools. Test scores may be one component of an improved evaluation process, but over-reliance on them creates the wrong incentives for teachers — steering them solely toward that metric. A private-sector example is instructive: In 2013, Microsoft junked a "stack ranking" performance evaluation system that many in the company felt had stunted collaboration and deterred recruiting for years. That's how a rigid performance evaluation tool can do unintended damage.

Finally, this is not just about firing bad teachers. It's about attracting and retaining good ones. As Dana Goldstein, author of the recent book *"The Teacher Wars,"* points out, there are many reasons why strong teachers do not teach

for long at low-performing schools: High principal turnover, longer commuting distances, and general teacher preferences for less troubled learning environments all contribute to the problem. In other words, eliminating the lowest-performing teachers from schools does not ensure improvement in the overall quality of these schools, as there is no guarantee that better teachers will naturally slot into these positions and stay.

Much as I sympathize with children and their parents stuck with a terrible teacher, there is no evidence that a singular focus on removing these teachers is the most promising way forward. In fact, it could be that such an emphasis ends up making low-performing schools even less attractive for all teachers.

Teachers matter. But improving the quality of teachers at struggling schools is most likely to come by taking coordinated, incremental steps that encourage all teachers to improve and develop metrics that evaluate their performance more thoughtfully. Tenure may or may not have a place in this environment, but the priority should be policy that stimulates teacher collaboration and productivity. Yes, bad teachers should be fired, but not in such a way that better teachers opt to leave the profession.

These ideas aren't magic bullets, and they may not satisfy those in search of a quick solution, but their patient application might actually improve California schools.

— **Nathan Holmes**





DO POLICE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

CHARLIE BECK REFLECTS

WRITTEN BY
JIM NEWTON

CHARLIE BECK'S LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT is a far cry from his father's. Beck's dad was a Los Angeles police officer who rose to the rank of deputy chief, and the LAPD of those years was white, fearsome, straight-arrow and distant. Officers were discouraged from interacting with the public for fear it would cause corruption. "Professional policing," as it was known, was pioneered in Los Angeles. At its best, it offered sturdy protection for an under-policed and growing city. At its worst, it was racist, brutal and alienating.

Today, the model is community policing, and the emphases are on nimble analysis of crime data, using it to solve community problems that can cause crime and working with other agencies to keep neighborhoods secure. Police are now encouraged to address blight and quality-of-life offenses, an acknowledgement that the landmark work of James Q. Wilson and his "Broken Windows" theory has made a lasting imprint on the American social and safety landscape.

None of that, however, is the most significant change in policing over the past several decades. When Charlie Beck's dad entered the LAPD, most observers, including academics, police administrators and politicians, assumed that crime was the result of social, racial and economic forces — and that the police were supposed to respond. They were there to solve crimes after they happened, not to prevent them. Today, only the most stubborn holdouts cling to that view. It is now almost universally accepted that police officers can affect the commission of crime — that smart policing saves lives, and that police departments should be held responsible for the amount of crime being committed in their communities. "We're not the only factor in determining the presence of crime," Beck told me recently, "but we're a very strong factor."

As the importance of community policing has become clear, however, the difficulty of executing it properly has become even clearer. Indeed, the very

techniques that have made policing more effective are now under scrutiny by some skeptics, placing the work of law enforcement in a paradoxical quandary: Departments have made strides against crime and won public trust by focusing on community quality of life, but that same focus has recently stirred anger from critics who complain that departments are engaging in “zero tolerance” and using community policing as an excuse to target minor offenders, sometimes with tragic consequences.

The question for police today is how to act as a constructive force without either abandoning strength — some criminals simply need to be subdued — or relying too heavily on force and in the process alienating those whose support the police need. Conscientious attention to low-level criminal activity can head off more serious violence, but bullheaded enforcement can alienate and exacerbate tensions. Just ask the police and residents of Ferguson, Mo., North Charleston, S.C., or Baltimore, Md.

This, Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck acknowledges, is a delicate and never-ending struggle. Public support is hard won; if squandered, it is even more difficult to recover.

When he was a boy, Charlie Beck could not imagine following his father into the LAPD. Police were viewed with suspicion. He could see how his neighbors treated his father differently. “There’s always the watching and the watched,” he said. “There’s a separation.” Instead, he thought of other things, including motocross racing. (He still has a motocross helmet on a table in his downtown office.) Eventually, however, he was attracted to the responsibility of police work. He joined the LAPD reserves in 1975 and graduated in 1977 as a police officer.

Beck commenced a steady rise through a buffeted and often unstable department. He became a sergeant in 1984, a lieutenant in 1993, a captain in 1999, a commander in 2005 and a deputy chief in 2006. When Chief Bill Bratton resigned in 2009, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa picked Beck to succeed him.

As chief, Charlie Beck has fused the reform instincts of Bratton with his own deep knowledge of the Police Department, including his first-hand observation of some of its lowest moments. Beck was a promising sergeant in the early 1990s when the LAPD hit bottom: Some of its officers, caught on videotape, Tasered, beat and kicked Rodney G. King, a robbery parolee they had pulled over after a high-speed chase. King was African American, and the beating caused a public outcry. When a Ventura County jury acquitted three of the officers and a mistrial was declared for the fourth, Los Angeles erupted into a riot that killed more than 50 people, injured thousands and caused damage estimated

as high as \$1 billion. Moreover, Beck saw the tragic consequences of bitter silence between then-Mayor Tom Bradley, a former LAPD officer himself, and Daryl F. Gates, police chief at the time, who resigned under criticism that his officers were slow to respond to the riot.

Easygoing and self-deprecating, Beck is sometimes underestimated. But he’s whip-smart and a shrewd observer of City Hall. He has served under two very different mayors, the energetic Villaraigosa and the more cerebral Eric Garcetti, and has forged good working relationships with both.

Beck’s tenure has not been without incident. He was criticized last year for approving the Police Department’s purchase of his daughter’s horse for an equestrian unit, after saying he had no role in the transaction. In

addition, the Los Angeles Times has analyzed the department’s crime data and concluded some of its numbers are inaccurate. At the same time, some categories of crime have increased after years of decline. But the difference between now and the early 1990s is stark: Back then, more than 1,000 people were being slain by others every year; last year 260 people were murdered in Los Angeles.

**“IT ISN’T ABOUT
DATA ITSELF. IT’S
HOW YOU USE IT.”**

Today’s LAPD is different. It is more diverse and more oriented toward the people it polices than was the department that lost the public’s trust in the early 1990s.

It is also more proficient technically. Patrol officers are equipped with mobile computers and in-car video cameras. Some wear body cameras, intended to reassure the public that police conduct is being monitored and to reassure officers that they will have evidence against false complaints. At the same time, commercial security cameras are becoming ubiquitous, and the LAPD is looking for ways to tap into their images. Drones may become part of the LAPD’s arsenal, although civil libertarians and other activists are trying to head that off, or at least impose rules that will limit their use. Meanwhile, advances in forensics have revolutionized detective work — while also, Beck warns, raising “false expectations” that every criminal case comes neatly wrapped in conclusive DNA evidence.

Most important, modern policing at the LAPD has plumbed data in ways that would have baffled chiefs a generation ago. This aspect of the LAPD’s work, however, is much misunderstood. Yes, crime trends are important, and a city is better off with fewer people killed or raped or robbed. But news stories tend to



PHOTO BY DAVID SPRAGUE

CHARLIE BECK FOLLOWED HIS FATHER INTO THE LAPD, JOINING THE DEPARTMENT AS AN OFFICER IN 1977. AFTER A LONG RISE THROUGH THE RANKS, BECK WAS APPOINTED BY MAYOR ANTONIO VILLARAIGOSA TO THE DEPARTMENT'S TOP POSITION IN 2009. VILLARAIGOSA'S SUCCESSOR, ERIC GARCETTI, LAST YEAR APPOINTED BECK TO A SECOND AND FINAL TERM.

report the bottom line — whether crime is up or down — while the real value of data is not so much raw numbers as how those numbers are used to forge strategies. “It isn’t about data itself,” Beck said. “It’s how you use it.”

For the LAPD, strategizing from data happens during a weekly meeting at headquarters. During one recent session, leaders of a San Fernando Valley division presented statistics showing an uptick in petty thefts. On the surface, that didn’t mean much. Maybe children were out of school and lifting candy bars, or maybe gangs were targeting stores to line their pockets — scenarios that would warrant radically different responses. But petty thefts, left unchecked, make a community feel vulnerable and lawless, precisely the conditions that “Broken Windows” suggests might give rise to crimes that are more serious.

So commanders dug in, demanding to know what was causing the uptick. The answer: Retail chains, such as WalMart, averse to chasing off customers, were resisting measures that might make it harder to grab items and instead addressing the problem by nabbing shoplifters after the fact, an approach that might be better for business but that encourages crime to flourish. The response in this case: working with those stores to improve security — not just for the sake of the stores but also of their surrounding neighborhoods.

The focus on lower-level crime can make community relations more difficult. Those stopped for shoplifting or illegal vending or selling small amounts of drugs can feel rousted and harassed. Surely, they ask, don’t the police in a city the size of Los Angeles have better things to do? That is especially true when those being arrested for small offenses are members of minority groups who feel targeted by a department with a history of racial insensitivity.

Beck acknowledges this fallout but says that allowing small crimes to foster an attitude of lawlessness also has implications for minority groups. As we talked, he reached for the LAPD’s 2014 Homicide Report. He showed me a chart on page 15. Of the 260 people slain in Los Angeles last year, 231 were black or Latino; just 18 were white. Most of those killed lived in poor neighborhoods, and a majority of the killings were gang-related.

“Your demographic,” Beck said to me, a 52-year-old white male, “is almost immune from violent crime.”

That helps explain why a smaller percentage of murders has been cleared in recent years (gang crimes are notoriously difficult to solve because witnesses are reluctant to come forward). It also explains why the murders of white people are more likely to be solved than those of

blacks or Latinos (whites are more likely to be killed by an acquaintance or “loved” one).

It also underscores the dilemma that now confronts the LAPD and other modern police departments: The same police work that angers minority communities is often what protects them.

The reminders of that quandary flare up over and over again. Earlier this spring, LAPD officers received a report that a Skid Row man had been assaulted and robbed. Responding, they tried to take a suspect, later identified as Charly “Africa” Leundeu Keunang, into custody. Keunang was a bank robber with a history of mental illness, and he resisted. There was a struggle, and police shot and killed him. An episode that began with an attempt to protect one homeless man ended instead with another homeless man dead. Like so many incidents these days, it was captured on video, and public anger flared again.

That confrontation highlighted yet again the shifting responsibility of police in a modern age.

The challenge of Beck’s father’s generation was to maintain order. The challenge for Beck’s immediate predecessors was to regain trust. The challenge for Beck is to use the tools of science and community policing to thwart crime without overusing them to squander that support.

“The job of building community trust,” Beck said, “is never finished.” ▀

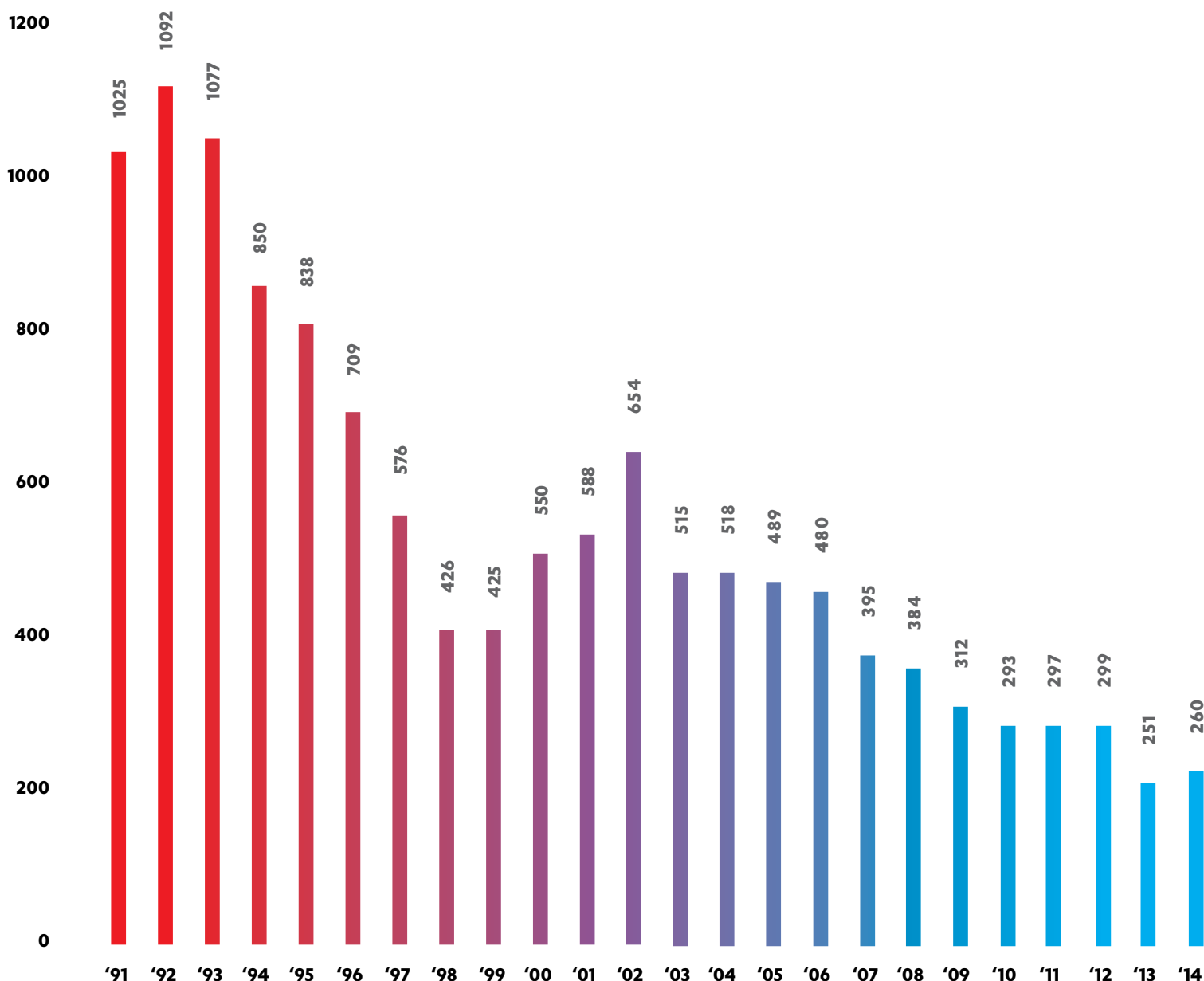
MURDER IN LOS ANGELES

Two Decades of Killing

Over the course of the past 20-some years, Los Angeles has become a strikingly safer place to live and work. Violent crime in all categories has declined dramatically over that period, the result of a combination of social and economic forces and, experts now acknowledge, adoption of new policing strategies.

Murder is only one measure of crime and in some ways not the best. Even at the height of this city's violent crime, few people would ever meet their end at the hands of another.

Still, it's a useful gauge, in part because murders almost never go unreported — unlike, say, rape, which is difficult to track because so many victims do not bring their case to the police. Here, then, is a look at murder in Los Angeles over a generation and today.



YEAR BY YEAR

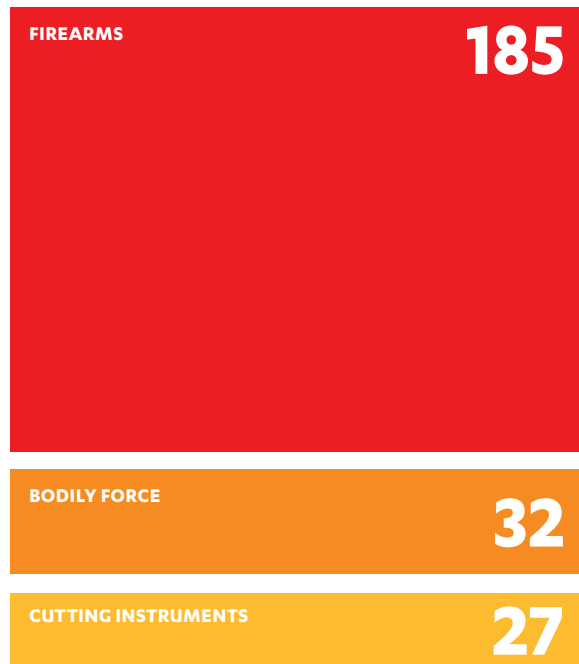
1991 - 1995 (LAPD Staff Report, 1998) 1996 - 2013 (FBI Uniform Crime Reports) 2014 (LAPD Homicide Report)

Note: There are some slight discrepancies between LAPD's reporting and that of the FBI. In part, that is because of the ongoing process of investigation.

Say, for instance, a man dies in a house fire and the death is ruled accidental. That could later change if investigators concluded the fire was an arson, making the man's death a homicide.

MURDER IN LOS ANGELES LAST YEAR

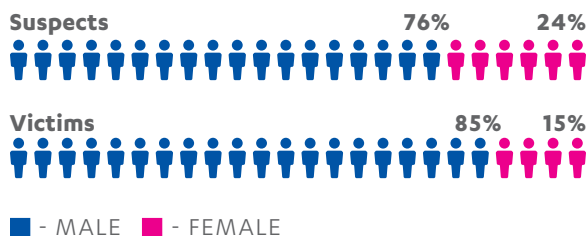
How Angelenos Were Killed



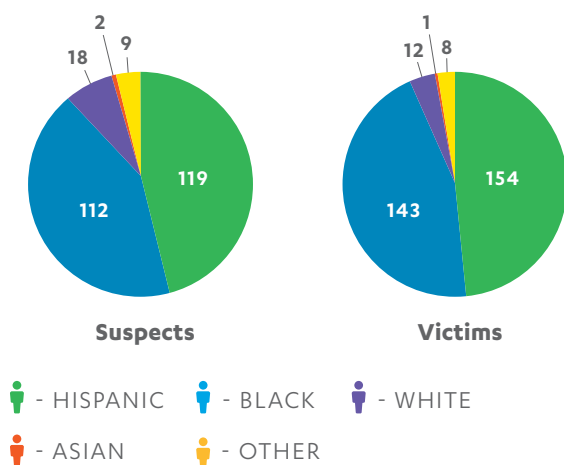
Gang Related Murders



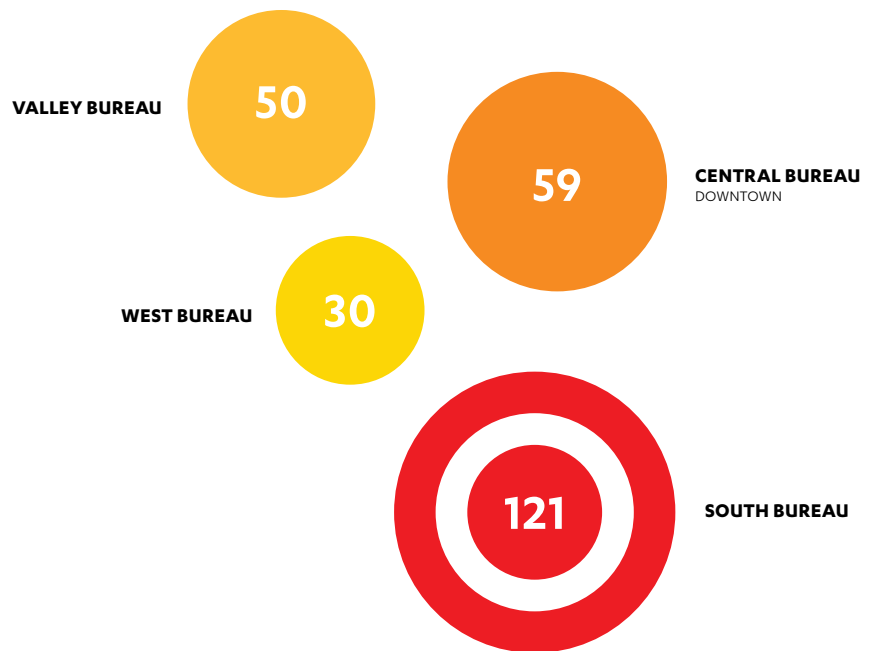
Male vs. Female



Ethnicity

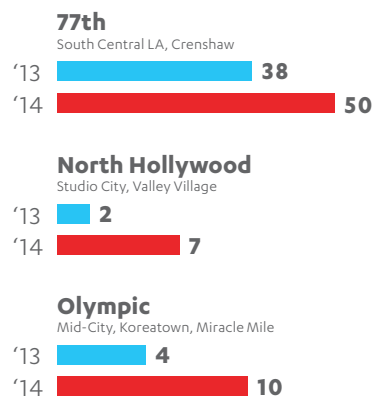


Where Angelenos Were Killed

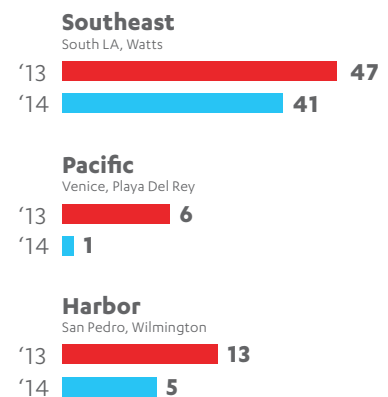


Where Things Changed

↑ Murders were UP



↓ Murders were DOWN



Quick Notes

APR April was the most homicidal month: 31 murders

JAN FEB January and February tied for least: 13 murders



PRISON SENTENCING: WHERE COMMON SENSE COLLIDES WITH POLITICS

WRITTEN BY
LISA FUNG

MICHAEL STOLL DIDN'T SET OUT TO BECOME AN EXPERT ON PRISON SENTENCING.

When he entered academia more than two decades ago, he focused on the challenges that low-skilled workers face in the labor market — examining questions such as barriers to employment and racial disparities in unemployment rates.

But about 10 years ago, Stoll's research shifted. "In some of the seminars I would give across the country, I was always getting this question: 'Why do so many men have prison records?' That was the elephant in the room." Stoll studied poverty rates, racial inequality and income inequality, but he also began to examine how employers responded to efforts to find low-skill jobs by a growing number of ex-offenders — mostly men, primarily minorities — who had served time for low-level offenses, like property and drug crimes.

Stoll, a professor of public policy and urban planning at UCLA, joined Steven Raphael, a professor of public policy at UC Berkeley, and they threw a net over the elephant. "We started to do a lot of work looking at under what conditions do employers hire people with records, when do they discriminate against them, and who bears the cost of employers' behaviors," Stoll said. They began

publishing books on these questions, beginning with "Do Prisons Make Us Safer?" in 2009, and, more recently, in 2013, "Why Are So Many Americans in Prison?" Stoll and Raphael found that the prison population had increased dramatically. In the '70s, most industrialized countries incarcerated about 100 people per 100,000, or about 0.01% of the general population. In the United States, that was true until the 1980s, but by 2007 the percentage had quintupled. Their findings suggested that the surge was almost entirely attributable to changes in policy, which included reclassifying some offenses and increasing the severity of sentencing. "Americans," Stoll said, "either through elected officials or referendums or other mechanisms, got tougher on crime."

"There's a whole bunch of theories about why," he said, including incentives from the federal government that promised more resources for police and for building prisons if states adopted legislation known as truth-in-sentencing laws, which required that people convicted of crimes serve 80% of their sentences. "We do know that people ran on platforms to get tough on crime. If you're the opposition candidate, then the way you equalize them is by saying that you're equally as tough. You can't say you're softer." That doesn't work with voters.

As incarceration surged, Stoll said, “There was a big debate going on about whether prisons work in reducing crime.” Indeed, he said, “Crime rates since the 1990s have declined rather dramatically.” Violent crime, for example, fell about 46% nationwide, from 713.6 to 386.9 per 100,000 between 1994 and 2012, their research found. “Most people say the reason that crime is dropping is because you locked everybody up,” Stoll said. But research by Stoll and Raphael indicates this assumption is simply wrong. They found that the get-tough laws were not causing the drop in crime. While increased incarceration accounted for about 10% of the decline, changing demographics played a big role. “We’re getting older, we’re getting more foreign-born. Older people and foreign-born people are less likely to engage in crime,” Stoll said. In addition, school attendance was up, and high school graduation rates had climbed. “We know there is a relationship between being in school and crime.”

Moreover, Stoll and Raphael found that as prison populations grew, benefits decreased. The financial impact of high incarceration rates was significant. The annual cost of housing an inmate ranged from the low \$40,000s to upwards of \$60,000 at high-security prisons. That included the cost of building and maintaining prisons as well as the expense of providing guards and other prison personnel. At the jail level, costs varied widely, but they were significantly lower. In California, Stoll said, the price of jailing offenders instead

of imprisoning them was as much as 60% to 70% lower. Today about 2.2 million people are being held in state prisons, federal prisons or local jails across the country, according to the U.S. Bureau of Justice. Notably, Stoll says, incarceration rates are disproportionate for African Americans and Hispanics, which account for 20% and 25% of the prison population, but only 11% and 13% of society.

Funding associated with prisons accounts for 5% to 15% of state budgets, and in some places as much as 20%. According to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, nearly \$9 billion was allocated to the agency for fiscal year 2013-14. “These are huge budgetary categories that take up a lot of the General Fund,” Stoll said. “When [state] budgets shrank, people had to think creatively. That was when people started to think about how you do this differently. ... There was movement on thinking smart.”

Stoll and Raphael concluded that “getting smarter” meant changing sentencing and parole practices, abandoning mandatory minimum sentences and creating incentives to redefine the use of state prison systems. Such policy changes, Stoll said, will result not only in cost savings but also in reduced crime rates. “Our idea of the diminishing margin of returns to incarceration as a crime-fighting strategy starts with the idea that if we use prison right — if you target the most violent in society and the most criminally prone — that is where you get the most effectiveness in reducing crime.”



Michael Stoll grew up in the Crenshaw district in South L.A. (“I’m one of the rare UCLA faculty members from Los Angeles,” he said). He attended Cal State Northridge for two years before transferring to UC Berkeley. “I had no idea I was going to be a professor when I went to Berkeley,” he said. “That just sort of happened.” In his senior year, Stoll met a graduate student from Africa who was pursuing a Ph.D. in political science and a master’s in public policy. “I met him and another graduate student in public policy, and they introduced me to this world of city planning and public policy where I could actually be a professional and do stuff that makes a difference.”

From Berkeley, Stoll went to MIT. “I was going to do a master’s only. But I guess I was performing well in class, and a senior faculty member, during the middle of my first year, asked me what my interests were. I told him, and he said, ‘I think you’d be a great Ph.D. student.’

“I was, like, ‘What does that mean?’

“Then I started thinking about it. I liked doing the research, and I was innately curious, so it just clicked that that’s what I wanted to do.”

In his office at UCLA, surrounded by stacks of books, Stoll, now 49, talks eagerly about where his research has taken him. But it is clear that he is just as devoted to his family. His wife, Kenya Covington, is an assistant professor of urban planning at Cal State Northridge. The wall behind him is covered with photos of their 6-year-old daughter, Myla, and his two older daughters, Emera, 14, and Samina, 11, who live in Florida with their mother. “I invest a lot of time in my daughters,” Stoll said. When Myla showed an interest in tennis, he took it up himself. “I do a lot of running,” he said. “I lift weights, I do stretching and yoga.” He loves music — jazz, R&B and soul. He enjoys traveling, but does so mostly for work: research, presenting papers and consulting.

In addition to books on workplace and labor market issues, Stoll has written three on crime and prisons, as well as numerous papers on the effectiveness of prisons in reducing crime. With Raphael, he recently authored the paper “A New Approach to Reducing Incarceration While Maintaining Low Rates of Crime” for the Brookings Institution, where Stoll is a senior fellow.



A NATIVE OF L.A.’S CRENSHAW DISTRICT, PROFESSOR MICHAEL STOLL HAS PIONEERED IMPORTANT WORK ON THE COST AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PRISON SENTENCING. HIS FINDINGS ARE HELPING FUEL RECONSIDERATION OF SOME OF CALIFORNIA’S TOUGH-ON-CRIME MEASURES.

His Brookings paper and other publications emphasize that money can be saved by using prisons to house the more dangerous criminals and shifting less violent offenders to less expensive jails. The savings can then be used to expand local police forces, which have been shown to be effective in lowering crime, or for other preventative or rehabilitative measures.

"All state budgets are strained, ridiculously so because of the [recent] recession," Stoll said. "You have to think of more efficient ways to use resources."

Such changes are already taking place.

In 2011, California Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law AB 109, which targeted prison overcrowding by letting judges send low-level, nonviolent, non-sex crime felony offenders to local jails instead of state prisons. It also allowed violators to split their sentences between time spent behind bars and time under supervised release. In 2012, Californians voted overwhelmingly to change the state's Three Strikes law by limiting the ability of prosecutors to seek 25-year to life sentences for lawbreakers if their latest offense was not a serious or violent crime. Statistics compiled by the Three Strikes Project at Stanford Law School, whose director, Michael Romano, helped draft the change, show that prisoners released since the revision have a low rate of recidivism.

Last year, California voters approved Proposition 47, a ballot initiative that reduced the classification of several criminal offenses from felonies to misdemeanors, among them drug possession, forgery and some other nonviolent crimes. That made more offenders eligible for sentencing to less costly local jails. It also allowed these offenders to seek reduced sentences and possibly release. Savings from these changes were earmarked for mental health and substance abuse treatment, truancy prevention and victim services and are expected to be realized next year.

"We just went through a period in some big states that had been big incarcerators — California, Florida to some extent, Texas a few years ago — where they just got softer on crime," Stoll said. "And even conservatives, who are usually the get-tough-on-crime people, have been fairly strong, vocal proponents on getting smarter on crime. So we're in this unique period."

In Los Angeles County, the Sheriff's Department has seen a decrease of about 3,000 inmates since Proposition 47 was enacted, bringing the jail population down to about 15,500, according to Commander Jody Sharp of the population management division. "We're still overcrowded," Sharp

said, "but we were able to depopulate some areas. We were able to take bunks out of day rooms and spread the inmates throughout the facilities more easily, and it helped us manage our population better." The decrease in population also allowed officials to complete renovation and repairs and to create space for educational programs.

Because of overcrowding and AB 109 mandates, "Inmates typically were doing anywhere from 10% to 40% of their time, based on what type of charge they had," Sharp said. "As the population has decreased, we were able to increase the percentage of time served by the inmates in custody to where now they're doing 90% to 100% of their time."

For the Sheriff's Department, she says, the changes highlighted special needs. Although overall population went down by about 16%, there was no noticeable drop in the mental health population. "So mental health is something we're focusing on now," she said. "Some [inmates with mental health problems] require specialized housing, and Proposition 47 allowed us a little flexibility with that. But we're looking for ways to deal with the mentally ill because this is a jail ... [and] it's not the best way to house those in need of mental health treatment. ...

"We're learning as we go," Sharp said. "There are things that we just did not know when we started. I think things were spread thin everywhere, but we're finding ways to look for funding and finding ways to do things better and enhance what we do, with the goals of reducing recidivism or working with our community partners to assist the inmates so they don't come back to jail. That's our goal; that's everybody's goal."

Since the enactment of Proposition 47, police are making fewer drug arrests. "Some chiefs indicate as high as 35% to 40% reductions," according to Edward Medrano, Gardena police chief and a vice president of the California Police Chiefs Association. "Officers are not spending as much time or effort enforcing narcotic offenses because they're now a misdemeanor." The message, Medrano said, "is that enforcement of narcotics is not as important to our community and that they would rather have us spend time doing other things."

At the county level, the Sheriff's Department has seen a 28.7% drop in narcotics arrests from Nov. 5, 2014, through Feb. 5, 2015, compared with the same period 12 months before, according to Assistant L.A. County Sheriff Mike Rothans, who oversees patrol operations. Meanwhile, law enforcement officials say, property crimes, which some drug users commit to support their habits, have risen slightly.

There is no statistical proof that fewer drug arrests cause an increase in property crimes, Stoll said. Moreover, local statistics are insufficient to indict a proposition with statewide impact, and

no comprehensive numbers are available. If there is an uptick, Stoll said, "The question is whether society is willing to accept these slightly higher property crime rates — particularly if there's no physical victimization — for less expense on state prisons and more investment in other crime-control strategies. What is the tradeoff that society is willing to make?"

Rothans and other law enforcement officials worry that fewer felony convictions for drug crimes will mean that many offenders will no longer be required to attend rehabilitation programs — and that funding for those programs, determined by enrollment, will drop.

WHEN [STATE] BUDGETS SHRANK, PEOPLE HAD TO THINK CREATIVELY. THAT WAS WHEN PEOPLE STARTED TO THINK ABOUT HOW YOU DO THIS DIFFERENTLY... THERE WAS MOVEMENT ON THINKING SMART.

Stoll acknowledges the concern. "Because we don't have the savings yet and programs for re-entry in place, we can't ensure that those convicts get the right services so they can minimize their recidivism," he said. "Once we see the savings, the idea is that we can start putting in diversion support programs at the local level."

All sides agree the goal is making communities safer, with the understanding that change will take time.

"It's a work in progress," Stoll said, "but policy change and adoption is taking place. It's not a seamless transition. There's uncertainty. But it costs substantially less for jails than for prisons." ▀



CHILDREN WHO OFFEND

A LEGACY OF FAILURE, A CHANCE FOR PROGRESS

WRITTEN BY
SCOTT FIELDS

AFTER 10 YEARS OF MOUNTING CRITICISM, the Los Angeles County Probation Department is moving away from punishing juvenile offenders and toward rehabilitating them, a shift that experts welcome and that may at last bring the embattled department into conformity with a growing body of research on how best to address juvenile crime.

"There has been a trend toward this change in model," said Jorja Leap, adjunct professor of social welfare at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs. "The time has come for L.A. County to be a part of it."

That trend reverses decades of movement in the other direction, part of a larger, national crackdown that included Three Strikes and other tough-on-crime initiatives, many born in California. It was in those years that the public, alarmed at the descriptions of "super predators," responded with prisons for children. It was, said Leap, "crazy,"

though difficult to resist politically. No elected official wants to be the one to allow a dangerous person, even a child, to commit new crimes.

But while locking up young people was politically popular, it was neither intelligent public safety nor a smart use of public money, as new research is making ever more clear. One important contributor to that body of work is Laura Abrams, associate professor of social welfare and doctoral program chair at Luskin.

"We're often asked to inform policy [or] practice, or to help engage with the community," said Abrams, whose research focuses on identity formation and transitions among youth and young adults with histories of incarceration. Her most recent work (to be published by Rutgers Press, probably in 2016) is an attempt to look more deeply into those who have been caught up in California's juvenile system. Over a period of years, Abrams followed the lives

of 25 young people who had done time in the California juvenile system, mostly in L.A. County.

"I interviewed these young men and women from three to five times between the ages of 18 and 24," Abrams said. "Many had been incarcerated more than once. ... A lot of them had been shuffled through the system — and it was very clear that the detention facilities and camps and probation group homes really didn't prepare them too well for independence.

"When you spend your adolescent years behind bars, you lose ties ... to mainstream social situations, to family," she said. "And when these young people turn 18, there can be many fewer resources for them than when they were a juvenile.

"These young people's lives were characterized by a great deal of instability," Abrams added. "Between the interviews, they would have moved, changed jobs. There was always a sense of climbing



PHOTO BY MICHAEL MORIATIS

THE WORK OF MANY RESEARCHERS, INCLUDING LAURA ABRAMS (ABOVE), IS HIGHLIGHTING AN IMPORTANT IDEA: THAT YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS ARE LESS LIKELY TO COMMIT FUTURE CRIMES IF THEY ARE RE-INTEGRATED INTO SOCIETY RATHER THAN BEING LOCKED AWAY FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME.

up a steep hill. They might get ahead with a job, but they couldn't complete school. Maybe they found a place to live in an independent living facility, but then it was too far away from their work. One young woman finally got a job at a movie theater, but she couldn't keep it because they were asking her to work until 1 in the morning and she was a single mother."

Half of the young people Abrams tracked were already "in and out of adult jail or serving time," she said, noting that in some cases it was for serious offenses, but that in most instances it involved "being thrown in jail for petty things like unpaid parking tickets or unpaid fines or not having up-to-date registration tags on their license plates."

That only compounded the sense of antagonism and alienation, Abrams added, noting that many of those she interviewed felt "overly monitored" by police and targeted for their race; all of the men in her study were black, Latino or Filipino.

In 2012, Abrams and co-author Ben Anderson-Nathe published "Compassionate Confinement: A Year in the Life of Unit C." The book follows the lives of 15- and 16-year-old boys navigating the juvenile detention system. It examines the tensions among punishment, rehabilitation, involuntary treatment and identity construction, as well as processes of behavioral and identity change.

Abrams' work supports the concept that "if we want to stop the revolving door of incarceration, we need to provide young people with a leg up on how to get not just re-entered but reintegrated — into family, into school, into the social aspects of community, so they're not just re-entering the same set of circumstances that led to incarceration in the first place," she said.

Leap concurs. Just as common sense in sentencing and attention to reintegration for juvenile offenders offer promise, more punitive approaches can backfire. Solitary confinement, for instance, can compound traumas for young people who often have been exposed to myriad violence — from gangs to domestic abuse, Leap said.

Some L.A. County facilities have eliminated or at least reduced the use of solitary confinement. In addition, there are also real transitions under way in facility design, such as at Camp Kilpatrick, where the county is now tearing down large, impersonal barracks and replacing them with small cottages where the young people will live together in groups.

"They'll be functioning in a home-like environment ... learning together, doing therapy together," said Leap. "It sounds like a small change, but it's a complete turnover in the approach to these youth."

"Are things getting better?" Abrams asked rhetorically. "It depends on which camp, which juvenile hall. But most of these facilities are still very outdated."

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The line between research and advocacy can be a thin one, and to some of those who have studied juvenile crime extensively, the conclusions are so stark that it is difficult to resist the temptation to argue for change.

"Sometimes I feel like it's easy for academics to sit here and say what should happen, when we're not there day to day," said Jyoti Nanda, a core law school faculty member in the David J. Epstein Public Interest Law Program. "But someone needs to say this is wrong, that we're traumatizing these children. Academics have to be the ones to say these things."

"The challenge of the juvenile justice system is that it involves multi systems and multi agencies operating with different interests," added Nanda, who co-launched and teaches the Youth & Justice Clinic, which serves the civil needs of detained children in L.A. County's Central Juvenile Hall. "A lot of times these kids fall through the cracks."

Much of Nanda's research has focused on girls and young women in the system. "We don't have targeted outreach, response or remedy for these young women," she said. "It's not that what they have for boys is adequate. It's not adequate. But what they do have — all the programming — is geared toward them."

To take just one example: Most girls who wind up in the justice system have some sort of sexual abuse in their family history, and many programs do not address this issue.

"If a girl is offering sex on the street, they'll arrest her, charge her with prostitution and she becomes part of the criminal justice system. ... She has an open file," Nanda said. And yet, it's difficult to imagine that such a girl chose that course deliberately; it seems far more accurate to view her as a victim than a criminal.

Last July, Nanda helped organize a forum on critical issues confronting poor young girls, particularly girls of color.

"We did it partly to document their stories that will become the footnotes for our policymaking," she said. "It gives us additional affirmations that what we hear second-hand is true."

The panel and audience sat quietly as girls described their traumatic experiences, debunk-

ing whatever tendency there was to see them as willing criminals.

One of the girls at the hearing had been sexually trafficked, Nanda said. "Another girl was in the foster care system, we had one girl answering questions about her abuse in front of the abuser," she added. "They spoke poignantly about their experiences with schools and school police, and within the judicial system."

In addition to the embrace of a more rehabilitative approach for juvenile offenders, Los Angeles County also is enjoying some respite from what once were crushingly large numbers of boys and girls in custody. Two years ago, county facilities typically housed about 2,000 inmates; today, that number has fallen to about 540.

County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas considers that decline the "most significant improvement" in the system, but cautions that it is not the result of adopting new rehabilitative programs. Rather, he said, it's part of the overall decline in crime nationally and in Southern California.

As those new programs are employed, however, Ridley-Thomas hopes they will accelerate the drop in youth incarceration. "Any confinement is contrary to rehabilitation and by virtue equates to punitive measures," he said. "This is particularly

"SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE IT'S EASY FOR ACADEMICS TO SIT HERE AND SAY WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN, WHEN WE'RE NOT THERE DAY TO DAY."

true for the developing mind of a juvenile and persons struggling with mental disabilities. Isolation and separation from familial environments and community safety nets, even in brief confinement, has been shown to increase mental and emotional trauma."

Ridley-Thomas joined researchers in touting the superiority of community-based programs as both more humane and more cost-effective than incarceration. That's especially true, he said, for first-time offenders and young people whose crimes did not significantly endanger the public.

Those are precisely the messages of the most current research in the field. "We're in the midst of a real sea change in terms of juvenile justice," Leap said. "It's up to all of us — researchers, advocates, county probation — to sustain these changes and make the L.A. County system a national model."

Abrams wholeheartedly agreed. "As academics," she said, "we have to do whatever we can to continue to help change the system." ▀



REDUCING RECIDIVISM THROUGH PUBLIC HEALTH

WRITTEN BY
JEFFREY L. RABIN

THE UCLA SCHOOL OF NURSING NEEDED PEER COACHES, SO IT HIRED SOME FELONS.

Nobody, says Associate Dean Adeline Nyamathi, could have done the job better. She teamed the former inmates with nurses and offered counseling, case management and health care education to 600 parolees and probationers at a residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation program south of downtown Los Angeles.

The purpose: to find out what combination of assistance is most effective in reducing drug abuse and recidivism of newly released inmates. That's a problem of great social and even economic significance. Seventy-six percent of those who leave prison go back within five years, according to a 30-state survey by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. It is, as Nyamathi said,

a "revolving door," and it is one of the reasons California spends far more from its General Fund on prisons (\$10 billion per year) than it does on its University of California and state university systems combined (\$7.4 billion).

Prisoners often lose families and support networks while they are locked up, Nyamathi said. This causes one of the most difficult challenges convicts face when they are released because it creates "insurmountable odds [against being] successful in re-entering into the community." Access to health care and counseling, she said, "gives them the skills that they need, the improvement of self-esteem, the networking [and] social support. All these things are the secret combination ... to preventing the tendency to go back to the life that put them in prison in the first place."

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A soft-spoken researcher whose fashion statement is long silk scarves, “Adey” Nyamathi specializes in investigations into health promotion, coping and personal adjustments to illnesses, as well as risk reduction for adults and adolescents vulnerable to diseases, including HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and tuberculosis. Her study of post-release counseling and health assistance was born of “my very strong interest in community-based participatory action research,” she said. “Nurses believe that when you can improve one part of your life ... that it has ramifications in lots of other parts.”

Five years ago, Nyamathi, funded by \$3.2 million from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, embarked on her work with the 600 parolees and probationers, all at Amistad de Los Angeles, a residential drug treatment center in a four-story brick building and adjacent structures near the Harbor Freeway in South Central Los Angeles. Her subjects had entered the center immediately after leaving custody. Mark Faucette, vice president of the nonprofit Amity Foundation, which runs Amistad, said its mission is to “help individuals who are some of the most marginalized in our communities. We have a lot of individuals with pretty severe health issues, which is one of the reasons why we were excited to be a part of this project with UCLA.”

After a health assessment, most of the parolees and probationers, ranging in age from 18 to 60, were vaccinated against hepatitis A and B. They also were tested for HIV and instructed in health care, including the dangers of injecting drugs and having unprotected sex. They were coached by peers — five former inmates, hired and trained to be part of the intervention team. Some of the peer coaches had served lengthy sentences. Faucette says their combined terms totaled “well over 100 years.” But they had turned their lives around and become successful role models.

The School of Nursing, Nyamathi said, might have achieved a first by putting felons “on the payroll of UCLA.” Because of their experience “of having been incarcerated themselves,” she said, “they have the ear for listening.” The ex-convicts, she added, were “fabulous to work with.”

The subjects of the study averaged 11.5 years of education, just short of a high school diploma. Forty-six percent were African American, 33% were Latino, 15% were white and 6.2% were of other ethnicities. They were randomly divided into three groups.

The first group received intensive case management from UCLA nurses. “The nurse sits with you,” Nyamathi said. “She gets all your needs, what are the priorities, and actually makes sure you get to that referral, get an appointment with that doctor, or with that nurse, or social service or legal [assistance].” Members of this group also got peer coaching, both in group settings and one-on-one, and they were shown how to reduce the risk of hepatitis and HIV infection.

The second group was given only peer coaching and attended a brief information session on hepatitis.

The third got limited peer coaching and attended an even briefer hepatitis session.

The combination of case management by nurses and peer coaching by former inmates proved to be the most successful treatment model. Members of the first group showed a higher likelihood of completing drug treatment and reported what Nyamathi described as “significant decreases in their drug use.”

Preliminary findings from follow-up surveys taken six months and a year after the subjects joined the treatment program found that those in the first group said they used less marijuana, methamphetamine, amphetamines and cocaine.

Importantly, their recidivism rate also was lower.

It might not be surprising to learn that the group receiving the most help fared the best. But the study demonstrated something more broadly meaningful: As an alternative to Three Strikes laws or other sentencing systems that lock away inmates for long periods but also overcrowd prisons, repeat offending can be reduced by providing health care instruction, case management and peer coaching. Moreover, the more such assistance former inmates receive, the less likely they are to return to custody. All of which rebuts the once-popular notion that criminals were beyond help and that society could only be protected from

them by locking them away.

The study ended last May. Nyamathi says more follow-up is necessary. “We haven’t, unfortunately, done very long-term, beyond a year, follow-up,” she said. “Most programs fail on the ‘after’ side of things. What happens to these people when they get out [of treatment]? Where do they go? Where do they live? Do they go back to the crime-infested areas where they were before?”

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Also needed, Nyamathi says, is a women’s study. During the School of Nursing’s work with the male parolees and probationers,” she said, “Women would come up to us and say, ‘How come you’re not working with us?’

“Some of them have told us horror stories of being given \$200 [when they leave prison], and the door closes behind them and there’s nothing. They don’t know where to go. They have been out of touch for 20 or 30 years. It’s so sad what’s happening to them. They’ve told us they commit crimes to go back, because they don’t know what else to do with themselves. ...

“So we wrote the grant. We got it funded.”

The National Institutes of Health has given \$688,000 to the School of Nursing to conduct a three-year study of women parolees. Although smaller and shorter, it will be similar to the men’s study. UCLA has hired five women to serve as peer coaches.

They include former inmates, Nyamathi says, as well as women who have friends or family members who have been incarcerated. “We have just completed almost two weeks of training with them to get them ready to do this intervention,” Nyamathi said. “They are fabulous.”

**THOSE WHO HAVE
BEEN INCARCERATED
ARE THE MOST
VULNERABLE
IN MANY WAYS.**

The peer coaches will team with three female nurses — a junior faculty member and two students seeking master’s degrees. Half of the participants in the study will receive a form of behavioral therapy. “It is much more in tune with mindfulness, getting in touch with their inner selves and understanding what makes them anxious,” Nyamathi said. “What makes them hostile? How did their childhoods affect them?”

The participants will be taught new ways of coping, she said, “and, of course, reducing drug use.”

For most of her professional life, Nyamathi has wanted to help the most vulnerable in society. “Those who have been incarcerated are the most vulnerable in many ways,” she said. “Many of them, I would say three-quarters of them, have had a history of abuse in childhood — sexual, physical, verbal abuse. That is quite debilitating for them and has led them to behaviors that are not the best kind of coping strategies.

“Others have gotten involved because a boyfriend or a husband [was involved] in drug selling. They began using themselves. Some of them were involved in prostitution because that’s the only way they know how to make a living.”

The difficulties of those in custody — and those newly released from custody — are not always met with sympathy. To many, ex-cons are dangerous and untrustworthy, deserving of a cold shoulder rather than a helping hand. Not to Nyamathi. To her, those at risk are among the most important subjects for research. They are, she said, “my passion as a nurse.” ▀



SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS TO POLICE RACISM

WRITTEN BY **ERIKA HAYASAKI**

ONE EVENING IN 2008, PHILLIP ATIBA GOFF SET OUT TO PERFORM WHAT SEEMED A FAIRLY ROUTINE TASK: He was trying to track down data on race and police behavior. He had recently co-founded the Center for Policing Equity at UCLA, with a goal to improve relations between police departments and communities, and he needed statistics. His initial questions were extremely basic: How many police officers were involved in shootings every year? How many of those shot by police were minorities?

Goff's mother had been a reference librarian, and he'd inherited her research skills, so he figured he'd have answers quickly. He sat down at his computer at 10 p.m. and went to work. Thirteen hours later, Goff, who had spent much of his career studying hidden racial biases and stereotyping, realized something that would change the course of his research: There was no way to quantify the prevalence of racism in policing, or to analyze comparisons in ethnic backgrounds of people who had been shot by officers. There was no way to know how many police shootings occurred in any part of America, at any given time.

There was no data to analyze because no one bothered to collect it.

"I was so aghast," said Goff, an associate professor of psychology at UCLA, who is currently a visiting scholar at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. It was not that this information did not matter. Rather, data were not regularly collected because each police department handled the information differently, which made it impossible to meaningfully aggregate or compare.

How could racially biased law enforcement be prevented, Goff thought, if there was no way to measure it? It was in that moment that he launched what would become a formidable undertaking — collecting national data about police and the citizens and communities that they patrol.

It was a lonely undertaking at first, one that attracted only a handful of scholars, scarce funding and little attention. Not any longer. Three recent killings by police officers have riveted public attention: one in New

York City, another in Ferguson, Mo., and the third in North Charleston, S.C. In all three cases, white officers shot black men. "For the first time," Goff said, "there is tremendous interest" — not just from activists, scholars and citizens but also from police chiefs and law enforcement personnel.

Public attention intensified when FBI Director James B. Comey spoke forcefully about racial bias in policing, spotlighting the challenges that Goff has been trying to tackle for the past decade. In a speech at Georgetown University, Comey recalled how, in the days after riots in Ferguson, he asked for reliable data about police shootings. A chief told Comey he "didn't know whether the Ferguson police shot one person a week, one a year or one a century and that in the absence of good data, 'All we get are ideological thunderbolts, when what we need are ideological agnostics who use information to try to solve problems.'"

Now, armed with funding from private organizations, the U.S. Department of Justice and a \$1 million grant from the National Science Foundation, Goff and his team at the Center for Policing Equity have launched the Justice Database to measure disparities in policing. Forty police departments and agencies have signed on to participate in the project, and the center is now preparing to begin analyzing data, which will cover more than 25% of the U.S. population. Many police chiefs are hungry for this data, Goff said. "We are rushing to meet the needs of law enforcement."

In addition to pure policing data, the Justice Database will examine trends in education and joblessness, and look at how these combined elements affect law enforcement. The database will turn an emotionally charged issue into a more nuanced one with the potential to create real change, Goff said.

"The goal is to turn this into a mining expedition to understand everything we can," Goff said. "It's embarrassing, not just that no one can tell me how many people got shot by police last year. It's embarrassing that we don't know how racial segregation influences law enforcement. How is that possible?"

When Goff attended a Quaker high school in suburban Philadelphia, he hadn't set out to study race relations. He cared most about math, comic books and girls. He is the son of a white father and African-American mother (according to his family's legend, his parents' marriage became the first legal interracial union in North Carolina, but Goff has not yet been able to document it). "In my house growing up, we didn't talk about racism, we didn't go through the news and talk about racial problems." He had experienced occasional encounters with overt racism. In one instance, a man on a bus made it clear that he did not like "mulattos" and tried to extinguish a cigarette on Goff. But mostly, Goff understood that racism was stupid and wrong, and it didn't much affect his life until his senior year in high school.

After a life-threatening diagnosis of mononucleosis and hepatitis, he missed several months of classes in the beginning of 12th grade. While other teachers made accommodations for him to catch up, one popular teacher threatened to fail him.

Goff couldn't understand why the teacher seemed so hostile. Another teacher, who was black, explained that the few African American faculty members on campus suspected that this man, who was white, had a problem with black people. Later, that African American teacher was

pushed out of the school, and for the first time Goff watched his parents become passionately involved in a race-related issue, as they rallied against the teacher's dismissal. Goff's parents and other black faculty believed the black teacher's poor treatment was racially motivated.

Back in class, Goff began to discover his voice and mission, beginning with a discussion of "Cry, the Beloved Country." The students and teacher demonized the book's black character, and Goff asked why. The class turned on him, he remembered, saying he was playing victim politics and being a jerk. "I didn't understand what the vitriol was about," Goff said. "For the first time, I was an outsider on an island in a way I had never been before, with kids I grew up with."

He was the first black student from his high school to attend Harvard, where he majored in African American studies. He studied psychology in graduate school at Stanford University, where he became increasingly interested in racial bias and policing issues, particularly after the 1999 New York police shooting of Amadou Diallo, who was fired upon 41 times by four officers, who were later acquitted. Goff ended up getting a Ph.D. in social psychology from Stanford.

In his early work, he often collaborated with Jennifer L. Eberhardt, a psychology professor at

Stanford. In 2004 and 2007, Eberhardt organized two historic gatherings of law enforcement and social scientists at Stanford. She wanted to bridge the two worlds. At the conferences, Goff got to know Tracie L. Keese, then a division chief at the Denver Police Department. Keese learned about Goff and Eberhardt's ongoing research into racial bias, which had resulted in a 2008 study published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, showing that people in the United States implicitly associate black people with apes. That association, they showed, makes it easier to tolerate violence against African-American suspects.

In lab studies, Goff and Eberhardt's team flashed words like "gorilla" and "chimp" on a screen so rapidly that participants did not even notice them. The participants were then shown videos of suspects, some white, some black, being forcefully apprehended by police. When participants exposed to the ape images beforehand thought the suspect was black, they supported the police use of force and felt the suspect deserved it — a different reaction from when they thought the suspect was white.

"I was intrigued," Keese said of Goff's research, particularly how it showed that all people, especially police, could have hidden biases that impacted their interactions with people. "I will be honest with

“IT’S EMBARRASSING THAT WE DON’T KNOW HOW RACIAL SEGREGATION INFLUENCES LAW ENFORCEMENT.”

you, I considered myself to be very progressive and open...I had no reason to do harm to anyone.”

Keesee had participated in a study published in 2007 in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, in which Denver Police officers were compared with community members in measuring the speed and accuracy with which they made decisions to shoot, or not shoot, black and white targets. The findings from “Across the Thin Blue Line: Police Officers and Racial Bias in the Decision to Shoot,” showed that officers who worked in larger cities, or in areas with higher percentages of ethnic minorities, were more likely to show bias against black suspects. Keesee thought Goff’s research on implicit racial bias needed to be tested on actual police officers. She invited Goff and his researchers to Denver.

“I needed help from someone who could interpret the social psychology of what’s happening in the field,” Keesee said. “That’s what he came to do. Most chiefs are willing but afraid of what the outcomes will be.”

Last year, Goff published a study, also in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, with results from the police officers he tested, as well as people who were not in law enforcement. Goff’s researchers asked both groups to estimate the ages of young people whom they believed had

committed crimes, and both viewed black boys (who were as young as 10) as older than white boys, who were more frequently seen as innocent. Black boys were also more likely to be perceived as guilty and encounter police violence.

The partnership between Keesee and Goff led to the creation of the Center for Policing Equity, which has since received \$3.4 million in funding, according to Keesee, who is on the board of directors. The events in Ferguson, New York City and across the nation have finally brought the issue to the forefront, she said, attracting funders and newfound motivation. “We’re more than in a moment,” Keesee said. “This is a cultural shift. This is a paradigmatic shift in policing that’s going to be with us for a while.”

.....

Goff’s work has pushed the national conversation beyond unconscious racial bias, and into the realm of other forces that play into racial disparities in arrests, some of which might not stem from police racial views, said L. Song Richardson, a University of California, Irvine, professor of law who uses cognitive and social psychology to examine criminal justice and policing. She pointed out another area of research that Goff pioneered, which has shown

that officers who feel like they must demonstrate their masculinity might be more likely to use force against a suspect.

“His work tells us that to really change what’s going on in policing, especially policing communities of color, we have to rethink how we view police officers and the type of policing that we want,” Richardson said. Instead of putting money into federal grants that create incentives for more arrests, money could go toward relationship building, she said, or the hiring of more women police officers.

These days when Goff speaks to people in the community and police officers, he is often asked, “What are we to make of the Michael Brown shooting and the aftermath? What are we to make of the Eric Garner killing and the aftermath?” Goff tells them: “You can say they died from police violence and racial politics.” But he believes it’s more than that. “We are in a crisis of vision.”

“You have police officers who sign up to do the right thing, who are literally tasked with doing the wrong thing,” Goff said. This is where he believes change needs to occur, and commitments by police chiefs and leaders like Comey reinforce what Goff has been working toward for so long: “That it’s possible at the highest levels of government to have adult conversations about these issues that are not about blame but responsibility.” ▀

CALIFORNIA'S

"TOP COP"

ON THE STATE OF

CRIMINAL JUSTICE





As California's attorney general, Kamala Harris is the top law enforcement officer of the nation's most populous state, and she's a formidable presence. Smart, assertive and ambitious, Harris first won elected office by knocking off an incumbent district attorney in San Francisco — where politics is a blood sport — and then winning a squeaker against Los Angeles District Attorney Steve Cooley in the 2010 race for attorney general. That made her, as she likes to put it, California's "top cop." She is the first woman, the first African American and the first Asian American to hold that office, which has been occupied by Earl Warren and Jerry Brown, among others.

Harris and Blueprint Editor-in-Chief Jim Newton met in March to discuss many of the issues featured in this magazine. With the exception of the final question in this exchange, the conversation was about policy, and Harris discussed a range of issues, including Gov. Brown's realignment program, which shifts responsibility for many low-level felony offenders from the state to counties; the death penalty; and Harris' efforts to reduce recidivism.

Recidivism has been central to Harris' work as attorney general, and her conversation with Newton took place just after she unveiled Back on Track Los Angeles, a program to help inmates return to society and reduce the likelihood that they will re-offend. She announced that program at Los Angeles County's Pitchess Detention Center, and the two had their conversation there afterward, so this is, in a sense, a jailhouse interview.

The one question about politics referred to Harris' latest career move: When Sen. Barbara Boxer earlier this year opted not to seek re-election, Harris quickly announced her candidacy, then waited to see who else might run. Her biggest potential rival, former Los Angeles mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, took a pass, meaning that Harris now has an easier road ahead, though, as she noted, there's still time for others to enter the race.

What follows is an edited transcript of the Harris-Newton conversation. Some exchanges have been clipped for clarity, and omissions are indicated by ellipses. The order and substance of questions and answers have not been altered.



Blueprint: Looking back across your four years as attorney general, what would you identify as the biggest challenge confronting California's criminal justice system?

Kamala Harris: I think the biggest challenge is being able to adjust quickly to realignment, but I want to put that in context. Realignment is doing ... what we should be doing, which is to let county governments have the responsibility for addressing low-level offenders, nonviolent offenders, so that we can focus on recidivism.

BP: So it's not just realignment, but realignment in relation to recidivism?

KH: Yes, because based on my experience, the institutions that are best equipped to deal with recidivism are structured around county government — child support, education, the superior courts, public health, the Sheriff's Department, the jails, everything. So the potential of realignment is, I think, dependent on the structure of local government and the services and duties that it performs.

BP: Why, then, is adjusting to it difficult?

KH: We gauge effectiveness based on a couple of axes, and one of them is time. That works against counties because this happened pretty quickly. The challenge for counties is to build up a structure quickly enough to do the work that they have the potential to do ...



AS A LOCAL PROSECUTOR IN SAN FRANCISCO AND NOW AS CALIFORNIA'S ATTORNEY GENERAL, KAMALA HARRIS HAS MADE COMBATTING RECIDIVISM A CENTRAL TENET OF HER WORK. SHE ARGUES THAT CALIFORNIANS HAVE, IN RECENT YEARS, BECOME MORE OPEN TO ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO FIGHTING AND DETERRING CRIME.

BP: My sense, too, is that there's some suspicion that realignment wasn't really motivated by a deeply considered criminal justice imperative, but rather that it was done to relieve overcrowding and save the state money, so that even if it ends up being a sound criminal justice reform, it didn't start out that way.

KH: Right. And there are examples in nature and in history where things are just thrust upon us, and it forces us to readjust in a way that we actually might do things smarter than we did before. This is one of those examples. At some point we have to move beyond "why" and accept that this is what it is, and so let's make it work. That's my perspective. Let's make this work. ... This could be a smarter way of doing business than we were doing before.

BP: Do you sense a new mood in California when it comes to criminal justice reform? This was the state that gave us Three Strikes and tough-on-crime measures, but recently, voters rolled back some felonies to misdemeanors and eliminated third strikes for nonviolent offenses. Does it feel different to you than it did 10 or 15 years ago?

KH: Yes, it does feel different. Part of the dynamic, the environment, is that we've seen a reduction in serious and violent crime across the country. So it's not the hot-button issue that it was, that required public policy that ended with an exclamation point. And by the way, no good public policy ends with an exclamation point.

And so, I think the environment is different. People are also starting to see how this has all worked out: They're starting to see that in many places we're putting more in our criminal justice system than we are in our educational system, and the public generally — and their mood fuels the politics — is starting to demand that we in government be held more accountable for the return on the investment.

BP: And that's a fairly nonpartisan observation ...

KH: Totally. I have talked about this with every stripe of person, of every political affiliation. It's pretty simple. ... We all, Democrats and Republicans, are talking about this a little differently. When I create something like Back on Track, it's not because I feel sorry for somebody. It's because I think we could actually be more effective in saving money and enhancing public safety. I want to protect a future victim from ever becoming a victim.

BP: Historically, these debates strike me as not only political but also kind of arbitrary. If we had four strikes in baseball, would we have a whole different sentencing system?

KH: Right. Part of the problem is that we have defined our success ... almost purely on how we react [to crime]. Was the suspect arrested? That's a measure

of success. Was he convicted? That's a measure of success. Was he sentenced to some long prison term? That's a measure of success.

And then we stop our analysis of the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. We stop. When in fact there's another chapter: He comes out. Eighty [percent] to 90% of them do. But we stopped our analysis the moment the jailhouse door shut, instead of realizing: OK, break for a commercial, come back, he's coming out, and guess what, he's committing another offense. ...

This is not only bipartisan, it's nonpartisan. ... I've never known a robber who approached his victim and asked: Are you a Democrat or a Republican?

**NO GOOD PUBLIC
POLICY ENDS WITH AN
EXCLAMATION POINT.**

★★★

BP: *Talk about juvenile justice, which we address elsewhere in this edition of Blueprint. Are there special issues there that are in need of reform or attention, beyond those in the adult system?*

KH: Oh, yeah, absolutely. ... If we want to stop something, we must ask what's going on and why. In this case, it's as clear as the ring of a bell. The vast majority of these children have untreated trauma. We're not diagnosing that, and we're not treating it. They're literally suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

If you're talking about the 6-year-old who goes to sleep every night hearing gunfire, who has immediate relatives who have been killed and may be even in front of that child, we can't expect him to go to school the next day and learn. He's experiencing what anyone exposed to violence experiences. He's having flashbacks. He'll act out, be unruly, quickly get designated as the bad kid, self-identify that way. He can't concentrate or focus in class, he'll skip school, start to then hang out. If he's not getting educated in school, he'll get educated on the streets. Then he starts slinging drugs, and there you go. Welcome to the revolving door of crime.

If we could do one thing to fix what's going on in the juvenile justice system, I would give the highest priority to diagnosing and treating trauma.

BP: *You oppose the death penalty personally but have defended it in court. Two questions: Do you believe the death penalty acts in any way to deter crime, and do you believe it has any place in the system anywhere, or should it be abolished nationwide?*

KH: I am personally opposed to the death penalty. I will follow the law, which is what I have done as attorney general. I think the deterrence argument, among the arguments in favor of the death penalty, is probably one of the weakest.

There's also the cost: We could put a thousand more police on the streets to solve unsolved homicides. There's the disparity in terms of the application. And there's the reality that DNA has proven that there are people on death row who are not guilty.

And you can't take it back. It's an ultimate punishment. You can't take it back.

BP: *How serious a problem is racial bias in policing?*

KH: Based on everything that's happening nationally and the debate that's occurring, it's clear that there's a crisis of confidence. I am a strong believer in the idea that for law enforcement to do its job, there must be trust between law enforcement and the communities they are sworn to serve. That being said, as everyone knows, in every relationship, professional or personal, developing a relationship of trust is a reciprocal endeavor. Both sides have to work on it and be vigilant. ...

There is a history of distrust between some communities and law enforcement. So I decided to address it first by dealing with my own backyard. I have hundreds of special agents. I ordered my director of the division of law enforcement to do a 90-day review ... on implicit bias and use of force. *[Editor's note: That review was still under way as this issue went to press.]*

I also convened law enforcement leaders — police chiefs, sheriffs, rank and file — they met with me, working on what they can do to highlight what they are doing already on developing relationships of trust and also to talk about what we can do better in terms of training on issues like implicit bias. ...

It's important for all voices to be heard on this and then come together to collaborate to fix what is broken, and also to rededicate ourselves to being vigilant and constantly look for ways to work on this relationship of trust. ...

I'd like to believe, and I do believe, that California is, generally speaking, ahead of the game, but there's still work to be done. I'm not pretending there's not.

BP: *This is an interview about policy, not politics, but I need to ask a quick political question before we finish: Were you surprised that some potential contenders passed on the race for Boxer's seat?*

KH: It's not clear yet. There's another year. I'm knocking on wood all the time. ▀

CLOSING NOTE:

Being Smart on Crime and Safety



THE LESSONS OF THE RESEARCH FEATURED IN THESE PAGES ARE FAIRLY UNAMBIGUOUS, even if they buck against a reflexive period in California and American history, one that will look even more unfortunate in retrospect: the long years when this country attempted to fight crime merely by rounding up criminals and shoveling them into prisons for as long as possible.

That approach, egged on in California by special-interest politics, gave this state the nation's highest number of men and women behind bars. In 1980, 23,000 Californians were in prison; 10 years later, the number had grown to 94,000; and 10 years after that, it reached more than 160,000. The effect on crime was hard to discern: Crime rose in the 1980s while incarceration skyrocketed; crime fell in the 1990s as it continued to increase. Meanwhile, aggressive policing — neighborhood sweeps, battering rams to take down drug houses, racial profiling — left communities edgy and victimized, by both criminals and police. Los Angeles had its riots in 1992, after which policing began to change, and crime began its long descent.

The desire to “get tough on crime” is visceral and politically appealing. As Michael Stoll notes in this magazine, most candidates cannot afford to be “soft” on crime. The trouble, however, is that getting tough doesn't make things better — and in some cases, it makes things much worse. Juveniles separated from community and family are more likely to end up as adult criminals; fully three out of four adults who go to prison commit another offense within three years and are inside again.

There are alternatives. Adeline Nyamathi's study of former inmates on supervised release suggests that access to health care, counseling and services may lower the re-offense rates for adults — a finding that argues against any notion that these former prisoners are beyond help or redemption. Laura Abrams' pioneering studies of children suggest a similar blend may head off their criminal futures.

This work arrives at a propitious moment, for there's reason to think Californians are ready to reconsider this state's approach to crime. Community policing strategies, especially in big cities such as New York and Los Angeles, have helped produce stunning achievements in safety over the past decade. Voters in 2012 overwhelmingly approved a measure to roll back California's Three Strikes law (the rollback carried in every county), and two years later approved Proposition 47, which downgraded a number of felonies to misdemeanors. The public already is showing more flexibility; it's time for leaders to follow.

Policymakers are understandably skittish about being seen as coddling criminals, but if the cost of sounding tough is a society that is less safe and more racially divided, then it seems a high and foolish price to pay. The work featured in this issue of Blueprint suggests a different course — smarter, kinder, more cost-effective and, in the end, safer.

— *Jim Newton*



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On the editorial side, the legendary Richard E. Meyer, with whom I spent more than 20 years at the Los Angeles Times, brought his unrivaled editing talent to these pages as my principal deputy. Generations of Times' journalists were the beneficiaries of Rick's ability and decency; Blueprint's contributors now get the same opportunity. Lisa Horowitz, the magazine's copy chief, tightened and troubleshot the entire issue. Every story improved as a result of her work.

Blueprint's look is built largely around the work of two visual artists: David Sprague, our lead photographer, who shot the distinctive portraits of Charlie Beck and Kamala Harris; and Noma Bar, whose internationally renowned illustrations infuse Blueprint with his wit and give the magazine its distinctive texture.

Behind the scenes, dozens of people contributed their time and expertise, in areas ranging from design to distribution to event planning. Among those whose work was particularly significant are Jim Poore, Powell Michael, Elizabeth Kivowitz Boatright-Simon, Kate Halkett, Laura Heller, Shilo Munk, Jessica Lander and Marisa Feng.

I am personally grateful to all of the above. There would be no Blueprint without them.

— Jim Newton

DO YOU HAVE
SOMETHING TO SAY?

Blueprint's mission to stimulate conversation about problems confronting Los Angeles and the rest of California doesn't stop on publication day. We urge you to continue these conversations by contacting us or our contributors or by reaching out directly to the researchers whose work is featured here. We also hope you'll follow us on the web, where we'll showcase exclusives and link to ongoing debates in these fields. You can find us online at blueprint.ucla.edu

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