

FBI Law Enforcement BULLETIN

June 1992
Volume 61
Number 6



Features



Page 14



Page 21

- 7 Graffiti Paint Outs** 137433
By Daniel Schatz
- 6 Higher Education and Ethical Policing** 137434
By Mitchell Tyre and Susan Braunstein
- 11 The Evidentiary Value of Plastic Bags** 137435
By Richard F. Stanko and David W. Attenberger
- 16 Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy** 137436
By Stephen J. Boros and Larry C. Brubaker
- 21 Police Recruitment** 137437
By Ralph S. Osborn
- 26 Disclosure of Personnel Information** 137438
By Jeffrey Higginbotham

Departments

- 4 Research Forum**
- 14 Police Practices**
- 25 Unusual Weapon**
- 32 Legal Brief**



Cover: Police working with citizens to remove graffiti from neighborhoods strengthens community relations. See article p. 1.

United States Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, DC 20535

William S. Sessions, Director

Contributors' opinions and statements should not be considered as an endorsement by the FBI for any policy, program, or service.

The Attorney General has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business required by law. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Editor—Dr. Stephen D. Gladis
Managing Editor—Kathryn E. Sulewski
Art Director—John E. Ott
Assistant Editor—Karen F. McCarron
Production Manager—Andrew DiRosa
Staff Assistant—Darlene J. Butler

The *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* (ISSN-0014-5688) is published monthly by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 10th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20535. Second-Class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, D.C. 20535.

NCJRS

Police Recruitment

Today's Standard—Tomorrow's Challenge

By
RALPH S. OSBORN

If American policing is to survive in the 21st century, officials must plan today to address the problems of tomorrow. Police managers must begin now to recruit qualified individuals who can lead departments successfully into the next century.

However, rapid changes in demographics can make the problem of recruitment even more difficult. According to Trojanowicz and Carter, "By 2010, more than one-third of all American children will be black, Hispanic, or Asian."¹ The Caucasian majority of today will become a minority within America in less than 100 years.² Obviously, this change in society will have a tremendous impact on the recruiting process of the future.

The challenge of recruitment goes beyond demographics to the problem of shrinking numbers. According to the 1989 *FBI Uniform Crime Reports*, 6,664,062 young people between the ages of 15 and 29—the age group of the current potential work force—were arrested that year.³ And, because law enforcement must compete with private industry and the Armed Forces, the pool of qualified applicants shrinks even more. While this problem will impact on all law enforcement agencies, it will be hardest on small police agencies, which simply

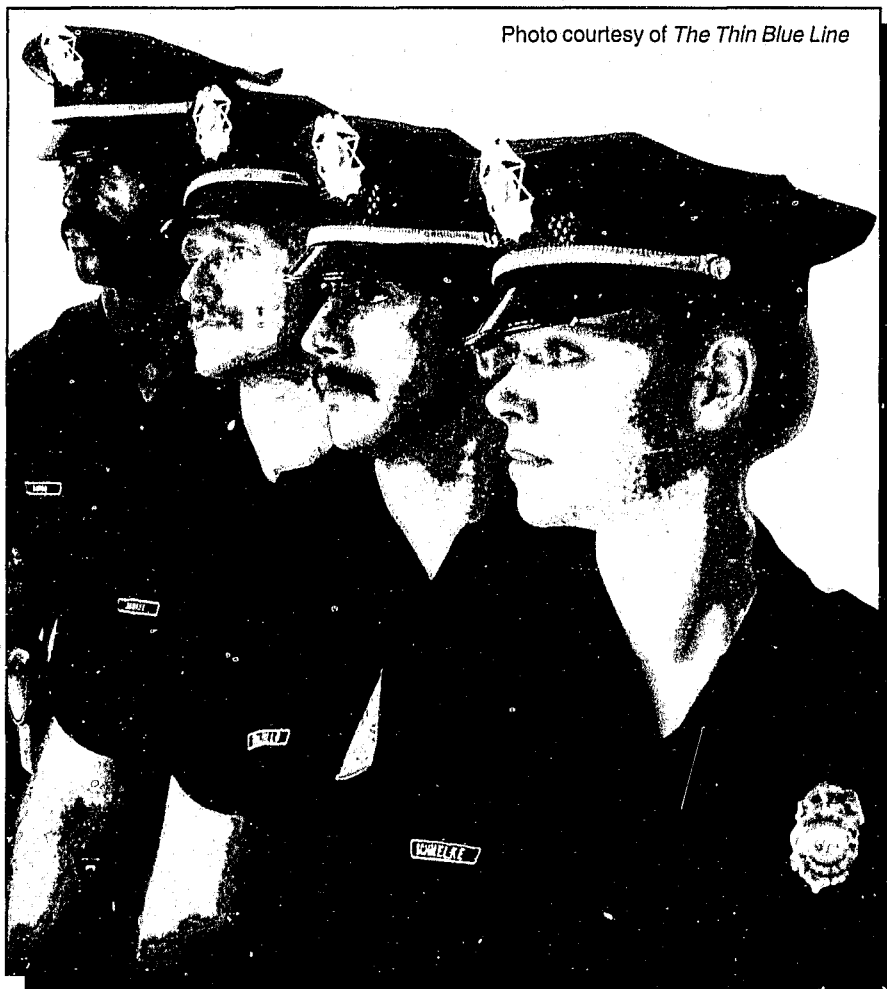


Photo courtesy of *The Thin Blue Line*

do not have the resources for extensive recruiting efforts.

As recruiting becomes more difficult, the temptation will be to hire now and qualify later. This is a dangerous posture to take—quantity will never be an adequate substitute for quality. Therefore, police departments must continue to focus

on qualified applicants, offer incentives that are more than just adequate, and develop creative recruitment programs to meet tomorrow's challenges.

This article examines the problems and challenges of police recruitment, both now and in the future. It also provides police

executives with some ideas that may be helpful when planning for the future.

Demographic Change

Over the next decade, there will be a decrease in both the number and the percentage of high school graduates who fall within the age range of most police applicants. The severe shortage of qualified applicants may result in some departments being dissolved.⁴ This thought, alone, should have police chiefs running to their personnel office to see how they may be affected.

Not only will there be fewer qualified applicants in the future, but the nature of our communities will change, as well. It is important that recruitment meet the needs of these changes. Because of changing demographics, the term "majority status" may become archaic within 100 years; there simply may be no majority within our society.

Therefore, police departments must aim for work forces that mirror

the communities that they serve. Failing in this will result in inadequate public service, at best, and violent confrontations between racial and ethnic groups and those in authority, at worst.

The transformation of urban areas across the country presents law enforcement with a serious problem. With many families moving out of cities to more homogeneous suburban communities, cities are left with largely racial and ethnic minorities that are oftentimes policed by nonminority whites. With the various race, ethnic, cultural, and language barriers that currently exist, these police officers can provide only minimal public services—they simply cannot fully understand the community they must police.

However, changing demographics may force the correction of this problem in the near future. During the next 10 years, only one out of four who enter the work force will be a white male.⁵ The others hired

will be either women or other minorities. Recognizing this, police executives can plan recruiting strategies now that will ensure that they get the most qualified individuals for their departments.

And, while it is important for police personnel officers to address the problems of changing racial and ethnic demographics, there is yet another recruitment problem looming on the horizon. "The percentage of the population between 16 and 24 years old will shrink from 30 percent of the labor force in 1985 to 16 percent in the year 2000."⁶ Not only will the population of those considered to be the age of typical police recruits be drastically cut, but police departments will have to share this pool with both private industry and the military.

Therefore, hiring the best qualified individuals, both today and in the future, will require police executives to work harder and smarter. Among other things, personnel officers need to develop successful recruiting programs that will provide incentives that change to meet the needs of each new generation of recruits.

For example, about 7 percent of today's law enforcement officers are women. During the next 10 years, however, two of every three new employees will be women.⁷ Considerable research has repeatedly concluded that women perform equally with men in many tasks. Therefore, law enforcement agencies should begin to plan recruiting strategies that will attract the best women to their departments. Officials should also examine their departments' employee benefits pack-



“
If American policing is to survive in the 21st century, officials must plan today to address the problems of tomorrow.
”

Captain Osborn is in the U.S. Marine Corps in Barstow, California.

age, as well as existing promotional systems, in order to determine whether they address issues that are important to women.

Recruitment Strategies

Traditionally, the police mission has been that of enforcing the law. In recent years, however, the emphasis has shifted toward crime prevention, and most recently, to a community policing model. In the future, the mission may be that of human resources.⁸ In order to meet this new role, law enforcement officials must institute innovative programs that will attract the applicants of the future.

Recruitment strategies of the past will not be sufficient to provide agencies with quality applicants. In a study conducted by the Los Angeles Police Department, researchers found that over 64 percent of new recruits surveyed received information on available positions within the department from police officers, friends, or relatives. Only 1.9 percent of the recruits learned of job openings through the more traditional newspaper employment ads.

The implications of this research are important. Each police officer must be viewed as a potential recruiter. For example, the Marine Corps offers extra vacation time and extra points toward promotion scores to anyone who recruits a new Marine. Police departments should consider offering similar incentives.

The Los Angeles Police Department also found that more than 50 percent of the candidates made the decision to become police officers at least 5 years prior to joining the

force.⁹ Because many potential recruits decide to enter law enforcement during high school and college, recruitment efforts should begin there.

In many cities, high school youths begin their involvement with law enforcement through cadet or explorer programs. New York City has taken this practice one step further. In an effort to keep

“
Recruitment strategies of the past will not be sufficient to provide agencies with quality applicants.
”

teenagers oriented toward a law enforcement career, the city allows them to take the police written entrance exam when they are 16 years old. Those who pass the test and stay out of trouble are guaranteed a job when they reach the appropriate age. This provides a tremendous incentive for the young person to “stay straight.”

The New York City Police Department also initiated a program to recruit college students for the Cadet Corps Program. In this program, the city pays \$3,000 toward the cadets' last 2 years in college. After graduation, if they serve for at least 2 years with the police department, the loan is considered paid in full. If they decide against police work, they must repay the loan with interest.

Students in the Cadet Corps are also offered paid, full-time summer employment and paid, part-time employment during the school year. They are able, during these times, to assist the police in community policing programs.¹⁰ It also allows the students to gain valuable experience in police work.

In addition to high schools and colleges, the military must always be viewed as an important source of potential law enforcement employees. Few persons who join the military make it a career. Active recruitment of these well-trained, well-educated, and highly disciplined individuals could add to the professionalism of any police department.

And finally, departments should develop programs aimed at changing traditional ethnic community attitudes of law enforcement careers. Some minority groups that have recently arrived in this country have brought with them fear and distrust of police. Because of this, they choose not to enter police work. Police managers must work to change this attitude, or they will fail to recruit from these ethnic groups.

The Need for Quality

Choosing quality over quantity in applicant processing is critical. In the future, quality will only become more important because individuals in the entry-level labor pool will compete for fewer available jobs. The applicants themselves will have more education than those in the past, and department personnel will be held to higher levels of professionalism and accountability.

With technological advances in the field of information systems, police officers have access to and are required to handle more and more data in shorter periods of time. Police officers of the future could find themselves working alone and without supervision, with only computers linking them to their departments. The demands of the job will be so great that any department that does not place the quality of applicants above all other considerations will soon find itself in trouble.

Departments that hire individuals who lack basic communication skills and read at substandard levels will be also handicapped. This is a Nation governed by laws. When a problem arises, a new law is written. Anyone who lacks the skills to read, comprehend, and then apply that knowledge, whether on the street or in court, will have difficulty succeeding in law enforcement or in maintaining professional standards. This leads some experts to believe that departments should test for basic educational skills during the hiring process, and that all recruits should test at a 12th grade level in both reading and writing.¹¹

Personnel Retention

No discussion about recruitment is complete without also discussing retention. Much of the recruiting efforts today are the result of job turnover, which is often the result of dissatisfied employees. If departments can minimize turnover by understanding the wants, needs, and desires of employees, they will ultimately need to recruit far fewer individuals.

Understanding is the key to retaining employees. Mid- to upper-level supervisors have different needs and values than new recruits. Treat both the same, and one group will be dissatisfied, with high job turnover rates as the result. Those departments that experience recurring job turnover are repeating the same personnel mistakes year after year. Understanding the needs of every new generation of recruits can greatly reduce employee dissatisfaction and job turnover.

Recruitment in the Future

Private industry has known for years that the best way to ensure future success is to plan now. It is no longer uncommon to encounter college courses or entire text books devoted to the study of strategic planning for the future. Law enforcement would do well to learn

“
***By examining the past
and understanding the
present, law
enforcement officials
will be better prepared
to deal successfully
with the future.***
”

from this example. A basic understanding of the differences between the human resources of the past and present gives police officials a good idea of what problems will exist in the future.

Today's entry-level employees are nothing like those who

joined police forces in the 1960s. And, the young recruits of the 1980s will be quite different from the recruits of the 1990s. Today's new employees face an entirely new job market, and they bring with them an entirely new set of ethics and values.

The prospective police candidate of today must compete for a limited number of good jobs. The prosperous job market of the last two decades is gone. The result is young adults who are largely disappointed with their career options. "New employees today are overeducated and underemployed. The result is young people who are skeptical or even cynical of having careers. They see little value in adhering to the current work ethic."¹² It is important to recognize new recruits as individuals and to realize that they do not share the same values, ethics, goals, or objectives of recruits of the past.

According to police psychologist, Dr. Larry Blum, today's new recruits have less prior work experience than their predecessors, and they lack a sense of mission or purpose.¹³ For some departments, finding a single qualified applicant among hundreds can become a challenge in itself. Lifestyles are radically different, with single parents and working, unmarried couples both fairly common occurrences. In addition, very few applicants today have any military background, let alone any other work experience. They frustrate easily and react poorly to discipline. They view work as a means to an end, such as paying the rent and bills. Work is a job, not a career, and commitment is conspicuously absent. Their ability

to read and write may be deficient, and interests away from the job may be their top priority.

Conclusion

"Recruitment is likely to be the law enforcement issue in the year 2000."¹⁴ The number of individuals available for entry-level positions will be smaller than it is today. More organizations, both public and private, will be vying for the best potential employees. Departments must, therefore, try to understand the values of the current entry-level applicant and be sensitive to making changes in the department that will encourage these people to take pride in the department and give them a sense of ownership. Strategies should be also be developed to ensure that departments hire only the best qualified potential employees.

By examining the past and understanding the present, law enforcement officials will be better prepared to deal successfully with the future. Those who blindly approach the 21st century will do so with fear and uncertainty. However, those who plan for it now will welcome it with open arms. ♦

Endnotes

¹ Robert C. Trojanowicz and David L. Carter, "The Changing Face of America," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, January 1990, 6.

² *Ibid.*

³ U.S. Department of Justice, *Crime in the United States*, Uniform Crime Reports (1989), Washington, D.C., 182-183.

⁴ Gordon Bowers, "Avoiding the Recruitment Crisis," *The Journal of California Law Enforcement*, vol. 24, No. 2, 64-65.

⁵ Martha Farnsworth Riche, "America's New Workers," *American Demographics*, February 1988, 64.

⁶ Marvin J. Cetron, Wanda Rocha, and Rebecca Luckins, "Into the 21st Century, Long-

term Trends Affecting the United States," *The Futurist*, July/August 1988, 64.

⁷ Robert G. Norman, "Women Peace Officers: Law Enforcement Resource of the Future," *The Journal of California Law Enforcement*, vol. 23, No. 2, 63.

⁸ *Supra*, note 4, p. 66.

⁹ Harold R. Slater and Martin Reiser, "A Comparative Study of Factors Influencing Police Recruitment," *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, vol. 16, No. 3, p. 176.

¹⁰ Ordway P. Burden, "Recruiting Police from College," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, March 1988.

¹¹ Vance McLaughlin and Robert L. Bing, "Law Enforcement Personnel Selection: A Commentary," *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, vol. 15, No. 4, 272-3.

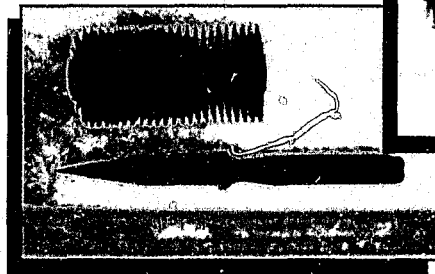
¹² Robert A. Krauss, "How Will the Changing Work Force Impact Law Enforcement Human Resource Practices in the Year 1995?" *California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training*, 1986, 7.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁴ *Supra* note 4, p. 68.

Deadly Hairbrush

An officer in the Greenfield, Ohio, Police Department ordered this seemingly harmless item from a weapons catalog. However, this ordinary hairbrush quickly converts into a knife or thrust dagger with a 3 1/2-inch blade when the bristle section of the brush is removed. The easily concealed weapon can be purchased for under \$15 and poses an obvious serious threat to law enforcement officers and corrections personnel. ♦



Unusual Weapon

