

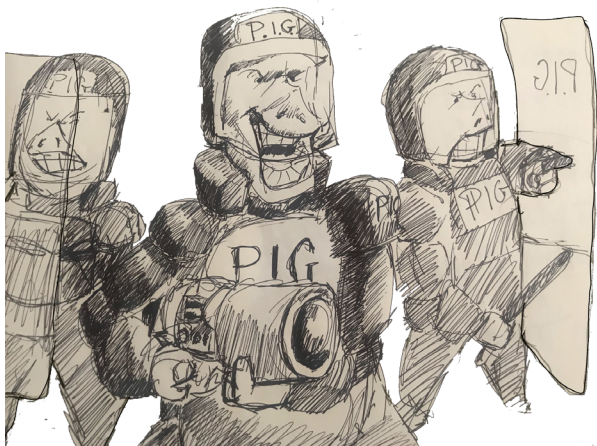
A CHIEF-BY-CHIEF HISTORY OF LAPD "COMMUNITY POLICING" AND COUNTER-INSURGENCY

April 2022



Not a moment in time...

LAPD's website abbreviates the title "Chief of Police" to COP, a seemingly formalized all caps version of the colloquial designation for a police officer. The title suggests that the office of Chief of Police and the individual that occupies it embody the whole of policing. It's through this lens that we view the Chief of Police not just as a leader who informs the latest shape of police violence but as a steward inheriting and continuing the legacies of settler-colonialism, white supremacy, and capitalism that policing has always embodied.

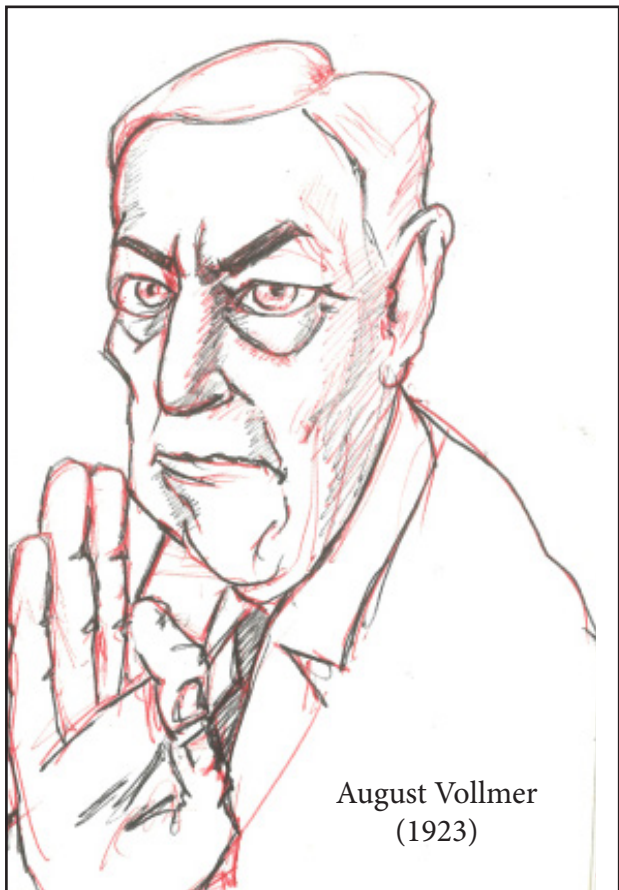


... but a continuation of history

Each chief is tasked with the mission of securing new resources and political cover for policing, the primary apparatus through which the state targets Black, Indigenous, migrant, and poor communities for murder and banishment.



In the upcoming pages we recount the careers of select police chiefs over the past hundred years and trace how their particular flavor of racist violence has culminated in the manifestation of community policing we face today...



August Vollmer
(1923)

The Eugenicist

Lauded as “the father of modern policing,” August Vollmer should be remembered first and foremost as a eugenicist. Vollmer was an early proponent of police professionalization, the reformist notion that police need better training and science to calibrate their violence. He was the first police chief in the country to require that officers obtain formal training, and he created the University of California’s first criminal justice program. Although Vollmer did not join the American Eugenics Society until 1924, much of his earlier work was distinctly influenced by eugenics, and his police training curriculum taught topics like “eugenics,” “the origin of races,” and “race degeneration” within pedagogy on “criminological anthropology and heredity.”

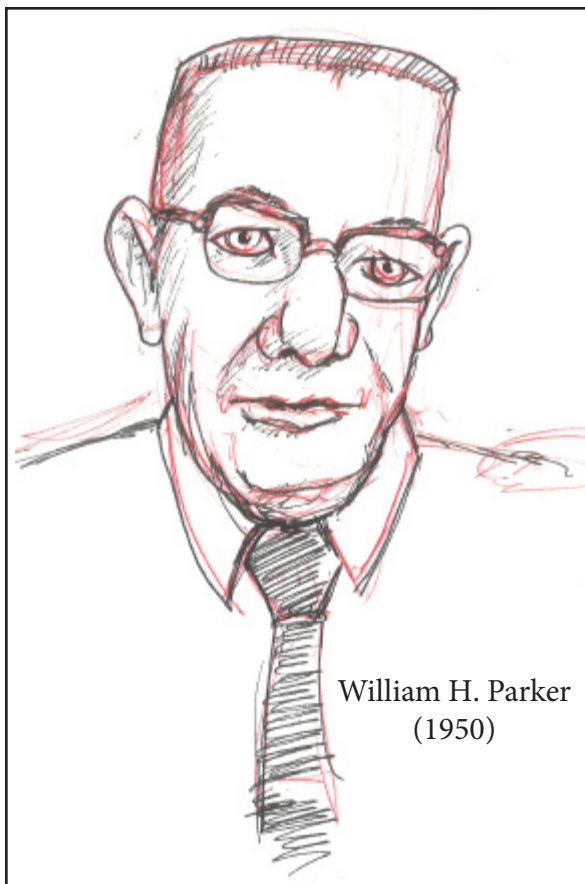


Knowing that he viewed the world through this white supremacist lens and based many of his so-called innovations on US military tactics in the Philippines, it should come as no surprise that the modern iterations of Vollmer's developments are equally as racist. Before LASER and PredPol, Vollmer was using spatial analysis or "pin-mapping" to gather intelligence and predict future criminal activity in Berkeley. He would later introduce this technique to LAPD. While modern techniques have evolved in sophistication, their objective remains the same: to displace and dispose of groups deemed "lesser-than," leaning on the lie of scientific authority to enact racist, eugenicist practices.

Vollmer shot himself to death in 1955. Appropriately, his final words, uttered to his maid, were: "You'd better call the police."





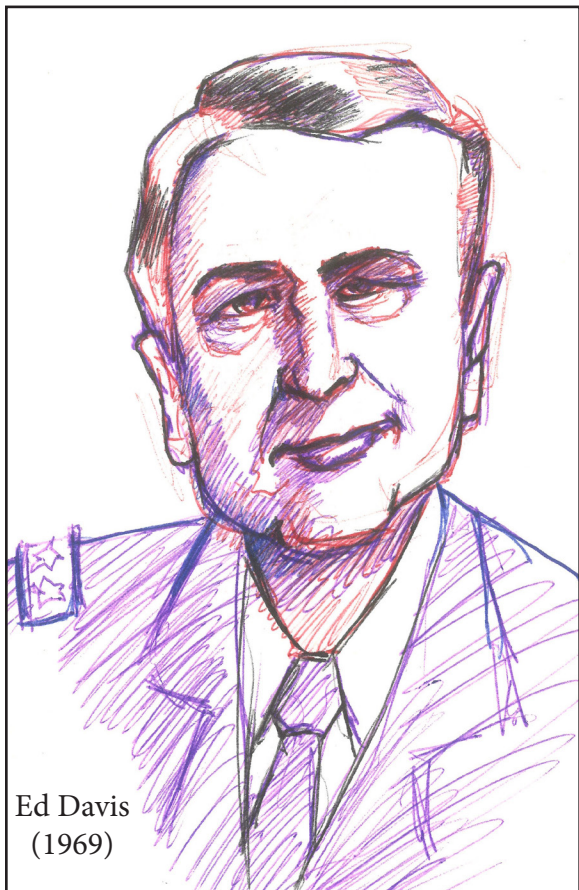


William H. Parker
(1950)

Propaganda Parker

The LAPD, in addition to being this country's most brutal, racist, and murderous police force, is also a nearly unmatched PR machine. The LAPD's virtuosity at both violence and the proliferation of propaganda can be credited to the leadership of Chief Parker. Chief Parker embodied the LAPD's racist values so completely that in 1966, shortly after his death, the city named the police headquarters after him.

Inheriting the helm of an unbelievably more frenzied police force than we see today, Chief Parker is responsible for the militarization of the LAPD to ensure the public saw them as more professional. Shaping the public's perception of the LAPD would be at the top of his priorities for years to come; he facilitated this by ushering in the medium of televised copoganda. Shows like *Dragnet* and Chief Parker's personal creation *The Thin Blue Line* put the false image of the polite LAPD officer with integrity in every family's home. Parker even had a pre-Star Trek Gene Roddenberry as his speech writer. This campaign to make sure the public loved the LAPD provided cover for some of Parker's more nefarious actions, such as actively recruiting KKK members from the South, and denying complaints of police brutality by Black Angelenos, including concerns that drew the attention of a federal civil rights advisory board. While the LAPD headquarters is no longer named after Chief Parker, the tradition of sanitized racist violence he built lives on in the very heart of the LAPD.



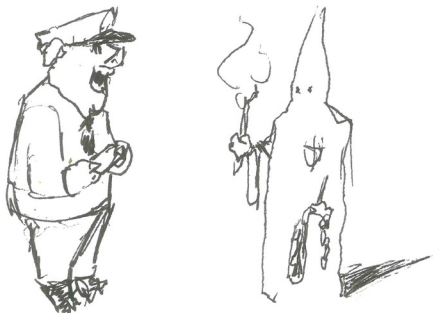
Ed Davis
(1969)

Father of T.R.A.S.H

“I would much rather celebrate ‘GAY CONVERSION WEEK’ which I will gladly sponsor when the medical practitioners in this country find a way to convert gays to heterosexuals.” This was Ed Davis’ response to a letter requesting he attend the 1975 Los Angeles Pride Week celebrations. The following year his shameless homophobia would manifest itself in a violent raid of a bathhouse hosting a mock slave auction to benefit the Gay Community Services Center. With the media in tow, the LAPD arrested 40 gay men, subjecting them to cruel and humiliating treatment while detained in jail. The following day’s headlines read “Police Free Gay Slaves,” playing up comments by an LAPD officer claiming they had ‘liberated’ the victims of their brutality. Since the 13th amendment essentially extends the institution of slavery into prisons, the idea that police are involved in any sort of liberation – particularly during a violent raid and arrests – is laughable.

The raid, a \$150,000 publicity stunt trafficking at the intersection of foundational US anti-Blackness and homophobia instead displays the violent white supremacist, heteronormative logic at the base of LAPD’s claim to “protect and serve.” In the tradition of Chief Parker, Davis also ensured the LAPD’s public image remained untarnished through his role as a technical advisor on the TV series *Dragnet* and *Adam-12*.

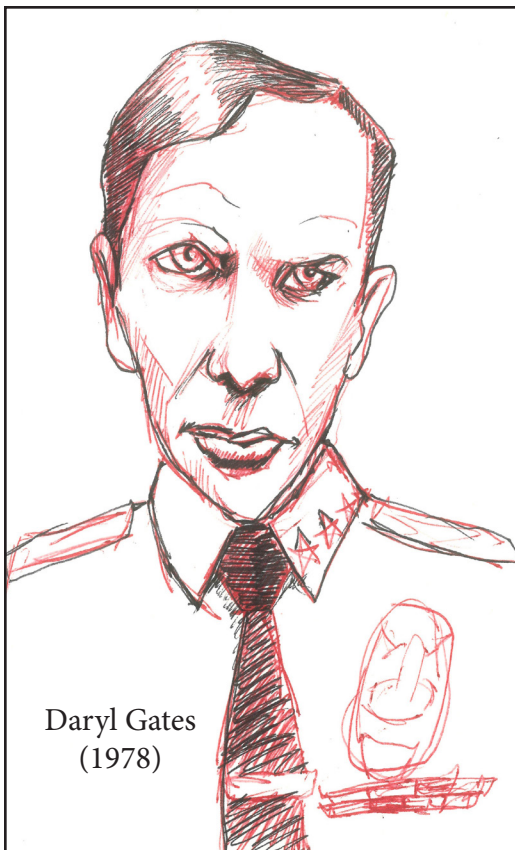
Davis' innovations as police chief would have consequences that outlasted his tenure. In 1973 he created a unit called TRASH ("Total Resources Against Street Hoodlums") consisting of uniformed and plain-clothed intelligence officers. The unit's focus on gang-related activity inevitably meant they targeted young Black and Brown Angelenos. After community upheaval around the dehumanizing language in the unit's name, it was changed to CRASH (Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums). CRASH officers would go on to be responsible for some of the most notable scandals in LAPD history, including a deluge of racial bias complaints during Operation Hammer and the Rampart Scandal. Despite the many notable episodes of overt hate and violence that Davis could have been remembered for, his 2006 obituary published by the New York Times interestingly chose to memorialize him as a champion of community policing.



KeystoneCops



Don't
Give me
Any of That
Attitude



Daryl Gates
(1978)

Hell's Gates: From SWAT to DARE

Daryl Gates' long and hate-filled journey to LAPD police chief would begin with Chief Parker selecting him to be his personal chauffeur. Working closely in Parker's tow, Gates steadily moved through the ranks until becoming Chief of Police in 1978. Comfortable in anti-Black rhetoric and dehumanization, Gates famously attributed the deaths of several Black people who were placed in LAPD chokeholds to the theory that "blacks might be more likely to die from choke holds because their arteries do not open as fast as they do in 'normal people.'"

Gates' clear disdain for BIPOC people was only matched by his deep love for surveilling Angelenos. Under Gates' leadership the Public Disorders Investigation Division (PDID) grew its surveillance efforts. Created as a reaction to the Watts Rebellion under Ed Davis, PDID infiltrated hundreds of community groups, labor unions, and newspapers; kept secret dossiers on thousands of activists, organizers, and community members; spied on judges and elected officials; and instigated violence to frame protestors. LAPD was found to have provided information to the far right group Western Goals and corporations like Exxon and Security National Bank.

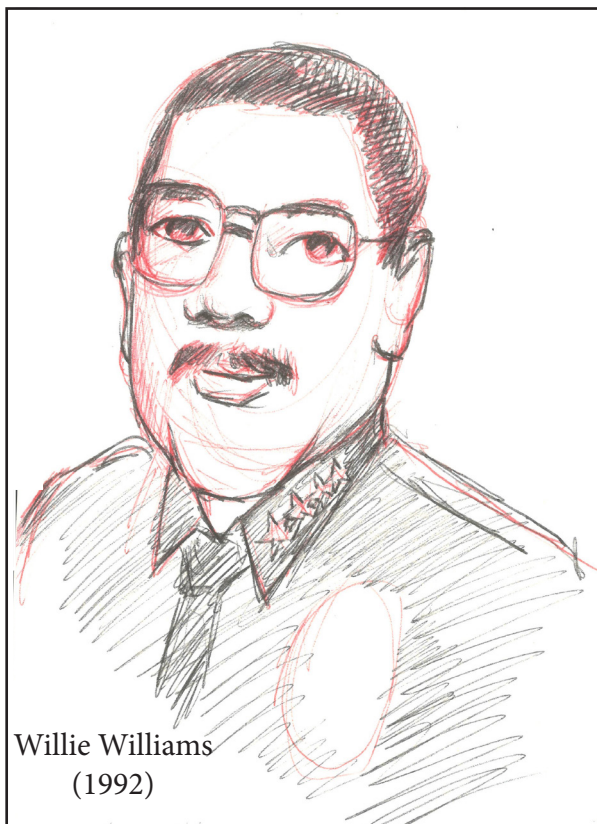




Gates' career is emblematic of policing as counterinsurgency. Though not during his tenure as chief, he was instrumental in establishing SWAT teams – a military-style unit inspired by the desire to violently repress uprisings like those in Watts. Just a decade later, during his tenure as chief, the LAPD developed one of their most pervasive community policing programs: DARE. In 1983, the LAPD launched the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program, which created partnerships where police officers would be assigned to schools, under the guise of teaching kids about drug prevention, in 17 one-hour sessions. A highly influential and massive program that inserted police into schools, it was lauded as “one of the principal means for the LAPD to create positive interactions between officers and the community.” D.A.R.E. has been a key pillar in the so-called “war on drugs,” operating as the community policing/infiltration arm that works in tandem with aggressive arrest and incarceration of communities of color.

It seems appropriate that Gates' tenure as Chief is overshadowed by the revelation of misconduct and the eventual dismantling of the PDID and the Rodney King Rebellion that would eventually force him into retirement. Gates' post law-enforcement pursuits included new forms of white supremacist police propaganda, including the development of a video game criticized for its racist depiction of Black characters.





Willie Williams
(1992)

“First Black Chief”

In response to a historic rebellion fighting back against the lack of accountability and incessant brutality by the LAPD, those in power believed that an easy way to crawl back into some good graces would be to hire someone that looked like Rodney King. L.A.’s “finest” embarked on their own history naming the city’s first Black chief as Gates’ successor.

Williams had recently become the first Black police commissioner for the Philadelphia Police Department, a corrupt and brutal department notorious for the bombing of a Black neighborhood in 1985 destroying 61 houses and killing five children in the process in an effort to eradicate MOVE, a Black revolutionary organization.

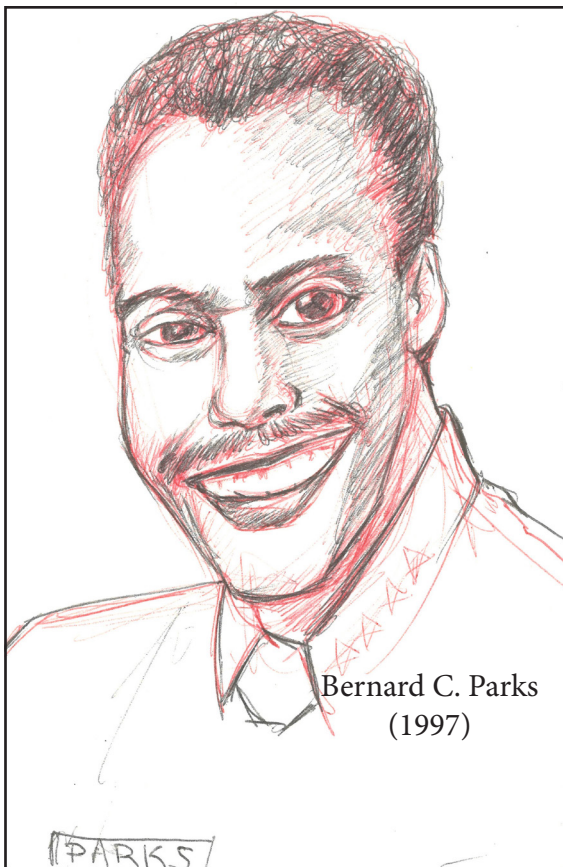
Willie’s tenure as chief was spent emulating a politician in the middle of a hotly contested election – he organized hundreds of meetings with various community factions, shook hands and kissed babies to ensure community support for the LAPD. He saw citizens as pawns in the larger scheme of community policing and used interactions with the community as the perfect opportunity to help put a new PR spin on racist policing.



Under his reign, community police advisory boards (CPABs) were created in 1993. The LAPD has described CPABs as the essence of community policing, with these boards creating the illusion that the community would now have some control over police matters. What they provided instead were collaborators and “foot soldiers” that would give the LAPD a steady stream of human intelligence gatherers – a tactic straight out of the counterinsurgency handbooks of the US military. The self-ordained guinea pig for community policing would find himself out of a job by 1997 with many of his detractors citing dishonesty among the main reasons to kick him to the curb.







Bernard C. Parks
(1997)

Good Old Bernie: the Most Prominent Black Face on White Supremacy

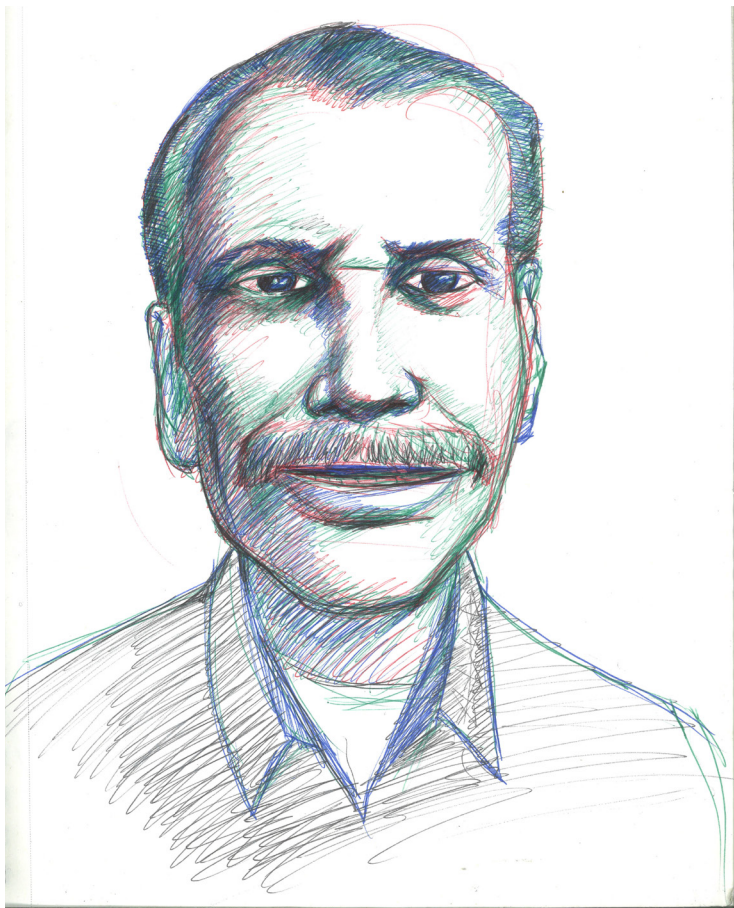
Bernard Parks was billed as the polar opposite to Williams, having been his most fervent nemesis (in fact, at one point Parks threatened to sue the LAPD over a demotion by Williams). Parks had a style of leadership that paid homage to the “good old days” of the LAPD and he ascended to the head of the department in 1997, becoming the most prominent Black face on white supremacy.

Parks came on the scene with a mentality that community policing had to evolve with wide institutionalization and an expansion across the ranks. His vision was to bring community policing into patrol cars, detective squad rooms, and classrooms instead of existing solely within the spaces occupied by senior lead officers who in his words had become “full-time community activists”.

What Parks didn't prepare for was how the culture of brutality that permeated every fiber of LAPD's being would soon be on full display. The same officers now tasked with becoming the ambassadors of community policing were exposed as corrupt goons when details started to emerge around what would become one of the biggest embarrassments in the history of the LAPD: the Rampart scandal.

The Rampart Division's CRASH unit planted evidence, robbed banks, trafficked drugs, and terrorized the community. People started to come to the realization that the LAPD was using the veneer of community policing to mask their racism, corruption, and criminality. Parks' subsequent attempts at covering up the scandal would lead to Mayor Hahn refusing to rehire him in 2002.







Bill Bratton
(2002)

Broken Windows Bratton

Arriving in the wake of the Rampart Scandal, Bratton first worked for the consulting team that oversaw the LAPD's implementation of their consent decree with the DOJ. After just five months on that team, Police Commission president Rick Caruso recommended him for chief of police.

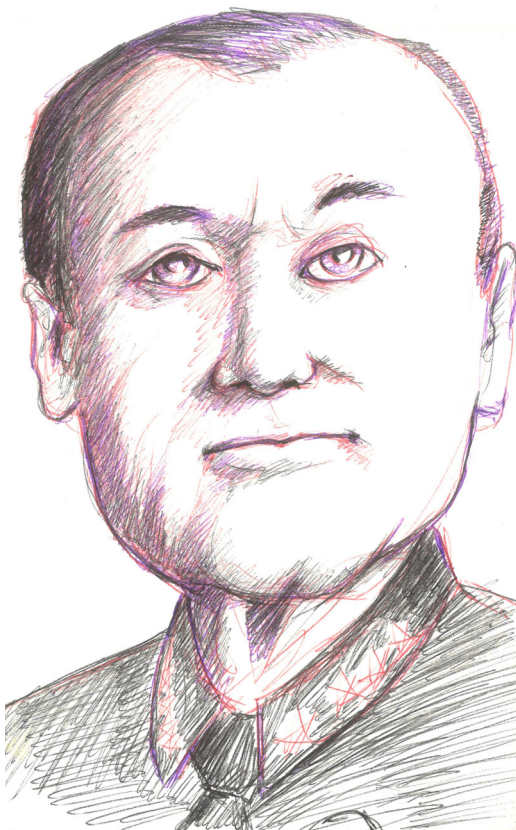
Using the consent decree as a justification for new investments, Bratton pursued a series of experiments that expanded LAPD's data collection and surveillance powers, including community policing, "broken windows" policing (which he had used to criminalize Black and Brown communities as chief of police in New York), behavioral surveillance programs, and integration of military surveillance technologies. Skid Row in particular became a testing ground for how counter-terrorism and counterinsurgency programs would become integrated into everyday policing.

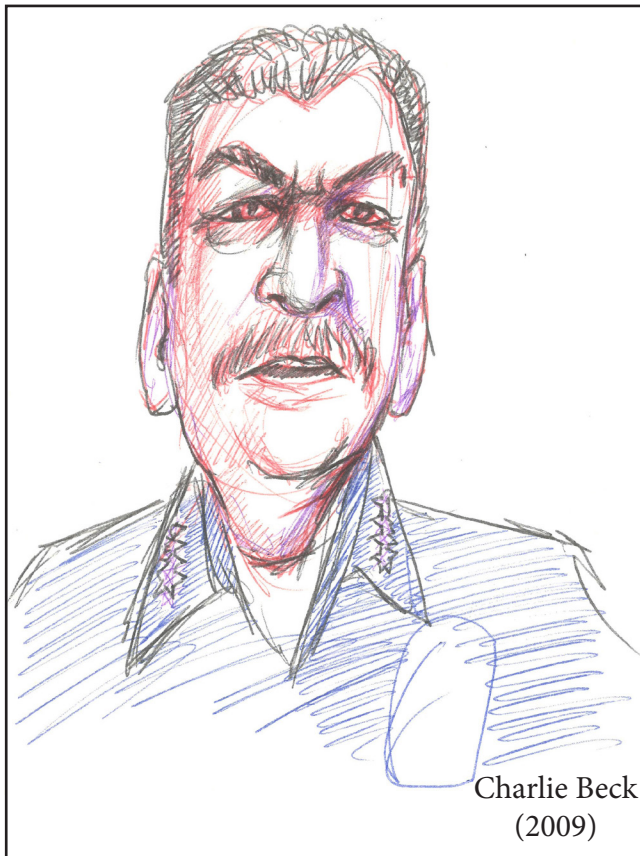
Bratton also had a strong focus on counter-terrorism methods and sought to include new surveillance tactics in every aspect of policing. This included deputizing the public through Special Order 11, allowing the police to investigate anonymous suspicion reports which disproportionately targeted Black and Brown people. Bratton would go on to weave the "broken windows" policing method with behavioral surveillance, data collection, and post 9/11 "intelligence led policing" methods to create what would go on to be called "data-driven policing".

Bratton's marriage of police data to community policing would facilitate the surveillance and criminalization of entire communities. This practice would go on to sophisticate and legitimize the LAPD's practice of harming Angelenos by codifying the inherent criminality Bratton ascribed to Black and Brown communities.

He verbalized his view that poor people were inherently criminal in a 2007 interview, saying "The one thing I have learned and now strongly advocate is that the police, properly resourced and directed, can control behavior to such a degree that we can change behavior. Many social scientists are wedded to what I believe to be the failed and never proven idea that crime is caused by the structural features of a capitalist-based democratic society especially demographics, economic imbalance, racism, and poverty."







Charlie Beck
(2009)

Bank of Trust Beck

Before becoming chief, Charlie Beck was the LAPD's knight in shining armor – a member of the Rampart CRASH unit, a veteran of Operation Hammer and the son of a former deputy chief. After decades of policing South Los Angeles, Beck believed that broken windows policing and community policing could be combined to expand LAPD's reach into Black and Brown communities.

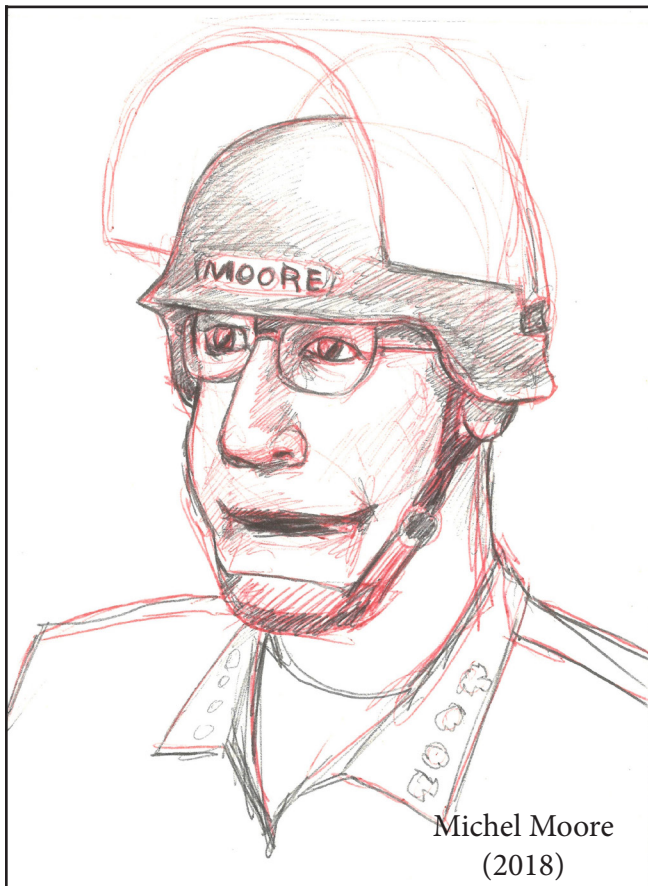
His brainchild, Community Safety Partnership, evolved from a Bratton directive for him to come up with a gang reduction strategy for the city. Beck also revived the DARE program in 2013, again enabling DARE-trained officers to enter schools and give lessons to students about “the best way to live productive lives and make important contributions to their communities.” These kinds of partnerships were the newest way for the LAPD to infiltrate communities by creating relationships with people who would see police as “the builders of the community instead of its enforcers.”

By embedding police into these housing developments, Beck's dream was to force policing into the fabric of communities. These trojan horses weren't pressed by the LAPD's standards of productivity to make arrests, write tickets, and control the population.

Their mission was to convince members of these otherwise neglected communities that the LAPD was the only way important services, community necessities, and quality of life improvements would flow to where they lived. What became glaringly obvious is that this racist counterinsurgency tactic would provide the LAPD with their most expensive type of policing ever and help pave the road towards more reform (and more money). Beck garnered internal LAPD support for CSPs by providing officers with two incentives - a guaranteed 5% pay increase every year while on “tour” and a fast track for advancement within the hierarchy of the department.

As Beck invested in a community policing unit, “putting money in the bank of trust”, as he put it, another scandal would hit his office at the close of his first term. His department was exposed for misclassifying violent crimes to create the illusion that they were responsible for a drop in crime in Los Angeles. This type of manipulation is as old as policing itself, with the state always defining “crime” and “violence” to serve its political purposes. This is why we can’t trust any of the numbers being produced by the LAPD as they look to sanitize their newest invasions of our communities.





Michel Moore
(2018)

Mumbling Mike

Before Moore ascended to his throne of terror, he retired - a move that gifted him a \$1.27 million payout via the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) and allowed him to pilfer the public purse by guaranteeing a \$240,000 yearly pension once he returned after a month long absence. This move was made in concert with then Chief Charlie Beck and Mayor Eric Garcetti to incentivize Michel to take over the mantle of leading the most murderous police force in the nation.

Shortly after taking the reins, Moore stressed the importance of building relationships, deepening trust, and expanding collaborations across the board. Moore's commitment to collaboration ran so deeply that he even felt compelled to publicly state that George Floyd's blood was as much on the hands of protestors as it was on the officer that murdered him. Moore spent years crunching numbers as one of the LAPD's finest data "experts" and firmly believed in the terror tactics of data-driven policing. However Moore's trademark verbal gaffes would go on to reveal that just like data-driven policing, he too was merely a facade of sophistication on something old and racist.

In Moore's malevolent mind, police are the people and the people are the police. Look no further than the inception of volunteer patrol programs which provided police with surveillance servants who were charged with "taking back their communities." In 2020 Moore created the Community Safety Partnership Bureau.

Rather than containing community policing to a singular bureau, this escalation of the Community Safety Partnership program seeks to infuse community policing into the department's DNA. The expansion of community safety partnerships in his eyes was the future of policing even while the LAPD struggled with building trust with communities that had borne the brunt of their brutality for decades.

At the head of the new bureau was Emada Tingirides, a Black woman and native of Watts. Tingirides had been immersed within the program from the start, having helped set the foundation for community safety partnerships with her husband, retired Deputy Chief Phil Tingirides in 2011. When she was tasked with overseeing the new bureau, she contended that this “advancement” in policing was more necessary than ever after the massive protests against police brutality. To the LAPD, CSP Bureau is a vehicle to mask the department's harm for decades to come, providing gateways for recruitment and community infiltration all under the veneer of “friendly” policing. Community policing is never friendly -- it's a violent strategy to repress our communities.



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