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UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS  
RACIAL AND ETHNIC TENSIONS IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES:  
POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION  
LOS ANGELES MINI-HEARING  
(CONTINUATION)

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1996

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LYNN ZINK, CSR NO. 9466, RPR

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(CONTINUATION)

Transcript of Proceedings taken on  
behalf of the U.S. Commission on Civil  
Rights at U.C.L.A. School of Law,  
405 Hilgard Avenue, Stauffer Courtroom,  
Los Angeles, California, commencing at  
3:00 p.m., on Wednesday, November 13,  
1996 before Lynn Zink, CSR No. 9466, RPR.

A P P E A R A N C E S :

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UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

CRUZ REYNOSO, Vice Chairperson

CARL A. ANDERSON, Commissioner

EDWARD A. HAILES, JR., Deputy General Counsel



1 participant in a public hearing on a panel entitled "Update  
2 of Christopher Commission and Kolts Commission Reforms:  
3 Racial and Gender Bias in the Los Angeles Police  
4 Department." The Commission requested his testimony in part  
5 as part of our multiyear project on Racial and Ethnic  
6 Tensions in American Communities: Poverty, Inequality and  
7 Discrimination.

8 Pursuant to that multiyear project, we've had  
9 several hearings throughout the country, including two now  
10 here in Los Angeles and one in New York that I attended and  
11 one before I joined the Commission in Chicago, and several  
12 others. We hope to have one more hearing before we finish  
13 our study in this area.

14 At that time Chief Thompson failed to appear to  
15 testify on that panel. The Commission then agreed, without  
16 objection, to ask the U.S. Attorney to proceed to consider  
17 enforcing the subpoena issued to Chief Thompson according to  
18 statute. Both the U.S. Marshal and the U.S. Attorney made  
19 efforts to produce Chief Thompson during the hearings in  
20 September but to no avail.

21 Following ensuing discussions, including the  
22 Commission's General Counsel, U.S. Attorney, and Chief  
23 Thompson, the witness agreed to comply with the subpoena by  
24 testifying before the subcommittee of the Commission today.

25 The subcommittee consists of Commissioner Carl

1 Anderson, as I indicated before, who is seated to my right,  
2 and yours truly as Vice Chair. I would like to indicate  
3 that my full-time job is teaching law here at the law  
4 school, and I'd like to thank the law school for making this  
5 available to us. We've saved some taxpayers dollars in  
6 providing for the use so we can have this hearing.

7 I would like to have Commissioner Anderson  
8 introduce himself and his capacity, perhaps, beyond being a  
9 commissioner.

10 MR. ANDERSON: Well, thank you. My name is Carl  
11 Anderson, and I'm Dean of Graduate School of Theology in the  
12 Washington, D.C. area, John Paul, II Institute for Studies  
13 on Marriage and Family.

14 MR. REYNOSO: Very good. In addition, we have with  
15 us from Washington the Deputy General Counsel Mr. Edward A.  
16 Hailes, Jr. who will be doing the initial questioning.

17 As I indicated privately, in addition to the  
18 scheduled witness, there will be an opportunity for  
19 concerned individuals to testify in what we call an open  
20 session after the scheduled testimony. Ms. Deborah Reed who  
21 is an attorney advisor in the Commission's Office of General  
22 Counsel will be available at the appropriate time to assist  
23 anyone interested in delivering sworn testimony during the  
24 open session.

25 We are scheduled and have been scheduled to

1 begin at 3:00 o'clock, and I'm advised by the staff that  
2 probably the testimony will take 45 minutes. It may take  
3 less; it may take more. And then we will call for the open  
4 session at 4:00 p.m. If folk appear at that time, we will  
5 hear anybody who comes before us. If folk do not appear,  
6 then I think we will simply close the session at that time.

7 I would now like to call on the Vice Chair to  
8 read the rules that the Commission has adopted for a public  
9 hearing such as this.

10 Commissioner Anderson.

11 MR. ANDERSON: Thank you very much. Our procedures  
12 require that we provide a brief summary of the rules that  
13 govern the Commission's hearings, and I will do that now.

14 These are brief summaries of the major  
15 provisions and, therefore, the rules themselves should be  
16 consulted for fuller understanding. And there are staff  
17 members present who will be able to answer questions if you  
18 have a question during the course of the hearing.

19 The Commission is empowered by statute to hold  
20 hearings and act at such times and places as it deems  
21 advisable. The hearing is open to all, and the public is  
22 invited and urged to attend.

23 All witnesses within the Commission's  
24 jurisdiction have been subpoenaed as is our process.  
25 Everyone who testifies or submits data or evidence is

1 entitled to obtain a copy of the transcript on payment of  
2 costs.

3 In addition, within 60 days after the close of  
4 the hearing, a person may ask the Commission to correct  
5 errors in the transcript of his or her testimony. And such  
6 requests will be granted only to make the transcript conform  
7 to testimony as presented at the hearing.

8 If the Commission determines that any witness  
9 testimony tends to defame, degrade, or incriminate any  
10 person, that person or his or her counsel may submit written  
11 questions which, in the discretion of the Commission, may be  
12 put to the witness. Such person also has a right to request  
13 that witnesses be subpoenaed on his or her behalf.

14 All witnesses have the right to submit  
15 statements prepared by themselves or others for inclusion in  
16 the record, provided that they are submitted within the time  
17 required by Commission rules.

18 Any person who has not been subpoenaed may be  
19 permitted, at the discretion of the Commission, to submit a  
20 written statement in this public hearing. Such statement  
21 will be reviewed by the members of the Commission and made a  
22 part of the record.

23 Witnesses at Commission hearings are protected  
24 by Title 18 U.S. Code Sections 1505, 1512, and 1513, which  
25 make it a crime to threaten, intimidate or injure witnesses



1 on account of their attendance at government proceedings.  
2 The Commission should be immediately informed of any  
3 allegations arising or related to possible intimidation of  
4 witnesses. I emphasize, we consider this to be a very  
5 serious matter, and we will do all in our power to protect  
6 witnesses who appear at the hearing.

7           Copies of the rules which govern this hearing  
8 may be obtained from a member of the Commission staff upon  
9 request. And the scheduled witness appearing during the  
10 course of this hearing has already been supplied a copy, I  
11 understand.

12           Finally, I would point out that these rules  
13 were drafted with the intent of ensuring that the Commission  
14 hearings be conducted in a fair and impartial manner. In  
15 many cases the Commission has gone significantly beyond  
16 Congressional requirements in providing safeguards for  
17 witnesses and other persons. We have done that in the  
18 belief that usable facts can be developed best in an  
19 atmosphere of calm and objectivity. We trust that such an  
20 atmosphere will prevail at this hearing.

21           I would stress, however, that with respect to  
22 the conduct of every person, all orders by the Vice  
23 Chairperson must be obeyed. And failure by any person to  
24 obey an order by him, as chairman of the hearing, or any  
25 commissioner presiding in his absence, will result in the

1 exclusion of the individual from the hearing room and  
2 criminal prosecution by the U.S. Attorney, when required.

3 And as I've noted earlier, this hearing will be  
4 open to the public.

5 MR. REYNOSO: Very good. Thank you very much. Who  
6 else will be presiding besides you, Mr. Anderson?

7 With that, Counsel, will you please call the  
8 witness.

9 MR. HAILES: Chief Oliver Thompson.

10 MR. REYNOSO: Would you please stand and be sworn  
11 first. Raise your right hand.

12 Do you swear or affirm that you will testify  
13 truthfully to the best of your ability?

14 THE WITNESS: Yes.

15 MR. REYNOSO: Please be seated. Thank you so much.

16 Please proceed.

17

18 EXAMINATION

19 BY MR. HAILES:

20 Q Will you please state your full name and your  
21 present occupation for the record.

22 A Oliver Maurice Thompson, Chief of Police, City  
23 of Inglewood, California.

24 Q And do you have an open-end statement you would  
25 like to give, no more than five minutes, at this time?

1           A       No.

2           Q       You are the past president of the National  
3 Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives; is that  
4 correct?

5           A       Yes, I am.

6           Q       And when did you serve in that capacity?

7           A       July of '95 to June of '96.

8           Q       And will you please describe the issues that  
9 NOBLEE addresses that disproportionately affect the  
10 African-American community.

11          A       NOBLEE came into existence in 1976 whereby  
12 approximately 15 to 20 African-Americans, predominantly  
13 male, were called together, in I believe it was Atlantic  
14 City, to discuss urban violence and black-on-black crime.

15                   This was during the time of the law enforcement  
16 assistance administration being in existence, and there was  
17 a small grant that came out of that. And a small  
18 publication was put together in the area of black-on-black  
19 crime.

20                   NOBLEE, over its 20 years of existence, have  
21 looked into urban violence and urban crime. We've looked at  
22 racism, institutional racism. We've looked at upper  
23 mobility for African Americans within the criminal justice  
24 system, predominantly in law enforcement -- state, local,  
25 and federal.

1                   And we've looked at the exchange of information  
2 to ensure that all persons who find themselves within those  
3 ranks, be it at line level, supervisory, middle  
4 management, or command level will have all the information  
5 necessary so if they desire to be upwardly mobile, they can  
6 be.

7                   Q       In the course of addressing some of those  
8 issues as an officer, and I understand -- let me just ask  
9 this question. You also served in other official capacities  
10 with NOBLEE in years before 1995.

11                  A       Yes.

12                  Q       What were those positions and the times? Do  
13 you recall?

14                  A       I would say chief cook and bottle washer at the  
15 local level and chapter, secretary, vice-president,  
16 president, regional vice-president, national vice-president,  
17 and then president.

18                  Q       In those several capacities, did there come a  
19 time that you became aware of issues that directly related  
20 to African-American females and upward mobility  
21 opportunities in law enforcement capacities?

22                  A       Oh, sure.

23                  Q       What were those issues that you --

24                  A       I started out in law enforcement 31 years ago  
25 in Riverside, California, a young guy out of South Central

1 Los Angeles via Tulsa, Oklahoma. And I remember a lot of  
2 the travails that I had myself at the age of 23 starting out  
3 in law enforcement down in Riverside.

4 And the only difference, I believe, between a  
5 male and a female doing this job is that, as a male, even  
6 though of a different ethnicity, you're a man against -- in  
7 dealing with other men. But when you bring a woman into  
8 this, the men are going to rise up, generally, and they're  
9 going to say that women can't do this job. I never believed  
10 that because I believe if I can do the job, anybody can do  
11 the job.

12 And so it was in Riverside when it really, as  
13 far as I was concerned, really began to hit home. And it  
14 wasn't because of African-American women. It was because of  
15 white women, their lack of acceptance. And then as a few  
16 black females began to look at Riverside County Sheriff and  
17 Riverside Police Department, about coming on board, that it  
18 really begin to hit home, the pervasive, institutional  
19 racism and sexism that we find in this business.

20 And it's still predominant today. It hasn't  
21 changed, and probably will be several generations before it  
22 will -- you'll see the monumental changes that are  
23 necessary.

24 Q What, if any, recommendations has NOBLEE made  
25 to attempt to bring a more speedy resolution to some of

1 those claims of institutional racism and gender bias?

2 A Well, primarily I think working at both the  
3 local, state, and federal levels, ensuring that all of our  
4 members, male and female, be they associate members below  
5 the rank of -- let's say in the federal lot of GS13, GS14,  
6 or if you're at a local state level below the rank of  
7 lieutenant, you're an associate member -- trying to ensure  
8 that those associate members readily qualified become  
9 members through promotional processes, through assessment  
10 centers, through passing on information; making sure that  
11 tests are put together the way they should be, that any  
12 institutional bias that might be prevalent is diminished;  
13 making sure that everybody gets all the information that's  
14 necessary to pass those, both written as well as performance  
15 processes, when you go through an assessment center.

16 And then also to ensure that formal  
17 education -- that our members understand the great need for  
18 formal education, be it at the associate level, bachelor at  
19 graduate level, to ensure that they recognize that this job  
20 is totally in his responsibility.

21 Q Now, the Christopher Commission and I believe  
22 NOBLEE had supported the concept of community policing.

23 A Yes.

24 Q How do you define on a pragmatic basis that  
25 term "community policing"? What does it entail?

1           A           Community policing is a philosophy. It's not a  
2 program. Programs, like Chief Williams would say with  
3 L.A.P.D., whom I've known for better than 20-some years,  
4 remembering his rise from Philadelphia Police Department --  
5 programs come and go. Philosophies don't.

6                       It must be the philosophy of the persons of the  
7 head of the organization, the department head. And when you  
8 take its component terms, community policing, you're not  
9 saying policing policing. You're saying community policing  
10 which says as a lead in is that the community must take  
11 charge of the policing services that they have within their  
12 midst.

13                      Police officers are public servants. They are  
14 not an entity unto themselves. As such, they are there to  
15 serve the public, which means that they must be  
16 understanding what the public wants, and they must give the  
17 public what they want and be responsive to their needs. So  
18 again, it's a philosophy. And that philosophy must be  
19 driven home by the department head.

20                      NOBLEE, over the last three years, has been  
21 going throughout this country teaching the basic tenets of  
22 the community policing. I'm one of the lead instructors in  
23 that area. I just came back from Philadelphia last week,  
24 and we're out preaching the tenets of community policing as  
25 a philosophy, the program aspects of it, and then also the

1 community partnerships that must come out of it. Because a  
2 police must act in consort and in a partnership with the  
3 public to ensure that we do the job they want us to do, not  
4 the job we want to do.

5 Q Can you give some concrete examples of how  
6 minority communities benefit from that philosophy?

7 A Well, I think the primary way is to do away  
8 with the credibility and the trust gap. I think out here in  
9 Los Angeles there's a tremendous trust gap between law  
10 enforcement and the general populace. Even though persons  
11 would say that really there isn't, there is. There's a  
12 tremendous trust gap because I think that a number of  
13 minorities, black and brown, have had problems with the  
14 police.

15 I myself, being reared for the latter part of  
16 my high school years in Los Angeles, I had my problems with  
17 L.A.P.D. It was probably the reason I didn't get on  
18 L.A.P.D. I had to go out into the suburbs and get a job.

19 But there's a distrust factor; there's this  
20 discrepancy factor; there's this "will I be treated  
21 correctly." And then when you bring up and come move  
22 fast-forward in 1991 and you see what you saw on  
23 television -- and no matter how many times it was played,  
24 that's a fact. That is not an aberration. Your eyes are  
25 not lying to you. Rodney King had a tremendous disservice



1 that was done to him.

2                   And when you got all of that -- and the police  
3 many times do not live where they police. They are a combat  
4 army that comes in, and they take care of business, and then  
5 they go back to the so-called safer suburbs -- when you have  
6 all of that, minorities are definitely -- and people of  
7 color are definitely going to have a problem with how they  
8 look upon policing services.

9                   So this philosophy in a program aspect of  
10 community policing is so important to cut into that and  
11 enhance that trust, enhance that credibility. Because you  
12 get to know the person and know they're human and things  
13 like that.

14                  Q       Well, to follow up, and I see that during your  
15 interview with Commission staff you indicated that, quote,  
16 "cultural diversity issues are almost synonymous with  
17 community-based policing in the sense that police-community  
18 relations are involved." Can you explain that?

19                  A       Oh, yes. You have to have a police force that  
20 mirrors the population that they serve. Otherwise, you're  
21 not going to get, I think, a real intense flavor of what  
22 policing is all about.

23                         By coming from South Central Los Angeles, I  
24 understand, that at that time as being reared, what a lot of  
25 the problems were in that particular community. I wasn't

1 coming from outside. I lived there. I was reared in that  
2 community, and I went to school there.

3 As such, I knew a lot of the problems there. I  
4 knew a lot of the people. They knew my first name. They  
5 knew me; I knew them. They knew where I lived; I knew where  
6 they lived. And so you could cut right through, as you  
7 might say, cut to the chase to ensure that you can resolve  
8 issues and situations.

9 The diversity issue is so important because it  
10 is not so simple today to just say it's a black or a brown  
11 or a white or an Asian. There are the many cultures within  
12 that come from all over. And with that diversity in its  
13 richness, it's not a melting pot. But the riches that you  
14 have there, I think, makes for a much better policing  
15 service.

16 And that policing service is not just about  
17 incarceration, but it's prevention, intervention and  
18 incarceration. But so many times so much effort is put  
19 toward incarceration, and there's forgetting of the first  
20 parts, which are prevention and intervention.

21 Q Well, I just have one further question, and  
22 it's prompted by what I would consider to be a rich resume  
23 of experience in the issue of labor/management issues in the  
24 law enforcement area. And I would just like for you to tell  
25 us, for the record, what approaches promote cooperative

1 atmosphere between police unions and police management?

2 A That's kind of interesting to ask me that. My  
3 union just took a vote of no confidence against me.

4 Q I was unaware of that. That's not why I asked  
5 the question.

6 A Yeah, the primary thing is recognizing that  
7 there are labor issues and there are the management issues  
8 that must be dealt with. And one cannot lord it over the  
9 other. There must be meet and confer in good faith. There  
10 must be collaboration and cooperation.

11 And the thing of it is that, you know, I really  
12 get -- what really gets to me is a community does not hire a  
13 police association president, secretary/treasurer, Sergeant  
14 at Arms, our police officers do. Now, after one becomes a  
15 police officer, then they begin to vie for those positions  
16 after they've been there for a goodly period of time.

17 And what happens is that people forget why you  
18 came into this job. You didn't come in to be a union rep.  
19 You should have come in to follow the tenets of the code of  
20 ethics and to protect and serve that community and be  
21 responsive to its needs.

22 What happens many times, though, is that the  
23 union philosophy and direction takes hold in this  
24 adversarial process. And instead of being concerned about  
25 the communities, there's more concern for the union than for

1 the community they serve.

2 It doesn't have to be adversarial, but it is in  
3 many instances. What you'll see here in Southern  
4 California, and probably in California in general, mirrors  
5 what you find in places across this country, with F.O.T. and  
6 things like that. Doesn't have to be, but it is.

7 MR. HAILES: Vice Chairperson, I have no further  
8 questions.

9

10 EXAMINATION

11 BY MR. ANDERSON:

12 Q Okay. Well, thank you for appearing before us  
13 today. I think one of the reasons that your testimony can  
14 be so helpful to us is your long experience in law  
15 enforcement and your experience with NOBLEE and the fact  
16 that we have not had many witnesses with your experience  
17 testifying before us, either in this hearing in terms of Los  
18 Angeles or in the other hearings we've had in New York and  
19 Chicago and other places.

20 We have, or at least I have, been told in  
21 discussions with other chiefs of police that criticism that  
22 they receive about community policing is that it is not the  
23 most efficient use of police resources. That instead of  
24 being involved in the investigation of crime and the  
25 apprehension of criminals, they're out doing sort of

1 community projects.

2 How do you respond to that?

3 A Hogwash. The chief doesn't know what he's  
4 talking about. It's a very efficient use because you're  
5 talking about bringing the community in to help you resolve,  
6 not your problem, but their problems. And you're working  
7 together in cooperation and collaboration toward resolving  
8 the community's issues.

9 These are not your issues. You're just hired  
10 as a public servant to assist them in doing their thing.  
11 Way back when, everybody was a part of a police department,  
12 male and female. But what happened is that it became a paid  
13 profession. And so people who didn't want to do that paid  
14 profession did something else.

15 Over time what has occurred is that people have  
16 shoved all of America's problems, I believe, social and  
17 otherwise, onto the police because, as the kids would say,  
18 we're 24-7. We're the most visible arm of government. And  
19 other people have shied away, become apathetic, and have  
20 allowed themselves to become intimidated by people in the  
21 community -- the gang members, the drug dealers.

22 Well, when you bring that community in and  
23 you're willing to sit down with them and you respect that  
24 community, that they have sense and intelligence and they  
25 got smarts and they know how to eradicate problems within

1 their community, you're going to be much more richer for it.  
2 Now, I understand what those chiefs are saying.  
3 But I say hogwash because they really don't want to give up  
4 their power. And there's tremendous power in the police  
5 being the persons who say "I know it. You just stand back  
6 and let us do our job, and we can do it better than you  
7 can." And I will tell any chief to their face or  
8 commissioner that you will have a much easier job if you  
9 bring the community in and work with them in resolving  
10 issues. I have to say hogwash.

11 Q So you don't find, as you allocate resources in  
12 your department, that community policing affects the  
13 allocation of resources so that sufficient resources are not  
14 allocated where they're needed --

15 A No.

16 Q -- in your judgment?

17 A No. And the reason I say that is that if we  
18 hadn't received the money from President Clinton, we would  
19 have still done what we're doing now.

20 We have eight lead officers out of 160  
21 officers. We have eight lead officers in a town ten square  
22 miles, six and a half livable square miles of livable area,  
23 you would say. And we have these eight lead officers, and  
24 they are providing the service that I want them to  
25 provide -- problem identification, problem resolution, and

1 working intensely with the community.

2 Q What kind of things does an officer learn  
3 through community policing in terms of listening to the  
4 community in terms of what they want done as opposed to  
5 beginning to understand who lives here and who operates this  
6 business and that kind of thing in terms of the priorities  
7 of issues of what needs to be done? What do they learn from  
8 that?

9 A I think the primary thing the officer should  
10 learn is that instead of them taking the lead, they work to  
11 develop leaders within their beat area. We've got four beat  
12 areas in Inglewood. They work to develop leaders within  
13 those beat areas, and they work in consort.

14 And after a while they are stepping to the rear  
15 and letting those developed leaders move to the forefront  
16 and in resolving the community issues and pretty much coming  
17 to law enforcement and saying can you help us with the  
18 resources.

19 See, I believe community policing is just a  
20 small part of a larger turn of community-oriented governing,  
21 not just policing but community-oriented governing. And so  
22 instead of us taking the lead, that the people in that  
23 community take the lead to resolve their issues.

24 Q Several decades ago we heard a lot of talk  
25 about winning the hearts and minds of communities. Now, I

1 don't ask you to respond in terms of Inglewood, but just in  
2 general. Do you think that in American communities there is  
3 that sufficient alienation that we really need an intense  
4 program to win the hearts and minds of the community behind  
5 the law enforcement effort?

6 You talked about community policing in terms of  
7 credibility and trust gap, overcoming that gap. Do you  
8 think that's a narrow gap or really wide gap?

9 A It's a narrow gap in some areas, and in some  
10 areas it's very wide. It's a chasm. But I think it's  
11 growing because each and every day you're finding out that  
12 law enforcement at some level, be it local, state, or  
13 federal, is doing something that people are saying, wait a  
14 minute.

15 And you know what I find so interesting, sir,  
16 is that in the past, it pretty much was people of color,  
17 black and brown, Asian. And now it's Caucasians who are  
18 saying -- they're saying, "Wait a minute. I'm beginning to  
19 have some problems with how our police are doing their job."

20 And this is from traveling over this country in  
21 the last three years in a whole bunch of little cities and  
22 medium and large cities. A lot of people are beginning to  
23 wonder really what law enforcement is doing and how they're  
24 going about doing their job.

25 And for sure in Southern California. I mean,



1 we've been bombarded with this problem for about the last 10  
2 to 15 years. I won't say it's the hearts and minds -- I  
3 think wins the hearts and minds. I think it's a matter of  
4 really reestablishing who the officer is and what the  
5 officer is all about.

6 Q Assuming for a moment that part of this is the  
7 way the officer is doing his job that is out of whack --  
8 could be the citizen's perception is out of whack -- but  
9 assuming for a minute that part of it is the officer's  
10 conduct, what would you say gives rise to that conduct?

11 Is it racism? Is it police culture? Is it the  
12 lack of training? Is it too much stress? How would you  
13 describe why there is this divergence between public  
14 expectation of what should be done and the reality or the  
15 perception of what's going on?

16 A Lack of leadership at the top of police  
17 agencies across this country. When you see something that  
18 you know is wrong and you've been trained like a majority, I  
19 would think, of most police leaders across this country, and  
20 you fail to stand up and say that's wrong, and I'm not going  
21 to be concerned about the liability cost for my  
22 jurisdiction. We're going to right the wrong. And people  
23 know of themselves that it's wrong and saying if I can see  
24 it's wrong, and I think I'm a reasonably intelligent person,  
25 why can't you Mr. or Ms. Police Leader see that that is

1 wrong and be willing to step up and be counted. Lack of  
2 leadership.

3 Because, see, if you have a proper leadership,  
4 then all these other things you've talked about fall into  
5 place. Comes back to leaders. It comes back to leaders  
6 standing up in 1991. Stands up to leaders in Houston  
7 standing up with some of the issues that were occurring down  
8 there.

9 Things that are occurring at the federal level  
10 and the state level and things like that, standing up and  
11 being counted and saying that's wrong and we're going to do  
12 something about it instead of saying, well, okay. It will  
13 go away. Blind eye, apathy of walking away and things like  
14 that. Lack of leadership.

15 Q How important is monitoring complaints against  
16 officers, being able to track that?

17 A Oh, I think it's huge. You have to do that to  
18 make sure that the officers are responding correctly. 31  
19 years, I'm here to tell you, if you don't have a monitoring  
20 system, if you aren't investigating religiously citizen  
21 complaints, not to hang an officer, but to ensure that your  
22 department is doing things the correct way, it can cause a  
23 demise of an organization. Oh, yes, it's greatly needed --  
24 computerization in that particular area.

25 Then also I think another part of that is --

1 your mentioning stress, is a training module that needs to  
2 be generated, established, that after a particular period of  
3 time that officers go through maybe, you might say, a  
4 debriefing of stress over time and to show them a different  
5 way.

6 The streets of urban American and many other  
7 places, suburbia, also have become some real strong battle  
8 grounds out there. Officers are not immune to what they see  
9 over time.

10 Q Do you have confidence in the integrity of the  
11 complaint process for your department?

12 A Oh, yes. Oh, yes. The young man with me, he's  
13 one of the investigators, a sergeant. I have sergeants in  
14 that unit. And any complaint that comes in, I tell them  
15 their job while working directly for me is to ensure that we  
16 investigate that to the fullest.

17 And we're not going in there -- the charge  
18 isn't going in there with any kind of preconceived notion.  
19 You're going in there with a neutral mind to ensure you get  
20 all sides, and then we'll make the appropriate decision.

21 Q It's hard to ask you about other departments,  
22 but would you say that, generally, citizens ought to have  
23 confidence in that complaint process, or do you think it  
24 varies significantly from community to community?

25 A It varies significantly from community to

1 community. But I think what needs to occur is that the  
2 citizens have to, when they know that a complaint should be  
3 generated and they receive a response back, they don't just  
4 accept that response, but check a little further.

5 I say to people make contact with your chief,  
6 with your sheriff or your commissioner, personally. They  
7 all have a phone, phone number. Give them a call. Go sit  
8 down with them and talk to them about that complaint after  
9 it's been resolved. And to make sure they understand that  
10 you take this seriously. This isn't just something that you  
11 just want to have looked into. Take that seriously.

12 Q I don't want to monopolize this. I just have  
13 two more questions, and one would be how you see community  
14 policing affecting the question or the problem of  
15 black-on-black crime.

16 A It can have an effect, but that's something  
17 that the black community's going to have to deal with. The  
18 churches, the schools, the little moms and pops who are in  
19 the community, the elders, the mothers of the church, the  
20 deaconess, as I was reared back in the south -- they're  
21 going to have to come to grips with that. You can't put  
22 that off on the police.

23 We've got some social issues that we're going  
24 to have to take and be cognizant of, and we're going to have  
25 to really decide which way we're going to go as an ethnicity

1 in this country.

2 With all the things that we see across this  
3 country, with the turning back of affirmative action,  
4 Proposition 209, California immigration reform, welfare  
5 reform, I think the black community's going to have to sit  
6 down at some point in their life and going to have to have  
7 some town hall meetings and stuff like that and really begin  
8 to come to grips with those things that affect our  
9 community, our village, and take the bull by the horns. And  
10 we can't put it off into community policing.

11 Q Well, then let me just ask you finally, what  
12 would you like to see this Commission recommend in terms of  
13 initiatives or reforms that might lessen racial tensions  
14 particularly as between police and community?

15 A I think for the police, a strong recommendation  
16 on leadership, leadership training. Just because a person  
17 becomes a police chief doesn't mean that they are the  
18 appropriate leader. Some people have just got it by  
19 default. Making sure there's appropriate leadership  
20 training. Making sure that --

21 Q Can I ask you where the leadership training  
22 ought to begin?

23 A First day the officer walks in. That's when  
24 you start making leaders, when the person's a follower. And  
25 you're beginning to identify those things and those officers

1 who are better attuned, moving up the organization and  
2 running an organization, first line, supervisors, management  
3 and command staff, that type of thing.

4 I think on top of that also is making sure  
5 that -- officers may not live in the community that they  
6 police, but they have a real strong understanding about what  
7 that community's about, and they're willing to take on the  
8 community concerns.

9 I think in communities that have different  
10 languages, that it should be a requirement that the officer  
11 at least begin to have an understanding of that language  
12 because if you understand the language, the culture, you're  
13 probably going to have much more affinity toward what that  
14 community's all about.

15 Then I think also is that there needs to be  
16 real examination of our officers after a particular time  
17 period. I look for officers who are caring, concerned,  
18 compassionate, responsible, and accountable -- those five  
19 things that come out of our code of ethics.

20 And after a particular period of time, five  
21 years or as the commission recommended, the Christopher  
22 Commission talking about us having a psychological  
23 reexamination to see if this person still should remain in  
24 this business or something else because this business is  
25 getting tougher and tougher.

1                   Those are the kind of things that I think that  
2 you ought to really be looking at. And then really examine  
3 through an evaluation process, not anecdotally, but a real  
4 examination process, of what community policing is all about  
5 from its philosophy as well as its program points.

6                   MR. ANDERSON: Okay. Thanks very much.

7  
8                   EXAMINATION

9 BY MR. REYNOSO:

10                  Q       Chief, I very much appreciate your thoughtful  
11 responses to the questioners thus far. I have a few  
12 follow-up questions on that.

13                   Let me tell you preliminarily that since the  
14 Commission was established in 1957, perhaps the most single  
15 consistent area of review by the Commission has been  
16 police-community relations. And the Commission was  
17 established in the 1950's; so these issues obviously have  
18 been of a constant certain to this Commission.

19                   I must say that until the last two or three  
20 years, when I've been receiving a great many phone calls on  
21 issues pertaining to civil rights and immigration, the calls  
22 that I receive most often, in terms of civil rights  
23 violation, had to do with police.

24                   And so it continues clearly in the modern era  
25 to be of great concern in the relationship of community to

1 police and particularly, of course, of people of color to  
2 the police. So I just -- I'd like to follow up on some of  
3 the Commissioner Anderson's questions.

4 Why is it that here we are in 1996 and we  
5 continue to see many of the same problems that we saw when  
6 the Commission was first established -- a sense that there's  
7 a division between the police and the folk that they serve,  
8 particularly when the folk that they serve are members of  
9 racial or ethnic linguistic minorities?

10 There's something -- you know, there must be  
11 something practically institutional, if you will. And  
12 incidentally, it's interesting that it's not always a matter  
13 of simply a predominantly white police force not  
14 understanding the minority community. The Commission issued  
15 a report in Washington D.C. where presumably most of the  
16 officers are African Americans, and there was a problem  
17 there with the Latino community.

18 So it's, as you had indicated earlier, a lack  
19 of sort of understanding. But we see this year by year.  
20 And it seems to me there's got to be something institutional  
21 about it to have the same problems recur decade after  
22 decade. You must have given this a lot of thought, both  
23 before you became an officer and in the 31 years since  
24 you've been an officer.

25 A No, I didn't give it any thought prior to



1 coming into this business. The thing I was trying to do is  
2 stay away from the cops in South Central Los Angeles. I  
3 came strictly because I had a wife and a couple kids, and I  
4 needed a job.

5 But it was then after I came in and some of the  
6 tenets that I learned under Dr. King, that if you are going  
7 to really look at institutions and change institutions, the  
8 best way to do them is from the inside out rather than from  
9 the outside in. And I came in as -- I'm a U.S.C. grad; so  
10 to be on U.C.L.A. on this campus is a little bit too much  
11 for me. But --

12 Q Save you some mileage to come here rather than  
13 go to S.C.

14 A It was really an eye-opener because what  
15 happens is that after you get inside, that culture can  
16 change the most jaded and the most optimistic person. It  
17 can change you to a point that it really does become us  
18 versus them if you allow it to happen.

19 Q Okay. But what culture --

20 A The police culture.

21 Q What in the police culture formulates the  
22 third -- it seems to me, in everything I've read, that "us  
23 versus them," which is exactly the opposite of what you were  
24 testifying earlier needs to be the relationship --

25 A Sure.

1           Q       -- as you said, the relationship ought to be  
2 one of the police being servants and through community  
3 policing, knowing who they need to serve.

4                   And yet many writers, as you know, indeed point  
5 to that culture of -- some call it the bunker mentality of  
6 us versus them. And we see that quite often. Actually, we  
7 see it in Los Angeles when there's a sense that the present  
8 chief is not, quote, supporting his troops, end quote, well  
9 enough.

10                   There's sort of a sense, you get particularly  
11 from the police person's union, that the chief is not being  
12 supportive enough of them because he's supporting the  
13 public. And somehow there seems to be that division. How  
14 does that come about? And I take it that's been around for  
15 some time.

16           A       It comes about really -- really subtlety. It  
17 comes about because of a strong military discipline as a  
18 part of it. A real negative. 90 some percent of the  
19 officers are responding to negative situations.

20                   Like a guy said in Philadelphia last week, he  
21 said, "No one calls me to their house to say 'I just wanted  
22 to tell you we're having a great day. Everything is going  
23 great.'" He says, "Nobody does that." He says, "They call  
24 us out on problems."

25                   And I think any profession where all you do is

1 deal day after day after day with negative situations, it's  
2 going to turn you from this starry-eyed person to a negative  
3 individual against "those people" and instead of realizing  
4 it's not like this.

5 Q Then institutionally how can a police force  
6 prevent these negative situations becoming so overwhelming  
7 that -- for example, a police officer who goes out is  
8 obviously also looking out for his or her safety and, two,  
9 very often sort of expecting the worst, because they so  
10 often run into the worst.

11 And yet when they run into individuals who are  
12 not predisposed to do the worst, there's a misunderstanding  
13 very often, and you end up with a good citizen who's never  
14 had problems with the police maybe being arrested or being  
15 pushed around a little bit. And then you have even a  
16 further breakdown of the relationship between that really  
17 superb citizen, in terms of never having problems with the  
18 police, and his or her feeling that the police is not out  
19 there to protect his or her interest.

20 So should there be something institutionally, I  
21 guess, is my question, once having analyzed that this is a  
22 problem in terms of how a young recruit goes from having a  
23 real sense of service to after a while viewing his fellow  
24 citizens suspiciously or expecting the worst, what should be  
25 done? Or what do you folks do in your department?

1           A        What we try to do and what we preach is more  
2 communication, more information. And if something happens,  
3 is that you will tell the citizen in full scope and breath  
4 as to what has occurred, why it occurred, and what you did  
5 and what you didn't do.

6           Q        I don't recall the details, but a few years ago  
7 here in Los Angeles, and just for a very short time, there  
8 was a very active -- they call them community relations  
9 unit. And one of the things they did was to go out to talk  
10 to groups.

11                   And I remember reading a newspaper report by an  
12 officer saying something like the following: "Gee, it's  
13 such a pleasure to go out and talk to a group that's  
14 supportive of what we're doing, interested in what we're  
15 doing, and considers what we're doing important."

16                   (A brief interruption.)

17           Q        BY MR. REYNOSO: I remember thinking to myself  
18 if more officers had that sort of encounter so that not  
19 every encounter or 99 percent of the encounters would be  
20 negative, maybe that -- if that could be institutionalized  
21 in the experience of every officer, not just the community  
22 relations officers, I thought maybe that might be something  
23 that could be effectively used to try to get away from  
24 whatever you folks have analyzed as the step by steps by  
25 which an officer after five or ten years ends up with a "we

1 versus us" mentality rather than "I'm hear to serve"  
2 mentality.

3 A Sure. That can occur. But you don't call the  
4 police out just on the positives. It's overwhelmingly  
5 negative. You call us only when you have a problem. You  
6 don't call us at any other time. And what happens is that  
7 it takes a lot of the "attaboys" to do away from the, ah,  
8 you know, whatever's.

9 And if a person is predisposed to believe that  
10 this neighborhood or this community is going to do a certain  
11 thing, then that's what the person is going to believe.

12 See, there's one thing that's left out of this  
13 equation that really -- and I guess we'll go back to the  
14 recommendation to you, sir, is really and an emphasis on  
15 education, formal education for police officers across this  
16 country.

17 A greater majority of officers today are only  
18 working the job, and they do not avail themselves of formal  
19 education on a college campus, which is one of the things  
20 that's so interesting about Inglewood. Is that that city,  
21 sergeant and above, will pay 100 percent of tuition and  
22 books for anyone who wants to go to any public institutions,  
23 including U.C.L.A., and 80 percent tuition and books if a  
24 person wants to go to a private institution.

25 Formal education, I believe, is a great part of

1 this answer as to how we get a better understanding between  
2 the police and the public.

3 Q Is it your experience, does an officer with a  
4 higher degree of formal education, does that officer become  
5 more resistant to the "we versus them" mentality, if you  
6 will?

7 A I think so. But then I think also the officer  
8 is not so subject to become a robot, automaton, but a  
9 thinker. And I believe that if you think things through,  
10 you can come out with a proper response, whether he's being  
11 told to do something and to go about doing it like you've  
12 always done it.

13 Q I describe myself as an operational optimist,  
14 and I am on most things. But I must tell you that I -- so  
15 often when public officials or private officials express  
16 surprise, it doesn't surprise me. The Rodney King incident  
17 didn't surprise me at all. The recent army incident of  
18 sexual abuse didn't surprise me at all. The Texaco incident  
19 didn't surprise me at all, I'm sorry to say. I guess I've  
20 been around long enough to see so many of those incidents  
21 that it doesn't surprise me. I always hope for better.

22 But so I want to shift just for a few minutes  
23 to the newer, but in some ways very similar issue having to  
24 do with integrating females into the police force.

25 Again, in Los Angeles, as you know, there have

1     been some studies made that indicate that the police  
2     department is having a hard time integrating females into  
3     the police force.  And you mentioned in the very first part  
4     of your testimony that it didn't surprise you.

5                     Why does it not surprise you that the L.A. --  
6     I'll just speak about L.A. because that's what I read  
7     about -- the L.A.P.D.'s having a hard time integrating  
8     females into the police force?

9             A        I don't know about L.A., but I can talk in  
10    general.

11            Q        All right.  Sure.  That would be more helpful.

12            A        The people who are doing selecting, the people  
13    who are doing the questioning, the people who are  
14    predominately part of the assessment center process,  
15    whatever you name it, are men.  I think if you change that  
16    around and you had an equal distribution of men and women,  
17    you'll have a much more positive response, I think, across  
18    this country.

19                     One of the things we're trying to do in our  
20    department is that persons in charge of our personnel hiring  
21    is one of our women sergeants.  The person in charge of our  
22    training is a woman sergeant, to give a different  
23    prospective on things.

24                     Now, that does not mean automatically, but I  
25    think it sends a different message that we are not willing

1 to do business like we've always done business. I think  
2 when you have people on there who are different from the  
3 folks you've always had on there, you bring a different  
4 outlook. You bring a different prospective onto what  
5 questions are being asked. Certainly things that were being  
6 said before will not be said at this particular point  
7 because of a great representation of diversity of gender  
8 wise.

9 Q I've read it is your experience that in many  
10 situations female officers are more effective than male  
11 officers because they're not quite as confrontational; that  
12 is, they seem to be able to make an arrest without having to  
13 use force and that sort of thing. Or is it your experience  
14 that they -- that is pretty --

15 A I think so. I think so. And if I had my  
16 druthers, I would hire a greater number more of women  
17 officers than I would of men officers because of the less  
18 number of citizen complaints, the less confrontations, the  
19 less number of challenges that you have out there in the  
20 field.

21 Q Assuming that any court challenges to Prop. 209  
22 are not successful, what effect is that going to have, do  
23 you think, on the ability of police forces like yours to  
24 bring in more women into the police force? Do you think  
25 that the process of integration has proceeded so far that it



1 will continue, or do you think there will be some lessening  
2 of those efforts if you can't overtly go out and say, you  
3 know, we need to recruit more women?

4 A I think it's going to all come back to the  
5 leadership qualities of the persons you have in those  
6 positions. Those people, if they are true leaders, they're  
7 going to figure out ways, and I'm talking legitimate ways,  
8 to still have a diverse community, a diverse force, diverse  
9 representation.

10 Q Finally, let me ask you about the leadership.  
11 You emphasized several times, and it is quite understandable  
12 that the leadership sets the tone. And indeed that was your  
13 response to any question on integrating on the basis of  
14 gender. The workforce, the same thing, I assume, would  
15 apply for race, ethnicity, language, and so on.

16 But there is a culture, as you indicated, in  
17 many police forces, maybe all of them, and sometimes -- and  
18 Commissioner Anderson was asking about management relations.  
19 I may be wrong, but I think I see that quite often, indeed,  
20 in the relationship that top management has with union  
21 representation quite often.

22 And we have seen sometimes efforts by top  
23 management to do more integrating on the basis of gender or  
24 ethnicity or race. And we certainly have seen efforts on  
25 the part of top management to do more community policing.

1 And yet sometimes we see resistance, particularly by the  
2 organizations of police officers. That makes it very  
3 difficult, it seems to me, to have the leader be as  
4 effective as one would hope because there's that tension.

5 So I just -- I guess I'm asking you to think a  
6 little bit more about whether leadership will always quite  
7 get you to where you've indicated we need to get because you  
8 do have those elements of resistance. And how do you  
9 overcome those elements of resistance?

10 A I look upon leadership really as a process of  
11 seeds ministry, is that you are throwing out seeds. And  
12 some of those seeds are going to land in the right places,  
13 and some of them are going to land in the wrong places. But  
14 over time --

15 Q This sounds biblical.

16 A -- it's going to -- it will give its increase  
17 with the watering and, you know, the fertilizing it's going  
18 to give it. And it's not going to be -- maybe you'll get a  
19 chance to see it, but it will occur over time.

20 And so what you have to be, I believe, is  
21 steady about your job. You have to recognize who you are  
22 and why you are in this position. And it wasn't because of  
23 just something that you found yourself as a leader of this  
24 organization.

25 You got to take your best shot, when you can,

1 of recognizing you're only going to probably be here a short  
2 time period -- probably a chief of police three to four  
3 years, which means I'm on the outside now going on the other  
4 side -- and you got to do what should be done. And you have  
5 to recognize what's right, I think, an internal sense of  
6 what's right, and take your best shot and do it. And the  
7 heck with those people out there who don't believe in what  
8 you're doing.

9 Q The naysayers.

10 A That is right.

11 Q And your message to me is that this will take  
12 time, but it won't get better unless you continue this  
13 leadership.

14 A That's correct.

15 MR. REYNOSO: Okay.

16 Counsel, any further questions?

17 MR. ANDERSON: I have no further questions.

18 MR. REYNOSO: Counsel, any further questions?

19 MR. HAILES: I have no further questions.

20 MR. REYNOSO: Well, thank you very much for coming.

21 Again, I'm sorry that we have a complicated process of  
22 having hearings and all that, but this actually completes  
23 our Los Angeles hearing, and we're very thankful for your  
24 testimony.

25 As I indicated at the beginning of my

1 questioning, this is one of the most troublesome areas with  
2 which this Commission has struggled since 1957. And I'm  
3 sure we'll continue to struggle with it.

4 But the testimony that you've given to us and  
5 the testimony we have previously, I think, will provide us  
6 the opportunity to come forward with some very positive  
7 recommendations to Congress and to the President and,  
8 through our reports, I think to the country as a whole.

9 So I want to thank you very much for coming  
10 this afternoon.

11 THE WITNESS: I'd just like to say also in ending, as  
12 long as you have humans, you're going to always have the  
13 problems that we are having. But I think it's a matter of  
14 guiding those humans to get the results that you want.

15 MR. REYNOSO: Very good. Thank you so much.

16 (A recess was taken.)

17 MR. REYNOSO: Could the public session please come to  
18 order. I understand that in the federal register we  
19 indicated there would be a public session at 4:00 p.m. It  
20 has been our practice to take names of those people who hope  
21 to testify and then hear as many as can be heard during the  
22 time that has been allotted for the public session.

23 It is my understanding that no witnesses have  
24 presented themselves to testify at this public session.  
25 Unless I hear otherwise from the staff present, and I do not

1 hear otherwise, I would like to call this session to an end,  
2 adjourn the session, both the session for the witnesses  
3 which we already had, and now this public session.

4 Thank you very much.

5

6 (Ending time: 4:04 p.m.)

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1 STATE OF CALIFORNIA )  
 ) ss.  
2 COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES )  
3

4 I, LYNN ZINK, CSR No. 9466, a Certified  
5 Shorthand Reporter for the State of California, do  
6 hereby certify:

7 That the foregoing proceedings were taken before  
8 me at the time and place therein set forth, at which  
9 time the witness was placed under oath;

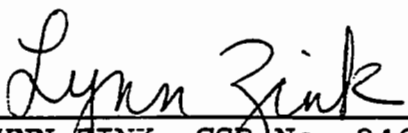
10 That the testimony of the witness and all  
11 objections made at the time of the examination were  
12 recorded stenographically by me and were thereafter  
13 transcribed;

14 That the foregoing transcript is a true and  
15 correct transcript of my shorthand notes so taken.

16 I further certify that I am neither counsel for  
17 nor related to any party to said action nor in any way  
18 interested in the outcome thereof.

19 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have subscribed my name  
20 this 18th day of November, 1996.

21  
22  
23  
24  
25

  
LYNN ZINK, CSR No. 9466  
State of California