



This is going to ‘sting’ a bit

The oddest phenomenon I think I ever witnessed time and time again was the small pile of money that seemed to last forever in a police locker room. The three quarters and maybe a dollar bill neatly stacked in plain sight on a bench. This small treasure would be so obvious that anyone who walked in would see it immediately. As the weeks went by, you would start to hear officers mumble “Yep, still there!” Eventually, it would disappear (we would believe Internal Affairs gave up waiting) or some copper or detective would finally snap, usually around the 41st day, and someone would blurt out “OK, I can’t take it anymore. I don’t care if it’s an Internal Affairs sting, I’m putting it in the coffee fund.” Maybe some PI would be told to book it by his PIII, just for a small lesson in integrity and to get a found property report under his belt. I am willing to bet that of the 54 times I have experienced that scenario, that none of them was an actual Internal Affairs sting, but the thought of it kept the money safe and sound for what would seem like an eternity. Cash laying around an LAPD locker room is probably safer than putting it in any bank, but don’t leave a pair of unmarked handcuffs out.



“Integrity is doing the right thing even if no one is watching.”

Was the above scenario ever a real “sting?” We will probably never know. But let me introduce you to a good friend of ours, a friend who would do such a scenario, or something very close to it just to keep us on our toes. Please meet EES (Ethics Enforcement Section) of SOD (Special Operations Detail) of IA (Internal Affairs). You’ve heard of them, right? If not, keep reading because you need to be aware that they are out there. If you decide to not do the right thing, you may pay for it dearly. EES comprises the hardest of hard cops, streetwise veterans, gumshoe detectives, seasoned and experienced PIIs from places like Newton, Southeast, Foothill, one bike cop from West L.A. named “Rusty,” detectives from SIS, snipers from SWAT and I believe a few CIA operatives with years of infiltrating the KGB, or not.

EES will usually be conducting these “stings,” or as they say, “Integrity Audits” on us, and for the most part they are simple to pass—if you just do the right thing and complete your duties as asked. Are you working the front desk? You may receive a phone call, “Hi, this is Jake from State Farm. I would like to talk to a supervisor and make a complaint!” Easy day, simply yell out, “Watch Commander, Internal Affairs, line two!” He or she will pick the phone up immediately, and you’re off the hook. How many languages do you speak? Do you know how to use the language line? Learn soon because you may receive a call from someone who you have no idea what they are trying to say. It may be EES, or it’s a citizen who needs help and reverted to their native language under stress. Either way, it’s a win for you if you do the right thing.



Don't get stung.

Do you think EES will conduct “stings” that are somewhat more complicated and with additional moving parts than the incidents above? You bet. Could you find dope in your “shop” at the beginning of watch? Could someone stroll up to you at a radio call and present you some dope or a driver’s license? Could you receive a radio call of found property with no callback number, and it’s a backpack full of cash or a few guns? How about a “415 man” who just happens to have skin color that is a different shade from yours and who is simply sitting on a bench with no ID?

Could other “stings” seem like borderline entrapment or a “wobbler” that would leave you confused on what to do? Do yourself a favor, just call a supervisor and let them decide. Here’s a hint for you. If you feel that what is occurring appears to be a complete waste of time, is completely going to interrupt your plans for a successful “Predpol day,” or it may take you off the street for a few hours at the price of less service to the community, there is a chance it’s a “sting” and you “shall” complete the task at hand. I’m not too sure, but I imagine having “failed an integrity audit” on your Teams report couldn’t be good. It may not hurt your chances when you put in for a lieutenant II spot at IA, but it sure will come back to haunt you when you ask to work the kit room for the last year of DROP. If the “angel” on one shoulder and the “devil” on the other start arguing on what to do, the hardest path is probably the answer, and you will thank yourself later.



Just do the right thing.

Are you IOD? Have you signed a contract with the Department promising that you will be a good boy or girl? Just so you know, there may be someone out there who's going to keep you on your toes with those also, and it won't be a phone call from EES. They may send that up to SOD, and if for some reason you fail, it will not be a simple "bad boy" entry on your Teams report that will prevent you from working the kit room. Engaging in work comp fraud or breaking that "contract" is a sure way to find yourself no longer employed with us. Within months, you may find yourself begging a retired cop for a job guarding a dumpster in an alley for just enough money to feed your kids for a week. I've seen peers caught. I've witnessed the shameful fall from grace and watched them disappear into obscurity and humility. Don't do it, and if you do and get caught and you decide to call me, you won't get much sympathy from me, but I will make it short and sweet and simply remind you of this paragraph and help you find a job guarding that dumpster. You will thank me for that opportunity.

Do yourself, your family and peers a favor, walk that thin blue line the best you can. If you decide to step over it too far, you may not be receiving many phone calls in the future, not even from EES. Please just do the right thing and don't be your own worst enemy. It's not worth it. I apologize if this brings your morale down even more, but I would rather see you grumpy and employed than receive that phone call from you.

Be safe out there.

If you have questions, feel free to email me at SteveGordon@lappl.org.