



This article is the first of a series of articles that I will be writing to express to the Department the unbelievable frustration of our men and women who just want to go to work and do the best job they can for the people who live and work in the city of Los Angeles, and then go home safely to their families.

Having worked the field for many years as a sergeant, I know how frustrating the job can be. I also know the frustration level has gotten progressively worse over the years because of demands placed on officers by the Department. The unrealistic due dates placed on them by management for projects, complaints, use of force incidents, ratings, comment card entries, and so forth make this job impossible to do.

The term “command and control” is now used frequently by management as a tool to place blame on field sergeants and watch commanders if an incident goes south. This only adds to field supervisors’ stress level because they know at any time they may become the victim of the blame game and their careers will be in jeopardy. I know of many great seasoned supervisors who are fleeing the field and going to administrative positions for career survival.

When this happens, the losers are the officers who work the field, the people they serve and the Department!

The following is written by a field sergeant in one of the busiest divisions in the city, but can describe the life of a field sergeant anywhere.

As always, please feel free to contact me at CraigLally@lappl.org, or call me at (213) 251-4554.

Being a patrol sergeant in 2017 has been labeled to be the worst job in the Department. I didn't want to believe that, but thinking about it, I saw the label slowly happening. Both lieutenants and patrol sergeants have said so. Some don't want to talk about it, but their actions of being assigned to a unit, a loan, an “inside spot,” is pretty evident, especially in their first six months of making sergeant.

A few of the things that are driving us crazy, I'm going to list below.

Complaint investigations: *Not the intakes, I understand those, but in Central Bureau, we are assigned to investigate complaints. That means we must schedule interviews of two officers, review BWV, review DICV and keep a chrono-log daily. Reviewing the BWV/DICV means that if other officers are present, they are now witnesses and must also be scheduled to interview. All this is done while listening to the radio because we are assigned to Patrol. If a citizen is involved, we must also schedule the interview with them. If we're unable to telephonically reach them, we must go to their homes. Again, this is going on while listening to the radio and handling calls in between our investigation. Even after the interviews are done, we must still try to find time to write up the interviews and put the investigation together between radio calls and days off. After doing all the above, the Department would like us to encourage, counsel and be there for the officers? I put myself in their shoes. Would I trust a sergeant interviewing me on Patrol? The answer is no. There is a conflict of interest, but nobody wants to deal with it.*

As a patrol sergeant, we are mentally drained on our days off, still thinking about what we must do administratively. I thought it was only me who did that, but after asking other sergeants, they agreed. This would have to be the biggest gripe.

Deployment: *We are short-staffed. Bottom line. I believe every sergeant should stay out in the field for at least the first year. Also, sergeants should not be made unless they have been to sergeant's school. How is it that a newly-made sergeant can sit inside for 2-3 months because they haven't been to sergeant school? We are regularly one in, one out. Not sure what can be done, whose fault it is, but we need sergeants in the field.*

Due dates: *We have BWV/DICV. Therefore, if there is a pursuit or UOF, we need to review all of them. The due date is the same for all divisions. We are pressured to submit by the due date, even though not all divisions have BWV/DICV to review. This problem has been mentioned, and the response was pretty much being told to deal with it.*

Ratings, action items, kickbacks, complaint intakes, some audits, pursuits, quality service audits, and uses of force are all the norm. We got this. Yes, this is part of our job.

It's funny, but as I am trying to type this, I'm listening to the radio because we are one in, one out (the norm). I'm covering a few of the things that have been tough on Patrol, but at the end of the day, I believe our mental stress is most affected. We have had some lieutenants copy everyone (including captains) in the division when our due dates are coming up, and even quote policy. Really?

It seems that recently, sergeants have been placed in the middle. It is always our fault, or we are always asked what we are doing about the problem.

At the end of the day, call me crazy, but I still love my job and I love working for the LAPD. But we have become that middle sibling that is counted for tax purposes, but everybody forgets about what we need. I made sergeant at 17 years, noting all the bad habits of the kind of patrol sergeant I didn't want to be, and remembering all the good experiences I have had with many. I

never just wanted to be the messenger with bad news. But we are forced into that position at times.