



‘The LAPD! The problem-solving Department of Los Angeles’

Is there anything the police aren't sent to these days to try and solve a problem? Especially if you're working Patrol (God bless your souls). Every one of us has had those "calls." The call that you realize within the first two minutes that "the police are not needed here, this is not a police problem," someone just needs to vent or rant. There is no crime, no emergency—nothing. You're just an ear for issues that affect that person. Being that we are marriage counselors, business dispute negotiators, child swap peacekeepers, etc. from time to time, being a therapist isn't that hard. Is it police work? Not really. Sitting in the shade having a cold drink between calls isn't either, but it seems to go a long way for our mental well-being. It's a vicious circle. Apparently, we are the "fix-all problem-solving Department."



One of my "solve my problem – 415 man calls" was a suspect who was supposed to be violent and out of control and destroying property. When we arrived, it was only "little Johnny" smoking marijuana, playing video games and refusing to clean the kitchen. Really? The lack of substance going on in "little Johnny's" life became an LAPD problem. Should I have spent the next two hours attempting to set his compass in the right direction for life and try to clean up his

first 17 years on earth? At what risk? The risk of him eventually spitting in my face and causing me to respond accordingly. Not a chance—it's career survival mode of 2017. "Here's a business card, Mrs. Smith, maybe you can bring 'Little Johnny' down to the station (naming a different division than mine), I hear there are some cadet openings. Have a nice day." Can you blame me? Her problem eventually became my problem and it was solved by some verbal judo and a business card. Let's go get that Slurpee. Yes, cynical and callous. It is needed for survival. Is it the level of service Mrs. Smith was looking for? Is it worth the risk to our careers for a problem we shouldn't be involved with in the first place?

Everybody who's anybody out there has an issue, and, it appears that more and more of those issues become an LAPD problem. If we didn't have the crime that we must deal with and society was the peaceful paradise we all want, I could see us mowing lawns and/or taking kids to school for folks—it does say "To serve" on the side of our car. The "protect" part? Oh yeah, we will get to that after I'm done speaking with "little Johnny," handing out food to the homeless and stopping addicts from overdosing. They might as well give us cash to hand out with our business cards.

If you haven't figured it out by now, there is a part of society that either doesn't like us and/or would like us to solve their problems, whatever they may be. Mrs. Smith may not have been over the moon with satisfaction on how I dealt with "little Johnny," but can you imagine how she would have reacted if I used a half can of pepper spray on him, broke her coffee table and "dry stunned" his hair straight with my Taser? Looking back, I believe my business card was a home run! How I handled that call could have had ramifications that would have affected us all. Yes, I had that much power, and so do you. "Pick your battles wisely" has never been so true as it is in 2017.

This dissatisfaction with the police (LAPD) doesn't stop there with this small population of society, right, wrong or indifferent. It affects every aspect of our organization, from the "PII Dogs" who take the brunt of the discontent, through the watch commander and our chain of managers, to within spitting distance of the Police Commission. I have witnessed it. I have heard the vilest and disgusting offensive words directed at the Police Commission, the Chief and the Inspector General that would cause most of us to possibly react less than diplomatically than we would like. During one Police Commission meeting, I half expected the Police Commission president (Matt Johnson) to jump over his bench and glory stomp one individual for what was directed at him, and I most likely would have cheered him on for doing so—yes, it was that bad. What caused this person to say such things and act this way? One of us killed her son. She was trying to get a reaction, and thankfully, he didn't oblige her.

Could the son of the lady above have been "little Johnny" later in his life? Maybe, maybe not. But could I have at least given it the old college try and spent that two hours with him trying to get him to clean the kitchen and smack myself a few times in the head with my PR24?

Even if our actions are completely justified, someone will not be satisfied with the outcome no matter that 99.9 percent of our police encounters with the public are within policy, justified and well within the parameters of constitutional policing. It's that .1 percent that always seems to bite

us, and in an attempt to become perfect for that .1 percent, we will continue to try and solve their problems—and even then, they will most likely still not like us.

Be safe out there.

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