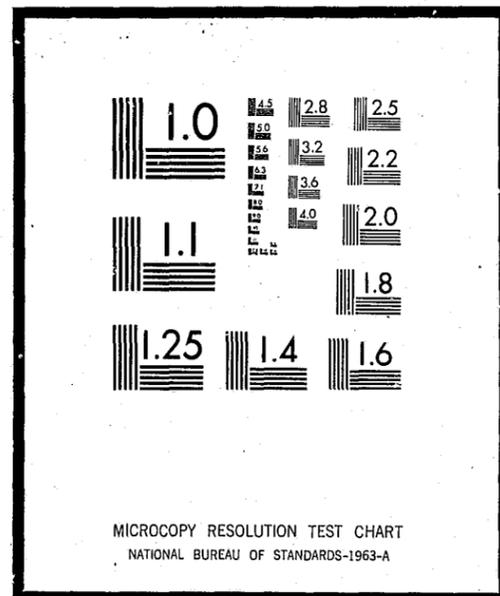


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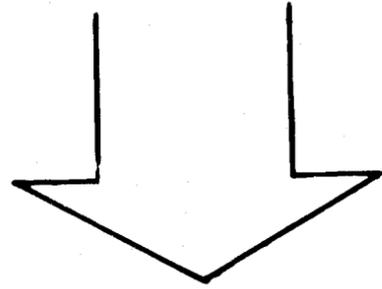
DEVELOPING A PROGRAM OF POLICE-PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS IS OUTLINED FOR THE PURPOSE OF GAINING AND MAINTAINING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE.

ABSTRACT:

THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF POLICE-PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS IS EXPLORED AS A FOUNDATION FOR REPORTING THE-STATE-OF-THE-ART IN MISSISSIPPI. ON THE BASIS OF SURVEY FINDINGS OF POLICE AND PUBLIC ATTITUDES IN THE STATE, THE REPORT PROVIDES GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND IMAGE OF THE POLICE PROFESSION AND FOR ESTABLISHING A POLICE-PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM.

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# HOW TO GAIN AND HOLD **229** PUBLIC CONFIDENCE THROUGH EFFECTIVE POLICE-PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

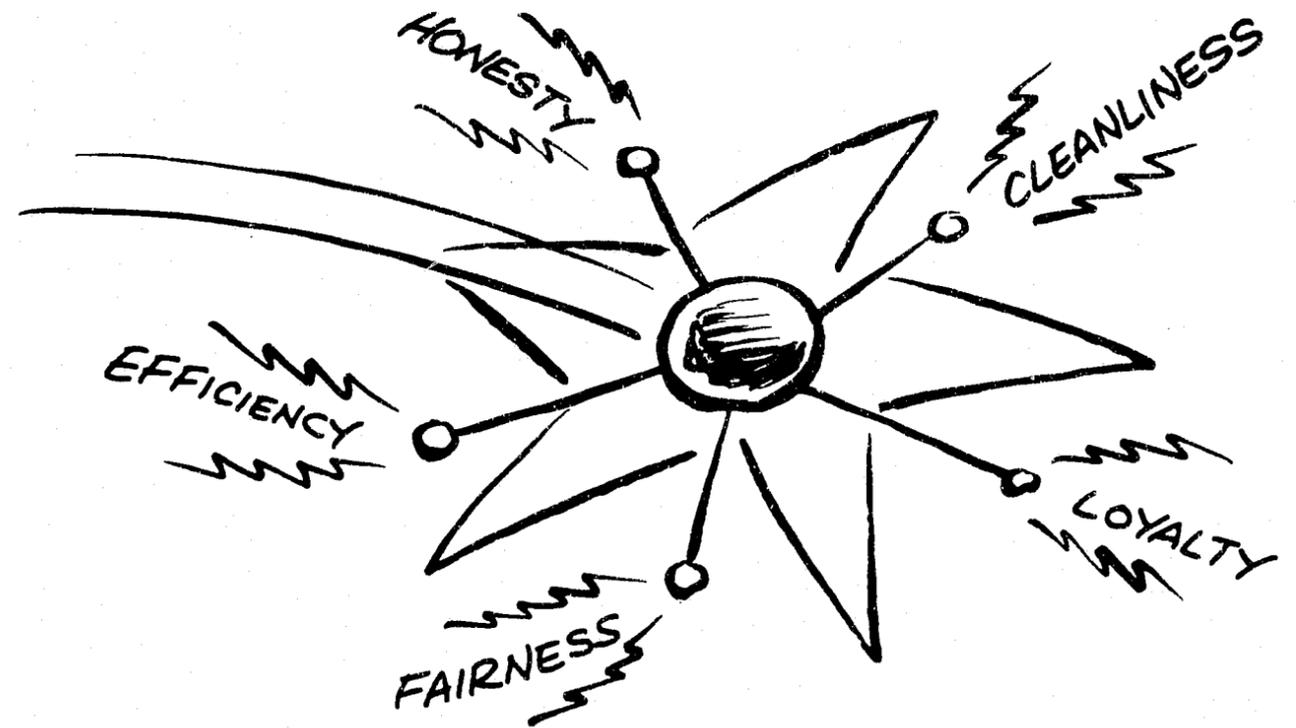


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ADMINISTERED BY THE U. S. JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

## POLICE-PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS



### ARE YOU ON THE RIGHT CHANNEL ?

## FOREWORD

This publication was developed by the Department of Law Enforcement Research of Itawamba Junior College, Fulton, Mississippi under grant No. 229 of the Office of Law Enforcement Assistance, U. S. Justice Department, Washington, D. C. The project represents an effort to upgrade the image of Mississippi law enforcement through the cooperative endeavors of the police, the public and the press.

The decision to develop this publication was made largely because the authors felt Mississippi law enforcement has not always appeared in its best image. Closer association with the masses and the exposure of state officers via national press media seemed to dictate that study be made to assist the local officer.

This publication is the result of the assistance and encouragement of many people throughout Mississippi and even the nation. It is the climax of what the authors deem to be a comprehensive survey of law enforcement, the public and the press in Mississippi. Attitudes and comments revealed in the surveys do not necessarily conform to the idea of the authors.

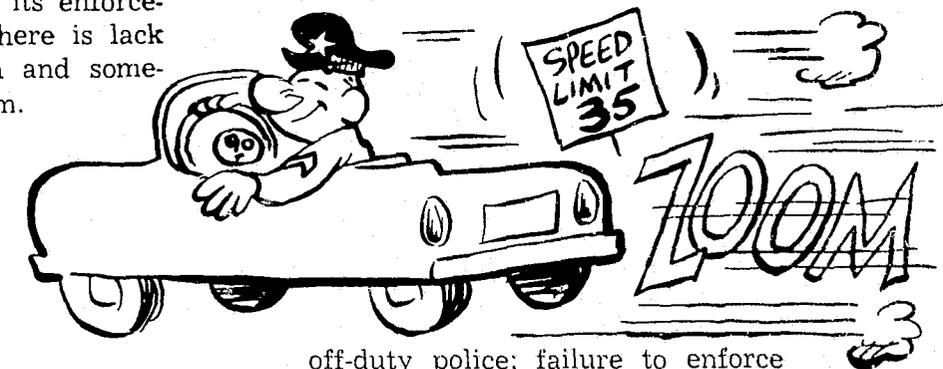
The assistance of the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Association, its executive committee and of those dedicated individuals who served on our advisory committee is gratefully acknowledged.

William T. Miles, Director

Sam H. Allen, Jr., Assistant Director

# What Is The Problem?

People in the United States are alarmed today because they no longer feel safe on their streets and in their homes. Every day we hear and read about incidents of murder, rape, robbery, purse-snatching and assault. Theft of automobiles for fun and profit is on the increase and every car owner . . . and that means most of us . . . must take extra precautions to guard against being a victim of this crime. There is disrespect for law and its enforcement officers. Often there is lack of confidence in them and sometimes even fear of them.



**How did we get this way?** We could point to many reasons which are beyond the control of the police: lack of discipline in the home; general breakdown in morals, religion and respect for all authority; too much emphasis on material things which gives people the idea that they have a right to everything they want no matter how they get it; the poor examples which adults set for the young. We can also point to a distorted image of the police in the public press, untrue stories about them and unfair criticism of them.

Even though all the above is true, we must admit that the police are an important part of that adult world from which the young take their examples. And the police themselves on occasion have not shown respect for law or obeyed

the laws they enforce on others. If we are to improve law enforcement, increase respect for law and order, and present a better image to the public of the law enforcement officer, we must begin by being sure that our own house is in order. Just as we can point to errors by the public and the press we must also admit to errors by the police: acceptance of bribes and "kick backs"; traffic violations by

off-duty police; failure to enforce the law when the rich and powerful or one's friends are involved; being a bully with people who are unknown, or poor and powerless; poor administration of police departments; failure to record evidence and keep proper records; bickering, jealousy and lack of cooperation within departments; general lack of knowledge of the law and proper and effective procedure for enforcing it.

Respect for the police by the citizen and citizen cooperation have always been essential to good law enforcement. If we are to improve law enforcement and improve the public image of police officers, we must do three things:

BE GOOD  
LOOK GOOD  
LET THE PUBLIC KNOW  
WE'RE GOOD

The purpose of this manual is to: (1) look at the situation in Mississippi; (2) hopefully offer suggestions and recommendations based upon opinions and problems given to us in a three-part survey of law enforcement officials, mem-

bers of the press and the public; and (3) provide a guide which can be adapted by the local law enforcement agency to help improve communication between the police and the public and increase citizen cooperation with law enforcement.

# What is? COMMUNICATION?

Webster defines "communication" as an exchange of thoughts and opinions, a means of transmitting, etc." Briefly stated "communication" might be defined as the ability to make oneself understood and to understand. Nothing is really communicated until one or more persons hears it . . . reads it . . . or sees it and really understands it. Communication is a two-way street from the person doing the communicating and the person receiving it. The fact that a person makes an elaborate presentation does not necessarily mean that there has been communication.

What better example of real communication can be found than the relationship between a mother and a small baby? Notice how the mother fusses about, doing certain things to the dictates of a whimper, a cry and even undistinguishable mutterings. At least they seem to be undistinguishable mutterings to the stranger. Why is this communication? Because the mother and the child are so in tune with each other that the act of one dictates the act of the other. Constant contact between the two has

caused the mother and child to adjust and to learn to let the other know what is desired through the simplest forms of communication. Psychologists tell us that the child progresses only as it becomes necessary to achieve his own goal, using more elaborate forms of communication such as real words, later printing, writing or maybe even none of these in a silent effort to communicate, like pouting.

Obviously the mother-child relationship is much simpler than the more complex problem law enforcement officers face in dealing with their public. But the simpler the acts of communication, the more effective.

A definition of "police-public communication" might be defined then as the act of transmitting understanding from the law enforcement agency to the public and vice versa in such a manner that each is able to motivate the other to do something. The public may be encouraged to halt a public disturbance, provide information for an arrest, give court testimony, serve on juries, dispel a potential disorder, etc. The police may be helped

to understand youngsters better and to handle them more effectively, to correct errors in manner and procedure of which they are unaware and to provide protection in areas where it may be inadequate.

To share their ideas and emotions, their knowledge and wisdom, men must be able to communicate. The human organism without communication with other human beings would remain an animal. Civilization becomes possible and advances as communication advances.

# WHY POLICE - PUBLIC COMMUNICATION?

No matter how good a police department and its police officers are, it has some built-in public relations problems simply because it is a law enforcement agency.

James Craig in his "A Newsman Looks At Law Enforcement" said:

"The fireman image is a good one while the police image is a bad one. Firemen constantly get credit from the public for wonderful services . . . for saving burning homes . . . for rescuing a child in the smoke . . . for pumping out basements . . . for helping people in many ways.

"Meanwhile, police are passing out parking tickets, stopping speeders (and in many instances irritating and arguing with them) locking up drinkers . . . and doing many other things that the people involved do not appreciate."

The man who has to make people do what the law says they must do is not the best candidate for a popularity contest. Groups of citizens



who are opposed to what the law requires of its enforcement officers often try to give distorted pictures of the police. And parents threaten their kids with the police when they should be doing the disciplining. Thus the police officer has to work harder than some others to make himself respected and understood.

Modern times and the mobile criminal have required modern transportation techniques. Many

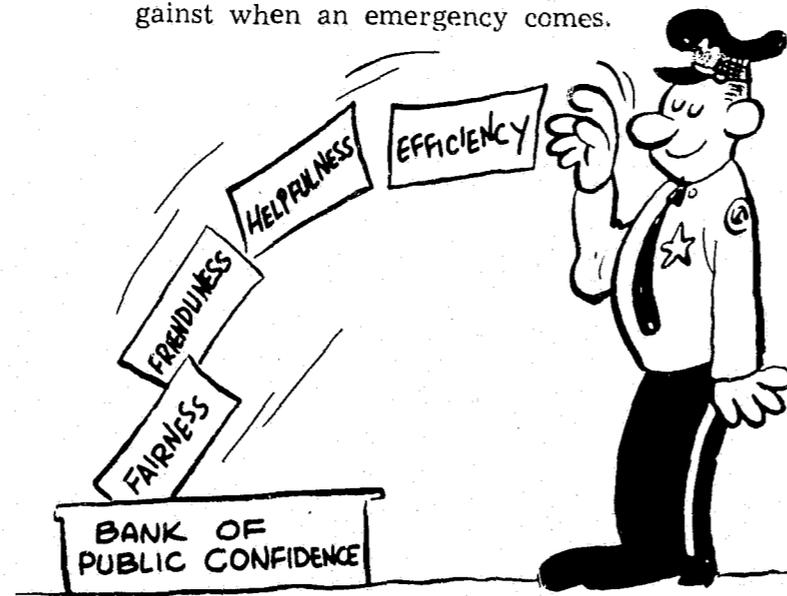
years ago, when police officers walked beats, there was no problem of communication between citizens and police. The officers knew almost everyone on their beats, and they in turn were recognized and respected by the citizens in their area. As the patrol function of police departments gradually became motorized, serious communication problems arose to the resulting depersonalization of police work. As the policeman was required to dart from place to place, underpaid, under-equipped and over-worked in most cases, the public began to see him as a symbol of authority who might punish them rather than a person who might protect and help them.

Another factor which has contributed greatly to the chasm which has developed between the police and citizens is the social revolution which has swept our nation during the past few years. As the visible symbol of a society which many citizens have come to regard as hostile and oppressive, police are the natural targets for pent-up frustration about housing, education, job opportunities and countless other grievances. Thus, for many, the image of the policeman has changed from the traditional one of protector and friend to that of the man enforcing the law of a society seeking to oppress them.

Much of the officer's communication with the public takes place during times of stress. It is not easy for an officer to keep a cool head under riot conditions when his own life is threatened. When a bad automobile accident has piled up traffic for blocks or even miles and there are seriously injured persons, the concern for human life is the first responsibility of the officer. In caring for the injured, the officer may appear rude, discourteous and even arrogant to the mo-

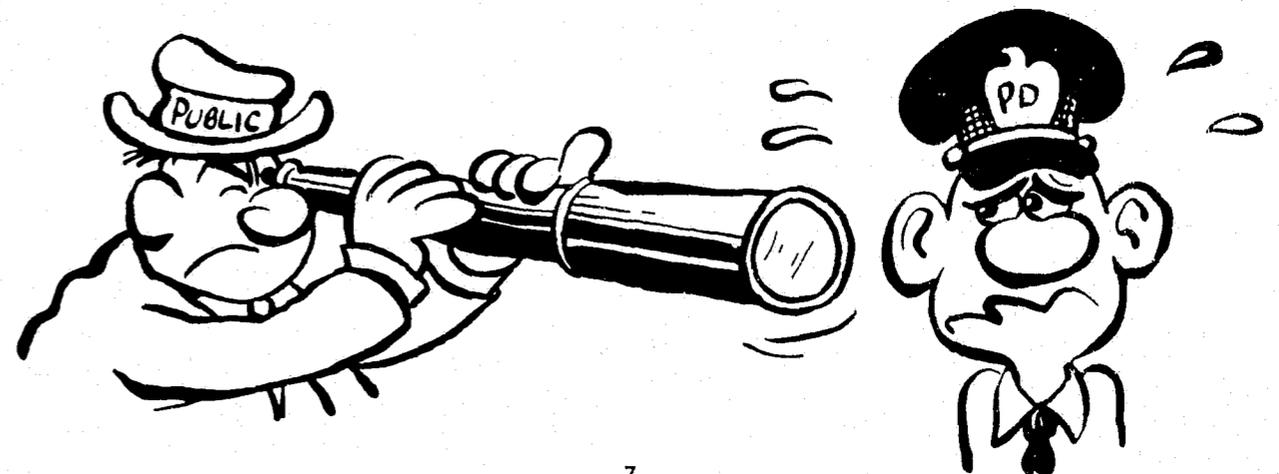
torist whose car may be hampering an ambulance from getting to the accident scene. Many times it is from situations similar to this that bad impressions are gained of the police officer. Obviously the officer does not have time to step back and see what would be the most popular thing he should do when an emergency presents itself.

The police officer is trained to enforce law and to protect life and property under emergency conditions. Generally he has had no training in public relations and communication. He is often left without a weapon in the court of public opinion. Good men, matched by professional training and equipment, backed by an organized program of police-public communications can reverse much of the misunderstanding and hostile attitude often aroused during emergency conditions. Since emergency conditions are not constant, the law enforcement agency has much time when the ordinary, routine, non-glamorous work goes on to make "police-public communications" work. By depositing daily to the bank of public confidence there will be a bank account to draw against when an emergency comes.



There are many urgent reasons for establishing communications with all facets of the public. There is growing public apathy and unwillingness to get involved with the problems of fellow citizens and communities throughout all classes of society. Even so, public-minded citizens have assisted lawmen by providing information and even physical support. It is the public who first comes into contact with the lawless element. The criminal lives close to someone, may work with someone, is related to someone, and so on. If the spirit of cooperation can be aroused in the ordinary citizen so that he will come forward as a witness, to provide information which leads to the arrest or better yet, prevention of a crime, then a communications program between the police and the public is effective.

Law enforcement agencies are supported by public funds usually administered by elected officials. Such public agencies are duly bound to report back to the taxpayers all the time. If the public does not believe that its law enforcement agency is doing its job effectively, fairly and economically, it will not provide the needed funds for more men, better equipment, shorter hours and the other things needed for an effective department.



A Mississippi chief whose community has suffered from racial incidents and general unrest which brought in a large number of the out-of-state press said in reply to our survey: "I have had trouble with free lance writers (those who write on speculation of making a sale). I have had no trouble with the regular press once I have been able to sit down with the reporters, show them courtesy and respect. I think the truth should be given to the press and the press should give the truth to the public." This chief added that he had been misquoted and even lied about in some out-of-state publications in order to build up the story.

Even with the local media there is often misunderstanding between newspapermen and the police. Effective programs to help ease the pressure from crime news which include articles and items of community interest involving the police

can change the public image of the police. The FBI has enjoyed outstandingly good relations with the press and in turn with the public because of what the mass media has said and reported about the FBI.

One very important reason for effective police-public communications is to be able to dispel rumors and half-truths before they erupt into violence as the case in Natchez in the summer, 1968, when the community became inflamed because word spread through the Negro sections of the city that a white man had killed a Negro youth. In reality there had been a disturbance between some out-of-state white youths and a Negro youth in which a Negro and a white boy were shot, but neither seriously. It took many highway patrolmen backing up the local officers and a week-long vigil to overcome the immediate problem.

In Chicago during the race riots of the spring, 1968, four rumor centers were set up so that citizens

could call any one of the four and be provided official information concerning the troubled areas. This reassured family and friends of residents of the city that things were under control and at the same time provided quick and efficient means of getting to the public with desired information such as curfews, etc.

When a recognized law enforcement official fails to inform the public quickly and effectively during times of peril, public reaction is to fear the worst. Such fear engenders vicious rumors often leading citizens to take the law into their own hands. The quicker an official can get before the public and present factual information, answering the questions of the citizens, the better chance law enforcement will have in securing support during the trouble.

Reasons for establishing effective Police-Public Communications might be listed as:

- (1) To re-establish the image of the law enforcement officer as a friend in need, a personality.
- (2) To instill sufficient public confidence in the police so that action by some under stress will not label all officers for all time.
- (3) To encourage public cooperation from citizens as witnesses, jurors, etc.
- (4) To arouse public support for law enforcement programs financed through public funds.
- (5) To erase any misunderstanding between law enforcement and its public before a situation gets out of hand.
- (6) To prevent crimes and disorders before they happen.
- (7) To keep citizens from taking law into their own hands.



# Report On A Mississippi Survey

In order to determine specific problems affecting Mississippi law enforcement agencies a two-part survey was mailed to each police department in the state. There was excellent response revealing a genuine desire to assist in achieving better law enforcement standards. In reply to the request for a

short summary on problems and ideas in individual communities "to insure that your department is able to effectively maintain community respect and law and order at all times" many observations fell into the general classification of needing more money, more men, more training, etc.

## What The Police Said:

Representative observations are included to show what Mississippi law enforcement views as major problems in different localities. In some cases what is being done is revealing. None of the departments is identified in this section.

"Educated, well-trained men, cooperative with superior and fellow officers, dedicated to law enforcement can and will gain and hold community respect."

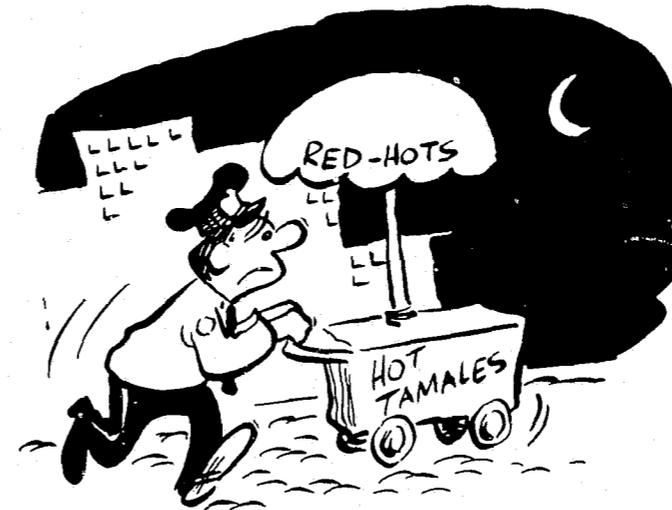
"Our policemen are all instructed to conduct themselves, at all times, in such a manner as will prevent any unfavorable criticism of them by the general public. This means while off duty as well as on duty. They are to make arrests only when the violation of the law justifies and are to apply the 'Golden Rule' at all times."

"By securing and keeping a well trained and a well disciplined police department, a community will respect law and order. Then meet with and talk to as many people as possible, as often as possible, and impress on the public what we are trying to do and why we are doing it, and why we need public support in order to reach our goal."

"My department can demand and get the respect of the majority of the people as long as the men conduct themselves as dedicated law enforcement officers. They must let the public know that they are public servants and will treat everyone alike-rich and poor. All officers should be clean in clothing, body and words at all times. The officer's conduct should be excellent at all times."

"We must maintain close contact with business, civic and educational groups in order to remain effective and to maintain law and order. These groups can assist police in maintaining good relations."

"The low salaries we have to pay our men force most to 'moon-



light'. When this is the case, the officer can not be expected to perform his job at peak efficiency."

"The first basic need for any department and community is to understand each other, that no person is above the law and that it applies to all persons regardless. Then the community should be aware of what the police department is doing."

"A handbook on criminal laws of Mississippi written in simple terms would help the officer. Often we are faced with the question whether something is technically a violation of the law, and we can't understand the legal terminology."

"We need more pay, more men, better retirement, training, better cooperation with other law enforcement agencies and better public relations."

". . . teach respect for the good guys again rather than encourage the extreme respect for the bad guys, hence neutralizing the problem of anti-father, anti-diety, anti-teacher, etc. We must teach more respect for the responsible, hard working, quiet and goal-minded individual rather than encourage respect and worship for the irresponsible, the escapist and mis-fit that is not a member of the solid, really productive group of the nation . . . they, luckily, still the majority at the time."

"To have a good department, one must be an officer whom people respect and the officer must respect the public. All laws must be enforced without favor and the officer must be honest, loyal and courteous and be of the attitude of helping those in need. Stand up for what is right, fair and honest and attend the church of your choice with your family as often as possible."



Impartial law enforcement to all citizens offers no favors to one class of people and gives none. Laws are made for everyone regardless of race, creed or standing in the community. All officers must conduct themselves in such a manner on and off duty so as to hold the respect of the community."

"The police profession is becoming more exacting with each court decision. Officers must be trained to handle certain situations on their own initiative and no longer can proceed on a department directive. This requires better educated men who demand higher salaries. The standards of the profession will have to be raised before the public gives to police the kind of respect officers should have. This will probably be the elimination of elected law enforcement officers."

"We need to be presented as the public's friend instead of many times today when parents are in-



clined to threaten their children with the law instead of disciplining them in a different manner and teaching them to fear us rather than respect us."

"I am an elected marshal but have to work in another town because I am paid nothing to en-

force the law. I don't even have an insurance policy in case of some misfortune. I collect the town's taxes for which I am paid a small percentage. So this leaves me in a position of feeling that my services are not too highly appreciated in respect to trying to do my duty as an elected officer."

Results from the survey revealed that 41.8 per cent of the departments claim some type of program through which they meet with some degree of regularity with school, civic and community leaders in order that the agency might acquaint the citizens with what is being done or what the department would like to do.

Programs described by the 41.8% ranged from sending an officer out to the school each day to help officials load and unload youngsters and to talk with school officials to community programs where representatives from all races and all classes meet weekly. The largest percentage of the programs were conducted on a monthly basis-45%. 41% were handled on a less than monthly basis, some quarterly, some when requested. 14% of the Mississippi departments described programs which met weekly.

Of those which maintain any kind of program at all, 86.7% were of the opinion the meetings were worthwhile and should be held. Only 6.7% felt they were wasted effort and 6.6% were unable to evaluate the program.

Although they amounted to only 27% of all departments, 64.3% of those which do have community communications programs of some kind attempt to get a genuine cross-section of the community including representatives of groups which may not support the law en-

forcement officer, agency or program.

In regard to dealing with the local press most departments had some regular contact with representatives of weekly newspapers. One-third of the departments said they held press briefings or interviews on a less than weekly basis. Almost all the departments where a daily newspaper is published had some kind of daily press session and the overall percentage was 22.7%. Fifteen per cent held weekly press meetings, another 15% had no answer and 14% reported no dealings with the local press.

However, the survey showed that 60% of the department believe that they have adopted some means of presenting official information to the press, while 26% do not, and another 14% did not feel that they had enough dealings with the press to warrant briefings.

Of the 78.6 per cent of the communities with news media representation which said there are no press briefings, 79.5 per cent said they thought such action would be worthwhile. Of the remaining 21.5 per cent some said that they felt briefings could be held as needed and that regular sessions would not be necessary.

In rating their local press, 57.6% of the chiefs of police gave a "Good" rating; 23.9% rated them "Fair"; only 18.5% rated them "Poor". The attitude of the law enforcement agencies revealed that they felt there was real need for press cooperation in their communities as 79% said they felt the press could help them do a better job in their locality. On the other end were 17.6% who did not think the press could help, and 3.4% who refused to answer.

Mississippi law enforcement apparently supports the theory of police-public communications as 57.4% of the departments said that they felt the public should know "everything except material which might prejudice a case or might aid the criminal." Ten per cent said they thought the public should know all the facts, but 6.6% didn't think the public should be told anything. Another 26% thought only what is revealed in open court should be public information.

On the other hand 74.2% believe a workable public relations program for a law enforcement agency is "one which provides programs so that the public can see law enforcement at work." Of the remaining chiefs 15.1% thought the best program is one which accurately presents everything to the public concerning law enforcement activities. Not answering were 10.7% of the departments.

The final question asked for an evaluation of police-press relations. In response 67.7% of the officers said they would consider that they had had no trouble with the local press. Another 26.1% said they had had some and 3.1% refused to answer.

From the answers to this survey, it appears that law enforcement agencies believe in programs where they can tell their story to the public and vice versa; that the press can be of tremendous benefit in this and that the best results are those where the public can see and evaluate law enforcement programs. A feeling of suspicion (often more characteristic of the veteran lawman) was detected in many of the answers in regard to including a general cross-section of the community in informational programs.



## WHAT THE PRESS SAID

Because the press in each community in the end will be called upon to play a key role in presenting the law enforcement program, a survey was sent to all newspaper, T. V. and radio station administrators in the state seeking their opinions in regard to community and press relations with the local law enforcement agency.

Since one of the questions to the law enforcement agencies asked about organized community-police communications programs and the majority endorsed the idea, one of the questions asked of the news media representatives was "Do you think regular meetings between law enforcement officials, civic, school, church and community leaders and the press would be helpful in improving police and public communications?" To this an overwhelming 93 per cent replied "yes".

From the 93 per cent 77 per cent of those felt that special efforts should be made to secure a general cross section of the community regardless of whether all supported the law enforcement policies. Twenty one per cent did not think this was a good idea and two per cent did not answer this question.

As stated earlier, the police departments indicated that some type of briefings were regularly held with the press. Apparently, however, the press did not feel that their police departments were really holding briefings as the survey to newspaper editors, radio and

television station managers revealed that only 21.4 per cent of those responding believed that their local law enforcement agencies were holding regular briefings of any kind. It is noteworthy that 100 per cent of the news media which reported that their law enforcement agencies hold regular briefings, thought the briefings were worthwhile and worth continuing.

As a matter of fact, a constant searching of the state's newspapers for the past few years had already provided indications as to which localities would rate their police agencies highest.

The editors and station managers were asked to evaluate the police-public communications program in each area as to "Excellent", "Fair" or "Poor". The majority, 51.8 per cent, gave a "Fair" rating, while 26.7 per cent gave a "Poor" as compared to 21.5 per cent which gave an "Excellent". Those grading "Poor" were asked to identify the reason for the rating. Sixty-six per cent blamed the chief of police while the remaining answers were distributed among such things as individual differences, etc.

Finally the press were asked two questions to determine willingness to support local law enforcement in an effort to upgrade the agency.

The questions were: (1) "Would you as a representative of the news media go all out to advocate better salaries, buildings, equipment, training, etc. if the department proves to you that it is trying to do its best through its various pro-

grams?"; (2) "Would you be willing to devote time and facilities to helping the department that is trying to help itself by conducting special interviews, features, etc.?"

To question one there was an 89.3 per cent affirmation of support and to question two there was a 96.4 per cent showing of willingness to help.

Respondents were given an opportunity to express any idea or thoughts they might care to pass along. Some representative comments include:

"The key to public communications is community participation, not just press releases. Responsible news media can offer the facts and present the programs . . . but don't just give us public statements. Show us something."

"Police officials should keep accurate radio logs and arrest records and make these available freely to news media. Reporters should study logs and records prior to interview with police officers so that no time will be wasted covering inconsequential cases."

"Briefings for the press could be held monthly in a small population county with special sessions called whenever something breaks. In my area the officers such as highway patrol, police, etc., who have had benefit of extra training do a pretty good job of dealing with the public. Those who have had no training make a mess of themselves and the law enforcement image. I think every officer ought to be required to attend the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Training Academy."

A more vocal supporter of the police blamed the U.S. Supreme Court for "opening a Pandora's Box".



"Generally speaking the law enforcement agencies tend to set themselves up as the decision maker about what the public should or should not know about its operations. This is based, in part, upon the lack of knowledge on the part of law enforcement as to the role the news media should play in our democratic society."

One newspaper editor was frank to admit that perhaps the lack of communication might be her fault as neither she nor the police officials in her town had tried to make contact on any regular briefing sessions.

"A well informed public is more likely to cooperate with departments if a good program of public relations is worked out. If a person is made to feel that he is a part of something, that feeling of belonging will make itself known."

"Our police chief acts as a henchman for politicians. Many of the force try to qualify themselves and do a professional job of work, but there are many obstacles and little encouragement. The department head hasn't the foggiest notion of public relations or departmental image."



## WHAT THE PUBLIC SAID:

In order to balance the opinions from law enforcement and the press, questionnaires were sent to names chosen at random mass mailing lists of persons living all over Mississippi. It should be noted that the names on these lists tended to be those of middle-income people. Therefore, the responses only reflect the opinions of all segments of the population insofar as names of all groups could be secured.

Here are the findings:

1. Mississippians rate their police favorable as 49.4% gave a "Good" rating in answer to "What do you consider the relations between your law enforcement agencies and the general public in your area to be?" Only four per cent gave a "Poor" rating as compared to 25.8% which marked their law enforcement-community relations as "Excellent". "Fair" ratings were given by 19.7%.

2. In response to involvement by representatives of law enforcement agencies in community, church and civic projects, 66.5% rated their officers active.

3. But respondents had to admit that 82.8% knew of no concentrated effort or program of cooperation between the major law enforcement agency in their locality and different groups within the community in order to exchange ideas and opinions.

4. A "Good" rating was given by 42.1% of the citizens to the question, "How would you rate the efficiency of the law enforcement agencies in your community?" One-third of the respondents rated their agencies "Fair" with 17.6% giving an "Excellent" rating as compared to 6% which marked "Poor".

5. Of the men and women surveyed 67% had never served as a witness or juror in a criminal case. Perhaps the unusually large number in this category can be partly explained by the fact that the survey was completed before Mississippi changed its law to allow women to serve on juries.

6. Of the total number of replies 94.4% answered "Yes" to the question, "Would you willingly give information to the police in order to help prosecute a criminal matter knowing that you might be called as a witness?"

7. The three most important expectations the public has of its law enforcement agencies, according to the survey, are: (1) enforcement of the law, honestly, fairly and impartially; (2) protection of life and property; (3) that officers be on the job.

8. From the individuals who wear the badge citizens seem to expect: (1) fairness; (2) honesty; (3)

courtesy and friendliness; (4) professionalism.

9. 42.5% of the replies said they believe their local law enforcement officials are doing a "more effective" job than their counterparts of five years ago. "About the same" was the answer given by 39.9%, while 9.9% thought their officers were doing a "less effective" job.

10. Personal encounter was the manner in which most of the citizens said that they had formed their image of law enforcement. In this category were 54.4% of the citizens surveyed. Second most important factor listed in determining the citizen's image of police was the national television and press. Local news media was named by 12%, while 5% said "others".

11. The age at which most people seem to establish their image of law enforcement is from 13-18 as 29.2% gave this group. The "young adult" years from 19-25 were second with 22.7% listing this division. The ages 5-12 were very close, however, as 18.5% gave this period. The ages 25-35 were listed by 13.3%, while 10.3% gave "above 35" as their answer.

It was especially interesting to note the willingness of the general public to answer the surveys and the completeness of their answers. Many of the respondents requested results of the survey. Some even volunteered information about unlawful activities in their own areas and provided complete identification of themselves, showing no fear in assisting law enforcement to clean up the situation.

While an overwhelming number of citizens were kind in their rating and comments, most did offer opinions and suggestions for improvements. Some representative comments are as follows:

"Treat each and every person as if he or she is a personal friend.

Don't pick on one and let another get away with the same thing."

"Law enforcement officers should realize that they are serving the public and should strive to improve their image by attending seminars, short courses, etc."

A Negro minister—educator commented, "I grew up in a society of people who adopted the attitude that any boy could be jerked up off a cotton patch, given a gun and a badge and made a peace officer whose primary job was to 'keep the nigger' in his place. I am glad to see that Mississippi is encouraging her officers to secure better training and this will eventually help overcome the distrust once so common for the white officer."

He added in question to cooperation from members of his race with law enforcement, "if the Negro citizen knows a man the police is after, regardless of how mean or bad he may be, they won't help the officer catch him, whether black or white. But if the Negro does not know the man the officer is after, he may be willing to help. Only the encouragement and persuasion of someone for whom the Negro has great respect can overcome the reluctance of getting involved."

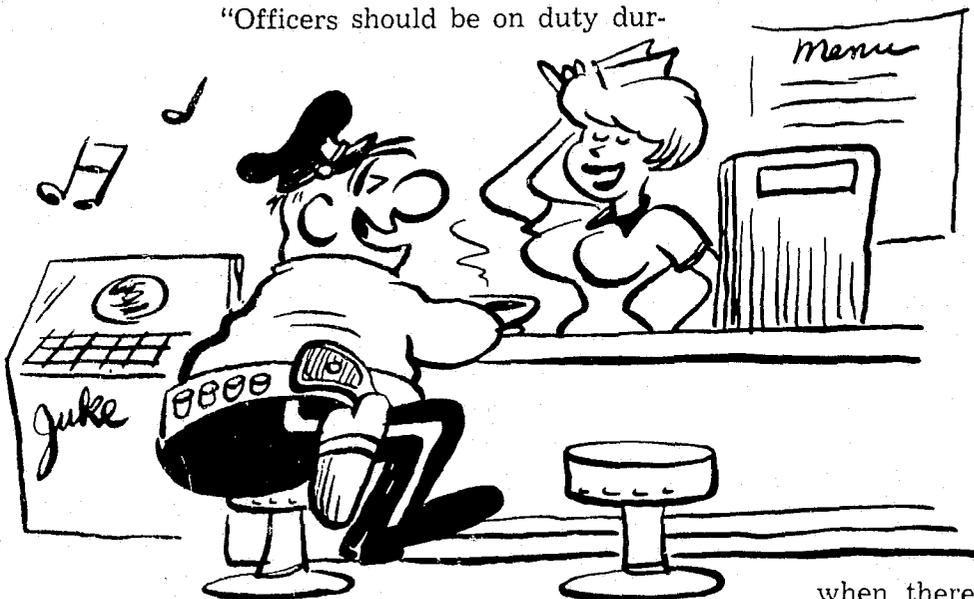
"A child should be taught, as early as possible, that a policeman is his friend and always ready to help."

"The American people will get just what they demand in law enforcement. As long as they are indifferent about this, they get indifferent law enforcement. I believe the average person couldn't care less about this as long as he isn't bothered."

"The way national television and the press show police in a biased and unfavorable light may contribute to crime in this country. I believe that recent rulings of the Supreme Court have encouraged crime by tying the hands of the police."

"Officials of the law would have a much easier time, if the parents of the younger generation would respect law obedience, setting a good example for the youth of today."

"Officers should be on duty dur-



ing their shift instead of congregating in restaurants."

"I'd like to see more appreciation of the efforts of our law enforcement officers and more cooperation with them. I'd hate to live in a place without an active police force."

"I believe our law enforcement representatives should be educated in the field and NOT POLITICAL PAWNS."

"The most important facets of law enforcement are cooperative efforts between all agencies and in

turn encourage fewer violations of the law. It is important that officers dress uniformly and be neat."

"One of the failures of adults in our society today is that we are failing to teach and plan for the next generation. This accounts for some of our young peoples' rebellion. They need a sense of purpose and responsibility for leadership in their generation. This comes from high standards taught by adults. It is impossible to legislate morals so we can't enforce laws

when there is no respect for law and order. The hearts of the people must be re-educated to respect and understand laws."

How can we have respect for law enforcement when we pay these people less than what I pay a janitor?"

"I believe that one of the most significant changes of law enforcement came with the power of the Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi. Some officers came under its influence, while others worked to maintain law and order against this element and the Black Power groups. The result of these several years of

turmoil has been an influx of FBI operatives and professional standards of investigation adopted by the Identification Bureau of the State Highway Patrol. These two agencies have worked closely with our poorly trained local law enforcement officers. Much of the professional training and manner have begun to influence the local officer. I believe that today the average local officer makes an attempt to approach his job with a more professional outlook than did

the officer of five or 10 years ago. They do this in spite of the lack of formal training. Their association with professional, trained law officers has been of lasting benefit. We need more professional training for local officers and a greater willingness to prosecute the crimes that are solved."

Law enforcement agencies should be allowed to carry out their duties without interference from minority groups."

'Remember Now . . . Be Gentle!'



COURTESY OF CAL ALLEY AND THE MEMPHIS COMMERCIAL APPEAL

## SURVEY SUMMARY

From the survey of police departments, findings appear to indicate a willingness on the part of local law enforcement to establish real communication with the public. However, many of the command level executives are unaware of just what this program should consist and some appear to feel that the public has the responsibility of establishing the line of communication with the law enforcement agency instead of the other way around. Instead of attempting to educate individuals or groups who may be giving law enforcement its most serious organized challenge, most departments seem to add to the hostility by refusing to attempt to communicate with them.

The survey of the newspaper, radio and television media seemed to reveal a lack of organized communication between the two groups, the press and the law. Because a high percentage of the citizens, according to the survey, form their impression of law enforcement from the news media, unpleasant relationships between officers and representatives of the press are bound to hurt police image in the long run.

Citizens were unusually kind to Mississippi law enforcement indicating that when properly informed and their assistance requested, the public is willing to respond physically and financially. More personal contact and attention were requested by the citizens. This can be accomplished through more community programs and varied activities sponsored by the police, and by giving prompt and courteous attention to requests for help.



# IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE POLICE PROFESSION

"Many times we call upon the public, city fathers, and Legislature to support our organization through increased budgets for pay raises, more personnel and added equipment. We cannot expect to get any of the above-mentioned items if we have not been an efficient organization doing the best we could with what we have.

"Police officers must be of the very highest type of professional people. There must never be a question as to his fairness, his honesty, or his firmness. A police officer must be trained and retrained. His own personal conduct can and must be an example to the rest of the society.

"Many people visualize an officer as a threat to their freedom rather than its protector. This thinking can be supplanted with a new concept of an officer as protector of that which is sacred and meaningful to every thinking person.

"Law enforcement is not a "game" but a part of the science of government designed for the rights of our people. We as police officers must realize our part in our system of government and live up to the standards the public demands.

"Police work requires strength of character. It requires clear thinking and sound judgment, physical and moral courage. Together, these qualities spell individual maturity. Regardless of the changes in laws or management theories, maturity will still be needed.

"In police work, if you had the opportunity to select your partner for a tough and dangerous job, you would look not to his family background or to his technical or academic knowledge or even past friendships, but rather to his judgment and loyalty under pressure.

"The supervisor can do much to improve the organization and better the profession through:

1. Good personnel selection
2. Proper inspections
3. A uniform designed for that particular department which is neat and attractive
4. Informing the public what you have done to improve an existing problem area. (EXAMPLE-Traffic picture in Mississippi over the same period last year)
5. Informing your own personnel of what is going on and how you intend to solve problem areas.

"Personal contacts or whatever way you communicate with the public should contain the following:

1. A speech by Giles Crisler, Commissioner of Public Safety, Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol, June 5, 1968, to the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Convention, Biloxi, Mississippi.

1. Are you considerate?
  - a. Have you put his feelings first?
  - b. Have you talked his language?
2. Is your contact courteous?
  - a. Will it promote "good will"?
  - b. Would you enjoy hearing your statement repeated?
3. Is it clear?
  - a. Have you used short sentences and pleasant words?
  - b. Have you presented only one idea in each sentence?
  - c. Have you avoided technical terms?
4. Is it concrete?
 

Have you supplied the details he needs?
5. Is it cheerful?
  - a. Have you used pleasant, positive suggestions?
  - b. Did you use a pleasant tone?
6. Is it complete?
  - a. Did you give all the facts?
  - b. Did you cover essentials?
  - c. Did you answer his question?

O. W. Wilson, Superintendent of Police, Chicago, Illinois and Dean Emeritus, School of Criminology, University of California, Berkley, said "Public good will is developed by positive action: It is not wished into being by hopeful thinking."

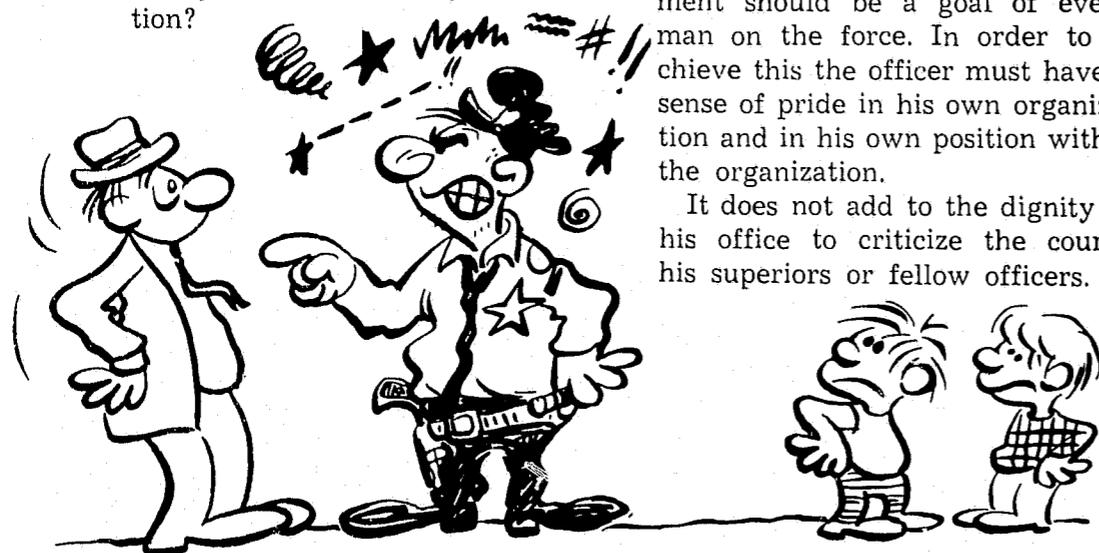
A department guilty of bad practices toward its citizens may meet resistance when wholesome changes are really going to be made. Any program designed to gain and hold public confidence must be one which the public accepts as honest, truthful and wholesome.

#### The Officer

Each person judges the police department as a whole by the individuals from that organization with whom he has contact, and his opinion of the agency is influenced by his reaction to these personal experiences. Consequently attention should be given to the personal appearance, attitudes, conversation, and conduct of each man on the force. To build good will and to avoid unnecessary resentment should be a goal of every man on the force. In order to achieve this the officer must have a sense of pride in his own organization and in his own position within the organization.

It does not add to the dignity of his office to criticize the courts, his superiors or fellow officers.

**His Appearance:** The uniform the officer wears has a bearing on the morale of the officer and the respect of the public. Personal cleanliness and body care are important. Failure to maintain



"When the police service has proven its efficiency with what it has and you can show where you can do a better job, the better your chance is to receive assistance."

neat personal appearance indicates carelessness, lack of discipline and self respect. While clothes do not make the man, they do tell you much about him.

**His Personal Habits:** What the officer does without meaning to presents an image which may assist or hamper effective communications. If the officer constantly reveals his impatience at having to listen to minute details from a disturbed complainant, the person attempting to converse with the officer soon gets the idea that the officer is not interested in his problem, which may be very important to him.

Off-duty carousing, drinking and the like, harms the professional image, tends to create a picture of hypocrisy on the part of the officer, and sometimes interferes with the officer's physical ability to do his job the next day.

#### Privileges The Officer

##### Must Forego<sup>1</sup>

"The officer must bear in mind that when he took the oath of office, he waived some of the rights and privileges enjoyed by other citizens. As an officer, he is not entitled to lead a private life according to his own whims, without regard to public reaction. His must be an exemplary life; the public expects the officer to practice what he preaches and to conform rigidly to regulations imposed on others. He must, therefore, give strict attention to his conduct and reputation; since the public is hypercritical, he must not only avoid evil, but he must avoid the very appearance of evil; he must avoid questionable associates and seek recreation in the company of persons of irreproachable character and reputation. He must avoid domestic

difficulties more than the average citizen. He must not gamble and he must be unusually temperate in the use of liquor, or abstain altogether from its use.

"The officer must also forego the privilege of becoming angry. He must remember that there is no law against making a policeman angry and that he cannot charge a man with offending him. Until the citizen acts overtly in violation of the law, he should take no action against him, least of all lower himself to the level of the citizen by berating him in a loud and angry voice. The officer who withstands angry verbal assaults builds his own character and raises the standard of the department."

It is well to realize that there are those who try to "bait" the officer into showing his worst side. Mississippi officers should know this well. Many times on TV and in the press we have viewed an officer arguing with a demonstrator or even striking one during a crucial time. Such a scene leads the general public to believe that the claims of "police brutality" are true.



1. O. W. Wilson, "Police Administration", McGraw-Hill, New York, N. Y., p188.

On one occasion a veteran officer was questioning a subject about some burglaries. The officer, noting that the suspect had a prior record of larceny convictions, shouted to the subject: "You've already been convicted of stealing one time. You're nothing but a thief and you might as well admit it." To this the suspect, in a much cooler voice than the officer remarked, "Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, when you were a boy did you ever steal a watermelon?" Taken back, the officer said, "Yes sir, I did," thinking that this admission would cause the suspect to reveal his criminal motives and confess. But the suspect only added: "Well that makes you capable of stealing a cow and I guess you're a thief, too." That ended the conversation between the officer and the suspect and needless to say, that officer didn't get a confession of guilt. But he probably left feeling a little guilty himself.

When an officer approaches a situation from a negative point of view, he is on the defensive from the beginning. While a good defense may characterize great football teams, people pay more to see the pros who do a lot of offensive scoring. Ending a conversation with "Thank you and if I can be of service to you, I'll be glad to," leaves the door open for the future. The approach the officer makes to someone who may have violated a law, especially a traffic law, helps establish a good or bad image of law enforcement. Was he reasonable, fair, courteous but firm?



**His Speech:** Police conversation should be courteous and pleasant in tone rather than rough and ill mannered. Profanity has no useful place in the conversation of the officer who may be watched by small youngsters and others. Although the officer does not need to speak like a college professor, he should make it his business to learn how to speak decent English and his words should reflect some thought and care. Once when attending a public meeting where a high ranking elected law enforcement officer was speaking, concerned lawmen were shocked to hear the speaker, in response to a question on what citizens could do to help law enforcement, say: "the onliest way, er I mean the mainest way. . .". Regardless of his intention such a statement marked the speaker as crude and ignorant to his audience, most of whom were businessmen.

### The Police Department

**Its Appearance:** The appearance of the police department headquarters and related facilities, patrol car, etc. has an important influence on the attitude of the public and the police. Both react unkindly to a foul-smelling, dark, poorly kept station. An appearance of loafing and idleness should be avoided.

**Its Operation:** The police department which maintains a high standard of efficiency, business-like attitudes and procedures, good conduct by its members both inside the department and on the street will have a good public image. In such departments officers do not gossip and talk unnecessarily with passersby, engage in flirting conversation with women on the street (because the public may think your motives are not those condoned by society), or stand or sit for a length of time in one place. One of the most frustrating pictures painted of traffic officers is one in which the officers remain in a patrol car, perhaps joking and carrying on with passing motorists while long lines of automobiles form because of a lack of direction from an officer.

Telephone and letter communications present an image also. Correct pronunciation and even the spelling of hard-to-understand words assist in communicating via the telephone. The normal good manners one would show if the person were talking with you in your presence should prevail. In letter writing, tact and courtesy should again be main features. The use of simple, non-technical terms in corresponding with the public will help insure that your message is getting across.

In receiving complaints, either at the station or on the street, the officer should be willing to assist



rather than pass the person off to another officer with the excuse that "I don't handle that kind of complaint." At least take the complaint or make sure it is steered to the proper person if you can't handle the problem.

**Handling Complaints Against Fellow Officers:** Sometimes a department is faced with receiving a complaint against another officer, either of that department or another department. The worst thing that can be done by the receiving officer is to try to defend and make excuses for the officer at that time. The complaints against officers are sometimes without foundation, maybe even most times, and often are minor in nature. But an expression of doubt from the officer before checking into the situation leads to "cover-up" accusation and in event the charges are found to be true, places the officer and the department in an embarrassing situation.

As Chief W. C. Burnley of the Greenville Police Department put it: "When officers are wrong, we say they are wrong and take action. If they make a mistake, we admit it and try to learn from it. If you are truthful, you don't have to remember what you said. We

teach our men respect for all the people and all are to have the same type of enforcement. You can not enforce the law of the city and state by arresting some and not others. To say it short and sweet, stay honest and fair with all . . . no trouble."



when handled firmly, politely and fairly.

The officer should recognize that conditions sometimes aggravate the

attitude of the offender:

(1) Generally speaking, any police effort to control public action meets resistance. The citizen usually resents being told what he must do or not do, whatever the case. The officer must appeal to the better nature of the offender rather than to criticize. Some situations cannot be handled just by attempting to enlist the aid of the offender in correcting the condition. However, the officer may accomplish his mission of understanding by diverting the offender's attention to other matters while disposing of the incident.

(2) Police confrontation may be a new and terrifying experience for the citizen, especially in the case of youngsters and women. There are those who stand in awe of the police and tremble at the thought of arrest and still others who are unable to contain themselves emotionally at contact with the law.

All complaints against officers should be registered, checked and disposition made so that the public cannot truthfully charge a department with "whitewashing".

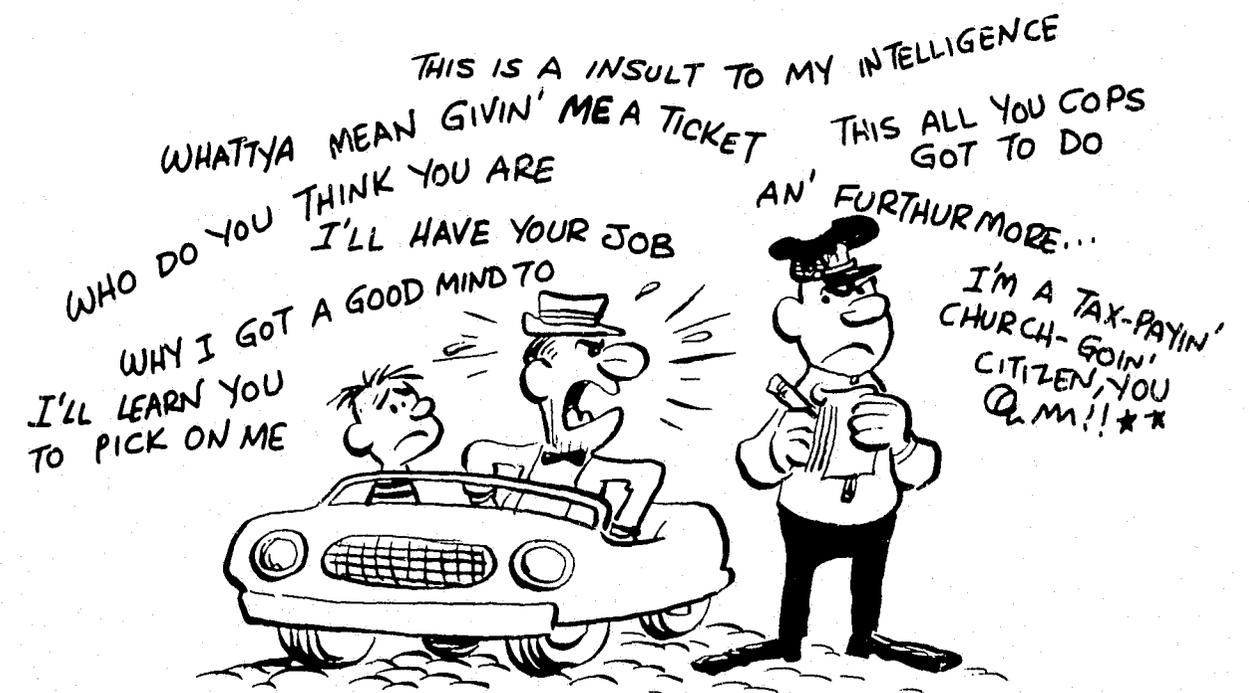
**Handling Offenders:** The offenders must not be unduly embarrassed. However, the officer need not be either. The officer must be firm and there should be no doubt in the mind of the violator that the officer means to handle the situation. Positive, pleasant, yet impersonal, is the rule in handling a violator. It is not the duty of the officer to penalize, embarrass, irritate, lecture or scold the offender.

The officer should be as polite and as patient as possible with the offender who may be quarrelsome or frightened. A pleasant manner, a smile and some small talk can often establish common ground and forestall a scene. People tend to get angry or frightened when they feel guilty. They generally calm down

The officer who can put his offenders at ease, and prevent or relieve an awkward situation, builds good public relations for the police instead of hostile feelings toward them. Sometimes, however, the officer must allow the emotional outburst because to attempt otherwise might only worsen the situation. To take the verbal abuse of an emotionally upset offender requires emotional stability on the part of the officer. His endurance most times is rewarded by an apology from the offender when he or she has had sufficient time to reflect on the situation.

(3) When persons are caught in an offense, embarrassment may cause them unconsciously to try to compensate for the act in a manner designed to justify the act in their own minds. Such face-saving attempts may occur when a father in front of his young son, proceeds to tell the officer off in order to try to maintain the confidence of his son.

In summary, communication and understanding are best established with offenders if the officer presents himself and his department in the most professional manner possible as to dress, training, courtesy, etc. The assistance of the violator, (especially a non-criminal one) can best be obtained by putting him at ease and permitting him to save face as much as possible.



# Establishing AN EFFECTIVE POLICE - PUBLIC COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

## BUILDING A GOOD IMAGE AND INFORMING THE PUBLIC THROUGH SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

We have probed ways in which communication is established by the officer during times when he might not even realize that he is communicating. Now we look at ways through which the departmental image and communications in general are made with the public. The police themselves share the common misconception that informing the public is unethical and that the public will misconstrue it as an effort to build personal prestige rather than to improve police service. These misconceptions may be based on the failure of the police to understand that their success is dependent on public cooperation and that keeping the public informed is an integral part of their job. As the informed citizen is generally cooperative, he needs to understand the reasons for control, the purpose of regulations, and the reasons for police policies and procedures.

The aim of public relations is to develop a favorable public attitude, based on respect for and confidence in the police.

When the activities of the police are misunderstood and construed as wrong, their morale is damaged, the maintenance of pride in the department is made difficult, and they develop a negative mental

state that causes them to be fearful of undertaking any constructive work. Also, faced with a critical, hostile public, the police unfortunately tend to develop a hostile attitude which only worsens public relations.

Before any official communications, such as changes in policy or procedures, are presented to the public, they should be presented to members of the department. Cooperation and attitudes of mutual



respect among the officers must be created before attempting to create them among the public. Most departments have found value in regular departmental conferences. However, the survey of law enforcement agencies in Mississippi revealed that only 58.6 percent hold

such. The officer who must find out about programs and policies in the newspaper or from the citizen on the street rather than from his superiors does not favorably impress the public with his departmental knowledge.

**Publications:** Many law enforcement agencies distribute publications providing information about services. Sometimes these publications are prepared by the department and again they may be stock items which can be secured through organizations such as the National Safety Council, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriffs Association, etc.

In these publications information on various problems and activities affecting different segments of the public can be dealt with in such a manner as to assist the citizens. Even small town departments can take advantage of these methods to promote good will among merchants, schools and other groups.

**Speakers Bureau:** Every law enforcement agency should have someone or several persons who are capable of presenting programs to the public, not only upon request but whenever an opportunity can be made. Building public good will is like making coffee: "You got to circulate to percolate." One officer should be assigned the responsibility of developing the programs to



be presented but every officer should be well enough acquainted with various activities of the department so that he could talk intelligently with a group of citizens even if it should be on the public street or in a business house.

Obviously the officer representing the law enforcement agency should not reveal secret investigations or material which might harm a case, but the public wants to hear things which interest them. Traffic safety speeches and displays provide opportunities to inform the public on regulations and to promote good driving practices. Church, school and business groups like speeches on narcotics, gambling, prostitution and liquor-control while businessmen are interested in methods criminals use to cash bad checks, steal merchandise, etc.

**Tours and Special Demonstrations:** Programs enabling the public to tour and inspect police facilities are excellent ways of promoting public interest in law enforcement efforts. This can be done



through open house programs where citizens come by for refreshments and to see equipment and facilities. It may be that deficiencies can be pointed out in this manner and this will result in public support for additional funds to improve the circumstances. Most municipal police departments have some kind of visitation program but so should the small town marshals and others. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts troops, 4-H Clubs, etc., all like to see the inside of a police department and jail, if they are neat and clean.

Special demonstrations like fire-arms (where accommodations will allow) and canine corps always attract the interest of the public. Movies and film strips are often available from different groups showing police at work.

**Working With Community Groups:** Because of limited budgets and staffs, the police and those who work with them cannot successfully carry on programs as widespread and extensive as is necessary to solve many of the community problems in which law enforcement has a primary responsibility. Therefore public support, community-wide interest, and individual participation must be enlisted. This is often done through community activities. Some departments organize auxiliary units which, when properly trained and regulated, offer additional public support in times of crisis as well as times of peace. Objectives of community organization should be to coordinate efforts; to protect responsible officials and the police from the influence of groups with selfish interests contrary to the good of the general public; to influence officials to take action for public good; to obtain public support for programs designed for the public good; to popularize programs so that the

people will favor their accomplishment and the enforcement of incidental regulations; to obtain cooperation in the form of compliance with the regulations.

Activities of community groups like the one now in effect in St. Louis, Mo., brings together law enforcement officials and the citizens in efforts for common purposes.

District committees are organized in those areas where the crime rate is the highest. This neighborhood idea is St. Louis' answer to the problem of reaching its citizens and reestablishing communications with them. These area committees consist of private citizens who conduct public education programs on crime prevention and police-community relations. In addition these committee members meet regularly with police officers to discuss problems.

The committee is broken down into sub-committees for the following categories: Law Enforcement, Juvenile, Sanitation, and Businessmen's committees. In each area an officer is assigned to work with the civilian group and report between the community relations director and his police superior.

A new program recently embarked upon by the St. Louis group is one whereby a citizen is appointed in each area as a civilian patrol leader. At weekly meetings with the sergeant or whoever supervises the area for the police department, the citizen tells of any problems he has encountered. He serves additionally in identifying wanted individuals who may reside or have resided in his home district and by providing information on trouble spots and unrest. He further assists by encouraging the neighborhood residents to support their police departments by testifying, etc. "We will have a known loyal sup-

porter in each neighborhood if trouble develops in that part of the city," Col. Curtis Brostrom, Chief of Police, asserts.

As a part of the St. Louis Communications Program the Board of Police Commissioners and the Chief of Police meet with civil rights leaders to discuss problems. Meetings are also held with representatives of the St. Louis news media to exchange information and create a better understanding of community problems. Meetings with other community organizations keep the channels of communication open at all times.

The St. Louis program further utilizes the newspaper, radio and television media and even publications, which are slanted primarily to minority groups, in an attempt to keep the public informed of all police activities, policies and items such as how to avoid becoming a victim of crime, how to prevent crimes and what new laws may go into effect. Interviews, feature articles and programs are provided to help the public better understand the department.

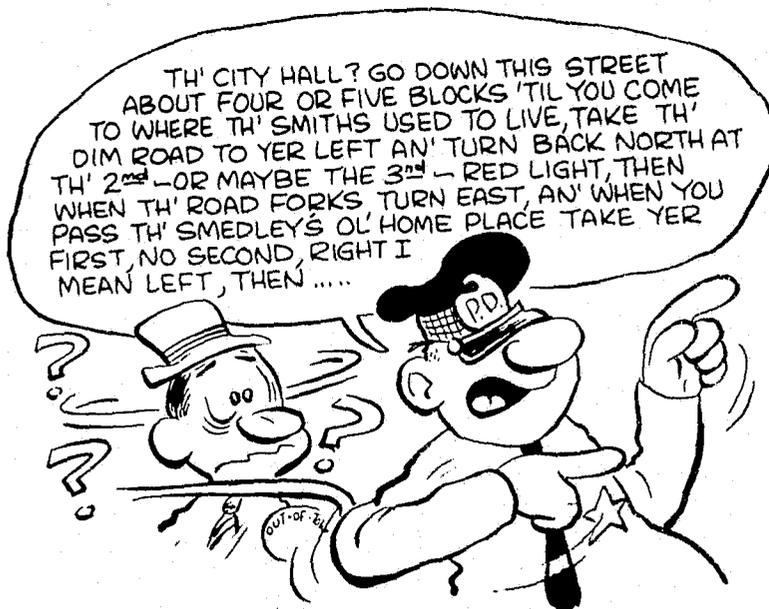
Where would you find people willing to assist the police on community committees and programs? Womens groups, parent-teacher organizations, VFW or American Legion posts and business and fraternal orders all should be stimulated and aroused to participate and most likely would if asked. The responsibility for asking for help must be borne by the law enforcement agency. And through these groups, all commanding great power to influence public opinion, an attitude favorable to accepting solutions to community problems can and most likely will be developed.

It might be pointed out at this time that only one or two goals should be presented to these groups at a time so that in-

dividuals working on volunteer committees can see some concrete results of their efforts. And above all, members of these public committees should be commended and publicly recognized.

**Special Services:** There are many non-arrest activities that have special value in building good will, and small courtesies and special services will go far toward improving the standing of the police in the eyes of the community. Little "extras" improve image and add to the bank of good will in case a draw is needed when ill winds blow.

Information is an extra service the public appreciates from the police. An out-of-town motorist may ask directions. The officer should be concise and simple in directions or instructions. Lending assistance to motorists with stalled autos not only is a service to the motorist but assists orderly traffic flow which is one of the duties of the officer anyway.



Policemen should establish speaking friendships with the businessmen and residents along their assigned areas. This relationship re-establishes the personal contact and

creates an information source for the officer. It aids in presenting information which the police want to get to the public. It builds good will. Inspectional services designed to prevent crimes and suggestions to protect citizens from criminal attack are excellent ways to gain public confidence.

One unique method of personal contact by the officer was initiated by one police department which gets a list of new residents in an area, checks to see that none is wanted for crimes and then prepares a special leaflet of information for the newcomer. This leaflet is submitted to the resident in the name of the officer. This is an excellent idea for a small town officer who would have few new arrivals in his community.

**Programs For Children:** It may take a whole generation before many public-police communication problems are solved. Regardless of this, no opportunity should be overlooked to promote good, wholesome contact between the officer and youngsters. Many Mississippi departments support Boy Scout troops (such as Jackson and others) while others work with baseball programs (such as Hattiesburg and others) or maybe junior officer groups are formed (such as the Oktibbeha County Sheriff's Department). One unique program originated by the Philadelphia, Pa., Police Department, adapted by the New Orleans Department and initiated in Mississippi through the Department of Law Enforcement Research at Itawamba Junior College, is a coloring book given to elementary school youngsters by local law enforcement agencies.

In Philadelphia Capt. Frederick Ruffin described the program as tremendously successful as the of-



ficer is assigned to go to a school, make a short presentation before the class and give each youngster a coloring book. The book presents the policeman in a number of ways performing a number of helpful services, many of which are with youngsters about the age of those doing the coloring.

The St. Louis, Mo., police department has started a "Say Hi" program where youngsters are encouraged through police media and other communications means to say "hi" when they see an officer. The officer is instructed to respond and thus establish a "Friend" relationship between youngsters and policeman.

Use of police officers in driver education programs for teenagers gives officers a chance to get to

know the youngsters personally while helping them learn to do something they want to do very much.

**Some Examples Of What Community Groups Can Do:** The July 30, 1967 issue of "Parade" Magazine carried an article entitled "A New Way To Stop Race Riots". This was the story of Tampa, Fla. and the "White Hats", a group of young Negroes who are given much of the credit for halting Tampa's recent race riot. It amounted to enlisting the help of some of the Negro youths, dressing them in white hats as a symbol and sending them into the strife torn areas. Their purpose . . . to talk the problems to death . . . to stop a riot before it got organized. "It was the old psychology," Capt. Walter Heinrich of the Police Crime Prevention Bureau was quoted as saying. "Kids were hungry for thrills and

recognition, and we gave it to 'em . . . on the side of the law." One of the White Hats explained why the program worked: "Most of us were chosen because we're well known in our neighborhoods. Most of us played football or basketball, and the younger guys, who were raising most of the hell, looked up to us. They'd listen."

Tampa Sheriff Malcolm E. Beard in a letter to the authors of this manual in June, 1968 reported that the "White Hat" program was indeed successful and that follow-up efforts were being made through the Tampa Community Relations Commission to further utilize these youths.

But after a disorder is quelled the real work of the community groups begins because situations which led to the misunderstanding must be erased. This may not be the primary job of the police department, but it should be interested as it has most to gain.

# Informing The Public Through The News Media

Police are occasionally the victims of unfair, sometimes malicious press attacks and then the community suffers. Again the police are creators of their own monsters by their failure to "shoot straight" with the press. It is the responsibility of the police administrator to establish relationships with the press which will protect the honest and sincere acts of the department and its men from unfair criticism in the press.

This is not done by attempting to build personal prestige for political benefit or by trying to hide departmental weaknesses and faults. In return for honesty with the press, the law enforcement officer should expect a fair representation in the press. This is not achieved, either, by every member of the force trying to issue a statement about a crime. One person should have the primary responsibility for dealing with the press and if he is not around, he should designate someone to take his place. The press often works under stringent deadlines and time is of the utmost

importance and reporters should be treated alike. An unavailable information officer or chief, if he is the one who issues statements, will cause the reporter to seek information elsewhere and often this is not authentic material.

The officer should realize that "no comment" seems to be an admission of guilt or an attempt to "cover up" when in print. This statement should never be made to a reporter. When you can't say anything, tell the reporter that. Tell him when you might be able to give him something and request his assistance.

The people will generally forgive a fine organization for an occasional slip. Any organization made up of humans is bound to slip now and then. On the other hand people will see through the organization which has been doing a sloppy job and announces while under attack that it will reform. The law enforcement officer must also remember that Americans are suspicious of things they do not know or understand.

Police and the press have common objectives to: (1) inform the public of dangers and safety considerations; (2) present accurate factual accounts to the public of activities in crime; (3) report arrest or interesting aspects of the investigation which will not prejudice court action or injure uninvolved innocents; and (4) encourage public support for law and order and efficient law enforcement.



## When To Issue A Press Release:

It's better to volunteer facts to the press because the good reporter will soon find something out about the event anyway. Immediately upon the arrest of an individual or other development of news, a statement should be given to the press. Care must be taken that the facts released do not jeopardize innocent people, harm an investigation still pending or destroy the prosecutor's ability to use facts and evidence at the trial.

## Who Should Issue The Release:

The chief should have regular sessions with representatives of the press so that all get to know each other. If the chief does not desire this function, a personable officer who can handle his own emotions and words should be assigned the duty. At such a conference decisions and statements can be issued in an authoritative way so that rumors and speculations are quashed before they begin.

**Personal Contact With The Press:** Each member of the force should be aware of the policy the department has toward the press and the individual officer should refer all questions of an official nature through the press officer. This avoids embarrassment for the officer and takes him off the hook with superiors.

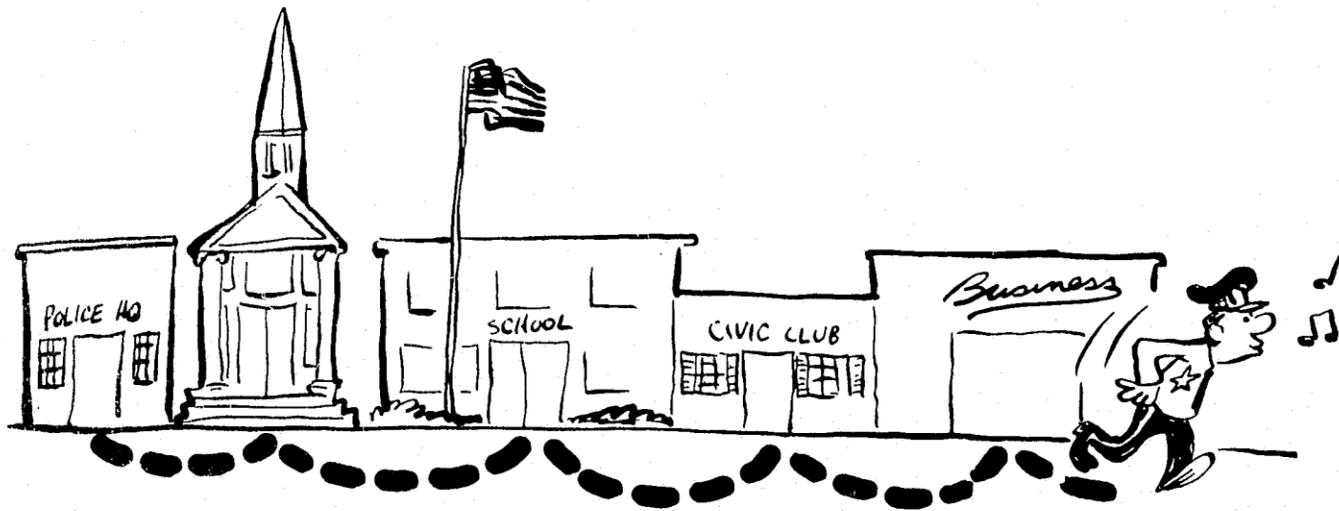
**Special Press Services:** Many media offer services such as "Know Your Policeman" columns where an officer or group of officers are chosen so that biographical data can be printed showing the public that these officers are human, too. Often the press can publish notes which will keep people out of an area, broadcast messages to gain public assistance and disseminate information which can relieve tense situations. Traffic tips, safety hints, etc., are ways in which the press

can pass along information from the law enforcement agency to the public in such a manner as to cause the public to appreciate the extra interest from the law enforcement agency. In almost a reverse to what is usually thought of as the role of the press, the press can sometimes assist by not publishing certain things, in event the non-published material has no real public value and could harm the public innocent individuals if known. Such an example is followed by the Detroit News which established a policy of concealing the identity of informants or witnesses and thus found that a high percentage of the public would be willing to assist officers if they could remain anonymous. In this case the informants contacted the newspaper which in turn cooperated with the police. Results quickly proved worthwhile as several crimes were solved which persons involved said would have been delayed without the citizens' support.

Police must recognize that the press can be working partners with them as Detroit Mayor Jerome Cavanagh said when disorders erupted following the assassination of Martin Luther King: "Events of the past 48 hours have made it clear that Detroit desperately needs its newspaper to combat explosive rumors and speculations."

# Points To Remember

1. Be trained and equipped professionally to do a professional job.
2. Do the job in a professional manner.
3. Be courteous.
4. Have a system to do the job and abide by the system insofar as possible.
5. Be truthful, fair and honest.



You Got To Circulate To Percolate!

# END