

1953

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Recommended Citation

Evabel Tenny, Women's Work in Law Enforcement, 44 J. Crim. L. Criminology & Police Sci. 239 (1953-1954)

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WOMEN'S WORK IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

Evelyn Tenny

The author was for several years a law enforcement officer in Canyon County, Idaho, having spent part of this time in the Prosecuting Attorney's office and the remainder as a policewoman with the Nampa Police Department. During that time she was active in peace officers' associations and published several articles in peace officers' magazines. In June, 1951, Mrs. Tenny became associated with the California State Peace Officers Training Program in Sacramento, where she assisted with the editing of police training manuals and the administration of state-wide police training schools. Since the preparation of this article, she has accepted a position in the California Department of Justice at Sacramento.—EDITOR.

The field of law enforcement offers an interesting and challenging future to young men and women today. It is a field which is not crowded, which offers excitement and change, and, as the profession becomes more standardized, the chances of advancement steadily increase. There is a certain fascination in police work which is characteristic of no other profession; its challenging dimensions in modern society make this profession infinitely more interesting than any mystery thriller.

Not every person has the ability and the temperament to become a successful police officer. The profession is exacting in its demands—the hours are irregular, the tension is often great, and in many cases the financial remuneration is not large. A police officer is constantly in the public eye and his every action, both professionally and in his personal life, is subject to comment and often criticism. A failure of one police officer to live up to the high standard of efficiency and conduct which the public has set for him may reflect on the entire law enforcement organization. August Vollmer has said that the average citizen expects a police officer "to have the wisdom of Solomon, the courage of David, the strength of Sampson, the patience of Job, the leadership of Moses; the kindness of the Good Samaritan, the strategy of Alexander, the faith of Daniel, the diplomacy of Lincoln, the tolerance of the Carpenter of Nazareth, and, finally, an intimate knowledge of every branch of the natural, biological, and social sciences. If he had all these he might be a good policeman."

There is no place for rivalry between male and female police officers. While their specific duties may vary, they are all "servants of the people", doing the same job, and working toward the same end. They should join forces and work as a unit. The policewoman is a regular member of the department and, as such, should be governed by the same rules and regulations, assume the same responsibilities, and share the same rights and privileges as male officers who are doing the same

kind of work. A policewoman will be accepted as a "good officer" by her co-workers when she earns their approval and respect.

ENTRY OF WOMEN INTO THE POLICE SERVICE

The first policewoman was appointed in 1893, at Chicago. The New York Police Department had had matrons on its force since 1845. Matrons had direct supervision of female prisoners, and differed in this way from policewomen, who were and are active law enforcement officers doing investigation or patrol work, preparing court cases, acting as social service workers, etc.

In 1922, the International Association of Chiefs of Police set standards for policewomen. Their duties were defined as "prevention and detection of crime and enforcement of the law." It was stated that an applicant for such a position should have four years of high school, plus two years' experience in social or educational work or nurses' training, or 7 college units; or four years of high school and two years of public contact and responsibility. An International Association of Policewomen was organized and remained active from 1915 to 1922.

In the larger departments, policewomen were first organized in many cases as a self-sustaining unit, headed by a woman who was directly responsible to the Chief of Police. In other cases they were assigned to a precinct or a district, under the supervision of the commanding officer of the district; and in still other departments they were assigned to the Crime Prevention Division or acted as purely social case workers with no police powers.

There has been very little published in the way of standards of performance for policewomen, probably because the duties of women police vary so widely depending on the needs, and customs, of the departments to which they are assigned. In beginning her work in law enforcement, the policewoman must draw upon her own common sense and instinct and profit from her own past experiences and the experiences of others. She will, of course, become thoroughly familiar with the rules and regulations of her department and the ordinances and laws she is expected to enforce. She is wise to seek the advice of experienced officers before taking a new step.

QUALIFICATIONS OF POLICEWOMEN

Standards for policewomen must not be set so high that no one can qualify. On the other hand, if the standards are too low, incompetent women may be appointed. Selection of policewomen in many

cities is made from a civil service eligible list, but a personal interview by the Chief or an oral board is absolutely necessary to make an appraisal of the personal fitness of the candidate for the job. Many characteristics essential to a good policewoman are not disclosed by a written examination paper.

Physical requirements should be established by qualified physicians, and usually are about the same as for male officers, with adjustments in height and weight. Any physical handicap which would constitute a hazard to the officer herself or endanger others should, of course, disqualify an applicant.

Age need not play too important a part in the selection of a policewoman. The objective should be to select a person who has a combination of mature judgment and a youthful viewpoint. Of major importance is the temperament of the officer. She should be dignified and sensible, tactful and sympathetic. Her personal appearance should be good—neat and attractive, as well as commanding respect. She should give an appearance of being alert, well-adjusted, and more interested in others than in herself. There should be no hint of a vindictive attitude or of a “holier-than-thou” complex.

Specialized professional training in police science is exceedingly rare among women, and very few positions in police department can be filled with college-trained criminologists. Therefore, it is necessary that most policewomen obtain their training after appointment. Training facilities available in the department or from outside agencies should be open to women, and the following are subjects which are essential to a policewoman if she is to do her work efficiently:

Field Notetaking	Investigation of Sex Crimes
Elements of Investigation	Rules of Evidence
Report Writing	Juvenile Procedure
Collection and Preservation of Evidence	Court Appearance
Elements of Interrogation	Public Relations
Penal Code	Allied and Related Agencies
Laws of Arrest	First Aid
Laws of Search and Seizure	Public Health
Patrol and Observation	Rules and Regulations of Department
Police Procedures	General City Information
Mechanics of Arrest	City Ordinances
Self-Defense	Narcotic Investigation
Use of Record Bureau	Psychology
Basic Criminal Psychiatry	Police Organization and Administration

SOME TIPS TO RECRUITS

At first, the appointment of a woman to the police force may be

viewed with suspicion. Every move she makes will be watched. The essence of what a policewoman herself needs in order to qualify her for her job is a sense of balance. Not only will she need balance in actual job performance, but it is required throughout her relations in and out of the department and with offenders.

In manner, the policewoman should not be over-feminine or, on the other hand, too aggressive. She should not use her sex as a justification for exemption from rules or seek favoritism or a lessening of her share of the responsibilities. Women must prove themselves to be capable of taking a place in the "No Man's Land" of male superiority before they will be unconditionally accepted.

Emotionally, she must take a middle course between being too sentimental and being callous and indifferent.

In speech, she should not cheapen herself by taking on the language of hardened offenders, or fall into a habit of using departmental or general police jargon which is not familiar to those outside the department with whom she has contacts.

In her associations, she should have extra-curricular social and other activity in order that she will be happier and better-adjusted personally, but her police work should not suffer because of too many outside commitments. She must avoid taking any position of leadership in controversial civic, political, or social issues.

Both in her professional life and her private life, a policewoman must be on her guard against behavior which is or might only appear to be indiscreet, and she must be extremely careful not to make careless or unguarded remarks concerning persons she has come in contact with in her work or regarding matters which are being investigated.

A policewoman should not deliberately expose herself to hazardous situations, and she should not be reluctant to ask advice. Others in the department are always able and willing to help.

PUBLIC AND PRESS RELATIONS

The modern police administrator recognizes that a sound and continuous public relations program is a justifiable and necessary part of his business. The policewoman is recognized as a public relations asset of great potential value. Her work in representing law enforcement and in interpreting personal and community problems has a very important effect of promoting better public understanding of the total law enforcement agency and its functions. It should be remembered that the average citizen has very few contacts with police offi-

cers and that he will judge law enforcement in general by the treatment which he personally received.

One of the most powerful intermediaries between a police department and its public is the press. Regardless of how efficient or sincere a group of officers may be, and regardless of the success they may have in the prevention and prosecution of crime, the general public will not be aware of this or feel willing to lend its support unless it is informed. The relations between the department and the press should be such that the news will be reported accurately and credit will be given when due. News should not be suppressed merely for the reason that it is unfavorable to the department.

SOME SPECIFIC DUTIES OF POLICEWOMEN

Prevention of crime. One of the most important crime prevention functions of the policewoman is to discover young girls who are in hazardous situations and to take appropriate action before they become a problem to themselves and the community. A requisite of this course of action is a sincere desire to help others. The violator's confidence and friendship must be won first, and every action taken must be sincere and honest. A person's first contact with the police has been likened to first aid treatment; that individual's chances for recovery largely depend on the kind of handling he or she receives during the first critical experience. A young person's entire future attitude toward law and order may hinge on his first impression of law enforcing officers.

Policewomen usually find that their time is best spent in patrol duties. It has been said that the policewoman will concern herself with any young girl who, because of her age, the hour of the day, the locality, or the circumstances, appears to be in danger. She will, therefore, look for any young girl conspicuous because of the place or the hour, any girl obviously loitering, or disturbed in manner, or with an adult of obviously unsuitable appearance. This, then, will involve a careful and regular patrol of parks and streets at night, skating rinks, dance halls, movie theaters, railroad and bus stations, etc. No arrests are made on patrol duty, except in extreme cases. The object of the patrol is to watch and warn, without creating antagonism. If it becomes necessary to take a juvenile into custody, the rules of the department must be strictly followed regarding notification of parents, suitable arrangements for detention, and the like. Also, a policewoman must remember that she is responsible for the safety of

the child in her custody. It is, therefore, important that no opportunity be given the girl to harm herself or run away. A thorough check should be made for any article which an emotionally disturbed girl might use to inflict injury upon herself or others.

Women in crime. The involvement of women in a life of crime usually begins in their early lives, when they have been considered "juvenile delinquents", and the causes of delinquency among children are of course many. If, added to such conditions as broken homes, undesirable living conditions, lack of discipline, lack of security, or other social maladjustment, is a history of mental deficiency or constant association with criminally inclined persons, the delinquent girl is fairly certain to become a criminal woman. It is part of the police job to stress the education of girls and women in the right ways of life, help to strengthen home ideals, bring about improvement in the economic system, and teach the price of crime through better enforcement of laws. It is also an important function of the police organization to welcome and assist persons who are seeking a better life, and give them a helping hand.

Runaways. Among juveniles, one of the most frequent situations handled by a policewoman is a "runaway." The policewoman's rules of sympathy and sincere personal interest apply particularly in these cases. Children run away from home for varied reasons, but by the time they are contacted by a police officer they are usually beginning to realize primarily that they are without protection in a cold and friendless world.

The physical needs of a runaway should be attended to first. Any sorry situation looks brighter and any individual is more reasonable when he is clean, rested, and not hungry. Runaways should not be treated as criminals. An effort should be made to gain their confidence and get the whole story. The policewoman should be kindly, but firm, and remember that there are at least two sides to every situation. If arrangements are made to return the child to his home, contact should be made with the parents to assure the child fair treatment upon his return, and by a discussion of the factors which caused the runaway's dissatisfaction, an improvement of the situation should result.

Missing persons. Two-thirds of all missing persons reported to law enforcement agencies are females. The average person so brought to the attention of the police is wilfully missing and does not want to be found. This is an especially suitable field for women police officers,

because so many cases of disappearance have their roots in family and social problems.

In taking a report of a missing person, care must be exercised to get a complete physical description of the person, information as to the clothing and valuables taken with him, and a complete record of means of identification which may be used when the person is located. Remarks as to the general habits, occupation, and expressed desires or intentions of the person should be recorded. Information which might explain a desire for disappearance should be sought. Much assistance is usually forthcoming from friends and coworkers, as disturbed persons very often discuss with comparative strangers problems which they do not mention within their own family circle.

The wishes of the reporting person regarding publicity should be respected. Unnecessary publicity may add to the discomfort and sorrow of the family.

Investigation of sex offenses. There are certain specialized types of cases in which the policewoman has particular responsibilities. These include the cases of girls or women who have been molested or criminally assaulted, those who are of promiscuous sex habits, and prostitutes who work alone or as inmates of disorderly houses and are exploited by some individual for the latter's gain.

In the criminal assault cases, medical evidence is of the utmost importance, and the policewoman is responsible for having a proper physical examination made of the victim. The policewoman must also obtain clothing of the victim and evidence from the crime scene for laboratory examination. In handling cases of this kind, she must have a thorough knowledge of the collection and preservation of evidence so that essential evidence will not be destroyed. The policewoman should go into detail with the complainant regarding the circumstances leading up to the assault, the locale, full description of the assailant, names and addresses of possible witnesses, etc. A complete statement should be recorded and signed by the complainant. It should be remembered that a charge of rape is easy to make and sometimes difficult to refute, and particular care should be taken to obtain any and all information which will assist in establishing the facts. In cases commonly known as "statutory rape" the age of the girl involved must be verified. The policewoman should, in connection with her investigation, give consideration to precautionary measures which will safeguard the girl against similar future occurrences, either due to her lack of protection or her own maladjustment. Medical care and/or

treatment for venereal disease must be arranged for when necessary. The policewoman should keep in touch with the case after her part of the original investigation is completed and may find an opportunity to be of assistance.

REPORTS AND RECORDS

All police officers should leave detailed reports, at the time they go off duty, of their activities during their shift. It is especially important that the report include a reference to action taken in particular instances by the officer, in order that other members of the department will know how to proceed if the subject is re-opened at a later time. Policewomen will find it helpful to keep card files on places of public amusement, etc., coming to her attention, which will make a ready reference when violations are found or when recommendations for new licenses are required.

It is also very important to remember that while a policewoman is handling a case of a delinquent juvenile, a runaway, a missing person, or a sex offense, she will very often be in a position to receive information which has a bearing on other cases which have come to the attention of the department. Any facts so obtained should be reported by her in detail. Likewise, a policewoman should keep informed of the activities of the department generally, so that she will be able to recognize the significance of information which may come to her or occurrences which she may note in her daily round of duty. An alert, well-informed policewoman will find many opportunities each day to be of assistance to her fellow man and to her coworkers.