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# POLICE SCIENCE

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## THE PLANNING AND RESEARCH DIVISION OF THE LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT

Richard Simon

Richard Simon has been a member of the Los Angeles Police Department during the last twenty-three years. For the past seven years, he has been a Deputy Chief of Police, having commanded four of the Department's seven bureaus. He has been Commander of the Bureau of Administration since its inception in November, 1950, and was instrumental in the creation of the Planning and Research Division, which was included in that Bureau when it was established. In addition to his departmental work, Chief Simon holds an appointment to the faculty of the University of Southern California lecturing on Special Problems in Law Enforcement in the School of Public Administration and is a member of the Society for the Advancement of Criminology.—EDITOR.

These are critical times—not only in the life of our nation but also in the development of our law enforcement agencies. The international situation with its urgent demands for manpower, the continued urbanization of the nation, and the advancement of technological developments have placed an ever-increasing burden upon police departments and have created the need for a careful evaluation of present policies and practices.

The police have been quick to seize technological developments which have enabled them to do the job better. Policemen have become skillful in the sciences—chemistry, physics, communications, lie detection, and other techniques which have made them adept in job skills. However, these desirable, vital technical skills have been adopted and given recognition almost to the exclusion of the so-called “science” of administration. While it is realized that administration deals to a degree in abstractions and that the application of administrative principles cannot be done with mathematical preciseness, there are certain accepted maxims of organization which provide stepping stones to increased effectiveness. Sound administrative policy and procedure provide not only the machinery for successful operation but also the lubricant for coordination, the lack of which causes inevitable delays, tensions, and reduction in efficiency.

Police departments are composed of more than men, money, and equipment. If the task is to be efficiently and economically accomplished, the men must be well trained, money must be wisely spent, and equipment must be effectively used. Finally, and most important, all of these factors must be coordinated and directed toward the accomplishment of a common goal. This is the task of administration.

Administration, the task of the Chief of Police, is the process of directing the organization so that it will produce results efficiently and economically. The Chief's duties are many and varied. Through his command staff, he deploys his men, coordinates their efforts, and controls their activities. He prepares the organization's budget and operates within its limits. He studies the past, analyzes the present, and plans for the future.

Successful administration depends to a large extent upon comprehensive planning, which is a necessary element and a fundamental function of administration. The extent and complexity of an organization are not the factors which determine the need for planning, since every organization, regardless of its size, requires planning in varying degrees. Every law enforcement agency throughout the nation must engage in the administrative function of planning, whether the task is accomplished by a single person or a group of officers specifically assigned to this duty.

In a city the size of Los Angeles the police department becomes a large and complex organization with many divisions and subdivisions performing a multitude of activities. Such an organization necessitates exhaustive and minute planning to efficiently and economically perform the police services demanded by the widespread heterogeneous population. Recognizing this need, the Chief of Police established the Bureau of Administration within the Los Angeles Police Department on November 10, 1950. One of the newly established divisions within the Bureau was the Planning and Research Division.

The Planning and Research Division represents an innovation in police science. Its energies are devoted primarily to analysis of departmental problems, with the purpose of determining the most efficient methods of providing police services. Although the traditional "profit motive" does not generally exist in public agencies, it is the policy of the Chief to provide a maximum of police service at minimum cost. The new division, therefore, was organized on a principle found indispensable in private industry, the "management research" approach. Systems and procedures used in private industry are examined for the possibility of use in the Police Department. It does not relieve other departmental units of their planning functions but stimulates, assists, and coordinates in developing long-range programs. In addition, many of its services provide valuable information for the daily operations of the Department.

### DIVISIONAL PERSONNEL

The personnel of the Planning and Research Division, which has been specially selected from within the Department, consists of one (1) Captain of Police as Commander, two (2) Lieutenants of Police, five (5) Sergeants of Police, seventeen (17) Policemen, and thirty-five (35) civilian employees of various job classifications. Many of these civilian employees were formerly assigned to the Statistician's Section of the Records and Identification Division, which was absorbed by the Planning and Research Division when it was established.

The selection of the officers assigned to this division involved an extensive investigation that was designed to determine which were particularly adaptable to this type of work. These procedures included I.Q. and temperament examinations, thorough background investigations, and the "Cooperative English Test," which examines for reading comprehension and the mechanics and effectiveness of expression. While these officers were selected for their suitability for this assignment, their background of police experience enables them to seek and recognize practical solutions to police problems.

### ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS

The Planning and Research Division is small numerically, but the scope of its general responsibilities is large. The functions of the division are performed by the four sections of which it is comprised—Legal, Manuals and Orders, Analysis, and Forms.

*Legal Section.* The Legal Section performs the following functions:

1. Surveys departmental orders and practices in light of actual or proposed changes in state or local law.
2. Answers questions on decided legal points and upon official request generally synthesizes departmental practices from a legal standpoint.
3. Maintains an original file of all written opinions pertaining to police operations and obtains new opinions, either oral or written.

*Manuals and Orders Section.* An organization can neither expect nor reasonably demand compliance with established procedure if such procedure has not been stated in understandable terms and properly communicated. Satisfactory performance and the accomplishment of goals are dependent upon this communication. The Los Angeles Police Department relies largely upon orders and manuals for this communica-

tion of policy and procedure. The need was recognized for a system of manuals which would be useful to the various levels within the Department, and which would incorporate not only the existing manuals, but several additional ones. It was decided that this system of manuals should include all phases of policy and operation of the Department. The Manuals and Orders Section was designated to coordinate this function. This Section is composed of the Line Volume Unit and the Management Volumes Unit.

The functions of the Line Volume Unit include:

1. Codification of all Department orders dealing with line procedures into the "Line Procedures Volume" of the Department Manual.
2. Investigation of requests for Department orders.
3. Coordination in the establishment of written Department policies, rules, and procedures.
4. Writing of proposed orders.
5. Obtaining of approvals from concerned operating and administrative offices.
6. Submission of completed work to the Chief of Police for approval.

The Management Volumes Unit is concerned with preparation of the "Management Procedures Volume" of the Department Manual, indicating the organization and functions of the Department, responsibilities and relationships of supervisory positions, and the codification of all Department orders dealing with management procedures.

*Analysis Section.* The Crime Analysis Unit, Statistics Unit, and Management Services Unit comprise the Analysis Section of the Planning and Research Division.

The primary function of a police department is the prevention of crime. A corollary to this is the apprehension of persons who have not been prevented from committing crimes. This prevention and apprehension depends upon providing information about the activities of criminals, and this in turn can only come from an analysis of reported crimes. This function is performed by the Crime Analysis Unit.

*Crime Analysis Unit.* The Crime Analysis Unit gathers city-wide crime data, and with these data discover and analyze crime trends and patterns with emphasis upon those affecting more than one division. Other duties of this unit include the conducting of surveys on particular crime problems, the preparation of administrative reports for

the Chief of Police and his staff, and the preparation of "Special Modus Operandi Bulletins". Many other reports, which disseminate crime data to field units, are prepared by this unit to assist in the deployment of personnel and development of tactics. This unit does not propose solutions, but emphasizes particular problems with the intention of stimulating field units to develop their own solutions. The preparation of graphic presentations of crime data is another function of the Crime Analysis Unit.

*Statistics Unit.* The Statistics Unit gathers statistical data pertaining to reported crimes, arrests, dispositions, traffic, personnel, and other phases of operation. Additional functions of this unit are the recording of data upon IBM punch cards, the machine processing of data, the preparation of routine and special reports from accumulated data, and advising in the use of statistical data. In effect it is a staff unit with a staff division.

*Management Services Unit.* The Management Services Unit conducts administrative research and planning and prepares reports to the Chief of Police. This unit maintains a file for reporting district information and conducts surveys and studies to measure the need for police services. The Management Services Unit is responsible for the preparation of the budget and developing intelligent, well-researched justifications for budgetary requests in order to inspire the confidence of those who allocate funds. It also assists in the preparation of the Annual Report and prepares many special reports which are requested.

*Forms Section.* The Forms Section performs the following functions:

1. Examines existing departmental forms and procedures to determine how they may be improved, combined, simplified, or eliminated.
2. Designs new forms or revises existing forms to implement new or existing procedures.
3. Makes procedural recommendations to achieve the most efficient results.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Is the Planning and Research Division a valuable administrative tool? Does its worth to the Department compensate for the necessary expenditures coincident with the operation of the Division? These questions may be answered by a review of a few of its accomplishments.

Increased service with less men—this was the challenge that faced the Police Department in 1951. Expanded services were necessary to

meet the needs of the growing city. At the same time, unable to attract enough qualified applicants to fill vacancies, and unwilling to lower its standards, the Department operated 9% under authorized strength. Because law enforcement is more a matter of quality than quantity, it was possible to meet this challenge by obtaining improved results from available manpower.

Analysis and planning throughout the Department resulted in more effective police service to the community. Results were reflected in the accomplishments of all sections of the Department. For example, without increasing manpower, the Valley Division handled 19% more patrol calls, 24% more juvenile cases, 31% more field interrogations, and recovered 32% more stolen automobiles.

The Crime Analysis Unit publishes Special Modus Operandi Bulletins when, through their daily analysis of crime reports, they are able to establish a pattern of operation from a series of reported crimes. These bulletins are distributed to all concerned officers of this Department as well as to other jurisdictions. They include all available data, the established pattern, and drawings of composite descriptions by a professional illustrator assigned to the Division. To date, 20 of these bulletins have been issued, 44 suspects have been arrested, and 191 cases have been cleared. The field officers, particularly detectives, have received this device most enthusiastically and frequently ask for the publication of these bulletins to assist in the apprehension of suspects. This acceptance is perhaps one of the best measures of success for a staff unit such as this.

Another illustration of the value and accomplishment of the Planning and Research Division is the creation of the Drunk Repeater File, which was established as a result of research and study by that Division. It was formulated on the basis of the number of arrests for drunkenness during 1949. During the year 39,002 individuals were involved in 88,360 drunk arrests. Of that number 13,349 were arrested two or more times and were responsible for 62,707 of the total arrests. These figures demonstrated that 33% of the individuals arrested accounted for 70% of the total drunk arrests. The purpose of the Drunk Repeater File is to reduce the processing coincident with the arrest by identifying these repeaters prior to completion of the booking process. By eliminating the twenty minutes necessary for the processing and necessary routine reports on each drunk repeater, a savings of 15,000 manhours of work is realized yearly at the Main Jail. The file, therefore, has eliminated the work of two police officers per watch, which, when considering the necessary relief officers, amounts to saving the

work of a total of nine police officers per day. Considering the additional savings in paper, filing, and other items, it has been conservatively estimated that the Drunk Repeater File saves \$50,000 annually. It has been further estimated that research, study, planning, and installation of the file cost the city a total of \$6,000.

After considerable research and study by the Planning and Research Division, a new reporting district system was inaugurated creating police districts based primarily on Federal Census Tracts. Under this new plan, the police reporting districts throughout the city coincide with the census tract districts. The purposes for this plan are:

1. Finer pinpointing of crime problems.
2. Crime reporting by smaller homogeneous areas.
3. Deployment of field personnel to problem areas.
4. Accumulation of sociological, density, health, and wealth data.

The significance of accumulating these data is realized by their utilization in analyzing departmental problems and in planning for future needs, such as manpower requirements and the deployment of personnel. By accumulating local crime data according to areas which coincide with the census tracts, a comparative study of these data with the statistics provided by the Bureau of the Census is readily possible.

The Division recently completed the Officer's Field Book. This loose leaf notebook is supplied to all mobile field units and geographical divisions, and contains the necessary departmental report forms used in the field, the names and addresses of various referral agencies in the community, functional statements of specialized units, and other information valuable to field officers completing the forms.

These projects typify rather than describe completely the accomplishments of the Planning and Research Division. As previously indicated departmental acceptance is an index of the worthwhileness of the planning approach. This acceptance has grown to the point where it is no longer possible to perform all the services requested by line units.

#### CONSIDERATIONS

It is, therefore, evident that the Planning and Research Division was organized with the purpose of accomplishing a threefold objective:

1. To assist the Chief and his deputies in planning and initiating over-all administrative policy.

2. To study intra-departmental problems with a view to their solutions.
3. To provide staff services to bureau and division heads by reviewing the systems and tools needed to carry out departmental functions.

In reviewing these objectives it will be noted that they are far wider in scope than those normally associated with past isolated planning units created for one particular bureau or division. They closely conform with those functions normally performed in private industry by "management consultants". It is important to recognize the department-wide scope of a planning unit; otherwise, the full potential of the unit will not be realized. Frequently, when a planning unit is created, some functions previously performed by a particular bureau or division are transferred to the unit. Such functions, however, are important only to the extent that they aid in the discharge of the over-all objectives. Unless they contribute clues or solutions to larger problems, they should continue under the supervision of the original bureau or division. For the planning unit to operate in its proper sphere, it should remain as free as possible from routine functions. Otherwise, it tends to become involved in these functions at the sacrifice of time which could be spent to better advantage on more important problems.

Perhaps the paramount decision in the formation of a planning unit such as the Planning and Research Division is whether there is sufficient work of this nature to justify the assignment on a full time basis of sworn and clerical employees. This decision depends largely on:

1. The extent to which the Chief desires the planning unit to perform completed staff work.
2. The ability of the planning unit to prove useful to members of the department command level.

The planning unit should not engage in direct management of the department, as its only authority is the "authority of ideas". Functions performed for the Chief should terminate in completed staff work, and if this work is accepted it becomes a decision of the Chief. However, as to the second item, a large part of the success of a planning unit is dependent upon its ability to prove useful and to sell its program to bureau and division commanders. An effective planning unit is a member of the team and cannot operate in a vacuum far over to the left or right of the organizational chart. Its function is to assist the Chief in the coordination of the department.

At the outset the Chief can help to establish a favorable reception for a planning unit, although confidence and respect cannot be commanded but must be earned. It should be understood that initially there may be some mistrust and reluctance to present problems to the planning unit for discussion and aid. This attitude can be overcome rapidly when it is made evident the unit is not seeking credit at the expense of other sections of the organization. When it becomes known that the unit provides effective assistance without censure, or seeking credit for improvements, it becomes a welcome aid to line commanders. Such a planning unit, integrated as part of the management team, invariably becomes a vital force in the progress of an organization.

The Planning and Research Division is proving a useful management tool. The operation of this Division indicates that this staff function is further improving the efficiency of the department. It has been said: "Staff services are an extension of the personality of the executive—more eyes, more ears, and more hands to aid him in the formulation of his policy." In an operation as complex as that of a large metropolitan police department a Chief of Police must be reinforced by a staff in order to be properly informed as to the areas of need, and to exercise sufficient control over the execution of policy. The performance of these services is not an end in itself, but rather a means to an end. Such objectives are to render the most efficient police service to the community in the most economical manner—both of which are currently of the utmost importance.

We believe that the Planning and Research Division is accomplishing the purposes for which it was established. Time and manpower savings resulting from studies conducted by it in 1951 have returned the entire cost of the division for many years ahead. We believe that the Planning and Research Division is a step toward improved police services, more efficient and economical operation, better administration, and the professionalization of the police field.