

Learning Isn't All in Textbook

Chicago Policemen 'Born' During 9 Months of Training

By THOMAS POWERS

There he was, a white Chicago policeman who should have known better, calling this black motorist a black BLEEP BLEEP because he wouldn't surrender his driver's license without force after running a red light.

And there he was, a black citizen calling this white traffic policeman a white BLEEP BLEEP because he had been sent to shut off a street water hydrant which had been opened on a 95 degree July day.

Some policemen and some citizens complain that it happens too often on Chicago streets.

Recruits Shown Error

It happens every day in the Chicago Police Academy, 723 W. O'Brien St., where an unusual applied psychology workshop for police recruits is conducted.

The two men involved in the situations described at the beginning of this article are real policemen — one white, one black. They are task force patrolmen, working as actors and psychology consultants in their off-duty hours.

They bring to the stage all the frustrations, foul-ups, and mishaps that have occurred to them in their years of experience in the worst areas of Chicago.

There is Sgt. Robert Klunk, white, tanned, modishly dressed in a blue denim suit—an imperialist when it comes to insults.

There is Investigator Augustus Lett, black, bearded, shabbily dressed, with eyes that bore thru a man as he issues racial epithets. Their role-playing in crisis situations may be the result of a previous night's experience while on patrol.

Directing them is Dr. Joseph C. Kulis, a young associate professor of psychology who calls himself "a shrink who works with the fuzz to solve police problems."



CHICAGO'S TROUBLED POLICE

Rookie Chicago policemen receive the longest training in the country, nine months. Today's story, one of a series on the Police Department, examines the Chicago Police Academy and compares it with police schools in other cities.

The stage is a locked classroom of the former elementary school building the academy occupies.

The only stage effects are desk chairs, paper batons, and fingers pointed as pistols.

The script, put together by the three men, includes a series of confrontation situations which sometimes become so realistic that recruits attack each other or the policemen and wrestle on the floor before they are reminded that they have "blown their cool" and should have reacted differently.

Because 80 to 90 per cent of the calls police receive are non-criminal complaints, the workshop is directed toward "critical incidents police have to deal with," Dr. Kulis said.

There's a Difference

"When a policeman sees a man running down the street with a gun, he knows what to do: draw his gun and go after him," he said. "But what about the citizen who hasn't done anything wrong and loses his temper? How do you handle him?"

"Too many young policemen have an 'either/or' style of thought," he said. "People are either rational or emotional. You are either with the police or against them. Policemen dealing with citizens take either a 'hard guy' approach or a friendly approach. A given activity is masculin or feminine."

"The recruits enter the workshops near the end of their classroom training at a time when they are apprehensive

about their ability to do the job, apprehensive about its potential dangers, and apprehensive about their qualifications for membership in police society.

"Within two or three days they begin to take the 'stage plays' quite seriously because the simulations offer them an opportunity to demonstrate their police skills to themselves and to their peers. Under these conditions, it is not surprising that we witness frequent temper outbursts, intense frustration when things do not go as planned and occasional overly-realistic violence, such as kicking somebody in the shins.

Explain Other Problems

"The recruit gets what, in many cases, is his first taste of a recalcitrant, verbally aggressive citizen who is impressed neither by the police star nor the man behind it. Our format is sufficiently flexible, for example, to allow us to use a simulation to illustrate to one

"The policeman is supposed to be trained and have the self-concept of a professional. We expect more of him than of a citizen."—Hans Mattick, co-director of the Center for Studies in Criminal Justice at University of Chicago.

recruit the danger created by his hot-headedness and a few minutes later the same simulation points up the need for a more aggressive stance from a recruit who is overly-friendly or even timid."

"We even get into the psychology of bribery," Dr. Kulis said. "Why some men offer bribes and why some men take them. The officer may feel foolish refusing a bribe because he is honest and knows he shouldn't take it. We show him how he can refuse without feeling foolish or feminine.

"And there's the problem of the well-equipped, well-trained, physically fit young policeman who is suddenly challenged to a fight on the street. Somebody makes a fool of you, and how do you back down? How do you avoid a fight without losing your image of yourself as masculine?"

Sgt. Klunk puts it this way: "We're trying to show the recruits that they must realize there is a point of no return in almost every situation and they must stop or change their tactics before they reach this point if actual combat can be avoided."

The applied psychology workshops started here three years ago. They were the first in the nation, and the idea has been copied by the New York City and Baltimore Police Academies.

It may surprise some critics of the Chicago Police Department that the academy has the longest training program of any major American city—nine months.

Robert McCann, director of training, who recently received his master's degree but received only seven weeks of training when he went on the police force 24 years ago, tells how the emphasis in the training program has changed.

"The training then was primarily concerned with the physical approach to the job," he said. "The job consisted primarily of keeping order and the courses were directed to the skills of how to handle a gun, write a ticket, and make a complaint. It was a skill-oriented type of program.

"As far back as 1960 the emphasis started changing. We started out by putting into the training program a social science component. The switch was to the focus of how do you handle people, how do you treat people? We started to crawl, and we're running now.

Emphasize Persuasion

"We began to realize that the most essential tool a policeman uses is other people. The baton [police club] is becoming less and less needed. The revolver is becoming less and less needed. They are not the real weapons.

"More and more, policemen are called upon to try to get people to get along together," he said. "We realized that it is essential to start telling policemen what it is that makes people tick, why there are social problems, why there are indi-



(TRIBUNE Staff Photo: By Michael Budrys)

A policeman tries to break up a family squabble, with Dr. Joseph C. Kulis and Sgt. Robert Klunk taking the parts of the combatants.



(TRIBUNE Staff Photo)

Capt. Patrick Needham . . . "When the recruit finishes our course, he has 16 college credits and can continue."

individual problems between person and person and group and group.

"One of the things that happen to a policeman is that he becomes completely frustrated at what is happening in the street because he does not understand what the real problems are if he hasn't been exposed to some of the factors and social changes."

Training Earns Credits

"We are living in a complex society, and it is becoming more complex," McCann said. "The policeman is in the center of any kind of social change, and it is necessary for him to be well versed in what is going on socially."

The present Police Academy curriculum includes Behavioral Science 101 and 102 and

Law Enforcement 101 and 102.

"When the recruit finishes our course, he has 16 hours of college credits and can continue his college education on his own time," said Capt. Patrick V. Needham, executive assistant to Police Supt. James B. Conlisk Jr.

Of the 13,000 policemen on the force, at least 1,200 have more than two or three years of college training, 1,500 have received the 16-hour college credit courses, and 800 are attending full-time college courses. Those interested receive special consideration in shift assignments so that they can continue the courses, Needham said.

Other Training Devices

Neither Needham nor McCann says that a college degree is as essential or desirable for police service as do some California cities. Palo Alto, Campbell, and El Monte demand two-year degrees. Covina demands a bachelor degree for a captaincy, three years for lieutenant, and two years for sergeant. Ventura demands a bachelor degree as



(TRIBUNE Staff Photo)

Director Robert E. McCann . . . "We began to realize that the most essential tool a policeman uses is other people."

a minimum education requirement.

Among some of the innovative training programs on the West Coast:

● Have recruits stop shaving and bathing for two days and put them on "Skid Row" to see how the bums react to

them and how police treat them.

● Send recruits to unemployment offices and day hire job centers to see how the clients are treated.

● Send a white recruit and a black police matron into a white neighborhood to try to rent an apartment.

Of the innovations, McCann said, "They appear to me to be too time consuming and expensive. Our courses are designed to develop the recruit's awareness to all social problems, including those of a 'Skid Row' drunk. The recruit learns that no matter what a man is, what he does, how drunk he gets, he is still a person."

Logic Is Erroneous

On the subject of college graduate policemen, McCann said, "There is an erroneous logic which asserts that because policemen are being taught college subjects, college graduates make better policemen. All policemen do not need a college degree, tho in 20 or 30 years probably all policemen will have college degrees.

"The educational level of a policeman should generally be, in my opinion, just slightly above the general educational level of the community. Certainly, if you have a small college suburb where almost everybody has a degree, then, sure, your policemen should be able to communicate with them" at the same educational level," McCann said.

Capt. Needham said Chicago has the best training program of any large city. "It is sound in terms of selection and preparing men for police service. There is a great deal of screening, extensive background investigations coupled with field training and instruction whereby we weed out those who don't have it."

Tomorrow. Greater civilian scrutiny of Police Department a certainty.