

Vacaville CRIMEFIGHTER

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The Face of Compliance

Building Trust and Legitimacy in Policing

By Chief John Carli

I recently met with President Obama at The White House to have a comprehensive conversation about the national events involving police shootings and race relations. The invitation came abruptly following two high profile officer involved shootings of black men by white officers. Then came Dallas with law enforcement struggling to cope with being targeted and violently attacked in response to these shootings. I joined the diverse group, representing what we can do to solve these critical issues, with all voices being heard and perspectives shared. The dialogue lasted a little over four hours, no cell phones and no breaks, and everyone had their voice heard. The rules were set by the President, and civil discourse occurred with emotions visible but in control. While a sense of progress was made, Baton Rouge was right around the corner. The heart of America was in crisis with fear and anger violently paralyzing our nation.

Since then I have had time to collect my thoughts about what can be done in our profession to improve police relations, public trust, and perception, including the belief by some that black men are being targeted by the police. Vacaville officers already wear body worn cameras, participate in ethics training, participate in crisis intervention and de-escalation training, and engage our community using social media on Facebook (@VacavillePoliceDepartment). So what is next? Build trusting relationships within our community, within every community. Trust is the key, a belief that community policing is occurring but not (racial) profiling. So how do we get past a mindset that the police are actively acting on bias, or the statistics that



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suggest officers are using force at a higher rate among blacks? The resounding cry by many organized groups suggest the answer is government transparency and citizen oversight and accountability. These buzzwords sound good but don't really describe what is necessary.

I will begin by saying we are not communicating. Words like Black Lives Matter, profiling, etc. get instant national attention and spur an emotional reaction, but what about using real words to help everyone understand what we are experiencing? At community events I will often begin by suggesting that we (police) help keep our community safe by profiling. After that word gets the reaction I am looking for I pause and start the discussion on what it really means, but make no mistake using that word is risky. Once we have a better understanding of what we are trying to convey, emotions settle, and the point is made. We need to be clearer in our words and our dialogue so as not to be misunderstood. We need to suspend our assumptions and listen more intently, on both sides of the conversation.

Policing in America is more professional today than at any time in history, yet is being painted as racist and corrupt at unprecedented levels that I can't ever recall in modern his-

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“The Face of Compliance” Continued

tory. How can this be? Media and social media, cell phone videos, national attention on sensational police shootings without time to allow for a thorough investigation to discern the facts before passing judgement, and many more reasons are the likely culprit. Are there areas to improve? Yes. So why don't the police get the same pass as other professions? It is likely due to the fact that a police officer has official power over people...authority to require compliance and suspend citizen rights, and that authority comes at a cost.

We are a society made up of rules and laws, which require compliance. There is no doubt however that in the last two years our country has seen protests bringing attention to policing and the criminal justice system, and an indictment that as a whole unfairly targets minorities, especially blacks. High profile police shootings become the example of what is wrong with the police, regardless of the facts. The compelling



question is, as a free society what happened to personal responsibility and consequences? A shift in our culture, parenting, and our support system that somehow has forgotten to instill respect

for individual human dignity, and authority. So as long as we are talking about how the police can continue to be more professional, we must also engage our communities and have the full conversation, which must include the premise that implicit bias exists in everyone.

I recently attended several community meetings and shared with mostly men; diversity was evident in the room. I was glad for the opportunity to listen, answer questions, to understand, and be understood. I expressed that there are avenues to investigate police grievances if you believe a traffic stop or police encounter is out of line. As a chief of police, I expect the behavior of all police officers to be professional and respectful. The vast majority of police interactions occur without distinction and go unreported since nothing comes of it and no force is used. I believe it is time we ask the same of our citizenry. For me it is a simple but profound request, comply at the time of a police detention, complain later if you feel the encounter was inappropriate, because sometimes it is. This cannot be overstated even as the President himself expressed that the vast majority of all police officers go about their work serving in their communities admirably every day.

When asked for advice by the audiences on how to keep safe when encountering a police officer on a traffic stop or on the street, be respectful and comply. Yes it is okay to ask



why a stop is occurring or why the officer is telling you what is required, just not in the moment when the officer

is conducting the stop, and with a respectful demeanor. There will always be time thereafter to complain or question what transpired, even at the end of the encounter is okay if politely asked. Generally speaking, these contacts are being recorded as more agencies nationwide adopt the use of body worn cameras. These recordings are used in court, and to explain the actions of a stop if there is a complaint. An important reminder is that the face of compliance has no color or ethnicity, and that every citizen who chooses not to comply creates an outcome that may result in arrest or conflict.

The outcry however is that somehow the police as a whole are racially targeting black people as a result of their own implicit bias. Can that occur? Yes, but logic and statistics may tell

a different story, or at least explain away deep rooted theories that it is all based on bias or racist attitudes. The challenge we are facing in today's tense climate is whether the use of deadly force by police officers is predominantly based on bias of the officer or behavior of the citizen, or sometimes both. The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing report has been published and presented to law enforcement leaders and officers nationwide, complete with takeaways on how to build trust and legitimacy and improve community relations. The recommendations are valuable and are commonplace in many police departments from coast to coast. De-escalation training and crisis intervention training are noted and will go a long way to reducing the tensions surrounding so many physical encounters the police face every day.

In my 27 years of experience as a police officer I have never had to use force during a citizen encounter when the person complied with authority. I ask the same question within the rank and file and the same answer is evident. When people comply with authority the contact or arrest almost always concludes peacefully. So the real conversation that needs to be discussed and understood is non-compliance. Is it wrong to expect compliance as a precursor to police encounters? Why is it rarely part of the conversation when we see media reporting on sensational events? There is little doubt that media has its own agenda and truth is not always the motive.

Swift

If non-compliance is the trigger that often leads to a use of force encounter, let's first understand that a police officer, in the moment, cannot predict or discern with total accuracy, why their authority is being questioned or challenged. I have categorized the face of non-compliance into four general but not all inclusive areas as a way to help others understand this concept. The first is the suspect who may have just committed a crime of violence such as a robbery and chooses to resist the lawful order of a police officer to avoid consequences. The second is the person who steals food because they are hungry and was only trying to survive. Third is the individual who has mental illness or cognitive issues and does not fully understand their actions. Finally, the fourth is the citizen who out of frustration does not believe they have to comply with an officer's (perceived unlawful) order, believing the police are "harassing" them. Make no mistake, all four non-compliant behaviors that defy lawful authority have consequences and can appear to the officer as threatening regardless as to why the resistance occurs.

There is much to accomplish if we want to bridge deeply rooted divides, perceptions, and issues in order to improve police relations and build community trust. The only failure at this point would be if we don't face the reality that we are all personally responsible for our actions and reacting emotionally to the issues gets in the way of finding solutions. We must actively find ways to solve fundamental problems within our society if we want real progress and not simply blame the police for all the woes we are facing. It is time for the rhetoric to end and meaningful dialogue to begin. We all must take personal responsibility in order to ensure we can get beyond this dark hour in our history.



Chris Kistner



Missing Children

Nanci Ladd



Adinda Curry
Age: 7
Missing: 6/26/16
Missing from Carmichael, CA



Rebecca Boyer
Age: 16
Missing: 3/28/16
Missing from Antioch, CA

Evelin Rodriguez
Age: 18
Missing: 3/18/16
Missing from Dixon, CA



Monique Ford
Age: 15
Missing: 7/23/16
Missing from Fairfield, CA

Pearl Pinson
Age: 15
Missing: 5/25/16
Missing from Vallejo, CA



Emily Rico
Age: 14
Missing: 7/27/16
Missing from Sacramento, CA

For more information on these or other missing children contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children: www.missingkids.com

Kid Fest 2016 "For The Child In All Of Us"

Vacaville Kid Fest was started in 1999, when an idea was born to create a "Children's Festival"; a place where families could come and have a day of activities with their children, and also have the opportunity to learn about many of the services and resources that were available within the community. The theme has always been "For the Child in all of us". Today, the Kid Fest Committee is still committed to the vision of a day of low cost or no cost activities, free resources, and fun.

This year, there will be 2 stages of entertainment and over 60 booths participating in the event. The event has become part of the fabric of what makes Vacaville a family oriented community. The focus remains on child and family safety and health.



Our Mission:

- To provide a day of no cost or low cost activities for children and families.
- To provide information on resources available to children and families in a safe, fun family oriented atmosphere.
- To provide nonprofit organizations an opportunity to do an outreach to children and families.



- To bring together representatives from the different departments of the City of Vacaville, the business community, and community organizations in a spirit of cooperation at an event that benefits the community.
- To raise funds for those programs within those departments that benefit children and families.

Please join us for Vacaville Kid Fest 2016. The event will take place on Saturday October 8th from 10am to 3pm in beautiful Andrews Park. For more information, go to: www.vacaville-kidfest.org or call 449-5432. Thank you to our sponsors, Northbay Healthcare, KUIC, The Reporter, Vacaville Abbey Carpet & Floor and Vacaville Firefighters Charity Fund!



Rx Take-Back Day

Save The Date!!
October 22nd
9am to 3pm

Vacaville Police Department Lobby
660 Merchant Street

For questions: 707-469-4707



Contributors from the Vacaville PD:

Gretchen Ash
Chief John Carli

Publisher/Editor:
Bruce Chapman

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