

Chapter 2

The Dual Impact of the Pandemic and Reform Movements on Law Enforcement

ABSTRACT

Chapter two explores key issues affecting law enforcement, divided into three sections. The first section examines how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted sustainability, purpose, and ongoing need for police officers. The second section addresses the misconceptions surrounding the calls to defund law enforcement, providing clarity on why such beliefs are not grounded in the reality of police officers' role. The third section focuses on how the pandemic has emphasized the critical need for trust between police officers and the communities they serve.

INTRODUCTION

The chapter goes beyond theoretical discussions by incorporating real-world examples from Sherwin's personal experiences working within communities, responding to calls for service, and interacting with citizens. These anecdotes help illustrate the themes discussed in the chapter, including the unpredictable nature of police work. No two days are the same for a police officer. Each work shift is filled with spontaneous situations that demand immediate attention and responses from a police officer. Police/citizen encounters frequently result in arrests that sometimes require the lawful use of force. Nonetheless, these situations must always be predicated on lawful decisions and methods depleted of bias. Police officers are expected to always exercise prudent judgment. No matter what type of police/citizen encounter,

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or the manifest issues that occur during those situations, all police officers' actions must be grounded in a humanistic approach to policing.

Unfortunately, there are instances when police/citizen encounters result in public scrutiny. Those encounters stimulate citizens, politicians, and the media to question the lawfulness and appropriateness of police officers' methods. These situations further underscore the ongoing need for clear communication, transparency, and trust between police departments and citizens to bridge the gap between police officers and the communities they serve.

Chapter two tackles several critical discussions surrounding the defunding of law enforcement, addressing community concerns such as the militarization of police officers and the societal impact of that imagery. Chapter two highlights the growing mental health crisis in society that is predicated on the abuse of illicit drug use. And with the legalization of marijuana the mental health of our youths is in peril as the regular use of marijuana impairs natural cognitive maturation. The early onset use of marijuana is scrutinized for its detrimental impact on young people's brain development, which ultimately affects their ability to learn and become contributing members of society. The section is dedicated to examining this phenomenon by emphasizing how young people are the foundation of a sustainable future with a focus on society's responsibility to suppress tolerating anything that supplants the cognitive maturation and mental health of children.

Chapter two also explores the use of force paradigm, explaining its lawful application through real-life examples from my own experiences. These examples are meant to clarify the legal parameters under which lawful force is used by demonstrating how lawful force can be appropriately applied in a range of situations. A significant portion of chapter two is dedicated to discussing the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, including its mission, identity, and the purpose behind its activism. Considering this, Sherwin provide a unique perspective on the George Floyd incident, comparing it to his own professional experiences in similar situations, while drawing upon insights from law enforcement colleagues.

A core concern expressed in this chapter is the need for community trust. Without trust, the relationship between police officers and the community is reduced to an "us vs. them" mentality, which erodes the very fabric of effective policing. Trust requires more than just effort; it requires mindful and responsible leadership at every level. It is not only the responsibility of supervisors but also of individual officers to foster trust through their actions and conduct. The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted this need for trust, particularly as police officers were tasked with enforcing radical mandates and policies that were often met with resistance by members of society. During this time, many officers lost public trust and respect, but the pandemic also illuminated the undeniable need for police officers to utilize

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