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## Daily News of Los Angeles (CA)

March 17, 1991

**Section:** VIEWPOINT

**Edition:** Valley

**Page:** VPT4

**Memo:** C.W. Baker is a member of the LAPD.

### ULTIMATELY, THE PUBLIC LOSES WHEN THE POLICE ARE HOBbled

*C.W. BAKER*

The motorists slow down to watch as the two uniformed Los Angeles police officers attack the black man. One officer forces the wide-eyed man against the block wall. The other 6-foot officer chokes and kicks the non-resisting man. After about 30 seconds he falls face down to the ground. He briefly tries to crawl away, but the continuing attack prevents it. One officer uses his fingers to pry open the man's mouth. Both look into the man's empty mouth and curse. Nevertheless, they drag him to a police car and drive away.

Residents hear a commotion and peer from behind their barred windows. In the dimly lit courtyard they watch as two LAPD officers beat a running black man repeatedly with their metal monadnocks. As the man runs, one of the officers physically tackles him. Obviously terrified of the officers, the man pulls away twisting and kicking, returns to his feet and continues running. There isn't anything in the man's hands nor was the man doing anything wrong. The chase continues for 300 feet as the officers alternately beat, kick and tackle him. At the end of the foot pursuit the suspect collapses from exhaustion. The officers handcuff and "hog-tie" the man before driving away with him.

Had these scenes been videotaped the whole country would have indicted me years ago. After all, I was involved in both incidents. My story isn't about the narrow perception of a video camera, but of what the camera actually misses.

I spent six of ten years in Foothill Division. I didn't sit studying on city time in some inside job. I spent it listening to the community, watching drug dealers, investigating gang shootings, robberies, burglaries, and arresting the source of these community complaints. When you spend 10 years on the streets of Los Angeles you become familiar with scum that wouldn't think twice about raping your daughter, bludgeoning your mother, or sliding a screwdriver into your belly. It isn't what I'm up against that bothers me either. It's what you, the Los Angeles community, are up against.

The first scenario: My partner and I were walking a foot beat on Van Nuys Boulevard. We saw the young black man stuff and swallow several rocks of cocaine. Drug users and dealers sometimes go to incredible lengths to destroy evidence. I once had a guy chew and swallow most of a glass coke pipe as we approached him.

Knowing that the man could easily choke or die from poisoning, we tried to inhibit his swallowing by placing pressure around his neck. The man squirmed and tried to run several times. My partner held him as I screamed "open your mouth" repeatedly.

The swallowing continued and we forced him to the ground. We used "pain compliance" with no results. After several minutes of wrestling and twisting the man finally opened his now-empty mouth. It only takes a few grams of cocaine base to cause death from poisoning. We could have let him go and risk his death but opted to help him. We rushed him to the hospital where a doctor asked us what we wanted to do. I recommended ipecac to remove his stomach contents.

By the time most of the contents lay in a bowl it had dissolved. Now he was suffering from symptoms of cocaine poisoning. We released him to the doctor. Had we booked him for drug intoxication we would have ended with several hours of overtime; a waste of department resources for a cocaine dealer and no evidence.

The second scenario: We received several complaints from residents about PCP sales in their apartment courtyard. I had handled a teen-age boy and girl dazed and hallucinating from PCP intoxication only a few days earlier.

This particular evening we saw this man loitering just inside the apartment gate. When we approached on foot he rushed away from us. A clear vial of PCP dropped from his hand and the heavy odor of ether filled the hot evening air.

I got to him first, grabbed him by the shoulders and pulled him down. My partner and I were both runners and in excellent shape. Though he was shorter than both of us, the man's exceptional strength prevented his capture and he was up, without me, in a moment. My partner caught up with him and knocked him down with the monadnock. The man returned to his feet as I caught up and tackled him again. Several strikes with the baton didn't faze the man but my partner and I were both winded. He got up again.

We chased him over 300 feet, across traffic lanes and through a large parking lot, alternately tackling, striking, kicking, sitting, every 20 to 50 feet. My arms and legs burned from the continuous effort to control him.

After he finally collapsed we arrested and later booked him. He eventually was convicted of his umpteenth felony and did a couple years for selling PCP to children and young adults. Three years later I chased him after he sold cocaine to an undercover officer I was backing. That foot chase continued over 20 minutes. It involved a helicopter and more than 10 officers who alternately tackled and wrestled with him over trees, fences and bushes. At one point during the chase he ran full stride from a rooftop into a neighbor's back yard.

I cannot condone, judge, or condemn the officers involved in the LAPD video. Nor should America until the final disposition of the case. It will be as difficult to find a jury of the officers' peers as it is to find a jury of a drug addict's peers. Nevertheless, jurors who have no idea of what police work entails will decide and those involved will never be the same.

What about the losers? Who are they?

You, my friends, are the losers. The LAPD is merely a fenced guard dog ensuring that the master's domain remains secure. By being the master you decide if my tether remains 100 feet long or 100 inches long. By ordering me to bark and not bite, criminals take advantage of you, not me. By ordering me to discontinue pursuit allows him to return at will with the same agenda until his drives are sated. Giving him freedom after his capture assures his return. You, the members of the public, alone decide the quality of your lives.

(This essay also appeared in LAPPL's *BLUE LINE*, May 1991 p1. Two months later I was accused of beating Chavez.)

Daily News of Los Angeles (CA)

September 8, 1991

**Section:** EDITORIAL

**Edition:** Valley

**Page:** VPT2

**Memo:**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

## PUBLIC FORUM

### THIS OFFICER'S HIGHER-UPS AREN'T CHIEF MATERIAL

I was just reading about the recruitment of our next Los Angeles police chief (Daily News, Sept. 5). They say there are about 25 officers ranked commander and up who are eligible to apply and be considered. Well, if I had anything to do with it, I wouldn't give any of them a second thought.

Here you have a bunch of climbers who last worked patrol about the time I graduated from Newcastle Elementary School. For the last 13 years, they've been acquiescing to admitted Los Angeles Police Department administrative incompetence. Former Assistant Chief Jesse Brewer, Assistant Chief Robert L. Vernon, Assistant Chief David Dotson and a few others reported glaring problems to the Christopher Commission only after they were asked to testify. If there really were a problem, any of the 30 or so potential applicants could have broached the subject years ago. Instead, the wave-making has been delegated to a few frustrated uniformed dogs, like me, whom the department can write off merely as disgruntled employees.

A commander, even a captain for that matter, has sufficient rank to grab the attention of the Los Angeles City Council, the Police Commission, even the media, to illuminate problems within the LAPD. Yet none of them - not one - had the courage or stomach to address shortcomings until a commission was assembled. Frankly, I wasn't impressed by any of them.

Listening to Police Chief Daryl F. Gates, Brewer, Vernon and Dotson reminded me of Herman Wouk's "The Caine Mutiny" when Captain Queeg testified about the strawberries.

Right after Dotson and the others finished testifying, there was a small group of police officers who came forward and identified themselves as homosexuals. Though I was one of those who rolled his eyes initially, I later thought of the courage they must have possessed to identify themselves only to face potential ridicule. In that simple act, they exhibited more courage and class than the band of whining tattletales who sat before the Christopher Commission.

Whatever happens in the future of the LAPD, it doesn't look good for the community we serve.

Clark W. Baker  
Simi Valley

Daily News of Los Angeles (CA)

March 10, 1991

**Section:** EDITORIAL

**Edition:** Valley

**Page:** VPT2

**Memo:**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

**PUBLIC FORUM**  
POLICE BRUTALITY ON TAPE: VIEWERS RESPOND

I watched the sensational video with the rest of America as Los Angeles Police Department officers were seen hitting and kicking a black man for what seemed an intolerable length of time. My shock turned to outrage when Chief Daryl Gates and Mayor Tom Bradley made cowardly statements distancing themselves from the officers involved.

When I reviewed the tape again it appeared the officers were actually following LAPD procedure.

When a felony suspect is confronted and refuses to follow verbal commands, officers are compelled to escalate to firm grip-control holds. When it appears that firm grip is ineffective, they escalate to the Taser, kicks, batons and whatever it takes to control the suspect with a minimal risk of injury to the officers and suspects. As long as the suspect doesn't comply with lawful orders, the use of force is invoked.

This muscular 6'3" 225-pound parolee was swarmed by over five police officers. After several minutes of wrestling with no effect, the officers began using batons and kicks and the camera began to roll. Even after repeated hits he returned to his feet.

Maybe if LAPD still had carotid holds, those five officers could have controlled King without batons. Then again, wasn't it the ACLU and NAACP that encouraged the use of metal pipes over those tried and proven manual control holds?

You made your bed - now sleep in it. My taxes won't bankroll King's settlement.

Clark Baker  
Simi Valley

## Daily News of Los Angeles (CA)

October 16, 1991

**Section:** Editorial

**Edition:** Valley

**Page:** N14

**Memo:** Letters to the Editor

### PUBLIC FORUM

#### WHEN HE SAW WHO RAN L.A. SCHOOLS, HE MOVED

So Los Angeles city Board of Education member Roberta Weintraub finally is telling people that there's a problem in the Los Angeles Unified School District (Daily News, Oct. 14). She's boo-hooing because there are only a few administrators supervising large groups of children.

I'm a lifelong resident of the San Fernando Valley and attended public schools here. In 1983 I was jogging in front of Mulholland Junior High in Van Nuys during school hours when I observed a kid ditching classes. He jumped over a fence onto Vanowen Street next to me. Being a Los Angeles Police Department officer, I understood the correlation between truancy and daytime residential burglary. When I told the teen-ager to get back to school, he replied with obscenities. I grabbed his arm and walked him to the counselor's office.

I immediately was besieged by indignant LAUSD administrators who yelled at me for "kidnapping" the little truant. I gave them a primer on truancy and burglary and identified myself as an off-duty LAPD officer. They called my watch commander and made a complaint against me.

I knew then, eight years ago, what kind of people were running the LAUSD. I moved out of Los Angeles primarily because I didn't want Weintraub or any other LAUSD administrator to teach my kids their version of responsibility, discipline or ethics. I have nothing but pity for the children who must attend and contempt for those who run the operation.

They have no one to blame but themselves.

C.W. Baker

Simi Valley