

**POLICE CHIEF**

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**Mark W. Field** was appointed Chief of Police in 1996 and served as Deputy Chief of Police from 1991 until that time for the Wheaton, Illinois Police Department. He has been a police officer for thirty-two years and formerly served as Chief of Administrative Services for the Kankakee County, Illinois Sheriff's Police Department. He holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Governors State University, is a graduate of Southern Police Institute's 66th Administrative Officers Course. Since 2000, he has lectured in 26 states as an adjunct professor with the Northwestern University Center for Public Safety and College of DuPage. Previously, he was a graduate and undergraduate professor of Public Policy at Governors State University as well as Kankakee Community College. Mr. Field is a former Lieutenant in United States Intelligence and has served at numerous duty stations throughout the world with the Naval Investigative Service and Naval Aviation with extensive experience in the areas of counter-intelligence and counter-terrorism. His literary credits include over twenty published leadership and management articles in leading professional journals. His most recent articles, entitled "Velvet Covered Nights" and "A Leader's Great Challenge" appeared in *Law and Order*. Chief Field has lectured publicly and privately across the United States on the topics of leadership, ethics, human resources, and personnel selection. Mr. Field is the co-author of a published textbook entitled *Police Officer Selection: A Handbook for Law Enforcement Administrators* published by Charles C Thomas Publisher of Springfield, Illinois.

# POLICE CHIEF

**How to Attain and Succeed  
in this Critical Position**

*By*

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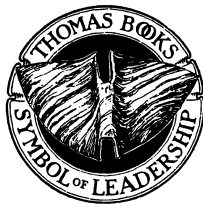
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This book began with the unforeseen decision and vision of two close personal and professional friends to join in a common goal to advance a vision for the cultivation and mentoring of quality police chiefs throughout the United States. It is our highest goal to provide prospective police chiefs with thought-provoking ideas and help promote and facilitate their dreams and goals to become outstanding law enforcement leaders. At one of the most challenging points in the history of American policing, where police chiefs are faced with greater and more complex issues than ever before, we are in dire need of committed, dedicated leaders of character and competence.

Our special thanks to our publisher, Michael Payne Thomas, whose constant support and guidance were always a source of encouragement, even in the face of missed deadlines as we tried to put the many ideas rumbling about in our heads on paper.

To the mayors, city managers, elected officials, and fellow department heads with whom we have served, your professionalism and dedication made our association with you truly a privilege.

To our families, without whom neither of our careers could have been even remotely possible—to our parents who made us both what we are, to our brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, cousins and in-laws for being there for us through it all, and for being our support group throughout our careers, and in a very special way.

From Mark Field: to my wife Christine, daughters Clare, Caitlin, and Grace, and my son Daniel.

From Dan McDevitt: to my wife Marilyn, daughter Erika and her husband Jason, who gave us three wonderful grandchildren, Kylie, Olivia, and Tanner Daniel, and to my son Christopher and his wife Kelly.

We are looking forward to the next chapter, and we're very fortunate to have you in our lives.

And to those of you who aspire to become Chiefs of Police and truly want to succeed, we wish you the best and sincerely hope that this book assists you in reaching your personal and professional goals.



## INTRODUCTION

Good, sound advice for the law enforcement professional who want to be police chief, or a chief wanting to advance to a better job, is hard to come by. The literature on the subject is pretty thin, even more so are the people who know anything about this subject. It is abundantly clear to the authors that most police chief aspirants are ill-prepared to play the game necessary to compete for jobs outside their agencies. Are you?

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I have the “right stuff” to be a chief?
- Are my credentials sufficient?
- What level of job can I realistically compete for?
- Are my family and I willing to relocate?
- Do I know how to write a résumé?
- How well do I interview?
- Do I know what to wear to an interview?
- Do I have sufficient negotiating skills?
- What makes up a good compensation package?
- What are my upper and lower salary limits?

If you know the answers, or think you have a sufficient grasp on the subjects, then you are wasting your time by reading this book. Leave it in the roll call room or on someone else’s desk. But, if you are in a quandary about the above, then read on; the information is guaranteed to make you a competitor in the police chief job-hunting market. The following credentials are typically requested of a candidate for a midsize city. How do you compare?

The authors’ research has led us to conclude that only a very small percentage of senior police officials have actually interviewed outside their agency more than once. And with rare exception, those who were passed over for a job had no idea why—was it the lack of education, insufficient experience, appearance or the wrong image, a poorly written résumé, an unfavorable interview, politics, the lack of connections, and/or a lackluster

TYPICAL CREDENTIALS FOR A MEDIUM SIZE  
CITY POLICE CHIEF

Education

Minimum of Bachelor's Degree. A Master's Degree is an added bonus. Leadership and management skills are more desirable than the educational background, however, due to the educational achievements of people in the organization, the city is interested in people who have a college degree.

Experience

The City of \_\_\_\_\_ is looking for someone who has had substantial experience in managing a progressive police organization or division therein. As such, those who are police chiefs in smaller cities and/or people serving in a number two position in cities of comparable size, or division heads in larger organizations are encouraged to apply. People who are at the mid-management rank would find it difficult to compete with the anticipated candidate pool. The successful candidate must have significant command experience and should possess the following characteristics.

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| • Leadership Skills     | • Communication Skills |
| • Community Orientation | • Decisive             |
| • Respected             | • Visible              |
| • Innovated             | • Analytical Ability   |
| • Delegator             | • Flexibility          |
| • Non-Traditionalist    | • People Person        |
| • Anticipatory          | • Listener             |
| • Morale Builder        | • Evaluator            |
| • Organized             | • Energetic            |
| • Progressive           | • Team Oriented        |

reputation? Startlingly, most of these people did little to investigate why they didn't get the job offer. Some are still wondering.

This monograph is not a scholarly endeavor nor is it a cerebral exercise. It claims little originality. In fact, the appendix contains a list of other books that might help with job hunting. It contains information resulting from personal experiences, input from job-hunting police chiefs, city managers, and mayors who have hired police chiefs and the contributions from executive search consultants. This written endeavor is an effort to snare the beneficial aspects of these experiences for the progressive job seeker, hoping that it will improve his/her odds in what has become a very competitive arena.



We are convinced each of us has a chance to win any specific job offer no matter how well qualified the other candidates are. We are also convinced that no matter how qualified we think we might be, any of us can be beaten by the other candidates. The key is preparation and planning which is the focus of this book. This text is contemporary on issues such as career positioning, compensation, negotiating, employment agreements, relocation practices, use of executive search consultants, the importance of image, and other elements related to a successful police chief job search. It is an attempt to bring both the potential and practicing police chief up-to-date with the law enforcement executive job market and provide tips that will help them compete for the job they are seeking.

Two fundamental themes that guide and are woven throughout the fabric of this book consist of the questions “How do I improve my chances to become a police chief?” and “How do I advance in the police chief profession?” But the subject matter is not all inclusive on this subject. We are not serving career advice “al fresco.” The menu in this book is restricted for the most part to the job-hunting aspect of career advancement. And, it offers some insight into what makes a successful police chief. Hopefully, it will provide you with some useful ideas that will help you compete successfully for the job of your choice and maximize your earning potential. There are certain commandments the applicant should keep in mind as they pursue a police chief job.

### **Learn to Fail Forward Toward Your Goal**

Instead of brooding, obsessing, theorizing reasons behind your de-selection, becoming discouraged and disillusioned, treat each failure as a lesson and learn from it. What are most leaders afraid of? At the top of many people’s list is failure. J. M. Barrie said, “We are all failures—at least, all the best of us are. In my 30-plus years of leadership experience, I’ve come to the conclusion that one of the most valuable but underestimated abilities that leaders can possess is the ability to do what I call ‘failing forward.’” It is more than having a good attitude about mistakes, and it’s a step beyond simply taking risks. “Failing forward” is the ability to rise after being knocked down, learning from mistakes, and moving forward in a better direction.

Everyone makes mistakes. But the real difference between average and achieving people is their perception of and response to failure. Nothing else has the same kind of impact on people’s ability to accomplish their dreams. Unfortunately, no matter how gifted or knowledgeable a leader may be, mistakes will be made along the way to dreams. Failure is the price paid on the road to success. Failure is just like success—it is a day-to-day process, not someplace where someone arrives one day. Failure is not a one-time event;

it is how leaders deal with life along the way. Leaders will make mistakes, but one cannot conclude they are a failure until they breathe their last breath. Until then, they are still in the process, and there is still time to turn things around for the better.

The truth is that only a leader can label what they do as a failure. Failure is subjective. The perception of and response to mistakes, determine whether they are failures. Tom Peters wisely acknowledged, “If silly things were not done, intelligent things would never happen.” Mistakes must be kept in perspective. Understanding every mistake is a valuable lesson and another opportunity to improve.

Setting realistic goals is paramount to “failing forward.” People often set themselves up for failure by setting excessively high, unrealistic goals due to lack of a clear understanding of what is to be achieved or by always expecting your best performance. Conversely, goals can be set too low because of fear of failure or taking it too easy. Setting goals at the correct level is a skill acquired by practice. Set goals slightly out of reach but not so far that there is no hope of achieving them.

Become more polished, work with a passion on the improvement of your cover letter, researching the next job, and becoming adept at marketing yourself. You must believe the authors that there will be plenty of challenges ahead for you as a chief of police that will test your mettle to the breaking point.

If you give up this easily in the selection and screening process, chances are you will be marginally successful—if at all—as a future chief of police.

### ***The Ten Commandments of Job Hunting***

1. You must develop a realistic career plans.
2. Don't accept a police chief position unless you have the necessary survival instincts.
3. Search consultants may control your destiny.
4. Only a well-written résumé will get you an interview.
5. You can't interview well unless you prepare and practice.
6. Appearance is the most important aspect of interviewing.
7. Once you have been offered the job you control the negotiations.
8. You won't get any more salary than you ask for.
9. All major conditions of your job should be reduced to writing.
10. Expect to be fired.

The authors do not claim to be experts, but both have more than a passing interest in the subject of job hunting. We have written articles in professional journals on the topics discussed in this book. We have lectured in the majority of the 50 states and numerous foreign countries on the subject. We

have probably read over a thousand résumés and interviewed a couple of hundred men and women for key management positions. We have been on the other side of the fence as job applicants so we have also struggled in our attempts to write the correct résumé, sweated over tough interviews, and probably settled for less pay than we could have negotiated for. We have also experienced the incredibly crushing emotional distress of being told “You are not qualified” by the head hunter as well as being thrilled by an invitation to interview for jobs for which we were barely qualified.

We have also had the opportunity to work the other side of the fence by conducting numerous selection processes, including chiefs of police, and assisting other professional recruiting firms in selecting new police chiefs. Over the years we have discussed career advancement with scores of police commanders, supervisors, and law enforcement administrators who have aspired to be police chiefs. During this time we have interviewed scores of police chiefs and were involved with the assessment and selection of police chiefs in other states.

In our considered opinion, all of this does not necessarily guarantee that we have attained some level or pinnacle of intellectual high ground on the subject. It has, however, given us the rare opportunity of conducting empirical research regarding the somewhat vaporous subject of “How one goes about advancing in the police chief or law enforcement profession.” Heeding Mark Twain’s admonition that “a successful book is not made of what is in it, but what is left out of it,” this monograph is relatively short and to the point. But compared to many of its truncated predecessors, this book is fount of information because the subject of career advancement for police chiefs is literally drenched in silence.

While occupying perhaps the most interesting job in the universe, the police chief routinely deals with the breakdown of democracy, politics, greed, bureaucracy, incompetency, cowardice, and the failure of good intentions. Sometimes the result is the police chief finding himself in transition, the current buzzword for being fired, not knowing how to search for another job, while the rest of the world seems somewhat contemptuous of his situation. It is our collective hope and prayer that this book will lead the aspirant to his first job. And, it will help the crushed and humbled out-of-work veteran leader to continue his career.

### **Every Cop Wants To Be a Chief of Police**

Deep in the soul of every police officer (lurking like an alligator in a swamp), is the desire to be chief. It is a sweeping motivation. With full knowledge that every police chief is routinely hounded by activist groups, beleaguered by politicians, and challenged by militant police organizations, nev-

ertheless, there are plenty of takers. Just about everybody with a badge wants to be the chief. But what makes you stand out from the rest of the pack? How good are your qualifications? How legitimate is your experience? What are your chances? What is your capacity to respond to the challenge?

In his book about the early astronauts and test pilots, Thomas Wolfe talks about the “right stuff.” Few can define it. Most find it difficult to articulate. But if a police chief is going to achieve the job satisfaction he wants, the recognition he desires, professional progress, and material advancement, he should be well supplied with plenty of the right stuff. There is not other experience that completely grooms you for being the chief until they seat you in the cockpit and place your hands on the throttle. No one knows until it is too late whether or not he can take charge of a new department. By taking charge I mean establishing mastery over the organization and influence of its people. Within a short time the new chief will have to move from the period when he is on the edge of his seat—when everything is anxiety-producing to making the machine run smoothly. If they can’t, life as a police chief will be a proverbial living hell.

Background and situational factors influence a senior police commander’s potential for success as well as failure. All too often the organizational environmental that surrounds a police commander is not conducive or beneficial in the transition to the position of chief. Most individuals who become chiefs are so driven by raw desire that they rarely contemplate the differences between what they do; what the chief does; and whether or not they can actually do what a chief does. There is a big difference in the way each of us has been molded and shaped. Since a typical senior police commander does minimum work to prepare them for the chief job, it is not surprising that many eventually fail. The effective police chief must be able to work with different people in groups, each having agendas: the media, politicians, civic leaders, union representatives, clergy, minorities, and other special interest groups. Few can do this successfully. Can you?

There is a popular misconception that the chief runs the police department, enjoying complete autonomy. Not so by a long shot. Special interest groups, the criminal justice system, the press, labor associations, television, judges, and prosecutors all combine to set the police chief’s agenda. Only those police executives capable of dealing with the public and the press, evaporating budget funds, and the realities of local politics are successful.

It is extremely difficult transition to move from the rigid, yet relatively comfortable, paramilitary bureaucracy of a police department into the more abstract arena in which a police chief must operate. Command presence, operational knowledge, technical competence, and program development skills must be replaced by the ability to negotiate, effective public speaking,

<b>Senior Police Commanders</b>	<b>Police Chiefs</b>
Make recommendations	Makes the final decision
Are generally task-oriented	Is goal-oriented
Work in the present	Works in the future
Are responsible for only a part	Deals with the whole
Data-oriented for the most part	Is oriented toward the concepts
Contend with internal politics	Face the challenge of external politics
Are doers	Is the agency planner

cooperative liaison with elected officials, and intuitive sense of public opinion and the ability to persuade the media.

To be effective and successful, the contemporary police chief must be a tactful diplomat, an innovator, problem solver, team player, leader, and possess a positive and enthusiastic personality that is driven by a high energy level. The Center for Creative Leadership lists ten reasons why executives fail:

1. Specific performance problems with business.
2. Insensitive to others: An abrasive, intimidating, bullying style.
3. Cold, aloof, arrogant.
4. Betrayal of trust.
5. Overmanaging, failing to delegate or build a team.
6. Overly ambitious, thinking of the next job, playing politics.
7. Failing to staff effectively.
8. Unable to think strategically.
9. Overdependence on an advocate or mentor.
10. Unable to adapt to a boss with a differing style.

It is our observation that police chiefs fail for many of the same reasons. While some will be discussed in this chapter, more will be identified and discussed in more detail later.

### **The Right Stuff**

As I said earlier, no one can define the “right stuff” but all winners have it. These people seem to either do things right, or land on their feet when they do things wrong. Whatever it is, it is an essential ingredient in the police chief profession. If you are made up of the following, you probably have the

right stuff. If not, think thoughtfully and introspectively about becoming a police chief.

### ***Leadership***

Leadership is not a question of having power over subordinates but rather a matter of having influence with them. Many can manage but few can lead. Right or wrong, successful police organizations are led by leader-managers, not manager-administrators.

### ***Servant-Leader Mindset***

We have learned many chiefs become the lack of positive affirmation or appreciation by anyone (usually in conference hospitality suites), particularly from their employees, elected officials, city manager, or the community. Successful chiefs embrace the servant-leader mentality thereby achieving incredible results for their organizations. They do this by giving priority attention to the needs of their colleagues and those they serve and placing others' needs above their own. Then, people success is all the affirmation they need.

### ***Introspection***

Introspection is the self-observation and reporting of conscious inner thoughts, desires, and feelings. A critical aspect of introspection for the successful chief is a self awareness that is practiced through a conscious mental process that relies upon thinking, reasoning, self-examination, or self-reflection. In *The Art of War*, the great ancient Chinese military general and strategist Sun Tzu wrote:

So it is said that if you know others and know yourself,  
you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles;

If you do not know others but know yourself, you will  
win one and lose one;

If you do not know others and do not know yourself,  
you will be imperiled in every single battle.

### ***Intuition***

Police chiefs must have the “aha reaction,” that sudden understanding, recognition, or resolution of an issue or problem in order to be successful.

An “aha” moment is one of those times in your life that all the pieces fall into place. A moment of clarity that enlightens and actually changes you. The job rewards the chiefs who are intuitive and snuffs out those who can’t sense a change in the winds. Once a chief has that “aha” moment, they know exactly how to proceed. These moments are defining moments where true knowledge has been gained and it is up to you to seize these moments and use this newly discovered wisdom to change your life.

### ***Professional Confidence and Experience***

This means you know your business and everybody else knows you know your business. However, too often chiefs make mistakes because they are afraid to ask for help. So, believing that they (as chief) are required to act, they may erroneously *think* they know their business and launch off on a disastrous course.

Not knowing how to do something may be embarrassing, but not asking for help can lead to catastrophic results. Remember, as a new chief it is inevitable that you will encounter and be thrown into new experiences and situations never before experienced. When you are faced with something you are uncertain about, and you don’t know your business, do not choose to suffer in silence. Use these three steps to ask a trusted peer chief, city manager, or colleague for assistance:

1. **Start with what you know.** Begin your request for help with context and background about the situation so that the other person knows what you know.
2. **Ask for feedback on a proposed direction.** Just because you are uncertain does not mean you cannot form an opinion. Explain what you are thinking of doing, your rationale, and ask for input and direction. Not what you want to hear, but what you need to hear.
3. **Ask for tangible advice.** If you are still unsure about what direction to take, be direct with the other person. Ask for the tools that you need to make a decision or for a referral to someone who has been in a similar situation.

### ***Sense of Fairness and Faith***

The performances of others are measured on a bell-shaped curve and a chief is judged on the degree of fairness with which they rate subordinates.

### ***A Catalyst for Change***

You can count on two things among the uncertainties of the organization you manage—it will be different from the past and different from what you expected it to be. Creativity and innovation are necessary for the chief's survival.

### ***Firing and Disciplining People***

You cannot manage a police department without having to either discipline or fire people. It is an unpleasant task but has to be done, and there is a tendency to avoid this task because it is unpleasant.

### ***A Strong Ego and Self-Confidence***

The media, the Friday-morning quarterbacks—will question you even before the game is played, your officers, and the public will critically judge your actions on a daily basis. Without a strong ego the stress-producing insecurities of being a police chief can be debilitating.

### ***A Tenacious Worker***

Nothing will do more for your reputation than hard work, and nothing can hurt a chief more than a lack of effort.

### ***Toughness***

Not a mean-spirited toughness but a spirit and constitution like whang leather.

## **Do I Have The Right Stuff?**

The authors believe that there is a way to arrive at an answer to this most probing question. We also believe that in engaging in the analysis that follows will not only answer this question but will also provide the reader with a powerful tool that can be harnessed to develop a strategic career plan; prepare yourself for the chief's selection process; ultimately get that coveted job; and, succeed for years to come. **Start with the end in mind.**

Humans should never delight in another human's misfortune or mistakes. But, analyzing other leader's missteps in an effort to identify and avoid hidden alligators in the swamp that have consumed other victims should never go to waste. Legendary Notre Dame football coach Lou Holtz once said, "Coaching is nothing more than eliminating mistakes before you get fired."



The legacy of every great chief and every fired chief contains both hidden learning gems and teachable moments. Those should be exploited and mined for a deeper and better understanding of how to prepare for, get, and keep a chief's job.

Enter the concept of *reverse engineering*. Reverse engineering (RE) is the process of discovering the technological principles of a device, object, or system through analysis of its structure, function, and operation. Companies use RE when buying the competitor's produce (e.g., a mechanical device, electronic component, or software program), taking it apart and analyzing its workings in detail in an effort to try to make a new, better device or program that does the same thing, but even better, without utilizing any physical part of the original.

Using RE concepts, we will attempt to provide the reader with a detailed analysis of why chiefs succeed and why they fail. It represents a compilation of what we learned from a critical analysis of the good, the bad, and the ugly. Some reflect our own failures and successes as well as those that we have witnessed, coached, mentored, or learned from reading newspapers and watching the news.

### **Lack of Confidence**

Drawing from our research, our first observation is that many police chiefs of today are suffering from a lack of confidence—the confidence of their own employees. During the past year, a number of these leaders received votes of no confidence from their labor organizations; and some now see themselves as victims—blamed for the countless maladies plaguing the law enforcement agency and the community as a whole. These chiefs perceive themselves as highly visible, vulnerable targets of discontent, caught in a crossfire between politicians, the public, various interest and pressure groups, and their own officers. To be sure, the police chief's job can at times be a thankless one. The following folk tale illustrates the dilemma in which some chiefs view themselves today:

There once was a police chief who lost his job and then found that he was rejected wherever he applied because he was either over- or underqualified. Totally dejected and becoming desperate, he eventually landed a job with a local carnival. His task was a simple one: to stick his head through a hole in a tent wall and have people throw baseballs at him—three baseballs for one dollar. Two police officers patrolling the carnival observed their ex-chief and remarked, "What a sad commentary—one day a police chief the next day a target for people throwing baseballs." The officers watched for a few minutes and finally approached their former chief on one of his breaks, saying, "Man, this must be a tough job." To which the chief answered, "Well, yes and no. You see,

it's not the baseballs—you can see them coming and have an opportunity to dodge and duck them. The really tough part of the job is the dart game that's going on in the back.”

So it is with the real-life police chief who is an exposed, susceptible target for both sides. They usually do an excellent job dodging and ducking the baseballs being thrown by the politicians, the public, various interests, and pressure groups. The really tough part of the job is when the employees and their unions begin throwing darts on the other side. And the job becomes toughest when that most devastating dart of all is thrown—a “no confidence vote.”

### **The Necessary Credentials**

While every city manager and mayor will differ slightly on the profile they desire in a police chief, research leads us to draw certain conclusions. In the broadest sense both the mayor and manager will want a police chief who can literally make the present law enforcement problems go away. However, there will be a tendency for the mayor to select a police chief on the basis of the political realities they must deal with while the city manager is more inclined to use efficiency and administrative competence as the selection benchmarks. And while neither is right nor wrong, police chief aspirants need to recognize the fact there will most likely be a difference in the organizational environment where the chief executive is appointed on the basis of professional competence, and one where the chief executive is elected.

There are a number of categories that make up a law enforcement executive's bonafide education and training, rank and experience, professional reputation and contacts, and for the lack of a better word those which are called the intangibles. Only in the rarest of circumstances can anyone successfully compete for a police chief position without holding a baccalaureate degree. The message here is that if you don't have one, then get one. And if you have one, then start working on some sort of advanced degree. Both society and the police profession have progressed so that now a college degree is the minimal prerequisite for any police chief position. Quality training is also important. The word quality is underscored. Programs such as those sponsored by Northwestern University's Center for Public Safety, Southern Police Institute, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Academy, Harvard's Program for Government Executives, and other prestigious institutions are essential. A candidate's experience, particularly with city managers, is important.

While the mystique of the detective commander may set well with the public and some selected officials, the most competitive police chief candi-

dates will be those who have a well-rounded background with the bulk of their experience in patrol command slots. Anyone with police chief aspirations should take advantage of any opportunity to broaden their base of experience while at the same time maximizing their exposure to patrol commands when at all possible. While technical competence, leadership, and a reputation for hard work may be all that is required for promotion in your own law enforcement agency, there is nothing like a solid professional reputation when you are applying for a position with another department.

This book is made up by not only what we have accomplished but who we know, what we have written, and how we are regarded by those outside our agency. It is important that you develop a reputation by writing, teaching, and participating in programs that will give you notoriety in your professional circles. All of this takes time, talent, and cannot be measured by the intangibles. And, while one can mount the argument that these activities have nothing to do with managerial proficiency or accomplishment, it nevertheless must be recognized that the broader your professional activity base is, the better your chances are for being interviewed and offered the police chief position you desire and seek.

Before you continue reading further, the authors want to share a poignant story about their mutual friend and former Chicago Police Superintendent Terry Hillard. This story has become powerful for both of us as police chiefs, so much so, that we close nearly every lecture with this vignette.

The summer of 1999 proved to be challenging for the Chicago Police Department. The fatal shootings of unarmed motorists LaTanya Haggerty and Northwestern University honor student and star football player Robert Ross after police chases in 1999 were just two of several officer-involved shootings that sparked heated and emotional outcries from the minority community. After attending an emotionally-charged community policing meeting known as Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) and patiently listening and responding to citizen's fears and concerns about the shootings, then Superintendent Hillard emerged from the meeting only to walk into the media feeding frenzy who continued to besiege and barrage him about the string of police shootings. Hillard's response was and should remain a profound message for any chief—new and veteran alike. Hillard told reporters, "I'm 62 years old. I've been to war. I've been shot in the line of duty. I'm a cancer survivor. And, I'm an African-American male. No one can take my spirit away from me. I have to give it away."

Two final comments are appropriate, both of which refer to what might be considered the "semantics" of the book: The title of city manager is used almost exclusively when discussing the relationship between the police chief and his superior. But in many instances the police chief's immediate super-

visor will be the mayor or village president, a situation determined by the form of government of any particular city or village. Therefore, the term city manager is used interchangeably and synonymously with mayor or village president. The other comment is that if you've read the "Biographies" on the authors, you'll note that although we have similar backgrounds, there are some significant differences. Mark Field started out his career with a county police agency, and then became a deputy chief, and later chief of a municipal agency. Dan McDevitt started out his career as a Federal Agent, and then did an entire career with a state police agency, and for the last ten years of his career was a municipal chief.

When we wrote this book, we wrote each chapter individually and then collaborated. This will explain why some of the material might be written in the "First Person," while other material is written in the "Third Person." Many of the experiences that each of us has had throughout our careers are highlighted for the purpose of providing examples to illustrate points. Don't get hung up on the fact that some start out with "We" while others start out with "I," as the information is the same.

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**POLICE CHIEF**



## Chapter 1

### PREPARATION

There's an old saying in real estate that the three most important things are location, location, and location. We've always had a similar thought regarding any law enforcement professional preparing themselves for a Chief of Police position, where the three most important things are: education and training, education and training, and you guessed it, education and training. However, before we go any further in this discussion, keep in mind that *you* are your own worst roadblock. As a profession, career planning is something law enforcement executives do not do very well. Many are ambivalent and their careers are structured by a reactionary mode and luck—both good and bad. Sometime their impulses about career advancement are frequently focused into misdirected energy—something that is exhibited by prospective chiefs when they speak about their futures—futures that are illustrated by pervasively ambiguous conversations. Rare is the prospective law enforcement executive who has a concrete career plan or well-thought-out blueprint of action. Look at yourself introspectively and try to answer these questions:

1. Do you have a definite career plan and a timeline to go with it?
2. Do you have an alternate career plan?
3. Do you have an up-to-date résumé?
4. Have you ever interviewed for a job outside of your present agency?
5. Do you have command presence?
6. Have you published any professional articles?
7. Do you dress like a business executive?

If you cannot answer yes to all seven—you may need some help and more time to adequately prepare for a chief's job. Part of successful career preparation is to intentionally pursue a well-balanced career. The more successful chiefs have served in a variety of roles within a police organization, i.e.,

investigations, administration and patrol. While you can still secure a chief's job after having served your entire police career within patrol operations, you will make yourself a more attractive candidate with a wider range of experiences. And, remember, as a chief you will be responsible for overseeing each of these areas so you best know the basics of each division or area since you will have deputy chiefs or division commanders reporting to you about these matters.

Within the smaller to midsize agency, you may end up serving in all of these capacities. Imagine never having prepared a budget—the first time being as a chief of police. Or, imagine never having prepared a search warrant—the first time being as a chief of police.

Or, think about having to prepare and execute an operational plan for a major public event that is going to occur on very, very short notice—like the visit of a United States President, or a Ku Klux Klan rally, or an emotionally-charged rally with over 1,000 people in attendance about healthcare in America. Each of these examples are not hypothetical scenarios. We know of specific examples where these occurred and the new chief had to learn, and learn the task for the first time in their entire career.

## FORMAL EDUCATION

One of the authors was once involved in a situation in which a police sergeant wanted desperately to be appointed the acting chief of an agency in which the chief was leaving, figuring that his chances of becoming the permanent chief would be enhanced by the appointment. His main competitors were two lieutenants, one of whom had a Master's Degree and the other a Bachelor's Degree. The sergeant had neither, even though the chief of that agency had arranged for the department to be used as a "host site" for a degree completion program from a local college. He would have had to complete approximately a semester's worth of work to complete a Bachelor's Degree, but for whatever reason he had chosen not to enroll. When he learned that one of the lieutenants was going to become the acting chief instead of him, he was incensed, pointing out that the old chief (my predecessor), who didn't have a college degree, had been chief for seven years. My reply, which did not reduce his anger, was sad but very true. "That was then, this is now."

The fact is that most governmental entities that are seeking a chief of police are looking for someone with some level of formal education in their background. We'll be the first to admit that mere possession of a college degree doesn't necessarily make someone a smarter person, a better manager, or even a better law enforcement officer, but for most places looking for

a chief it does matter. In fact, some of the finest cops and some of the finest leaders we've ever had the privilege of knowing did not have college degrees. By contrast, we've know some real idiots with an extensive academic background and no common sense to compliment that academic background. The fact is however, that in the last twenty-five years or so, the law enforcement profession is placing a higher value on higher education, and in most communities completion of higher education is a requirement for applicants to chiefs' positions.

The days of the "self-made man (or woman)" with no formal education seem to be over, and the requirement that a chief of police applicant possess at least an undergraduate degree seems to be a trend that shows no sign of going away. Anyone who has ever examined the postings for chief openings in publications such as *Police Chief Magazine* has noticed that the overwhelming majority of the advertisements include wording to the effect of "Bachelor's Degree Required, Master's Degree Preferred." For anyone who is ever going to aspire to a chief's position, we would strongly recommend that they seriously consider completion of a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree, and if at all possible a Master's Degree. Quite frankly the type of degree, Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science, doesn't seem to make much difference, nor does the school from which the degree was earned. The actual subject matter on which the degree is based doesn't seem to make that much difference either, although some job postings mandate that the degree be in a subject area relating to law enforcement, management, or public administration.

We realize that the attainment of formal education is expensive, time-consuming, and sometimes physically and mentally exhausting, but for anyone aspiring to become a chief it is also necessary. Some agencies have "tuition reimbursement" programs available, but many do not. This should not be a deciding factor in someone's decision to start or return to school, however, as formal education should be more important than money. Completion of formal education is quite frankly an investment in yourself and in the future of your career.

For every one of us (and both authors are living proof), this law enforcement career will not go on forever. There will come a time when you hang up the uniform, badge, and gun for the last time. If you have some formal education to assist you in your next career or next venture you'll be a great deal better off. In addition, the attainment of formal education for someone with a family affords you the opportunity to demonstrate two very important "life lessons" to your family and children: you're never too old to learn, and if you set a goal and work hard, you can achieve it. For anyone aspiring to become a chief of police, the attainment of formal education is usually not so much a luxury as it is a necessity.

## PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

A closer examination of many job postings for chief positions also often lists “completion of the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy (FBINA), University of Louisville Southern Police Institute (SPI), or Northwestern University School of Police Staff and Command (SPSC) preferred.” Many areas of the country have similar programs, but these three programs seem to be among the most recognized. Each of these programs is approximately ten to twelve weeks in length and each is geared toward administrative and leadership topics. These courses are either taught on some type of a campus, Northwestern University in Evanston, IL, Louisville, KY, or Quantico, VA, or in the case of the SPI and SPSC, these courses are often offered “off-campus” at various locations throughout the country. In many cases, to make it more convenient and less costly for the agencies sending their personnel, the programs are held at police department training facilities and are broken into one or two-week sessions until the course is completed.

Having completed the FBINA and having taught for the SPSC for a number of years we can attest that they are both excellent programs. Whether or not to try and attend the entire program in one ten to twelve-week stretch is a personal decision, based on family and job obligations, but if at all possible we would recommend doing so. The main advantage of attending the entire program at one time is that the attendee is placed into a “total immersion” to the academics of the program. No phone calls, no job crises, no interruptions, just classes and academic work. This is opposed to attending locally for a week or two at a time, where one is relegated to going back to the daily grind and crisis management of the job for two or three weeks then returning to class, which can be a very difficult situation.

All of these programs require research projects, completion of project-type papers, and public speaking or other individual or group presentations. These requirements are directly related to what chiefs of police do on a daily basis. In addition, these programs include courses such as Manpower Allocation, Budgeting, Media Training, Leadership, Management, and other topics that also directly relate to the position of chief. Therefore, it is not an accident, that many municipalities and communities seeking chiefs of police are requiring, with some regularity, the completion of one of these programs. Many aspects of each of these three (or similar) programs assist in preparation of the new or prospective chief for the challenges of the job.