

Ahora

A Report on Alleged Police Abuse
in Southern California

by

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Two weeks have passed since we launched our police abuse hotline to document allegations of police abuse in Southern California.

Our general conclusions, based on the people we have interviewed, are the following:

- Complaint systems to report police abuse, brutality, excessive force or plain rudeness are not easily understood, are sometimes inaccessible, are generally non-responsive, or shrouded with mystery.
- Politeness, decency, and trust between police officers and local citizenry have simply eroded.
- Severe allegations against the Fontana Police Department have arisen.

Anger Against the System

When it comes to police abuse, one caller, who was mistakenly identified as the Hillside Strangler in late 1970's, says, "It's nothing new."¹

One long-standing perception is that police appear to mistreat people and cover it up. To many of our callers, "covering-up" is an integral part of the system of law enforcement.

With the digital revolution, people feel that videos will serve as a vehicle for truth. "As I was laying down on the ground...the cop snapped my elbow behind my back while I'm laying on the ground and shattered my elbow, broke it in half. My problem is I didn't have someone video taping it."²

Some Latinos deeply feel that police who cover up are hurting the community rather than helping. As one mother says about a police officer that allegedly mistreated her son, "It was for him to help...not mistreat him."³

Another Latino preaches the following: "The [police] are here to take care of and help us, not destroy. They kill us instead of saving us. I have suffered [police abuse] and I have lived through it ...I thank God for life."⁴

Some allegations of cover-ups are eye-popping.

One Latino mother blames the system for putting her son away for 13 years. "All the evidence is false. There was not one solid evidence. They lied. The detective lied."⁵

A sister claims the police murdered her brother. In 2001, a young African-American allegedly dies from gunshot wounds in Lennox in the middle of day. "On the scene, they said he had been shot seven times. At the hospital, they said he got shot four times. The first two times he got shot he was in handcuffs; that's what we heard, he was in handcuffs when they shot him. But they said that they shot him because he had a gun. But there was no gun found at the scene."⁶

One caller claims low-income people are targeted by police.⁷ A mother visits her son in jail and claims that "his head is bent in the back in two places"⁸—caused by prison guards who may have covered-up a beating.

¹ Case 25 interview, Hesperia, CA, July 13, 2002.

² Case 31 interview, Sherman Oaks, CA, July 16, 2002.

³ Case 28 interview, Inglewood, CA, July 13, 2002.

⁴ Case 40 interview, Bell, CA, July 14, 2002.

⁵ Case 45 interview, Los Angeles, CA, July 16, 2002.

⁶ Case 51 interview, San Bernardino, CA, July 22, 2002.

⁷ Case 37 message, via telephone, July 14, 2002.

⁸ Case 33 interview, Los Angeles, CA, July 13, 2002.

Accountable to No One

Another strong feeling among those that called us is that police officers feel they are above the law. One woman claims a police officer boasted the following: “He said, ‘I’m the law; I can do whatever the fuck I want.’”⁹

When a young man with his mother were speaking to an LAX police officer asking for the sergeant, the officer replied that there was no sergeant available. He allegedly said, “I am the higher authority.”¹⁰

A 53-year-old Caucasian from Santa Ana allegedly claims police officers in Anaheim and sheriffs in Stanton repeatedly harassed him.

“I had expired tags I couldn’t get my tags because something was wrong with my car....I was trying to do it. And they were pulling me over like two or three times a day. And not just one cop, there was like three and four at a time and telling me if I moved or did the wrong thing they’d blow me away. They were rotten.”¹¹

Did they ever give this driver a ticket for his expired tags? “Never.”

The incidents allegedly took place three years ago and still leave behind tremendous fear. “[The police] intimidate you. They have way too much power. They are accountable to no one. They don’t [even] ticket one another.”¹²

A caller from Redondo Beach is tired of the rudeness and arrogance police displayed to her son.¹³ A factory worker complained, “The police treat young people badly. I don’t like that. They are young.”¹⁴

A concerned and proud grandmother of 40 grandchildren in San Jacinto feels the local police harass her family and are above the law.¹⁵

Our report now focuses on testimony of allegations against the City of Fontana’s police department.

FONTANA

“I’m Gonna Get You!”

A 21-year-old Latino, father of three, recalls alleged events that escalated with police in Fontana. “What happen was we were painting my mom’s house one day in Fontana. We were outside washing off the brushes with the hose. The paint...was green. So, when it mixed with the water, a lot of green. It ran down the driveway; it ran down the street.... Someone called the cops. And a ...cop came. He started making a big deal about it...as if somebody died from this paint. ‘Oh my God, blah, blah, blah.’ So he calls the fire department, and the fire department comes and says it’s not a big deal.”¹⁶

The police officers allegedly detained his brother who was complaining about the situation. The man we interviewed admits his younger brother “has a mouth” and told officers

⁹ Case 42 interview, Redondo Beach, CA, July 22, 2002.

¹⁰ Case 65 interview, Los Angeles, CA, July 22, 2002.

¹¹ Case 2 interview, Santa Ana, CA, July 13, 2002.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Case 46 interview, Redondo Beach, CA, July 22, 2002.

¹⁴ Case 56 interview, Los Angeles, CA, July 22, 2002.

¹⁵ Case 43 interview, San Jacinto, CA, July 14, 2002.

¹⁶ Case 10 interview, Fontana, CA, July 13, 2002.

“the basic-do-your-job-thing.” In other words, his younger brother suggested that the officers do something more important than investigate green water.

At that point their father came out and allegedly told the police, “Don’t touch my son. We didn’t do nothing wrong here. You’re the one’s coming over here yelling and overreacting over some paint.”¹⁷ The police released the son.

The father ordered his two sons to the garage. Our source claims a “skinny, bald officer” allegedly pointed at him and threatened, “I’m gonna get you.” The police officers and fire fighters eventually left.

The story continues.

Pregnant Wife Hides in a Field as Police Beat and K-9 Chews on Husband

A few weeks after the green paint incident, in October of 2001, the alleged Latino victim we interviewed was again at his mother’s home in Fontana. He and other family members were in the garage, listening to music, drinking a few beers, laughing, and having a smoke after eating “*camerones con chile*” when the police arrived. The officer was the “skinny, bald” officer from the earlier event.

Our source claims the police officer allegedly said, “Hey you guys come here!” To which the victim’s father replied, “No, you come here.” The reason for the father’s reply was he felt the police officer was attempting to set them up and arrest them for being “drunk in public” by having them leave their garage and walk onto a public area. “The cop got upset. He took it the wrong way...but he got mad...My dad started [arguing with the officer.] My wife hears it and my mom and they come out. My wife, she starts talking to the cop. She tells me to go inside and she tells my dad to go inside...She tells him that we are leaving already. She says there is no use for this.”¹⁸

The officer left, and about fifteen minutes later, our subject and wife left. Because he had been drinking, his wife, who was three-months pregnant, drove them home.

“The kids weren’t with us. They stayed at my mom’s...My wife says, ‘I think a cop is behind me.’” They were pulled over in a dark, rural area of Fontana. The “skinny, bald” officer asked for the wife’s driver’s license, then pointed the flashlight at the passenger and allegedly said, “You’re the one that told me to come here!”

When our subject attempted to clarify that it was his father who made those comments, the officer told him to “shut up.” The officer went to run their registration and his wife’s driver’s license. Another patrol car arrived. “We were there for like forty-five minutes. I asked [the officer] when he came back to the car, ‘Why is this taking so long? We need to go home. This is taking too long. We’ve been here almost an hour.’” The officer then allegedly threatened the Latino by stating he would take him to jail if he did not shut up. They had a brief and heated exchange over the alleged jail threat.

The “skinny, bald” officer then went to confer with the other patrolman.

Our source then stuck his head out of the car. The officers yelled at him to keep his head in the car. He then said, “What, are you going to shoot me for sticking my head out the window?” The officers then allegedly said, “That’s it. Get out of the car!”

The officers had him go to the rear passenger-side door of the car. “He held my hands...padded me down, turned me back around and out of no where goes into my face with his hands. He just popped me. Two, three, four times while the other cop is holding me. I start

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

yelling... They take turns... One guy got from each side and held one of my arms. And with their free hand were taking blows to my face, my mid-section, my [testicles].”

His pregnant wife got out of the car after he yelled for her. “She started screaming... I felt really helpless.” Our alleged victim claims he was being choked with a baton when another officer sprayed him with some kind of spray. “That’s it. I’m through. I fall to the ground. I don’t know where I am at. That was a good opportunity, if they wanted to arrest me for something, they could have did it right there.”

The officers did not.

Instead they allegedly went after his pregnant wife who was running down the street. “They’re going towards [my wife].”

Another patrol car came. “I put my hands up and I go, ‘These guys... back here are beating my ass.’ He’s all, ‘Just stay there. Don’t move.’”

Then, yet another patrol car arrived and a door opened.

“I’m with my hands up already and the dog comes and launches at me. I’m like, ‘Holy shit, where did this come from?’” Our subject is bit in the hand and arm and wrangles with the furious dog while the two original police officers come from behind and allegedly knock the victim to his knees with batons. “The dog gets back on my arm. It starts chewing it on my arm. The cop is pulling the dog with me on it!”

His wife “ran to a field” and hid. She eventually hid behind some well-groomed bushes of a housing development across the street from the field. “She was praying to God for somebody to come and help her and I think He heard her.” Two young boys walking by the bushes were startled when she jumped out of the bushes and pleading with them to walk with her to a nearby McDonald’s where she eventually contacted family.

Graphic Video Shows Horrific Chunk of Flesh Missing

Although our victim was originally charged with resisting arrest and obstruction of justice, both charges were later dropped. The end result was a chunk of flesh missing from the upper left arm. So graphic, a video taken at the hospital stirs the viewer when you realize you are looking not at a band-aid, but the young father’s tendons and bone.¹⁹

Elbow Ligaments Ripped in Fontana

During an arrest in July of 2001, a 62-year-old Caucasian retiree was injured.

“I did something I am not proud to talk about. The police came over to my house. In the process of arresting me, they bent my arm up so far that it dislocated the elbow tearing the ligaments and tendons inside.”²⁰

Broken Arm in Fontana

Four guys jump an 18 year-old Latino as he is leaving a party on June 14, 2002. He is attending Trade School and works at UPS. He has never had any problems with the police.

“When the cops came, everybody run and my son was left on the floor,” recalls his mother. “And they wanted to arrest him. They were putting his hands back, he goes... ‘You’re hurting me! You’re hurting me! You’re going to break my arm.’ When he says, ‘You’re going to break my arm,’ that’s when they broke his arm. They had him on the floor already so they kicked him in the face and fractured his nose.”²¹

¹⁹ Video, copy obtained July 15, 2002.

²⁰ Case 7 interview, Fontana, CA, July 14, 2002.

²¹ Case 36 interview, Rancho Cucamonga, CA, July 16, 2002.

Marine Allegedly Beaten in Fontana

On February 8, 2002, a post-birthday party gathering turned ugly. “A nephew was loud and someone called the police. The police went over [to the home] without ever bothering to ask who the owner of house was...He went directly to the kitchen where my son and his brother-in-law were. He grabbed the brother-in-law where the officer hit him and sprayed gas on him. [The police officer] put his foot on [one of the guests].”

Her son, a Marine for over eight years, is a paramedic-in-training and advised the officer that he was suffocating the man. The officer responded allegedly by “beating my son, threw himself on top of him, made him a prisoner, and made him pass out.”²² Another witness claims, an officer “came up to [her son], grabbed him by the throat and knocked him out.”²³

The mother declares, “You won’t believe the criminal charges they placed on them, that they resisted arrest, that they wanted to assault the officers.”

No Need for That

Another observer of the February 8 fiasco says an officer “put his knee” on the temple of one of the birthday guests who “was laid out already. Once he did that, he did it in a brutal way.”

This observer told the officer “there was no need for that.”²⁴

Our source claims that guests had been drinking and some were horsing around, but the police response was excessive. “He grabbed his baton and pushed us back. After he pushed us back, I seen the force.”

He alleges that the police forced everyone out of the house. Both the Marine and other birthday guest were left behind. Our source alleges the police beat both men who were left in the house.

Our report now focuses on testimony of allegations against the City of Inglewood’s police department.

INGLEWOOD

Hog-tied and Hosed-down in Inglewood

In 1998, an African-American woman was going to get something to eat. “The police pulled me over. Once he seen me he said, ‘Oh you black bitch, I’ve been waiting on you.’ He starts screaming and hollering at me to open the car door. I was telling him at the time that my car door didn’t open from the inside....So he peppered sprayed me, he snatched the door open, he snatched me off the car, he just slapped me. When he slapped me, I fell to the ground. And he proceeded to...drag me around the car.” They eventually hog-tied her.

They took her to police station claiming she was driving while intoxicated. Outside the station they hosed her down to remove the pepper spray.

Inside, she passed both intoxication tests. The police then detained her overnight claiming she had a warrant.

Our victim asks, “If it was a warrant, why was I released the next morning without going to court?” The day after the incident she was made aware of a black eye.

²² Case 53 interview, Ontario, CA, July 16, 2002.

²³ Case 61 interview, Fontana, CA, July 16, 2002.

²⁴ Ibid.

“I’ve always been hassled by Inglewood police...I was raised in Inglewood. Inglewood police have been beating up people for years. They just never been caught,” she claims. A housekeeper, she says “I’ve been in Inglewood for 29 years and I have seen Inglewood go to the dogs.”²⁵

Don’t Blow Kisses in Inglewood

In January of 2001, a Latino father claims a female police officer beat his daughter after his daughter and her boyfriend were blowing kisses to each other. “The policewoman got out of her patrol car and asked why they were blowing kisses to her.”

His daughter said they were not, and soon enough the father alleges the female police officer began beating her. They ended up hauling off his daughter.

“The policewoman claimed that my daughter had scratched her. That’s not true. My daughter does not have nails; she bites them.”²⁶

Investigation? What investigation?

“We were working late,” recalls an African-American engineer. At the office in Inglewood, co-workers ordered a pizza. He went to pick it up with a company check.

“When I arrived [at the pizza parlor], they...the person at the counter asked me for my [identification] which I presented to him. He then asked for my Social Security Number. I told him I could not give it to him.”²⁷

Our source offered to show his company identification. The pizza parlor employee eventually called the business office of our victim to confirm he had been sent to pick up the pizza.

“In the corner of the parlor were three men and two women, drinking and laughing,” our victim says. One of the men asked to speak to our victim outside about the incident. “We had barely stood there for five seconds... then I heard a pop on the back of my neck. There was this huge blow on the back of my neck which launched me forward to a light post....I hit my eye, my head.”

It was a police officer that hit him.

“I told him, ‘Why did you hit me?’ He told me to shut up or he’d break my neck. At that time I was infuriated.” He found out that that the men in the group inside the parlor were plain-clothes officers of the Inglewood Police Department.

The officers went back inside and our source recuperated and eventually left the scene.

Although this event occurred some years ago, our victim did file a complaint that same evening of the incident. A female officer assured him an investigation would be conducted.

“They never called me or contacted me. Later on, I went back to find out what ever happened to that report few months later. They told me they would call me and tell me the results of the investigation. No one ever called me.”

Busted Jaw in Inglewood

In 1998, a Latino father of two, who had never been arrested before, had no gang affiliation whatsoever, was at a friend’s house with several buddies at about 10:30 p.m. when the police arrived. “They come out with their guns drawn. We were right there. We were just kicking back. We didn’t have no alcohol or music or nothing. We were lifting weights. My friend has a bench for lifting weights.”

²⁵ Case 34 interview, Hawthorne, CA, July 16, 2002.

²⁶ Case 60 interview, Fontana, CA, July 22, 2002.

²⁷ Case 13 interview, Irvine, CA, July 13, 2002.

This construction worker claims, “[The police] started yelling...and everybody got against the car, put their hands on the car.”

Our victim claims his brother started questioning the officer. “[The police officer] hits him...pushes and grabs [my brother] against the car and slams him against the car, the hood [of a car].”

The officers sprayed the men with mace. “I couldn’t see. I was rolling my eyes because it was burning. All of the sudden they start jumping on me, both of the officers. They start kicking me. One of the officers that was beating me down took out his walkie-talkie and...he was screaming, ‘Get down, get down, don’t resist, don’t resist.’ But I wasn’t even doing nothing. I was on the floor. I couldn’t even see because I had the mace on my eyes.”²⁸

Allegedly kicked and beaten on the floor, this Latino cannot recall what hit him—he suspects a flashlight—but it busted his jaw. “They broke my jaw in two places. They beat me down pretty good.”

Our caller was charged with felony assault of a police officer, and because of limited resources to defend himself and his fear of being deported, his attorney advised him to accept the plea bargain of guilty to resisting arrest. “I was waiting for my green card. I was applying for it. He told me they may try to deport you. So I’m thinking man, I don’t know what to do because I have two daughters at home...so I took the plea bargain.”

Leaving for Safety, Latina Allegedly Thrown to the Ground, Kicked

The daughter of a Latina parking attendant was detained three years ago by authorities in Inglewood when she attempted to leave Inglewood High School for safety reasons after several fights broke out between African-Americans and Latinos during Cinco de Mayo.

“She was detained...They bent her arm...They threw her to the ground; they kicked her; they placed handcuffs on her.”²⁹

The mother claims her daughter was not involved in any way, shape or form with the fights. She claims she has photos of her daughter’s injuries and that when she went to complain, no one cared about the photos and treated the story as a falsehood. “We never heard a thing. They never did anything. After the incident, my daughter was demoralized with school.”

Inglewood Police Destroys a Day at the Park

Last summer, a family plans a day at the park. “We were parked inside a driveway; it was like a field. We were parked there waiting for the little kids to come down and get into the car. So we were loading up the car so we can go to the park,” says a young African-American father of four.

As he and his girlfriend were loading the car with groceries, they saw some police officers circling.

After pulling out of the driveway, they headed to the park. The police pulled them over a short while later for “blocking the driveway.”

“[The officer] asked me to get out of the car...He snatched me out the car. I told him I had a bad back. He put my arm behind my back.”

The officers allegedly didn’t care. They wanted him to move towards a bus bench.

²⁸ Case 24 interview, Inglewood, CA, July 13, 2002.

²⁹ Case 20 interview, Hawthorne, CA, July 13, 2002.

“So [the police officer] turned me around and I landed on my back and the whole bench fell over. I’m just trying to tell [them], ‘You all are hurting my back.’ That made it even worse.”³⁰

Traumatized, his girlfriend’s 11 year-old son started crying in the back seat of the car.

The police took our caller to the station for outstanding warrants on traffic tickets. He was at the jail for ten minutes. “They looked over them and they weren’t that serious; they let me out of jail. I was maybe in jail for ten minutes.”

The family never made it to the park. “We never did anything that day.”

Our report now focuses on testimony of allegations against other locations.

OTHER LOCATIONS

“Black and Blue” Wrists

In 1999, detained for an evening by police, a fifty-year-old Caucasian woman alleges that she was handcuffed so tightly, that her wrist area turned “black and blue.” She went to an emergency ward the next day and eventually filed a complaint with LAPD’s Internal Affairs. She claims to have won a \$20,000 settlement.

Her crime?

After being pulled over for expired tags and a variety of “fix-it” violations, this victim alleges she was arrested for vandalizing a police officer’s pen after “slamming” it down after signing the ticket.³¹ She was in a state of disbelief.

62 year-old “Snapped Right Into the Ground”

After winning \$30,000 in a 1996 Civil Rights case against the Arcadia Police Department, our source claims he was a victim of revenge. “Someone claimed I scratched their car...[The Arcadia Police] came down, walked outside to see what was going on. The officer says, ‘Put your arms behind your back.’... I stumbled.”³²

Our victim claims he had failed to take his heart medication that then caused him to be dizzy; thus, stumble. “As I stumbled they said I was resisting arrest...and they snapped my head right into the ground.”³³

This man then had a relapse the following day and spent four days in the hospital for an anxiety attack and possible brain concussion. He is currently suing the City of Arcadia.

Latino Silence

A 39 year-old mother claims that in November of 2000 the Santa Ana Police Department abused her 19 year-old son.

“After he was handcuffed, they hit him in the head.... After three days, they let him go and didn’t charge him with anything....The only thing that was left was silence.”

Asked if she filed a complaint she replies, “I called but, no, as you know someone who is Latino always shuts his mouth behind the anger.”³⁴

³⁰ Case 49 interview, Los Angeles, CA, July 22, 2002.

³¹ Case 9 interview, Hollywood, CA, July 13,2002.

³² Case 14 interview, Arcadia, CA, July 13, 2002.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Case 15 interview, Buena Park, CA, July 13, 2002.

Another mother from Hawthorne agrees that Latinos remain silent. “All the Latinos always stay quiet because we don’t...know where to get assistance or who can orient us. We stay silent to what happens to us.”³⁵

Unattended Broken Ankle

In early May of 2002, the Santa Ana Police allegedly arrested a 28-year-old Latino factory worker who had been drinking in front of a bar. “The police arrived...They arrested me. They threw me to the floor. They tied my feet and hands and when they put me in the patrol car, I felt a pain in my foot but I didn’t know what it was because I was slightly drunk.”³⁶

Once at the jail, he asked to see “ a doctor or nurse” because he couldn’t stand up, but the jail officials allegedly said the injury “was not an emergency....it was not important.”

The next morning, when he was released, our source went to the hospital where they discovered his ankle was broken. After surgery and eight screws implanted in his ankle, he has been unable to work

This man claims he suffered the injury when the officers put him in the police car.

Speak English and Shut up!

A 59-year-old Latina homemaker fumes about how rude a Los Angeles police officer treated her and her daughter recently when they were pulled over for not wearing seat belts in the last year.

When the mother, who was a passenger, tried to talk to the officer, “[The officer] told me to speak English. I was speaking English, English with an accent.” He then allegedly told her to “shut up.” She claims, “He didn’t even say ‘be quiet.’”³⁷

Although they ended up paying the fines, it was the rudeness that bothered her.

Female Impersonator “Severely Beaten”

In the City of Redlands, a 50-year-old gentlemen involved with real estate who works part time as a female impersonator alleges he was beaten by police officers in 1997 as he was changing into costume in his private office. It looks like the police entered his office after someone reported smelling marijuana in the building.

“When they found me half dressed in female clothing, they handcuffed me, threw me to the floor, and beat me so severely they broke my leg, my left leg. I was transported to a nearby hospital where I received medical treatment. I was never charged. And I was not doing anything illegal, wrong, immoral....”

“I filed a complaint with them which they told me they would investigate. They never did investigate. They never got back to me. They never told me what the results of the investigation were. So I presume they never investigated anything.”³⁸

He eventually sued and received a settlement of several thousand dollars.

Eight Months Pregnant, Mother Arrested by Mistake

On June 29, 2002, a pregnant Latino woman who sells and fixes computers was asked by Los Angeles police to move her truck, which promotes her business. After she asked why they wanted her to move, the police asked for her license and said she could not sell her products or services on the street.

³⁵ Case 20 interview, Hawthorne, CA, July 13, 2002.

³⁶ Case 16 interview, Santa Ana, CA, July 13, 2002.

³⁷ Case 17 interview, Yorba Linda, CA, July 13, 2002.

³⁸ Case 26 interview, Los Angeles, CA, July 13, 2002.

“He told me I had an arrest warrant and I said that was not possible because my license was new,” she claims.

The police officer said he was arresting her and called for back up. The officer put handcuffs on this pregnant mother and put her in a squad car.

The police took her to the police station, detaining her for two hours. “When I arrived there, I told a Latino officer that my left arm was asleep. He told me he would take off the handcuffs. A short while later, he took them off. My wrist was swollen and...my whole body was trembling; I think it was from nerves; I’m not sure. A while later, they told me that they were sorry, but they had no way to prove that the [arrest warrant] was mine.”

The police gave her a ticket for selling without a permit. The judge dismissed the case in court on July 24, 2002.

Smell of Vomit Leads to Alleged Beating

On June 2, 2002, a Latino woman living in Redondo Beach was hit in the head for the smell of vomit. “They put me in the police car....When the police went to the [squad] car to find out what had happened, he smelled the puke. He thought I...threw up in his car...He struck me in my head with his fist.”³⁹

She alleges that she had regurgitated earlier and the smell was on her clothes.

Our caller filed a police complaint that same week.

Stomachache Sends Latino to the Psychiatric Ward

A Latino from Los Angeles who had a severe stomachache after drinking some bad tomato juice called the paramedics. “I didn’t speak the language.” This caused confusion,

Thinking he was attempting suicide, the police officers sent him to observation. “[The Police] insulted me and scared me.” He was there for four days.

“I have nothing against the police, but I wanted to clarify to them that they not disrespect me or Hispanics.”⁴⁰

Encino Woman Wrangles with Internal Affairs

In May, a 62-year-old Jewish woman from Encino was trying to do “a good deed” by trying to get her neighbor into their neighborhood after the police had sealed the area off after a gas explosion.

After police authorities told her it was impossible to let her friend in, “I looked at...my neighbor and threw my hands up in the air, like, what can I do?” She headed back home. About half way across the street someone grabbed her arms. “I totally freak out...that’s how—I don’t know how—I managed to get out their clutches. When I did, I saw there was a police officer.”⁴¹

He accused her of resisting arrest and detained her.

“I was totally silent. Totally silent.” About an hour later, she asked why the officer had detained her. “So he goes into this thing that was totally...off the wall.” Ten minutes, he let her go.

She returned home and called the police department to complain. An officer came out, surveyed the area, and listened to the victim. “I didn’t sign anything and he didn’t report anything.”

Our victim has since called Internal Affairs repeatedly to find out the disposition of her complaint. “No one wants to deal with it.”

³⁹ Case 42 interview, Redondo Beach, CA, July 22, 2002.

⁴⁰ Case 30 interview, Los Angeles, CA, July 13, 2002.

⁴¹ Case 31 interview, Encino, CA July 13, 2002.

Foul Language and Foul Abuse

A young Latina teenager from Hawthorne was with friends in a trailer park. The police came and at one point began using foul language. When she called his attention to his rude behavior, she alleges, “[The officer] grabbed me from the hair and threw me towards a wall... My mouth was cut open and very swollen.”⁴²

Our young victim says, “They didn’t let me speak. I wanted to speak to someone about the incident.”

Worse than Dogs with Rabies

This middle-aged Latino is a garment worker who lives with his family in Bell. A few years ago, a co-worker claimed her young boy was abducted and she suspected that the child was at this man’s home. He was living in Los Angeles at the time.

“I have a daughter of the same age as the boy,” our victim claims. “It was midnight. [The police] came for the child and were confused. They tried to take my daughter. When I asked for an explanation, they hit me in the head. I pleaded with them not to hit me in the head... They didn’t understand. They hit my wife; they hit me... and kicked me... and my wife.”⁴³

He did not file a complaint. Why? “We didn’t know what to do... we didn’t have witnesses. These police were worse than dogs with rabies.”

Waken in the Middle of the Night

A Latino family man who rented a garage in Stanton, Orange County, believes he irritated his landlord when he asked for a receipt after paying his monthly rent. He recalls when a deputy sheriff arrived in the middle of the night, upsetting his entire family.

“[The deputy] only scared me, impressed me. He yelled at me to [provoke me] to find a reason to arrest me.”⁴⁴ He was never arrested.

Our source believes his landlord used the deputy to intimidate him to move out.

Our 47 year-old victim called the Sheriff’s Department to register a complaint. Another deputy came to investigate and suggested the man eventually move. The investigating deputy called the incident “a threat.”

Although he did move, our caller claims his young son still has nightmares of the incident.

Whooped in Long Beach

A Latino mother complains about how her son was left in a puddle of blood this year by police.

Long Beach Police allege the suspect kicked them.

“When the police arrived, they beat [my son], his eye so he couldn’t see out of it, his mouth was injured. They beat him. They beat him everywhere. His hands—where he only had nerves; he couldn’t move his fingers. They hit him so hard in the head, he had to go to the hospital.”⁴⁵

Infraction Leads to Injury

A Latina housekeeper was pulled over in Brentwood in May of 2001.

“[The police officer] told me that I made an error. But I told him that I had stopped at the stop sign. He asked for the documents. I did not understand what documents he wanted. I

⁴² Case 39 interview, Hawthorne, CA, July 14, 2002.

⁴³ Case 40 interview, Bell, CA, July 14, 2002.

⁴⁴ Case 18 interview, Anaheim, CA, July 16, 2002.

⁴⁵ Case 21 interview, Long Beach, CA, July 16, 2002.

told him all I had was a driver's license." She spoke limited English and at first did not understand that he wanted proof of insurance.

She exited her car to look for the appropriate documents.

At that time, our caller alleges the other officer restrained her, allegedly slammed her against the car and handcuffed her. They held her for two hours in a patrol call.

"The boss came and he asked them why they had me arrested when it wasn't a major problem. But they said I stepped out of the car when I should not have. I said you should have told me in a good way, not throw me on a car and handcuff me."

She ended up with a bloody injury on her right arm. She was released and immediately went to a hospital.

Eye Shut Closed in Long Beach

On Saturday, July 20, 2002, Long Beach Police allegedly tackled a young Latino man outside a popular club on Pine Avenue. Slamming his head down on the concrete, his eye was swollen shut.

This caller claims he had a few drinks, had shared some tough words with an adversary outside the club, but in no way was fighting.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Case 69 interview, Downey, CA, July 22, 2002.

About the Author

A veteran of three presidential campaigns, K.B. Forbes is the Executive Director of the Consejo de Latinos Unidos, a national non-profit organization which educates and assists the public in regards to health care, police protection, education, and immigration.

Last year, the Consejo released an investigative report that showed hospitals in Southern California overcharge uninsured Latinos almost five times more what they would typically accept as a payment in full from an HMO.