

D.C. BLUES

The Rap Sheet on the Washington Police

TUCKER CARLSON

On a winter night in 1990 around eight o'clock, Manfred Holmes was walking down Washington D.C.'s Georgia Avenue on his way to visit his twin brother, a police officer. As he neared his brother's apartment, two men approached Holmes from behind. They each put a handgun to his head. The men forced Holmes into an alley where they took his wallet, his leather jacket, a ring off his finger, and finally his shoes. After robbing him, the men told Holmes to lie face down on the ground. Holmes refused, knowing they intended to kill him. The men then told Holmes to walk away slowly. As he did, Holmes heard one say to the other, "Hurry up and kill him." In his peripheral vision Holmes saw the robber raise his gun and aim at his head. He ducked just as the gun went off. A 9-mm slug grazed his skull, leaving a bloody divot in his scalp. The men walked away.

Disoriented and barefoot, Holmes staggered the remaining blocks to his brother's apartment and called the police. The dispatcher at the station recognized the apartment's address as the home of a police officer. Within minutes several squad cars arrived at the scene. Holmes says the initial police response was good. "The cops all knew my brother and some knew me and so they were hot to make an arrest."

Only In the Movies

Soon after he was released from the hospital, Holmes was contacted by a police investigator who wanted to see the alley where the crime took place. Holmes took the investigator to the scene. The investigator spent several minutes looking around the alley and then left. That was the last Manfred Holmes heard from the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police. Calls to the police station yielded nothing. Frustrated, Holmes asked a police officer if he could look at mug shots of men arrested for the same type of armed robbery or attempted murder. Holmes reasoned, "The guys who shot me obviously knew what they were doing so I figured they'd done it before." But the policeman laughed and told him, "That's only in the movies." Three years later Holmes is bitter about the low priority his case was given. "The guys who tried to kill me might have been arrested on other

charges, but it doesn't look like I'll ever know."

People like Manfred Holmes are robbed and brutalized in cities across America every day. What makes Holmes's experience distinctive from attempted murder cases in other places is the lack of attention the Washington police paid to it. The men who shot Holmes showed they would kill for \$40 dollars and a leather jacket. They were an obvious threat to public safety. Yet, in spite of their initial interest, the police virtually ignored Holmes's case. Holmes is only one of many District residents who are denied basic physical protection by Washington's police department.

Despite having the most law-enforcement personnel per capita in the country, Washington has the nation's highest murder rate. From 1985 to 1991 homicides in Washington rose from 24 per 100,000 residents to 81. America's next most murderous city, New Orleans, had a rate of 69 murders per 100,000 in the same year. Even New York City, long the symbol of urban violence in America, logged a comparatively anemic murder rate of 31 deaths per 100,000. Washington's Seventh District, which has a population of under 69,000, recorded more murders in 1991 than San Francisco, a city of almost three-quarters of a million people. Violent crimes of all kinds, including armed robbery, rape, and assault, also have risen dramatically in Washington in the last several years. As one shooting victim put it, "There are no fist fights anymore in Washington."

Negligent Police Department

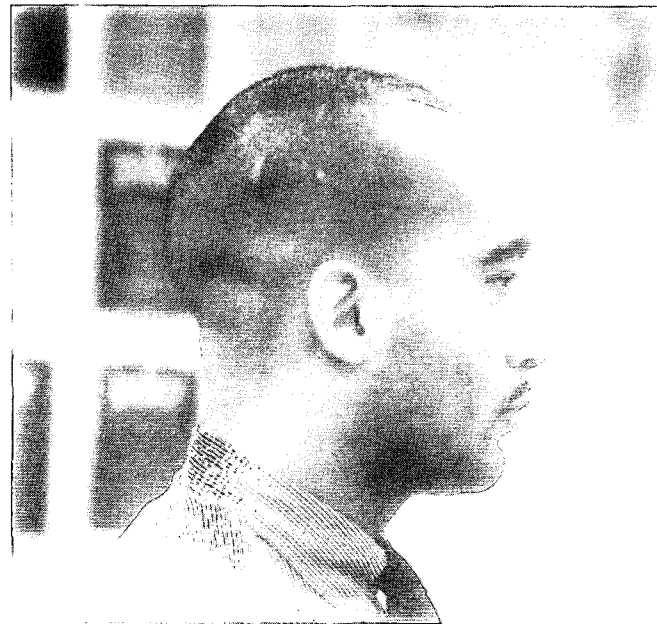
There are many reasons for Washington, D.C.'s soaring crime rate. Among them are broken families, lack of neighborhood cohesion, overburdened courts and prisons, and drugs—the usual causes of urban lawlessness. In Washington, however, crime is not counterbalanced by effective law enforcement. Citizens who are active in neighborhood organizations or who take the initiative to meet and befriend individual police officers can expect a relatively thorough response to their crime problems. Ordinary Washingtonians, however, often have to contend with superficial responses from a poorly

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trained and frequently uninterested police department. The Washington Metropolitan Police are deficient in three main areas that are crucial to effective law enforcement: sound hiring practices and rigorous training standards that are applied not just at the police academy, but to sworn officers; effective allocation of funds; and quick response to crimes in progress and thorough investigations of crimes that have already occurred. Until all residents of Washington can count on these basic standards of crime control, violence will continue to escalate in the nation's capital.

Perhaps the best indicator of the Washington Metropolitan Police Department's decay is its own rap sheet. According to the U.S. Attorney's office, in the first 10 months of 1992 alone, 32 Washington police officers were indicted on criminal charges, including murder, theft, assault with a deadly weapon, sodomy, kidnapping while armed, and making threats. Another 20 officers now are under investigation by the U.S. Attorney's office for similar crimes. In the words of one local prosecutor, there has been "an extraordinary increase in indicted police officers" in recent years.

The high number of cops in trouble does not mean that the department necessarily is purging itself of bad elements, however. Many Washington police officers fired for committing crimes will not be punished at all. Instead they will be rehired by the force and given back pay. A 1990 District law requires the department to decide on proper punishment for suspended officers within 45 days. If the department fails to take action within that time—and it often does—the officers cannot permanently be dismissed. In the last two years more than 100 suspended police officers have been rehired with back pay by the police department. In October of



T. Carlson

Manfred Holmes displaying his bullet scar. "There are no fist fights anymore in Washington."

and drugs estimated that close to 3,000 seized guns were unaccounted for. The vault in which the guns were kept had been used by police employees as a kitchen, replete with a refrigerator and a microwave oven. Employees simply put the guns in their coats and walked out after fixing lunch.

This discovery came several months after it was revealed that 60 guns had been stolen from a police station, presumably by officers. One of the weapons was later used in a murder. A police spokesman, in an attempt to quell fears that all the guns were recirculating among criminals, claimed sloppy police department filing procedures were responsible for the missing weapons. In any case, stealing is not unknown in the department. According to a report in the *Washington Times*, one District police station chains its typewriters to desks to keep them from being taken by officers and police-department personnel.

Former Glory

Despite its current state, the Washington Metropolitan Police Department historically has been a model force. For years the city's homicide department was considered one of the country's best. In the 1950s it was not uncommon for its detectives to solve 100 percent of Washington's murder cases in a given year. According to Gary Hankins, former president of Washington's Fraternal Order of Police and a veteran of 22 years as a Washington cop, the police department began to disintegrate in the mid-1970s. It was then that the city added a residency requirement to the police department's list of hiring standards. Because it dramatically limited the applicant pool, the new requirement immediately caused problems. By 1982, over 40 percent of the candidates who took the police admissions test failed it. According to Hankins, then-Mayor Marion Barry suggested fixing the problem by eliminating the test altogether and hiring police officers by lottery. The

One section of the city, with a population of 69,000, has more murders than San Francisco, a city of almost three-quarters of a million.

1992 the District of Columbia Public Employee Relations Board ordered the reinstatement of officers initially fired for violations ranging from drug dealing and vandalism to concealing past psychiatric treatment.

Ethics problems and disorganization in the Metropolitan Police Department became painfully obvious recently, when widespread theft by officers came to light. Last spring a police employee recording the serial numbers of confiscated weapons recognized a .45-caliber pistol. The handgun, which was supposed to have been in police storage, was found in the possession of a convicted felon. A subsequent police-department audit of the warehouse used to store confiscated weapons

U.S. House Committee on the District of Columbia squelched Barry's proposal in its 1985 appropriations legislation.

In 1985 the city adopted a new entrance exam for the police academy. The test, produced by McCann Associates of Langhorne, Pennsylvania, was billed as more rigorous and relevant to police work. Yet Hankins says that shortly after the new test was put into use he began getting complaints from police instructors "about people at the academy who could not read or write. Academy staff complained that they were turning out people who would endanger citizens or other officers."

Confused, Hankins called Donna Brockman, an employee at the Office of Recruitment and Examining, the city department that until 1987 administered the tests. Hankins says that Brockman told him all test scores were "converted" on the basis of non-academic factors. She said the "conversion factors are sex, race, residency, and whether you went to D.C. schools." Brockman told him that a score of 50, for instance, could end up 20 or 30 points higher due to these factors. Hankins believes that "social engineering in the police department drove down standards and elevated irrelevant criteria."

As proof of its low standards, Hankins points out that in 1983, not one student flunked out of the police academy. In 1987 and 1988, the graduation rate was close to 100 percent. The result, Hankins says, is that "we are getting a lot more people in the police department who lack the skills or moral fiber to be police officers." While

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the Metropolitan Police Department officially denies the use of affirmative action on the basis of race, gender, or alma mater, Investigator Gray (he would not give his first name) of the recruiting office admits that if applicants "want to claim residency in the District they can obtain additional points" in hiring.

It is difficult to evaluate the police admission test itself because the exam is shrouded in secrecy. An ex-staffer on the House Committee on the District of Columbia claims that the committee tried without success to get a copy of the test, until then-Congressman and ranking minority member of the committee Stan Parris complained personally to the police department. Even then, he says, the committee was not allowed to keep the test. Nonetheless, it is clear that the examination is not difficult. One candidate who took it claims "a third grader could have passed it."

Beyond the admissions test, the requirements for

becoming a Washington cop are minimal. According to a recruitment pamphlet issued by the department in 1992, "You qualify if: You are a citizen of the United States"; you are between 21 and 35; you are at least 5 feet tall and "carry proportionate weight"; "You have vision of at least 20/60 correctable to 20/20 in both eyes"; you have a high-school diploma or a GED, or have been a police officer in another city for at least a year; and you live within 25 miles of Washington. Nowhere does the pamphlet mention moral character or even the lack of a criminal record as requirements.

These omissions are telling. The city's police department routinely hires officers with misdemeanor records. Also, Washington, D.C., like many states, is prohibited by law from considering an applicant's juvenile criminal record during the hiring process. In a city where a substantial percentage of murders are committed by juveniles—an estimated 20 percent in 1990—this law practically ensures that the police department will end up hiring some criminals.

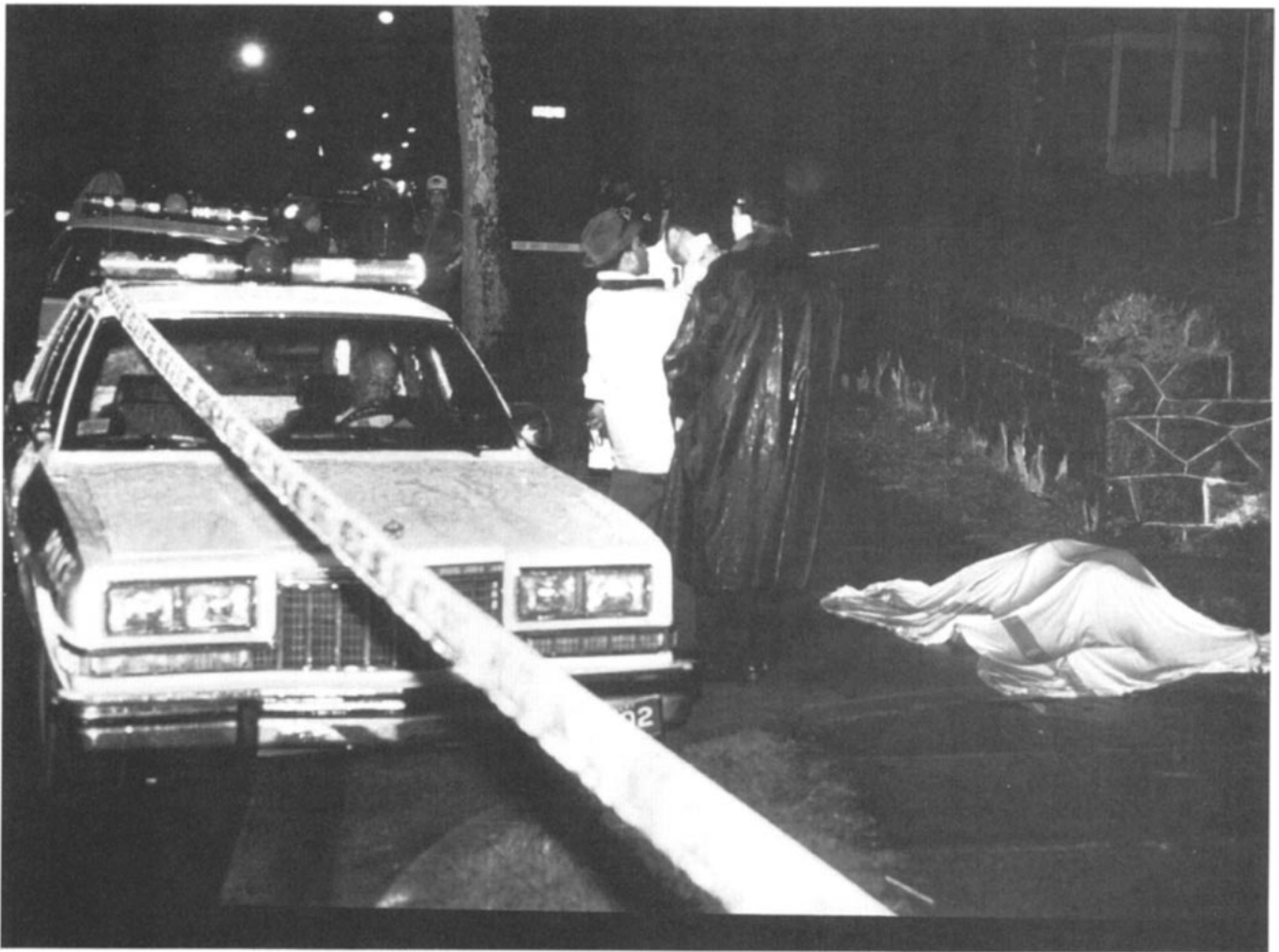
"Hire Them Now, We'll Fire Them Later"

If the police recruiting office's moral standards are low, its physical standards are even lower. Unlike forces around the country, the Washington Metropolitan Police Department has never required its recruits to pass agility or strength tests of any kind. To protect itself from litigation under the Americans With Disabilities Act, the department instituted a perfunctory agility test last year. Jerry Wilson, Washington Police Chief from 1969 to 1974, says the department has always been lax in its physical requirements. When he was chief, Wilson says, police recruits had to meet only two physical standards: "They had to have hands big enough to hold a gun and be tall enough to drive a car."

Slack attitudes about hiring are partly the result of the police department's rapid growth. In 1989, the department hired over 1,800 officers in response to Washington's growing crime problem. In order to expedite the expansion, the police academy was authorized to graduate police officers whose background checks had not been completed, or in some cases even started. Then-Police Chief Isaac Fulwood Jr. contended that those with egregious records could be dismissed when discovered. In the reputed words of Chief Fulwood, "Hire them now, we'll fire them later." Or as Deputy Chief Melvin Clark more delicately puts it, "In our zeal to get as many police officers on the street as are being demanded, we kind of rushed the training process." Detective Mike Hubbard claims that during his five years at the police academy, "We swore in entire classes—hundreds of people—without background checks."

The rapid hiring has continued. In 1990 Congress authorized raising the strength of the force from 4,000 to 5,500 officers. In the last two-and-one-half years the police department has hired 1,900 officers. Coupled with the retirement of many older cops, this increase has left the department with a disproportionately large number of officers hired during the years when vital requirements were suspended.

Montague Holmes, a Washington police officer for three years and a current member of the Los Angeles



Another murder in Washington. Between 1986 and 1990, roughly a third of the homicide cases brought to the U.S. Attorney's office by the Metropolitan Police were dismissed for lack of evidence, or simply because of illegible handwriting on the reports.

Police Department, says he was not personally interviewed by anyone when he joined the force in 1989. He says the lack of background checks made becoming a cop an appealing career move for many criminals. "A lot of people who were in the drug rackets joined the police department. Some of them went straight when they joined the department, and some of them didn't." Holmes claims that "a lot of police officers were known to be dealing drugs."

Giving Coffee Breaks

Recruitment practices like these have tangible consequences for District residents. One afternoon in early November of 1992, Washington realtor Chuck Holzwarth was on his way home from the hospital when he noticed a man driving down the wrong side of Wisconsin Avenue. Moments later, at a red light, Holzwarth's car was struck from behind by the same man. A nearby police car pulled up to the scene. According to Holzwarth, the man who hit him was so drunk he could hardly speak. When asked for his driver's license by the arriving officers, the man was initially unable to open his wallet. He then got out of his car, only to stumble and fall on the hood. The police ignored his behavior.

Realizing the police were about to leave the scene, Holzwarth told the officers he had seen the man driving on the wrong side of the road. The cops asked the man if he was drunk. He admitted to having spent the afternoon drinking in a bar nearby. He told the police he was now driving home to a town in Virginia three hours from Washington. Holzwarth says the two police officers never gave the drunk a sobriety test, but instead called the "mobile alcohol unit." When the unit failed to arrive after an hour, the police announced they were leaving. Holzwarth complained to the police. "I was outraged. This guy had a long drive ahead of him and he was still really bombed." In an effort to placate Holzwarth, one of the cops instructed the man to cross the street to the Holiday Inn and have a cup of coffee. The man happily complied and the police left. Holzwarth says the police never filed a report on the incident.

Irregular Training

The police department's personnel problems are compounded by the inadequate or irregular training of officers. A May 1990 General Accounting Office report concluded that the police academy's training schedules and curricula changed with each incoming class of can-

didates. From 1982 to 1990 the GAO determined that "The hours of instruction recruits have received have ranged from 294 to 880." In other words, some classes at the police academy received more than three-and-one-half months more training than others. In 1982 alone, the length of training periods for different classes varied by more than 11 weeks. In that same year, one class of recruits took 16 exams before graduating, while another class took only five exams. The importance of the exams, too, has changed periodically. In May of 1985 a recruit could be expelled from the academy for failing two exams. In November of the same year, the expulsion threshold was raised to six failed exams. By October of 1989 the limit was back to two failures.

Constant changes in the curriculum lowered the standards at the police academy. Former academy instructor Mike Hubbard says, "I saw people who were practically illiterate. I've seen people diagnosed as borderline-retarded graduate from the police academy."

One survey found that in the Seventh District, Washington's most violent, 12 out of a total of 19 patrol cars were inoperable.

Moreover, although the curriculum at the police academy has changed every year for at least the past decade, the academy has failed to keep records of the changes. This has led to confusion in the police department between members of different graduating classes over what constitutes basic procedure. Efforts to standardize training have failed. In 1988 the academy inexplicably abolished its final comprehensive exam after 40 percent of graduating recruits—the highest percentage ever—failed it.

In addition to confusion over what to teach, the police academy suffers from a chronic lack of resources. Several years ago the academy's indoor shooting range was closed because of improper ventilation that threatened the recruits with lead poisoning. It is still closed. A congressional staffer who visited the training center in 1990 says the academy's entire library was housed in the hallway of a building. He also claims the police department had no full-time lawyers to teach recruits the constitutional issues that surround police work.

In 1991, under pressure from Representative Dean Gallo (R-NJ) and others disturbed by the department's questionable training standards, Police Chief Isaac Fulwood announced that the police academy would be independently accredited, presumably by the Commission on the Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies, the nation's only major police accreditation organization. A year later, however, no accreditation process had

begun. Chief Fulwood still claimed the academy would be reviewed, although this time by a group of experts from the city-run University of the District of Columbia and the police department itself. In the words of one Washington detective, "It's unlikely the department will give itself bad marks."

"Damn Fools, They Are"

The police academy's inadequate training has produced officers who are often ill-equipped for the complexities of modern police work. Many of these complexities concern the paperwork that follows arrests. Detective Mike Hubbard says, "Officers get virtually no training in paperwork or in how to deal with the courts." According to Gary Hankins, younger officers often are intimidated or confused by police paperwork. "Reports they turn in may be unusable, unreadable," he says. As a result many officers forego making arrests. Hankins claims that "25 percent of the people in the field make 90 percent of the arrests."

Former officer Montague Holmes claims the paperwork burden is responsible for poor morale in the department. "If you work on the three-to-eleven shift and you lock someone up at 3:15, you're going to be there until one in the morning, and if it's a felony you have to be in court the next morning by seven. A lot of officers just don't want to deal with the paperwork so they go and sit in Wendy's for their entire eight hours or they go home." The lack of arrest quotas in the police department does little to discourage this do-nothing attitude. In Holmes's words, "I know one police officer who didn't make a single arrest during the three years I was on the force. If you wanted to, you could spend 20 years as a police officer without doing anything."

Much of the paperwork that is completed by police officers is incomplete or illegible. Between 1986 and 1990, 311 of the 938 murder cases the Metropolitan Police brought to the U.S. Attorney's office—roughly a third—were dismissed. By comparison, in 1987, 18 percent of murder cases in Los Angeles were dismissed and only 13 percent of murder cases in New Orleans. A local prosecutor claims that many cases in Washington are thrown out by prosecutors unable to read or understand the arrest reports. Of the murder cases that do reach disposition, many end in acquittals because of weak cases prepared by the police department. According to Cathy Boyer of Washington's Pretrial Services Agency, only 44 percent of the murder cases filed in 1990 and closed by the first part of 1992 resulted in convictions. Of the suspects who were acquitted, 32 percent were later arrested for other offenses. A Washington lawyer puts it simply: "A prosecutor's effectiveness is dependent on the ability of local law enforcement." According to American University crime professor Emilio Viano, "We have inexperienced officers who just don't have the training to verify all they need to prepare good cases."

Washington resident Walter Green recently experienced first-hand the consequences of low admission standards and shoddy training in the police department. Eighty-year-old Green was kidnapped this fall from the parking lot of a shopping mall by a man who claimed to have a gun. His abductor robbed Green and then forced



Photofest

Much of the police department's communications equipment is antiquated. Most station houses still have rotary dial phones, often making it impossible to reach detectives after business hours.

the elderly man to drive around Washington for about an hour. Finally, Green says he saw a police car at an intersection. Hoping for help, Green drove his Ford onto a sidewalk and jumped out. As he left the car, his abductor poured whiskey on Green's trousers and then told the arriving officers that Green had been driving drunk. The two officers promptly handcuffed Green, ignoring his protests that he had been kidnapped. His alleged assailant, James Byars, walked away from the scene. Green was held in custody by the police and then forced to take a cab home. Byars was finally arrested by Maryland police and identified as the alleged kidnapper of at least two other elderly men. Later, Green, the father-in-law of Deputy-Police Chief Donald Christian, gave the *Washington Post* his opinion of the police department: "Damn fools, they are."

Potato Chips and Television

The Metropolitan Police Department's personnel problems are evident to all who spend time in a Washington police station. One evening last fall I sat for about an hour and a half in the lobby of the Seventh District headquarters, located in the most crime-ridden part of the city. I watched while the four female officers at the front desk ate potato chips and gossiped about their romances. After a time, the boyfriend of one of the officers arrived. The two of them stood in the middle of

the room and talked and giggled romantically for nearly 30 minutes. As the officers talked and the couple flirted, a man who had just been beaten by drug dealers waited for assistance. The officers ignored him. At one point an officer at the front desk answered the phone with a mouth full of potato chips and mumbled a few nearly unintelligible sentences to the caller before hanging up. At 8:00 all the officers left the front desk and retired to a back room to watch *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* on television.

Playing Telephone

The Metropolitan Police Department's crime-control efforts are frustrated further by a lack of modern technology. Only a fraction of police offices have computers and many are without typewriters. Detective Mike Hubbard says the clerical equipment in his office consists of two manual typewriters. This shortage of equipment means that most reports must be handwritten. Also, few of the telephones in the department's seven police stations are the push-button type. The department's rotary dial phones cannot be equipped with voice mail, meaning that after 5:00 p.m., when police secretaries go home, telephones frequently go unanswered. Because the department's official policy forbids officers to use pagers, many officers are unreachable by phone during the evening hours.

In addition to primitive equipment, the Metropolitan Police Department has outdated schedules. Unlike departments in many states, including Ohio, California, and Florida, the Washington Police Department still operates largely on a three-shift system, with the day divided into three eight-hour periods. Although the vast majority of murders in Washington take place between 8 P.M. and 4 A.M., the police department has refused to overlap shifts to put more officers on the streets during these hours. In contrast, the Tucson, Arizona police department has 14 daily shifts, and the Los Angeles police have five.

Despite the success of such rescheduling, District police officials are skeptical. Former Deputy Chief Gary Albrecht was quoted as saying that increasing the number of police shifts struck him as "complexity for its own sake."

Even if police officials were to accept the schedule changes, a shortage of working vehicles might make them impossible to implement. A recent *Washington Times* article concluded that, at any given time, more than half of the police department's patrol cars are out

A common complaint is that police officers make little attempt to solve cases after their initial appearance at the scene of a crime.

of service. One survey found that in the Seventh District, Washington's most violent, 12 out of 19 patrol cars were inoperable. In the Fifth District, the *Times* noted, the lack of available cars sometimes caused backups of 40 calls. A police sergeant was quoted as saying calls deemed "too old" were ignored. The acting chief of Washington's First District said the shortage was due in part to accidents caused by the reckless driving of younger officers. As the police motor pool is still short seven mechanics, the situation is unlikely to improve in the near future.

Helpless Citizens

Slow police response to calls jeopardizes the safety of District residents. After leaving his job at the Defense Department in the evening, Robert Kim (a pseudonym) often goes to work at his parents' liquor store in Northeast Washington. With large amounts of cash on hand, liquor stores are frequently the targets of robbers. Kim says that the Metropolitan Police arrived at his parents' store quickly when the store was held up recently, although not before the robbers had left with the contents of the cash register.

But Kim says the store's biggest problem is not armed robbery. The real problems, he says, are shoplifting, threats, and extreme racial abuse from customers. The

District's restrictive gun laws make the Kims totally reliant on the police to solve incidents like these. "There is nothing we can do. We'd go to jail if we flashed a gun to a guy who was threatening us. All we can do is call the cops, and sometimes they take a half an hour to come, if they come at all." As they wait for the police to come, the Kims are powerless. "I see people shoplifting all the time and there is nothing I can do." Kim echoes the frustration of many in the city who feel unprotected by the police: "It's really unfair that my parents, who work hard, could get killed anytime by some low-life loser."

Little Follow-Up

One of the more consistent complaints of District residents is that police officers make little attempt to solve cases after their initial appearance at the scene of a crime. American University's Emilio Viano says "one of the department's major problems for the last 15 years has been victims of crime not hearing back from the police." According to Viano, simple boredom is responsible for the problem. "Follow-up is the most crucial part of police work, but it is not exciting, so many officers neglect it." Lack of ongoing communication with victims does more than just leave cases unsolved; it erodes the public's confidence in the police department.

Steven Tullberg's experience is a typical example. On October 7, 1992, Tullberg's house in Northwest Washington was burglarized. Thieves broke in during the day while he, his wife, and children were out of the house. The burglars entered by slashing a window screen and left with 34 pieces of jewelry, including the Tullbergs' wedding rings. Tullberg called the police, who promptly came to the house and took fingerprints. The police said that the prints would be sent to the FBI to be checked against those of known criminals, and they left the name of a 4th District detective who would be working on the case. "I was impressed," Tullberg says. As with many victims of crime in Washington, however, that was the last he heard from the police department.

Two weeks later, after reading in the newspaper that another house on his block was burglarized in the same manner, Tullberg went to the 4th District police station to see the officer handling his case. Tullberg was told the detective was out. Unsatisfied with that response, he asked to speak with the officer responsible for assigning work on burglary cases. He was virtually ignored. Angry and frustrated, Tullberg pressed for information about progress in the burglary investigation. "I was finally told 'Nobody's working on your case.' The officer told me that the department was waiting for the FBI fingerprint report to return."

On November 18, six weeks after his house was burglarized, Tullberg was contacted by a detective. The officer admitted, "I just got your report today." Five days later the detective came to the Tullbergs' house to get information about the break-in. Despite the Tullbergs' eagerness to help the police, officers did not interview a single person on their street, check any pawnshops for their jewelry, or make any recognizable attempt to solve the crime during the time between the burglary and the detective's visit. Tullberg has little hope the valuables will ever be returned. "The trail is just too cold now," he says.

"Even more upsetting is the fact that the police failed to pursue someone who had broken into my house in broad daylight with a knife in hand and thereby threatened the safety of my family." A call to the police department's Mobile Crime Lab confirmed that the fingerprints taken from Tullberg's house were never sent to the FBI.

Squeaky Wheels

Even when police do respond to citizens' concerns, they are sometimes ineffective. Joe Davis, organizer of the Shepherd Park coalition, a citizens' anti-crime group, generally has good things to say about the Metropolitan Police Department. But he says the police were unable to do much for him or his neighbors when a group of drugs dealers moved in down the street. In summer 1991, Davis says, about 20 crack dealers began selling drugs out of a rented house on his block. Repeated calls to the police elicited a sympathetic response and several raids on the house, but no permanent solution. A group of neighbors finally solved the problem themselves by forcing the absentee landlord to go to court to evict the tenants of the crack house. Davis admits that the police response he did get was probably the result of pressure from his group. "My neighborhood gets more police attention because we have an active citizens group." Another neighbor puts it more directly: "Here we were a middle-class, well-organized, well-educated neighborhood and we had to use civil law to get these people out. Law-abiding people in the bad parts of the city don't even stand a chance."

This is a consistent theme. Citizens who have already taken the initiative to rid their neighborhoods of criminals often speak highly of police involvement in their projects. James Forman, founder of the Metro-Orange Coalition, a citizen's anti-crime group known in Washington as "Orange Hats" for their fluorescent headgear, says his organization "has a tremendous relationship with the metropolitan police." Forman founded the group in 1989 after the murder rate skyrocketed in his part of the city. After returning from his day job at a department store, Forman leads a group of his neighbors on a patrol of the blocks around his house. Orange Hat volunteers stand on corners where drug dealers congregate and take photographs of cars that come to buy drugs. "The group's impact was immediate," Forman says. "A noseey neighborhood is the worst place in the world for crooks to operate." According to Forman, the police drive by the volunteers at night to make sure they are safe and help them plan their anti-drug

programs. Forman says some off-duty cops have even joined the groups.

Good Eggs

Despite the police department's manifold problems, there are many hard-working and dedicated police officers on the force. One such officer is Allen Banks. In his mid-30s, Banks has been on the force for seven years, five of them patrolling Anacostia, Washington's poorest area. In the five hours I spent with him, Banks sent three sets of kids on street corners home, so they would be ready for school in the morning. At one point Banks heard that a crack-addicted prostitute in the area had just badly beaten her daughter. Banks became angry and drove to the woman's house. Although she wasn't home,

"A lot of officers just don't want to deal with the paperwork, so they go and sit in Wendy's for their entire eight hours."

Banks comforted her daughter. In the interest of the girl's safety, he resolved to come to work early the next day and arrest the prostitute. "Even if you don't agree with people here," Banks says, "you have got to try to respect them."

The police department has not made Washington, D.C. a violent city. Widespread drug use and other social pathologies have done that. And there is an ongoing debate over how much any police department can reduce crime. Some experts claim that law-enforcement agencies—even the best ones—are largely irrelevant to the rate of violent crime in American cities. The salient factors in crime reduction, they say, include private citizens who organize to keep their communities safe, and sentencing policies that imprison violent offenders. The experts may be right. And yet all citizens, even those who live in disintegrating and disorderly neighborhoods, deserve a police department that offers them protection and justice. They are getting neither in Washington. ☛

DON'T CROSS THESE LINES

How Conservatives Will Mobilize Against Clinton

DICK ARMEY, GARY L. BAUER, ROBERT H. BORK, DON E. EBERLY, HENRY J. HYDE, RICHARD D. LAND, JAMES C. MILLER III, GARY PALMER, BURTON YALE PINES, FRED L. SMITH JR., VIN WEBER, PAUL M. WEYRICH

DICK ARMEY

Bill Clinton's election is likely to hurt America in many ways: the appointment of liberal judicial activists to the Supreme Court, an Environmental Protection Agency run amok, and a return to Carter-era tax policies. Here are some of the more dangerous policies that Clinton will likely attempt to guide through Congress.

1) **Re-loopholing the tax code.** During the Reagan years, tax policy was based on the idea that the fairest, most efficient tax code is one that lowers rates and eliminates loopholes. This tax code benefits workers and entrepreneurs rather than accountants and lobbyists.

Clinton, by contrast, will most likely "target" the tax code to provide favorable tax treatment to people with the best lawyers or best-connected lobbyists.

2) **New red and green tape.** Business regulation rose dramatically during the Bush years, a trend that is unlikely to abate with Clinton and Gore in the White House.

Clinton has already promised new taxes on small business to pay for worker training and government health care. He has promised additional mandated benefits, such as family leave and increased child care. We should also expect a plethora of new environmental regulations.

3) **Labor policy.** After 12 years of Republicans in the White House, big labor will pressure the new administration to fill its wish list. Clinton has promised to pass Senator Kennedy's right-to-strike bill, depriving employers one of their few remaining bargaining tools, the right to hire permanent replacement workers.

Clinton has also promised to index the minimum wage to inflation (putting him at odds with his adviser, Robert Shapiro of the Democratic Leadership Council), spend billions more on public-works projects, and hand the Treasury's keys over to big-city mayors. These are all

sops to both blue- and white-collar unions that remain such an important part of the Democratic coalition.

4) **Government health care.** Clinton's desire to get a health-care proposal in his first 100 days in office will do great damage to the nation's economy as well as the overall wellness of the American people. As the authors of The Heritage Foundation's health-care plan, Stuart Butler and Edward Haislmaier, have correctly noted, the pay-or-play approach advocated by President-elect Clinton is really an intermediary step to socialized medicine.

The health-care system's problem won't be solved by increasing government involvement, but by reforming the tax code to give tax credits to individuals rather than the companies that employ them, reforming our malpractice laws, and instituting uniform billing practices.

5) **Education anti-reform.** School choice was one of the few elements of the conservative reform agenda that the Bush administration ran with. Unfortunately, as with so many other issues, Governor Clinton has changed his position to placate a powerful liberal interest group, the National Education Association (NEA). To reform our nation's beleaguered schools, Governor Clinton chooses to rely on failed NEA bromides—more federal spending, higher salaries—rather than innovative reforms like choice. Although Mr. Clinton has embraced public-school choice, he will not give parents the opportunity to select the school that best fits their child's needs.

6) **Abortion policy.** Abortion policy will provide the most dramatic difference between the Bush and Clinton administrations. Governor Clinton favors abortion on demand at taxpayer expense. Certain to fall by executive order in the early days of the Clinton administration are such right-to-life measures as the bans on fetal-tissue