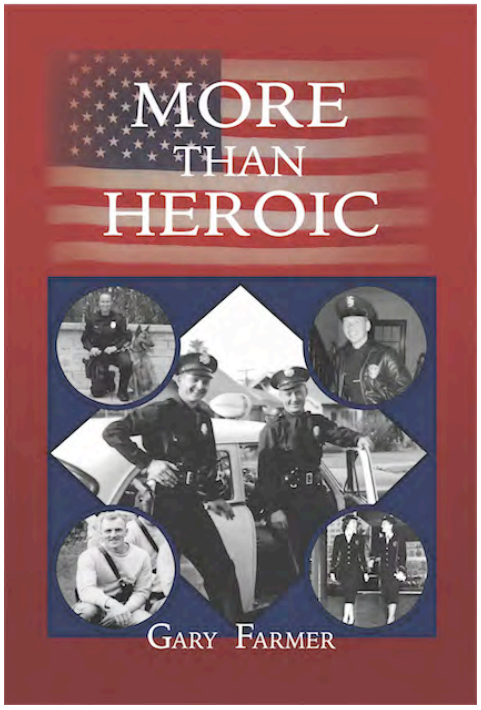
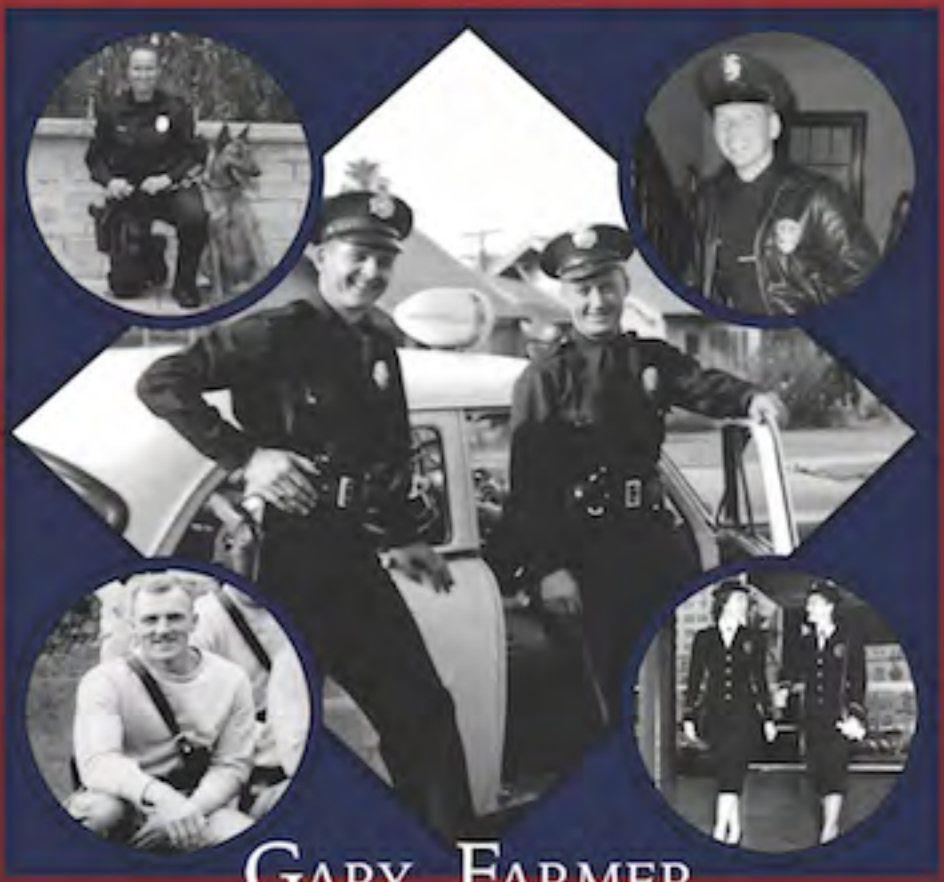


In this book, the realities of police work are captured through the spoken words of thirty former officers with the Los Angeles Police Department. The most powerful aspect of their words is that they reveal the individuals behind the badge, the individuals you call when in need.

MORE THAN HEROIC

by Gary Farmer

MORE THAN HEROIC



GARY FARMER

MORE THAN HEROIC

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Contents

Note: Dates in brackets indicate years on the Los Angeles Police Department

Front Cover: Center, Bob Drees and John Clapp; top left, Linda Travis; top right, Ken Welty; lower left, John “Jack” Harte; and lower right, Melva Meyers and Margie Collins.

Title page image: Don Stanley and Bob Smitson

Harry Lee (full Academy class picture, page 449)

Harry Lee

Birthplace: Los Angeles, California
Career: 1947–1974
Rank at Retirement: Police Officer III
Divisions: Highland Park, Valley, Central

At the start of World War II, I left high school early and became a seagoing Marine aboard the USS Pennsylvania. In ’46, a year after I got home from the war, I found myself in a crappy job as an optical technician in downtown Los Angeles.

I was walking home one day feeling sorry for myself when I saw a recruiting billboard for the Los Angeles Police Department. Remembering a neighbor I had when growing up who was a policeman with LAPD, I signed up. Out of six thousand men that took the test, they only picked six hundred. From this group, there were six Academy classes. My class had about seventy. Well, it seemed like everything came at once: I got married, my wife was pregnant, and I was off to be a policeman!

Frankly, the Academy was easy for me. I just enjoyed it. The instructors got mad at me once, though, and it worried me because I thought they were going to dump me. We were on a run, and as we were running up this hill, I thought the instructor said, “Go on.”

So I ran right past him. Running was easy for me; I had been a champion sprinter in high school.

He shouted, “Where do you think you’re going, home?”

Everything turned out okay, and I graduated from the Academy.

Highland Park was my first division. I was put with an old-timer, a War Emergency Relief guy. Those guys were policemen, but not certified; they were hired because of the manpower shortage from the war. On my first night, he said, “I’m going to give you the keys to drive.” I was nervous as hell.

We pulled over a speeder, and my partner said, "You are going to write the ticket." I did, and made all kinds of mistakes. The ticket was later canceled. He was a good guy to work with and more or less took care of me. He said, "Let's get your feet wet, kid." And believe me I got them wet.

At Highland Park, I got in a few pursuits, and I only lost one. Working by myself, I chased a guy down Colorado Boulevard. At the corner of Colorado and Broadway, there were high curbs to control flooding. On one corner was a gas station. The suspect made the turn at the intersection. I misjudged the turn, hit the high curb, and broke the wheels of the police car completely off! The rest of the police car, a '47 Ford, and me, went skidding into the gas station. That was the end of that pursuit.

At night, unless it was a real quiet area, LAPD always had two policemen working together. One time I got a sergeant mad at me, and the next night he put me on a footbeat by myself on Colorado Boulevard. I had never worked a footbeat. I survived it, but the next night I had a little talk with him. I told the sergeant he was dead wrong. I told him, "If you're mad at me, talk to me. Don't stick me out by myself where I can get killed." I got up and walked out, and he never bothered me again.

Valley Division police station

From Highland Park, I went to Valley Division and worked there for four years. There was only one police station for the entire San Fernando Valley. I had two pursuits there that ended up in the deaths of the people that I was chasing. In one, two military servicemen wrapped a car right around a pepper tree and died on impact.

The other pursuit was where Sunland Boulevard meets San Fernando Road. The driver spun out, rolled the car, and hit the trestle at the intersection. That was the end of him. He was a burglar and had all kinds of stolen stuff in the car.

One night a call came out of a robbery in progress at a gas station. We got there quick, but the suspects were gone.

"How long ago?" I asked the attendant.

"Five minutes."

Then he gave us a good description of the robbers.

I said to my partner, "Now, if you just held up a gas station and got some money at two o'clock in the morning, where would you go?"

"I'd go down to San Fernando to that all-night restaurant."

There was nothing open in the area except this restaurant several miles away.

"Let's go."

At the restaurant, we went inside and saw two guys that fit the description beautifully. One of the guys went for his pocket and I grabbed his hand and said, "Don't reach for it." Sure enough, he had a gun in his right front pocket. It was a small semi-automatic. We booked them both for the gas station robbery.

That was a shot in the dark for us, but it turned out good.

Then in 1955, I was off to Central Division. The old Central Station was on First Street, at the corner of First and Hill. My first assignment was a footbeat on Main Street between Third and Fifth Streets. My first day, I heard the old sergeant say, "Let's put Lee down there and see what happens." In Central, on day watch, most of the beats you worked alone. When you work alone, either you make it or you don't. You learn that you have to control the beat. Those two blocks are yours, and it's your job to take care of them.

What a policeman has to have when he walks a beat is a friend on the street to let him know what is going on because the policeman is never going to know by himself. The Department was not particularly fond of informants, but you were out there to solve crime. When you're dealing with people, some can fool you easily or they won't tell you when something happens. Some will give you the wrong information. That's why it was good to have a friend on the beat.

A big, husky guy named John was my best informant. He would tell me about drunks being "rolled," robbed of their money. That was the biggest problem on the beat. You wanted to get the drunks off the street; otherwise, bigger crime came along. The suspects would wait until the drunks were passed out or until they didn't know what was going on, then they'd go through their pockets. John would point out the suspects to me. I watched them, and when they rolled a drunk, I arrested them.

I must have been doing a good job because one day the station received a threatening letter. The letter stated:

> The policeman named Harry Lee is going to die. We are going to shoot him. He is not going to see us, he is not going to know where the bullet comes from, and he won't know when it is going to happen.

The station watch commander called me in, showed me the letter, and asked, "What do you think?"

"I think it is bullshit."

He was going to pull me off the beat, and I said, "No. I know all these buildings. I know where these guys can and can't hide."

We never did find out who wrote the letter, and nothing ever happened.

One tragic thing did happen, though. I was walking the beat when I was told to call the station. It was kind of scary when you're told on the Gamewell, a callbox on a street corner with a telephone for police use, "You need to come to the station right away."

When I got there, the sergeant told me that he had terrible news. My eight-year-old son had been killed. He had ridden his bicycle to the store to return some empty soda bottles for a few cents and was hit by a car. Nothing was done to the guy that killed him, but he really wasn't at fault from what I understood. My wife blamed herself, even though we had always let him go to the store. Everybody on the job was as nice as could be and helped us through it. That was in 1957.

On the street, there was very little in the way of drugs, mostly just marijuana once in a while. Drunks don't believe in that, only in the bottle. Drunks will say, "I'm just a drunk. I drink wine. I don't do drugs." I believed most of them. I think they were afraid of drugs. They knew what the wine would do to them, but they had no idea what the drugs would do.

Louie Rasic and I worked the East Fifth Street beat for about ten years. It was a two-man beat and the area was strictly Skid Row. Fifth Street was more of a drunk area than Main Street.

Each day when Louie and I started, we parked our police car in an alley and then walked the beat. One day after a couple of hours on the beat, we stopped a guy and said, "What's in the bag?" It turned out he had a police radio in it. Well, we walked back to our car to take him to the station, and, sure enough, he had stolen the radio out of our car! We usually left the car unlocked, and people left it alone.

Another time, this guy came up to us, and he was real upset. He said, "The lady I was in bed with is dead." We went up to his room, and, sure enough, the lady was dead.

I asked the guy, "What happened?"

"I gave her ten bucks to go to bed with me, but I was too drunk and I couldn't get it on. When I woke up this morning, I rolled over and she was stiff as a board. I want my money back."

"Well, I think we have got more important things with this now."

We called in the detectives, and they took over the case.

One time a guy pulled a gun on us. We stopped him on Fifth Street, and during my search, I felt the gun. He pushed me away and pulled the gun out of his pocket. He said, "I don't want any trouble. I just want to get away." Louie and I could have shot the man, but we let him back away. He turned and started down the street with his back to us. He was so intent on getting away that we were able to run up behind him and take him down. He still had the gun on him.

Harry Lee, left, and Lou Rasic

Louie eventually made sergeant and did his probation at Seventy-Seventh Division. While he was there, Louie was involved in a big fight between policemen and some suspects. One of the suspects had a knife, got to Louie, and stuck him with the knife in his forehead. After the fight, they could not find the blade to the knife. Louie went to the hospital and was placed off-duty for a few days. He started getting headaches that progressively got worse. Louie was X-rayed and there, plain as day was part of the blade stuck in his skull. He later transferred back to Central and finished his career there. I used to kid Louie, "If you had stayed with me, you wouldn't have had that knife stuck in your forehead."

On the Seventh Street footbeat, I worked by myself. On the beat, there was a guy that got into a fight with me every time he saw me. His name was John, not the same John that was my informant. I got tired of John fighting with me and changed to the Hill Street beat. Well, wouldn't you know it, I find John raising hell in a bar one day on my new beat. I dragged him out of the bar, and we had a big fight on the sidewalk. During the fight, he went down on my leg, and I heard my leg bone pop. I said, "John, I think my leg is broken." He stopped fighting. After that, for whatever reason, I never had a problem with him again. He turned out to be an okay guy, and we became friends.

Most of my good police work was hampered because of something I did that wasn't too good. It was said I was a good cop, but I did not follow the rules. I used to love cigars, and I'd walk a beat smoking a cigar. Over the years, I don't know how many calls came to the station, "Your officer in uniform is smoking a cigar." Then they'd call me in. It was against the rules, and I knew it was against the rules. But if you walked the beat on Skid Row, you had to smoke a cigar to stand the stench.

I retired on the spur of the moment. When the Department told us we could no longer carry .357 magnum handguns, I got up and walked out of roll call. I said, "I'm gone." Years later, I was right. The Department went to using semi-automatic pistols, which were stronger than the .357 handguns and more powerful than the .38 caliber revolvers they required everyone to carry.

Harry Lee

Another change was the baton. The officers now carry a baton called a Monadnock. The worst part about the new baton is that a guy can take it away from you. I still have my old club with a leather strap. I'd wrap the leather strap around my hand, and a guy would have to pull my hand off to take it from me. And they tried. But no one could get it away from me because the strap wouldn't break.

I enjoyed my time on the job. I don't know of a job that has more freedom than being a policeman. Where else could you be on your own for eight hours a day? If your supervisor saw you once a day, he was happy. He'd wave at you and drive on because he could trust you.

I couldn't possibly have worked in a factory where you tighten bolt B on assembly line A. I had the only job that I could handle, and I loved it. For twenty-seven years, it was my salvation, but I just got disgusted toward the end. The job changed, and there were too many rules and regulations. The Department sent me a letter giving me the opportunity to come back, but I told them no.

Once I retired, I was the happiest guy in the world. I was forty-eight years old, healthy, and I could do what I wanted. For nineteen years, I walked the beat, eight to ten miles a day. That is why I am still alive today at ninety-one years old.

Bettie Bowden

Birthplace: St. Louis, Missouri
Career: 1956–1968
Rank at Retirement: Policewoman
Divisions: Jail, Harbor

I was working at an aircraft company in production and control, and I liked my job. But I had worked up to the highest level and was told I couldn't go any higher because I was a woman. That didn't sit very well with me.

In a Sunday newspaper, I saw a picture of a policewoman. In the story, it said that she was trying to find young women to be on the Police Department and that they were now hiring.

My friend Ernie Glover was on the Police Department, and I asked him if he thought I could do the job of a policewoman. He knew me pretty well and said, "Of course you can." He told me to go down to City Hall and pay my dollar for an application. And that's exactly what I did.

After submitting my application, I was called and told to go to Hollywood High School for the written exam. There must have been over three hundred women there. I didn't know how many they were going to need, and with that many people I thought, *I don't know about this*. I took the exam, and after finishing the rest of the process, I was hired. I was in a class with five other women, and looking at these other women I thought, *Why would we be chosen out of all that humanity that came to take the first exam?*

The sergeant in charge of our class was Daisy Storms. Daisy was a wonderful person, and we became good friends. She did not have us for very long though—we were only at the Academy for five days.

Bettie Bowden, far left: Academy in-service training, 1957

Bettie Bowden, second from left: Academy shooting instruction, 1957

Earle "Fuzzy" Farrant, seated far right: Los Angeles Police Shooting Team

In those five days, we were overwhelmed with classes, including firearms. I was familiar with guns, having grown up on a farm, but a couple of the girls had never fired a gun before. The shooting instructor was Earle Farrant, and everyone called him "Fuzzy." He was on the Department's shooting exhibition team. He showed us how to handle, shoot, and clean our guns.

Once he had told us all that he was supposed to about firearms, Fuzzy said, "You are all going to be assigned to the jail. Here are some things you need to know." Then he showed us a few control holds, including the chokehold. We were grateful for Fuzzy's added instruction because, believe me, we did use those holds in the jail and that chokehold came in handy many a time.

We did not have a formal graduation. Friday was our last day at the Academy, and the very next night I was working the women's jail at Lincoln Heights.

When I first got to the jail, I was so intent on being careful about not bringing some disease home; I would wash my hands about fourteen times a night. At first, I thought people in jail were really dirty, but I soon learned they weren't any dirtier than the rest of us. Well, maybe a

little dirtier. I never washed my hands so much in all my life, but I got over that right away.

One time a policewoman searched an arrestee and didn't find anything on her. The woman was booked and brought back to a cell. Turned out she had a booster bag within her clothes and a five-pound ham in it! The policewoman never lived that one down. I wasn't there for that, but the story got around pretty fast.

Every Friday and Saturday night, the officers would bring in a lot of female drunk drivers. One night a booked drunk driver seriously hurt Marilyn Moon, one of my Academy classmates. Marilyn was trying to take the woman's prints when the woman turned on her. She had been cooperative with Marilyn as she printed her, but then suddenly went crazy. By the time other policewomen could get to the woman and control her, Marilyn had suffered injuries to her head and neck, including a good amount of her hair being pulled out. Marilyn was taken to the hospital and was off for some time.

The hardest thing for me to do was to put someone on what we called the Board." I don't even like to remember doing it. A board was essentially a table with leg and arm restraints. If someone were doing something that was harmful to them, even if they were in a padded cell, we would have to strap them to a board. It was the only way we had of keeping them from killing themselves. That wasn't easy.

"It was the only way we had of keeping them from killing themselves."

There was a woman one night that did kill herself. She had been arrested for trying to commit suicide. She had been running naked on a major street trying to get cars to hit her. The officers that brought her in had given her a jacket and wrapped a garment around her waist to cover her. That's all she had on. When I searched her, I felt something like a very thin belt within the lining of the wrap she had been given. But because it was sewn in, I didn't go further with it.

That night she was found hanging in her cell. She had removed the item I had felt and used it to hang herself. I had to cut her down. You could say it was my fault, or you could say she was determined to kill herself. That was her intent, and she was going to do it one way or another. That stayed with me a long time.

Did anybody try to escape? One tried. She had been booked for narcotics, and two detectives talked to her in an interview room. The room had a large window that cantilevered out to allow in air. When the detectives had finished their interview, they left her alone in the room, and they did not tell anyone that they were leaving. She climbed out the window looking to drop into a garbage truck that was directly below. We were on the fifth floor! One of the policewomen heard her yell, went into the room, and saw her holding on to the window. She was pulled back in, thus saving her life. It was a good ending, but, of course, there was a lot of explaining that had to be done.

Six months was probation. Once you're off probation, the other policewomen treated you like a real person. Up until then, you were just a person there to do something for them if they needed it done. They wouldn't let you get involved in anything. They would be planning parties or to meet up after work, and they wouldn't let us go out with them. At first, our feelings were hurt. Then we finally found out: they were waiting for us to pass probation so that we wouldn't get into trouble and jeopardize our career. That showed you how much they really cared about you. They were wonderful.

I worked the jail for a year, and then I was transferred to Harbor Division working the Juvenile unit as a leader in DAPS, the Deputy Auxiliary Police Service program. Harbor Station was in San Pedro City Hall. Police and Fire had the main floor, there were courts on several floors, and the women's jail was on the top floor. In fact, not too long ago, I went down to City Hall, and it was being rejuvenated.

San Pedro City Hall

The building was built in 1929. It's still there and beautiful. In 1962, we moved to a new police station near the freeway. That station has since been torn down and a new police station built, but the City Hall building is still working. There's something wrong somewhere.

My partner in DAPS was Morris Gilmore, we called him "Gil." He was a policeman of the highest degree, and he and his wife, Chloe, a policewoman, became lifelong family friends. We had a big group of kids in DAPS, almost seventy-five in the senior group and an even larger junior group. There was a movie house at Sixth and Beacon Street with a large basement that Gil finagled to get as our meeting place. You learned to finagle in DAPS because we did not get funds from the city.

We held fundraisers, including selling Christmas trees. We had a Christmas tree lot, and no one in San Pedro bought their tree anyplace else. With the money we raised, we built an archery range in our meeting place and held dances once a week. We took them on trips like half-day fishing on a boat and Disneyland. It was up to us to figure out

what to do to take care of these children and try to teach them good morals and a good way of life.

Gil was a Marine and had been in WWII. He was a prisoner of the Japanese for four years. He taught the kids how to march, and we would practice marching at Fort MacArthur up on the hill overlooking the harbor. They marched in various parades. Gil was very considerate, and he loved the kids, although being a former tough Marine, he wouldn't let them know that.

Some of the kids had no transportation to our meeting place, so Gil and I would pick them up in the station paddy wagon. We put as many kids in there as we could. I used to remind Gil not to go around the corners too fast or the back doors may fly open and we could lose a few! For the kids, riding in the paddy wagon was part of the fun.

We had kids from all over the harbor area, including the projects in Wilmington. One was Peter Gravitt. Other boys from the projects would make fun of him because he belonged to DAPS. Peter went anyway and once told me it changed his whole life. He later became a police officer for twenty years and rose to the rank of general in the U.S. Army Reserve. He also became Secretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

Morris "Gil" and Chloe Gilmore

Ezequiel Encinas, second from left, Vietnam: "We called him "Zeke."

Another kid from the projects was Ezequiel Encinas. We called him "Zeke." Zeke grew up to be a military pilot in the U.S. Air Force with the rank of major. Unfortunately, he was killed in Vietnam on a mission over Laos.

I was in DAPS a year when the program was brought to an end in June 1958. That was one of the worst decisions the Police Department ever made. The reason given was that men were needed back in the field. That was the saddest thing. I mean really sad. DAPS was a great program. A number of kids went on to become officers, but more importantly, they became positive role models within the community, some in leadership roles. Zeke was in charge of his flight crew and an ace pilot. You don't get there unless you're paying attention. As a kid, he lived in the projects with drugs and everything else available to him, and he said, "No." I would like to think our program had something to do with that.

When DAPS was shut down, I was reassigned to the women's jail upstairs on the seventh floor. Rita Eberhardt was my sergeant.

At Harbor, there was one policeman, Frank Haley, who had to have been 110 years old. He was a character, and we all loved him. His job

was serving arrest warrants. One day he came up to the jail and asked Rita if he could have a policewoman go with him for a warrant on a woman. Rita asked me, and I said, "Sure." Just as Frank and I were walking out the door of the building, I asked him what the warrant was for, and he told me murder. I then asked who the person was, and he told me her name. I knew her. She was one of the girls that were always in and out of jail. She had a drinking problem, and when she drank, she became mean.

One time when she was in the drunk tank, something set her off and she ripped out the toilet and washbasin with her bare hands! This time, she had been arrested because she had apparently got in a fight with some gal while drunk and tried to put a pair of scissors through the gal's head. She bailed out, but failed to appear in court, hence the warrant.

Frank and I went to her house, and she was not there. We could see something cooking on the stove, so we knew that she was not far away. I told Frank she might have gone to a market that was down the block. We knew she did not have a car. We went to the market, and there she was, getting ready to buy some groceries. She saw me, and I told her she had a warrant. She said she was expecting it.

I said, "Well, you understand we need to take you over to the jail."

"I understand, Miss Bowden."

She cooperated fully. If I hadn't known her from previous times, I'm sure it would have been different. I don't know what the outcome of her case was.

After we moved to the new station, one day I had four prisoners ready to take to court, but there were no cars. Getting a police vehicle in the morning was tough. The courtroom was about five miles away and Judge Benz was not one to take being late to court too kindly. At the last minute, a car came in, and I grabbed it. I loaded the four girls in, and off we went. About four blocks from court the car started sputtering, and soon I realized we were out of gas.

I got the girls out of the car and said, "Okay, girls. You see City Hall. We are going to walk over there. Now listen. I just cleaned my gun, and I don't want to have to do it again. So let's everybody pay attention."

They all replied, "Yes, Miss Bowden, we will."

We started walking toward City Hall, and at Fifth and Beacon Street one of the girls turned to me and said, "Miss Bowden, I can't walk by that bar. My friends are in there. They'll see you marching me around, and I'll be so ashamed."

I knew what her arrest record was, and I told her, "You got a lot more to be ashamed of than that, girl."

We marched right to City Hall and up into the court. We made it on time! I called the station and told Rita to send somebody from the garage with some gas to pick up the car.

Rita asked, "Well, how did you get them from there to the court?"

I said, "Never mind, Rita. You don't want to know."

Policewomen were often loaned to Vice or Narcotics for investigations requiring the presence of a female officer. One day Gil and I were cleaning up the DAP meeting place. I was in jeans, a sweatshirt, and old shoes. A couple of the guys from Vice came in and asked if I could work a detail with them.

I asked, "When?"

"Today."

"This is the way I'm dressed."

"That's the way we want you."

They were going to take down a bar for bookmaking. All that the officers wanted me to do was when they came in, to take the bookmaker, a woman, into custody. The sergeant and I went in early and sat at the bar. The woman bookmaker was behind the bar. When the officers came in, she grabbed a big old hockey stick. I jumped over the bar and said to her, "We're just going to put that down, and we're going to go over here and stand still. That's all you have to do, but you're going to do it. Do you understand?" She understood. She put her hockey stick down.

The guys were searching all over the place for betting markers, and they couldn't find any. The sergeant told me to take the bookmaker into the women's restroom and shake her down. I took her in there and told her to take her clothes off. She said, "Take my clothes off?" They were always like that, all of a sudden modest. She took off her clothes and out dropped a marker. That was it, the only marker.

About two or three days later, I asked one of the officers what happened after the raid. The officer said, "Oh, you didn't hear? We lost

the marker on the way back to the station." One marker for the whole raid, and it was lost!

Corine "Guzzie" Guzzetta and I went on loan to detectives for their investigation of a fortune-telling gypsy family. The father in the family had died, and the officers thought his death was suspicious, that his sons may have killed him. Guzzie and I were to get our fortunes told and try to develop a relationship that may give the family confidence in us, so that we may learn how the father died.

The mother told my fortune, and I asked her if she would tell my friend her fortune. She said she would. Guzzie and I went back a day or two later in a very expensive-looking car that the officers had borrowed. We were really putting it on. Guzzie had her fortune told, and we went back about three more times. This was around Christmas time, and the family invited Guzzie and me to their Christmas party.

Policewomen Nancy Lukes, Sydney Rester, and Corine "Guzzie" Guzzetta

We went to the party and met the rest of the family: brothers, cousins, all of them. These were bad people, mean people. When we left, the detectives felt we had given them enough information for them to work with. Eventually, a murder warrant was obtained for two of the sons. The case went to court. I never had to go, and I don't know what the outcome was.

What was my fortune? I was told I was going to get money. I'm still waiting!

I mentioned Frank Haley being a character. We had a number of characters at Harbor, and I just loved them all. Caraway Weems was one-of-a-kind. He had been on the Department a long time when I came on. Caraway was our sharpshooter, and one time he had to take a guy out with his rifle.

A call came into the station that a man was holding hostages in an apartment building and threatening to kill them. The officers responded, and after several hours, it was decided to take this guy out. Caraway was tasked with taking the shot. The guy walked back and forth a few times in front of a window, and finally Caraway got a bead on him and knocked him down. The people were very thankful, let me tell you. They knew this guy was going to kill some of them, maybe all of them.

I was working the front desk that night, and the news people were all over the station. Finally, when things settled down, I walked back to the coffee room, and Caraway was sitting there all by himself. He looked in deep thought. When I asked him how he was, he said, "You know." He wouldn't comment anymore.

I said, "Yeah, I do. Let me talk to the watch commander and get somebody to take over the desk, and I'll drive you home."

He looked at me and said, "You are the sweetest thing."

"No, I'm not. I'm just going to drive you home. This isn't any long-time romance." I knew his wife.

He laughed and said, "No."

"Okay, then it's time for you to go home if you think you can drive yourself. But I would be happy to go with you."

"No, no," he said, "I can drive."

"Okay," I said, "Get in your car and drive on home. Get some sleep."

Caraway said he was okay, and he drove home. He was in deep thought because he had just killed a man. You don't kill a man and not give it a lot of thought before and after. To me, it doesn't matter the lives you're saving, you're really thinking about the life you're taking. All of us were pretty close, and, of course, everybody loved Caraway. He was such a nice, big old bear, a great big guy. He was just as sweet as he could be. After that, I never knew him to have any problems from the shooting.

I was assigned to the front desk because I had been injured while working the jail. I was booking a prisoner who was very, very drunk, big, and heavy. I was going through the prisoner's purse and recording the contents when, all of a sudden, she came swinging a left and then a right hand to hit me. She was so drunk that she couldn't keep her equilibrium, and we both went down. She came down right on top of me, and it injured some vertebrae in my lower back. I could not walk straight and eventually had to have two surgeries. I was worse off after the first surgery, and the doctor fused the vertebrae in my lower back in the second surgery. I still wasn't able to walk very good, and eventually I medically pensioned off the job.

When Chief Parker died, I was on medical leave for my first surgery. I drove to St. Vibiana's Cathedral in a full-body cast. It was a hot day, and I shouldn't have been there, but I went anyway. I started to walk up to where the crowds were, and I realized I wasn't going to make it. I felt that I was going to pass out. I didn't want to make a fool of myself and disparage Chief Parker's name, so I went back to the car. I sat in the car until it was all over.

My goal was not to retire the way I did with an injury. I wanted to put in my full time, a full twenty years. I thought I was doing good work. I really felt like I was accomplishing something because I could work with the public very well. I recognized that when people had problems they could do some dumb things. I felt I could look through a situation and help them. I thought that was worthwhile.

Recently, I was given the Connie Speck Award by the Policewomen's Association. Connie was a policewoman who was the first woman to achieve the rank of lieutenant and then captain on the Department. She was a role model for the rest of us. Out of respect for her accomplishments, an annual award was established in her name.

Bettie Bowden

It was an honor for me to receive it. I appreciated being honored by my own people. That really meant something. And to my complete surprise, Peter Gravitt, the kid teased for being in the DAPS program, came up from behind and sat next to me at my table. I just about passed out.

Deputy Chief Sandy Jo MacArthur gave a speech to honor me, and she came to my table at the conclusion of the ceremony. She took her stars off her collar and gave them to me. I cried. She didn't know me on the Department, but she was honoring me for my faithful work. That was a touching thing to do.

I think about the different personalities of all the people I worked with over the course of my career. Everybody is a little different from each other, but they're the same when it comes to the Police Department. You're glad you are a police officer, and you're glad your partner is who he is or who she is. You depend on your partner totally, so you have to care for them as they do for you.

Jay Moberly

Birthplace: Los Angeles, California
Career: 1975–2010
Rank at Retirement: Detective III
Divisions: Hollywood, Communications, Wilshire, Metropolitan, Van Nuys, Central, Robbery-Homicide

For as long as I can remember, I had wanted to be a policeman. My cousin J.J. Thompson joined the Police Department in ’63. He was always Jimmy to me, but everybody on the Department knew him as J.J. I was nine years old when I went to his Academy graduation. In the Watts riots in ’65, I remember him getting his uniform all torn up, and I think he might have even gotten a bullet graze through his uniform shirt. I was fascinated by what he did. Whenever we’d have family functions, I was all over him asking him to tell me police stories.

When I turned eighteen years of age, Jimmy told me about the student worker program and helped me get hired as a student worker for the Department. The student worker program fit the bill, and I thought the program was outstanding. You had to carry a full load in college, and you could only work twenty hours per week. It was a good job because it gave me insight into how the police worked.

In September of ’75, I entered the Academy as a policeman. Jimmy was thrilled that I went on the Department, and he attended my Academy graduation.

Years later when I was working K-9, we had just finished a search for some robbery suspects in Devonshire Division. Jimmy was an assistant watch commander at Devonshire, and we talked when the search was over. I was a little boy when he came on the job, and now I was talking to him policeman to policeman. It was kind of surreal to me.

Jay Moberly with cousin J.J. Thompson: Academy graduation, 1976

At the Academy, I had no confidence in my pistol shooting ability. I thought I'd be disqualified based on my inability to shoot a pistol, even though I'd been a hunter since I was a kid. Shotgun and rifle I was okay with, but a pistol that was different. I had an unrealistic view that policemen could shoot the gun out of a guy's hand, that I had to be an expert pistol shot. As it turned out, despite my initial deficiencies with the pistol, I finished first overall in my class, and that gave me a good burst of confidence.

My first assignment was morning watch at Hollywood Division. The morning watch was a tight group. To say they were cliquish is an understatement. To walk in there and have to prove yourself wasn't easy, especially when you had a lot of military veterans at the time. I had no military experience to speak of. I was in the Air National Guard, but that paled in comparison to Marines that had been in Vietnam.

One of my first training officers was Frank Valdez. The first time I saw Frank was when he walked into roll call. He looked like he was mad at the world. His nickname was Grumpy. He was a good training officer. He taught me a lot and didn't put me in any bad situations.

Hollywood Division police station

The first night I worked with Frank, we got a call to go pick up a forgery suspect at the Holiday Inn. The suspect was in his mid-twenties and the classic Hollywood street hustler. He had gotten into some sort of fracas with the hotel security, and he had a cut lip. Many officers would prefer not to deal with a forgery arrest due to the investigation complexity, but not Frank. He was anxious to teach me about all police work.

On the way to the station, I was trying to fill out a field interview card, and the suspect wouldn't tell me his name or anything. At the station, we put him in the holding tank and went upstairs to Detectives. Frank started to write the arrest report, when the watch commander, Lieutenant Phil Sadlier, came upstairs. He wanted to know whose arrestee was in the holding tank because he was kicking the door. Frank told me to bring the suspect upstairs. I got the suspect, and as we walked by a water fountain, he said his first words, "Can I get a drink of water?"

"Sure."

I pushed the button down for him, and he got a drink of water and washed the blood from his lip. He straightened up, told me his name,

and said, “I’ll talk to you and nobody else but you. I’ve got a stolen car sitting behind the Holiday Inn.” Then he rattled off the license plate number. I was still new, but who can rattle off the license plate of their own car let alone a stolen car?

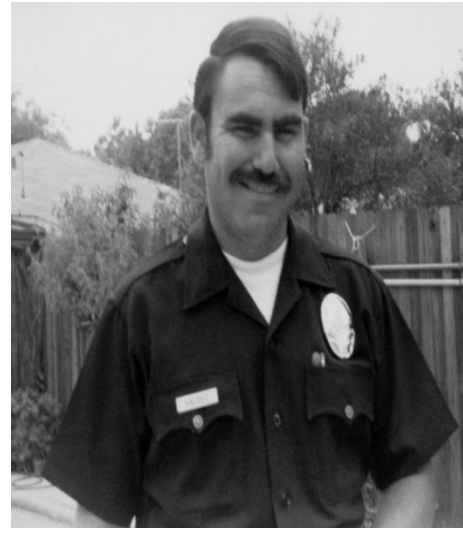
I’m in long sleeves and had a butch haircut; I obviously look like a new policeman. I said, “Look at me, man. I’m so new I don’t even know where to start.”

“I’m only talking to you, so you do with it what you want.”

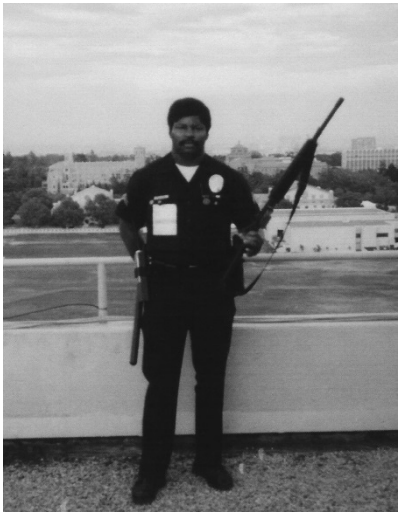
We went upstairs, and I told Frank what the guy had said. Like a good training officer, Frank didn’t get too excited. He said, “Go advise him of his rights and get a statement from him.”

In the meantime, Frank sent a unit to the Holiday Inn to verify this guy was being truthful. Sure enough, the car was there. I read the suspect his rights, and he started rattling off the crimes he had committed from the Canadian border down to San Diego. He had dates and times and license plate numbers of stolen cars.

I had to stop him. I said, “You are so far over my head I can’t keep up with you. Look, my partner’s a smoker, and he’ll let you smoke. He’s a nice guy and will treat you right. You need to let him come in here. I’ll stay with you.” Frank came in and took the statement. I was impressed. We called in detectives, and it was a big thing. This guy was good for a lot of crimes.



Frank Valdez: “He was anxious to teach me about all police work.”



Ike Williams

After probation, I wheeled out of Hollywood to Communications Division. For six months, I would answer a couple hundred phone calls a day. Would I do it again? No, thanks! At Hollywood, I was starting to feel like I knew something about being a cop, and then they put me in purgatory.

From Communications, I transferred to Wilshire Division and shortly thereafter worked the Wilshire Special Problems Unit, a crime suppression detail. My partner was Ike Williams. We were partners for about six months, and Ike and I became pretty close.

One night about ten o'clock, we were in the northeast part of the division in a plain car, but wearing our uniforms. We saw three guys walking on a sidewalk. It didn't matter if they were black, white, or green, Ike would stop anyone who looked like they didn't belong.

When we got out of the car, I heard something metal hit the sidewalk. The suspects had stocking masks and female jewelry in their pockets, and one had blood on his shoes. These guys just looked evil, absolutely evil. I was wondering if the metal sound I heard was a key for a nearby car. I looked around and found a door key. There were only apartment buildings around us. Bud Jablonski and Doug Tantee, part of our unit, met us, and I told Ike, "I'll take a quick look around."

I walked back up the street and turned the corner, and there in front of an apartment building was an ambulance with its lights flashing. The attendants were putting a female into the ambulance, and they had her

head all wrapped up. She was in dire straits. The attendants said that she was stabbed in the eye with a knife and in danger of dying.

Ike and I went up to her apartment, and there was a huge puddle of blood and a knife with an eight-inch bent blade lying in the blood. The three guys we stopped had forced their way into this girl's apartment, stabbed her in the eye, and took her jewelry. The knife was plunged into her eye so deep that the suspect actually bent the blade trying to force it deeper. She survived, and later in her testimony in court, she told how she tried to play dead. She also testified that she heard one suspect say, "Kill that bitch," and from another, "She's already dead." How she was able to do that I'll never know.

The lead suspect was on parole from the California Youth Authority for killing a man in front of the man's ten-year-old son. By this time, I'd been involved in a lot of arrests, but this was one of the first times I really questioned the system. I could not understand how somebody like that could be out roving the streets.

This girl came from Texas with aspirations of being a model or an actress. She rented an apartment in what she thought was a decent area, but the female manager of the apartment complex set this girl up. The manager gave one of the thugs a building key. The three guys knocked on the girl's door, she opened it, and they entered.

I'll never forget seeing her in court. She wore a plastic bubble over the eye that had been stabbed. My heart went out for that poor girl. That case was a huge deal for me and a blazing example of what kind of animals are walking around out there. It fortified my desire and my will to fight evil. Fighting evil was why I wanted to be a policeman.

David Kulby's death also had a big impact on me—I remember it like it happened yesterday. Like David, I was a young policeman with about two and a half years on. We were in Wilshire Station when Sergeant Kip Meyerhoff announced over the loudspeaker that David was in a vehicle pursuit southbound on Crenshaw Boulevard. David was working by himself. Ed McKeon and I, along with our supervisor, Mark Mooring, flew out of the station to respond. As we responded, we heard "shots fired, officer down" over the radio, but the radio was broken up and hard to hear.

When we arrived, David looked dead to me. I will never forget the impact of what I saw, and, unfortunately, later on in my career, I saw

too much of it. David wasn't dead at the scene; he passed later that night. It was all so senseless because the suspect was an ex-con from Texas. He had committed a robbery in Hollywood and was speeding down Crenshaw when David saw him. Why wasn't he still in prison? The suspect was caught the next morning hiding in a shed in the backyard of a house.

In '79, Mark Mooring and Donn Yarnall submitted a proposal for a Department K-9 Unit. Mark liked my work ethic and knew I trained my own hunting dogs. He asked if I would be interested if the proposal was accepted. I loved working with dogs and told him yes. Several months later Mark called me and said the K-9 Unit was approved. They had authorization for two more handlers, and he asked John Lopata and me to be in the program.

My first dog was Elka, a female shepherd. She was a little dog that looked like a coyote. John's dog, Rooster, looked like a bear. Officers in the field would look at Rooster and then look at Elka, and I could sense they were looking at me and thinking, *What are you going to do with that little thing?*

Jay Moberly, Elka, Donn Yarnall, Popeye, Mark Mooring, Blue, 1981

Elka was a good dog. When I first went to look at her, she wouldn't even let me in the house. I had to sweet talk her, and by the time our initial meet was over, she was good with me. She was about one and a half years old at the time, and I ended up having her for almost fifteen years. She outlived them all. When I had to put her down, it was not a lot different than losing a child or a family member. She would have laid down her life for me without even thinking about it. She was with me twenty-four hours a day for four years of her life when she was in service. Elka was a fantastic dog and a great home protector.

However, she could be moody. Some nights she wasn't on her best game, but on others, she did exceptional stuff. I remember searching the train yards in Central Division for a robbery suspect one night on morning watch. It was foggy, colder than hell, and the wind was blowing. We were walking along, when she put her nose up and started running. She ran a couple hundred yards and then made a beeline to a railroad car. There was our guy wedged up between the axle and the undercarriage with only a small patch of his jeans showing. We would never have found that guy without a dog.

My first shooting was on Mother's Day, and my wife was home pregnant with our first daughter. I had Elka in the back seat, and I was driving on Pacific Coast Highway. The K-9 Unit was still working out of West L.A. Division. It was around nine o'clock at night; it hadn't been dark all that long. All of a sudden, a car with college-age kids stopped next to me. They were in a full-blown panic and yelling, "There's a black guy with a knife down the street trying to kill a white guy."

Then another car stopped, and I was told the same story. I put out a broadcast that citizens advised a possible assault was in progress at Will Roger's State Beach. There was a mile or more of parking lots along the beach, and as I was looking in the parking lots, I saw a big guy holding a long two-by-four, waving at me frantically. He said, "This guy tried to kill me, he tried to kill my girlfriend, and he's in the parking lot. He's crazy."

I pulled into the parking lot, and I saw a black male holding a knife down by his side. The guy was mumbling to himself and prancing around in a circle. I put out an assistance call, and I lit him up in my headlights. His eyeballs were dancing around, and I immediately

thought PCP. He seemed focused on a car parked to my left with several females inside and a group of people standing behind it.

I got out of my car, shined my flashlight on him, and told him to drop the knife. He was about thirty feet away and now focused on me instead of the car, which was what I wanted. I was in a remote location, and at this point, all I could do was hold my ground, wait for the cavalry, and hope he holds his ground.

Meanwhile, Elka was in the back of the car going insane. She wanted to come out and do her thing, but that was a suicide mission. I wasn't letting her out on a guy with a knife—that's just nuts. That's not what the dogs are there for.

The suspect became considerably more heated up; more agitated, and then all of a sudden charged toward the civilian car yelling, "I'm going to cut one of these motherfuckers."

I fired a round, and it paralyzed him instantly. Then I put out a help call. Just before I fired, an incident I was involved in as a training officer at Wilshire went through my head. We responded to a help call at Pico and La Cienega where an officer had just shot and killed a PCP suspect who earlier had thrashed a liquor store and armed himself with a knife. He then ran into the street, climbed up onto a car stopped at the intersection, and jumped up and down on the roof of the car. The female driver quickly rolled up her window and locked the door. The suspect broke the glass of one window and stabbed the girl in the face. Officer Amos Lauder engaged the suspect who then started chasing Amos around the car with a knife. Amos shot and killed the guy. I thought about that when I was in the standoff with this guy. The people inside the car think they're in a safety zone, and I know they're in a death trap.

The incident at the beach started when the guy with the two-by-four and his girlfriend got a flat tire. As the guy retrieved items from the trunk, the suspect came out of nowhere saying, "I'm going to kill you." The suspect chased the guy, as the guy tried to back away. The college kids saw this and then stopped me. The suspect then went after the guy's girlfriend, who had gone to a payphone to call the police. He put a knife to her throat and dragged her out into the parking lot. The boyfriend and a truck driver were about to try to save her when they saw me. She managed to escape from the suspect.

The shooting was deemed out of policy. By the look on your face, I see you're just as perplexed by that decision as I was and a lot of people were. The shooting review board thought my actions were precipitous, that I should have done all kinds of different things. Suggestions included: Why didn't I use Elka? Why didn't I take on the guy with my baton? I somehow should have disarmed the suspect prior to him charging the group.

Lieutenant Chuck Higbie who was in charge of the officer-involved-shooting investigation team said to me, "I've got to remain neutral in these things, but you got screwed big time." Higbie said he took a chair and threw it clear across the room and stormed out.

Chuck Higbie was the lead investigator on four of my five shootings. He was a man that gave so much of himself because he loved cops so much. He gave you a fighting chance, gave you every benefit of the doubt, believed in what you did and would go to the mat for you. Chuck was a huge influence on me, no doubt. I revered the guy. He gave me his Sam Browne equipment belt when he retired.

l to r: Chuck Higbie, Eddie Garcia, George Haines, Patrick McKinley, Bob Smitson (all retired LAPD)

I received an official reprimand, which didn't make sense to me because they were essentially saying I got a paper penalty for killing a man I shouldn't have killed. I appealed the decision, and for three days, civilian witnesses came in and testified to what they saw. I still lost the appeal.

I don't believe it was personal, just politics. I was bitter for a long time because I didn't understand nor did I accept their decision. Did it really hurt me in the long run? No. Temporarily, it was bad news. All the people that testified came and thanked me. In the big scheme of things, that was all I needed.

While still battling the Department on my first shooting, I was involved in a second one. A couple of bandits were running around the San Fernando Valley robbing folks about four o'clock in the morning. Phil Wagner and his probationer, Bob Kraus, Jr., spotted the bandits in a 7-Eleven parking lot on Balboa at Sherman Way. One suspect was an ex-con and gave up right away, no fighting. The younger suspect got out of the car and ran. He slipped through an opening in a fence behind the store into a dirt field covered with thigh-high mustard plants.

Bob, who would later work SIS and whose father had been on the job, went after the suspect. As Bob started onto the field, all of a sudden *boom boom boom!* He was being fired on. Bob didn't see any muzzle flash; he only heard the gunshots with the bullets landing near him when he went to the ground for cover.

Mike Long and I responded. When we got there, Mike and I decided his dog, Duke, was a much better dog for this situation than Elka. We were going to clear the field, but we needed to get Bob out of there first. He was dug in, afraid if he stood up he would be fired on. We convinced him that we had him covered, and he came out of the field.

Mike and I started the search with Duke. Behind the field was a row of apartment housing with a wall separating it from the field. We had to clear the field first to get to the wall, and I remember never having been so fearful in my life. The mustard plants were so thick I couldn't see my feet, and the suspect could be anywhere. It was just the two of us; Mike was handling the dog, and I was the shotgun guy. I thought, *If I see a muzzle flash, I'm pulling the trigger because that may be our only chance.*

We cleared the field and were working our way up the block with a pretty stiff breeze at our backs. Duke walked past a car in a driveway, and then I saw the suspect under the car. The second I saw him the dog alerted on him. I yelled to Mike, "The suspect's under the car!"

We were scrambling for cover. The dog circled the car, trying to figure out a way to get under it. The suspect was trying to decide what he was going to do and when he was going to do it. He had his gun in his hand. I told him three or four times to stop moving his hands and to drop the gun. He said, "Get that dog out of here!"

I knew what was coming and yelled at Mike, "Get your dog! Get your dog!"

The suspect raised his gun, and I fired.

About six months later, I was in the station, and the desk officer said, "Hey, Jay, you've got a phone call."

I picked up the phone and said, "Officer Moberly. Can I help you?"

A female voice said, "Is this Officer Moberly?"

"Yes."

"This is the sister of the man you killed, and you're going to die."

She hung up the phone. There was an investigation, but she denied making the call. Nothing ever happened, but I had police protection at my house for several days for fear of something happening to my family.

When Elka developed hip dysplasia, she worked no longer, than we had to until I could get another dog. I grabbed Erko when he became available, and we worked together for six years. I've seen some great police dogs, but none could top Erko's desire to hunt.

One of Erko's most amazing searches was in Rampart Division. Erko engaged the suspect, and they're battling. The suspect got away, climbed onto a wooden fence, and then up onto an overhanging garage roof. Erko got half of his body onto the fence and then propelled himself up onto the roof. Once on the roof, Erko re-engaged the suspect, who pushed Erko off the roof. Erko fell onto a pile of bicycles between the fence and the garage. I looked down at him from the other side of the fence, but now I was in the heat of a battle with the suspect. I figured Erko was probably dead.

We managed to pull the suspect off the roof, and he was still fighting. Next thing I know, Erko found his way back into the yard and

was back in the fight, and we were able to take the suspect into custody. Erko just amazed me all the time. Fortunately, he only had a few bruises; it didn't slow him down at all.

One time there was a two- to three-week period where a string of banks on Ventura Boulevard were being robbed by guys wearing different kinds of masks. One day a witness saw the suspects' car as it was leaving a bank they had just robbed and called the police. An officer spotted the car, and the chase was on! It ended in the hills overlooking the San Fernando Valley.

The suspects bailed out of the car and ran into the hills. The officers found masks in the car, so they knew they were the bank robbery suspects. I was called out, along with two other K-9 units, to conduct a search. It was summertime, and it was hot. This was rattlesnake country big time, just wide-open territory. I even told the air unit to pick a landing spot in case a handler or a dog was bitten. We could not establish an effective perimeter because there were no boundaries. We searched and searched—and nothing.

Then Erko picked up a foxtail thorn in his ear, which can kill a dog. I radioed the sergeant and told him Erko was hurting and we were on our way back. We were walking along the edge of a gully, and when I say gully, I don't mean the kind you can step across—it was big and deep. You'd have to hike down one side and then back up the other to cross. Erko was out ahead of me a little bit, his head came straight up, and he picked up his pace. His tail flagged, and all of the sudden he took off.

You have to remember that we're not following ground tracks. The dog is working off the scent that comes off the body. To a properly trained dog's nose, the fear scent a person pumps out when they're in fight or flight syndrome is overpowering. Humans can't smell it. We went for several hundred feet along the top of this embankment, and we were off to the races. We were not walking; we're running.

I didn't want to stop Erko; I knew he was on the right track. He zipped down to the bottom of the gully and into some trees where he found the two suspects, and the fight was on. One suspect tried to kick Erko in the face to get him to back off, which made him fight harder. Then they pepper sprayed him, but that didn't affect him. We took them into custody, and one suspect still had on his mask. Without a good dog,

those guys might still be robbing banks today. Erko was hurt; he had blood in his ear from trying to shake out the thorn and was on his way back to the car when he found both suspects. That was classic Erko.

One night John Hall and I were called to Southwest Division after officers had pursued four gangsters who shot at them during the initial stop and again during the pursuit. The pursuit ended in an area full of alleys and multiple-story apartment buildings. The suspects crashed their car and ran. One suspect exchanged gunfire with the officers as he ran across the street and then down an alley. John and I were tasked with finding him.

In this area, the odds of finding a suspect were against you because some residents would let the crooks come in and hide. I thought it was an exercise in futility because by now these guys were probably in somebody's house. I had no confidence that we would find them.

John had his dog, Chaz, and I had Erko. John will tell you as quickly as I will; Erko was the better dog for this type of scenario. As a dog handler, you have to know your dog's pluses and minuses because you go into the worst of the worst and you need a dog that really wants to battle. It wasn't five seconds after I unleashed Erko that he goes into a full-blown alert. Even at that point, I didn't think he found him, probably just a cat or a rat. Erko went into a carport stacked two deep with cars. Behind the deepest car in the carport, I heard Erko growling. I went prone to the ground, and John did the same to my right. I heard John yell, "Gun!"

I saw the gun in the suspect's hand pointed at us, and we both fired. Once we were convinced the suspect was neutralized, I went to get Erko out of there. John had the suspect covered, and I had to go over the top of John to get to my dog. I grabbed Erko, and as I went back over John, Erko grabbed John by the butt and latched on.

Oh, John has never mentioned that to you. He forgot that part, did he? He's got the scars to prove it, trust me. Erko put a big love bite on him. Erko had just been in a fight and had heard gunshots—it was a reflex type of thing. It was another one those situations where a less capable and driven dog might have just walked past that guy, and then we ultimately would have had our backs to the suspect. Who knows what could have happened then.

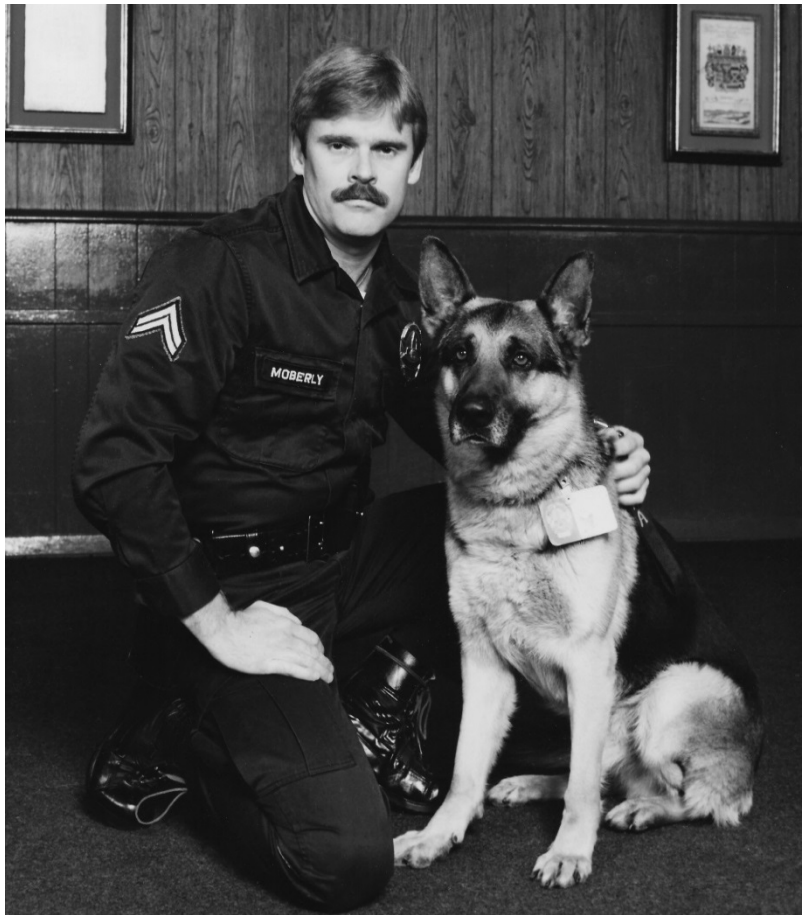
Eventually, Donn Yarnall left the unit, and I became the head trainer. Then things changed. The Department initiated a find-and-bark policy, which is difficult to rely on in tactical situations. Before, our policy was to find the suspect and go from there; the suspect will dictate what happens. A dog will bite if a suspect is aggressive or tries to get away; it won't bite a passive suspect. I just couldn't go with the new policy.

We also reduced the number of searches we were involved in. We went from being out in the field and backing up officers to staying on the training field and waiting for the big one. A handler recently told me they're lucky if they do one hundred searches in a year. In a year, we had done over two thousand searches. The mindset became: The less you do, the less you get in trouble, the less you may be sued. I was sued multiple times in municipal, state, and federal courts, all involving dog-bite situations. I never lost a lawsuit.

Another change for the unit was that the Department wanted supervisors to just be supervisors, so they no longer handled dogs. There may be some logic in that, but it started to cause a problem. We took direction from sergeants with no concept of what it took to handle a dog.

It just wasn't fun to go to work anymore. I don't blame the Department; that's just the way things evolved primarily from a civil liability standpoint. A team of civil lawyers had a database on all of the dog handlers. They knew us better than we knew ourselves. They knew our dogs' names, their bite ratios, all this stuff. All the changes actually did me a favor because I would have never taken the sergeant's test otherwise. I ultimately decided to promote to sergeant because I didn't necessarily agree with the changes taking place within the K-9 Unit. Probably even more of a factor though was that Erko was still active when he died in his sleep next to my bed. My spirit for K-9 operations died with this incredible dog.

I made sergeant and was assigned to Van Nuys Division. I had one bad day as a sergeant, and that was my very first one. Near end of watch, I was walking around wondering where my people were and realized how I was now responsible for others. I had come from a place where I was responsible for just my dog and me. I came home and told my wife I thought I made the biggest mistake.



Jay Moberly and Erko

On the way to work the second day, I told myself, *You're a sergeant of police now. You get to make decisions. That's why they're paying you*. That day I got in some stuff in the field requiring me to make some decisions, and from that day on, it was fun and I loved it. I loved every day of it.

When it came time to be wheeled, I was sent to Central Division. On morning watch, I realized there was no one on the downtown streets but cops and criminals. What really spiked my interest was the number of junkies walking around, heroin addicts by the dozens, it seemed.

One night I was around Seventh and Main, and it looked like a junkie convention in front of this hotel. I started talking to the younger cops and asked them, "Do we not book hypes anymore?"

"Nope, nobody books them anymore."

To them a hype arrest was only a misdemeanor and not worth their time. I tried to impress on the officers that when you're looking at a hype, you're looking at a one-man crime wave. If a hype has a hundred-dollar-a-day dope habit and no job, how do you think he's supporting that habit? Nobody was really too interested to be honest with you.

In fact, one night a couple young officers wrote a guy a traffic ticket at Seventh and Maple—a long-haired white male who looked like he belonged down on the beach, but was clearly a hype. I watched their contact with him. The guy was loaded. They wrote him a ticket and let him go. He just walked down the street. I was amazed they let him go. I stopped the guy, and we had a conversation. His name was Peter. I arrested him for being under the influence of heroin.

About a month later, I was in line for a cup of coffee at a coffee shop at Seventh and Maple, and I heard this raspy voice behind me say, "Hey, Moberly."

I turned around, and it was Peter.

"You remember me?"

"Yeah, I remember you."

"Can you talk?"

"Sure."

We went off into the shadows, and then he said, "Do you know who Jimmy Lee Smith is?"

"Yeah, of course I know who Jimmy Lee Smith is."

In 1963, Smith and Gregory Powell kidnapped Officers Ian Campbell and Karl Hettinger out of Hollywood Division, drove them to Bakersfield, and killed Campbell. Smith and Powell were caught and sent to prison. Smith was later paroled.

"Do you want him?"

"Of course I do. Where's he at?"

Peter told me that Smith hung out around Ninth and San Pedro with a longhaired American Indian and that both were junkies. Peter thought the other guy was also wanted.

I went to the area with another unit, and there was Mr. Smith, the infamous Onion Field Killer himself. Both guys were loaded, and the other guy did have a felony warrant for robbery. We arrested them both, and I booked Smith for being under the influence. Smith went back to jail for a hundred-plus days. Smith was later released and arrested again. He went back to prison, where he eventually died. No one should forget that God-awful thing he did that night in '63.

I started arresting hypes every now and then, and I would do everything myself. One night I was writing the arrest report on a hype when our new patrol captain, Dave Smith, asked if he could ride with me. You didn't tell a captain no, so we went out in the field.

I said, "Captain, there's really not a lot going on out here. Do you want to ride around all night and do nothing, or would you like to go talk to some folks?"

"You do whatever you do. I'm just sitting here."

So we went out and talked to a couple hypes. I was always amazed by a hype's story about where they came from and how they got to be on the street. I remember one who had been an electrical contractor and lived in a big house with a wife and kids. He tried heroin, and the next thing he's living in the bushes at Third and Flower with rats chewing on his clothes. He became one of my better informants for who was dealing dope and where. After we talked to a few folks, Captain Smith made a comment to me that it seemed like I knew everybody out there.

Soon thereafter, Captain Smith formed a ten-man Hype Task Force with me as the supervisor. This was one of the most incredible periods of my career. We were golden. We booked a hundred to a hundred and fifty hypes a month. We decreased property crimes by forty-two percent or some incredible thing like that. The unit was very successful.

At the time, Al Gonzalez was in charge of Central Division Homicide Unit, and he offered me a spot in Homicide. I turned him down, and he offered again about six months later. I turned him down a second time. When he offered a third time, I thought, *I have twenty-one years on the job, and this might not be a bad time.*

In twenty-one years, I never had a daytime job. I worked off-hours my whole career. Now that would change. I went home and talked to the family. I told my seven-year-old daughter that I could be home at night with her and on the weekends. She started crying. That was enough for

me, that was all I needed to make the decision. I accepted and went to Central Homicide.

In Homicide, I had a great partner, Cliff Shepard. Cliff was an experienced detective who I had known for a long time. Our first case was a classic Skid Row case. A guy was robbed for a pack of cigarettes. The suspect pushed the guy down, and the guy got injured and went to the hospital. He developed peritonitis and died never having left the hospital. The coroner labeled it a homicide.

The robbery report was all of eight lines. The suspect was described only as a black male. The robbery occurred at Fifth and Main, and the person who called the police was never identified. Cliff and I went to the hotels at Fifth and Main and started knocking on doors and talking to folks. It was eight months after the robbery—who's still going to be in any of these rickety hotels?

We played the tape-recorded phone call of the unknown person who reported the robbery for a security guy at one of the hotels. He listened to the voice and said, "That's Ina."

"You're sure?"

"Yeah, that's her voice."

Cliff Shepard, far left: "...a great partner."

We went to her room, and there was a great view of where the robbery happened. She told us she recognized the guy that did the crime and knew him only by his initials: L.D.

Cliff was a wizard with the computer. I knew a lot of folks on the street, but Cliff knew the computer. We identified the suspect, and he was in custody for a robbery in Chicago. We took a trip to Chicago and extradited the suspect back to L.A. Once here, the suspect admitted to the robbery and got a couple of years in prison.

The kind of witnesses you have working murders on Skid Row are down-and-out folk, and they are the toughest witnesses. First of all, good luck finding them. And if you find them, you have to establish a rapport with them so they'll want to help you. If you talk right, they can be great witnesses. My way of thinking is if you can take a homicide on Skid Row to its very end and be successful, then you can probably do it about anywhere. It was fun because it was challenging.

A year later, I got an offer to work Robbery-Homicide Division. I was assigned to a task force investigating the SLA, the Symbionese Liberation Army, a left-wing revolutionary group involved in bank robberies, murder, and the kidnapping of Patty Hearst, daughter of William Randolph Hearst, the newspaper mogul.

In 1974, six SLA members were in a shootout with SWAT, and all six died when the house they were in burned down. In retaliation, Kathleen Soliah and other SLA members placed pipe bombs underneath two parked police cars, one in a parking lot of a restaurant in Hollywood and the other at Hollenbeck Station.

John Hall, my partner later in K-9, and J.J. Bryant were finishing dinner in Hollywood, when they rushed out to respond to a robbery in progress radio call. J.J. was driving, and the way he jerked the car backing out of the restaurant parking spot created a gap between the contact pins of the pipe bomb underneath their car. One-sixteenth of an inch prevented the bomb from detonating. If the bomb had gone off, the officers and restaurant patrons would have died or been seriously injured.

Unaware of the bomb underneath their car, John and J.J. left the location. Citizens found it and notified the police. The Department initiated a check of all other police vehicles and found the second bomb. The Hollenbeck police car the second bomb was found under was often

used to transport kids assigned to the Explorer Program. The subsequent investigation tied the bombs to the SLA.

I had heard about John Hall while I was a probationer at Hollywood, and it was obvious he was a division legend as a street cop. Just off probation, I got to work with John one night. My partner had called in sick, and John came up to me and said we were working together. It was like meeting Mickey Mantle. I was excited and a little bit fearful at the same time. I didn't want to let him down. After five minutes in the car, he was treating me like we're old buddies. He asked, "What do you want to do?" He made me comfortable so that I could learn from him. That made an impression on me, and later as a training officer, I would pattern myself after John.

Then John and I worked K-9 together for a long time. I started my career working with this legendary guy who I didn't even know on a personal basis, and the guy today is my best friend. Now twenty-three years later, I'm assigned to the task force investigating the bomb placed under John's car by the SLA.

John Hall: "It was like meeting Mickey Mantle."

The SLA Task Force was formed because of the effort of three young and energetic detectives from Criminal Conspiracy Section: Dave Reyes, Mike Fanning, and Ray Morales. While dusting off old warrant packages, they came across the name Kathleen Soliah with an outstanding arrest warrant for the attempted murder of a police officer. The initial investigative effort in ’75 identified Soliah and others with placing the pipe bombs, as well as other crimes, but she fled and had been living on the lam for over twenty years.

They located Soliah living in Minnesota under the alias Sara Jane Olson. She was extradited back to Los Angeles. In order to prosecute her, we had to track down witnesses to the crimes she committed. My job was to track down witnesses to a bank robbery in Carmichael, California, where she and others killed bank customer Myrna Lee Opsahl, a forty-two-year-old housewife. We ultimately went to court in Sacramento, and Soliah pled guilty to her crimes, including placing the pipe bomb under John’s car.

My biggest case at Robbery-Homicide was a quadruple homicide. I was at home when the phone rang. My lieutenant directed me and my partner, Vic Pietrantoni, to respond to a homicide in the Hollywood Hills. It was about six in the morning, a big crowd was there, and detectives were all over the place. The Fire Department had responded to a fire at the house and found four bodies inside. Was it a robbery? Was the house ransacked? How do you tell? The fire had demolished the place, and there was water everywhere. A crime scene like that is a nightmare for homicide detectives. How do you tell what’s what? At the start, it was a complete whodunit.

It was a brutal scene, unlike anything I had ever seen before in my life. One of the victims was a sixteen-year-old girl, a dark-haired version of my own daughter, who was about the same age. The girl was bound with her hands behind her back, duct tape around her mouth, with her ankles tied together with zip ties. She was burnt so badly that part of one arm and part of one leg were burnt off. The family was killed in a way that I wouldn’t wish on anything or anybody. Even a rattlesnake should get a more dignified death than that, and I’m not very fond of rattlesnakes.

The victims were this sixteen-year-old girl, her eighteen-year-old brother, their mother, and their grandmother. The father had come home

from out of town around eleven-thirty the prior night to find his house on fire. He called the Fire Department and then attempted to save his family, but the fire was too intense. At first, we thought he may be our guy, but we couldn't figure out the motive.

The father owned a hotel. The hotel was very nice, a hotel where you would take your wife and daughter. However, next door was another hotel that you wouldn't be seen at with a two-dollar prostitute. It was a dive.

There was a shed-like structure sitting on an easement between both properties, and it had been the subject of a dispute between the father and the two owners of the other hotel. Both hotels wanted to expand into this easement. Initially, we didn't get too excited about the dispute, but as the case progressed, it was the only thing we had.

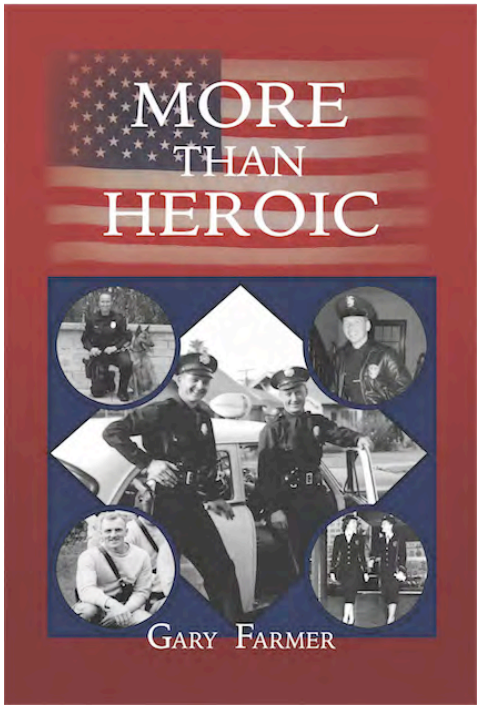
Turned out, it was all we needed because the dispute was the cause for the murders. They occurred six days before a hearing that would have probably been decided in favor of the father. The owners and a third person committed the murders. The third person testified against the owners because of the torture the two owners inflicted on the victims. All three went to prison.

When I retired, it wasn't because I was tired of being a policeman, that's for sure. I never got tired of that; I always loved it. I was always very proud of my job, and I was treated very well by the Department. I just thought I didn't fit anymore. I wasn't a tech guy, and things were getting so high-tech that I had to go to some of the younger detectives to help me. Nowadays, if you're not tech savvy as a detective, you're really behind the power curve because the crooks are all tech savvy. I was way behind on the tech stuff, and I was not motivated to get up to speed.

I miss the people; I really do. I believe that police officers are the purest people on the planet. One of the things I have to say, almost shamefully admit, is that I disconnected from the Police Department after retiring. Not on purpose, it just happened. Whenever I run into guys I used to work with, it's always fun to chat with them. It's amazing how a conversation refreshes your memory on things.

The one common interest we all shared was fighting evil. I liked learning how to find it and what to do with it. I like to dig. A policeman was all I ever wanted to be, and I wasn't disappointed.

Jay Moberly and Elka: "A policeman was all I ever wanted to be and I wasn't disappointed."



In this book, the realities of police work are captured through the spoken words of thirty former officers with the Los Angeles Police Department. The most powerful aspect of their words is that they reveal the individuals behind the badge, the individuals you call when in need.

MORE THAN HEROIC

by Gary Farmer