

**3/14/23** “Rampant” drug use and disorder in and around L.A.’s Metro subway system have driven many riders away. Fentanyl has become an overwhelming problem, and persons under its influence are everywhere. Overdoses - and deaths - are commonplace. “Sleepers” who take up seats also abound. But while police assigned to the trains have arrested dozens for drug use and possession, in the burdened justice system, criminal filings are exceedingly rare. But alternatives to policing have also proven futile.

**9/16/22** Seven years ago [DOJ placed Albuquerque police under Federal monitoring](#) for a “pattern or practice” of using excessive force, including deadly force, on persons who “pose a minimal threat” and on the mentally ill. DOJ has now determined that significant improvements in recruitment, training and supervision allow the agency to self-monitor compliance for the remaining period of the consent decree.

**9/10/22** [LAPD gang unit officers](#) took a teen to the ground as he used a cellphone to record the detention of two companions at a city park. Robert Cortez, 19, said he was there to help stage an event, and that neither he nor his friends did anything wrong. [Police reported](#) that they were going after guns and that Cortez was arrested because he, unlike the others, forcefully resisted. No guns were found, and the city attorney reportedly rejected filing charges. [Videos of the encounter](#) have gone viral.

**8/8/22** Albuquerque has a severe homicide problem. And its Muslim community may be facing a special threat. During the last nine months four Muslim men have been gunned down in ambushes. Two of the victims were Pakistanis and belonged to the same mosque. Police think the murders are linked hate crimes. Although they don’t yet have a suspect, [a photo of a “vehicle of interest” has been released](#).

**9/4/21** A Black couple arrested by Beverly Hills police last September for riding scooters on a sidewalk and resisting arrest is suing the city for engaging in a racially-motivated campaign. According to BHPD “street gambling, public intoxication, marijuana smoking and more” led it to create a specialized team. Its officers recovered many guns. Most of the arrestees were (like the couple) from other states and many allegedly had fraudulent debit cards loaded with state unemployment funds. Whether all of those arrested were indeed minorities (the couple claims 105 of 106 were Black) is yet to be confirmed.

**7/28/21** William Briggs is a lawyer. And a Black man. And the new President of the Los Angeles City Police Commission. And despite criticism from activists, he opposes “defunding” the police. “Our communities of color that are most impacted by crime, many of which have seen the homicide rate rise above 30% this year, cannot afford to go without law enforcement.” He *does* want to see more “beat” cops - officers who work the same neighborhoods over time and get to know its inhabitants.

**5/25/21** In 2020 murders in L.A. surged 36 percent, reaching a decade-high 305. Police Chief Michel Moore attributes the spike to gang violence, the “despair and dislocation” of COVID, and the elimination of cash bail, which quickly put violent persons back on the streets: “When those gun arrests are not going to court...zero bail, court trials being deferred...there’s a sense [of] a lack of consequences.” Defunding the police has been replaced by a drive to replenish the ranks. Stop-and-frisk, once abandoned, is back in South L.A., where an elite unit is waging a targeted campaign.

**5/21/21** [After taking a \\$150 million hit](#) last year, LAPD’s funding was increased by three percent. With many more officers leaving than expected, its force has shrunk to 9,457, three-hundred below what city fathers intended. A surge in murder and violence, though, has worked against activist demands that large chunks of the police budget be redirected to alternatives to policing and social services. [Meanwhile, cops in Chicago](#), facing a surge in violence and shootings, exhausted by twelve-hour shifts and angry at the elimination of specialized units and demands for intrusive reforms, voted a resounding “no confidence” in their mayor and police chief.

**4/26/21** George Gascon, L.A.’s new, progressively-minded D.A., halved the size of his agency’s “hardcore gang” prosecutive team. Renamed the “Community Violence Reduction Division,” it will continue to deal with “the most prolific violent offenders.” But instead of following a “purely prosecutorial model,” its arsenal of tools will now include “prevention, intervention and community involvement efforts.” Prosecutors are objecting, and police are so far keeping mum.

**2/24/21** Acting on complaints that the city’s police officers disproportionately stop Black motorists and pedestrians, the Berkeley (CA) City Council unanimously approved a measure that prohibits officers from making stops for minor infractions such as expired tags. “Transformative” changes, including slicing the police budget in half and tuning over traffic enforcement to civilians, are planned by summer. According to the police union president, officers will become “filing clerks.”

**2/13/21** A surge in shootings and murders has led LAPD to redeploy uniformed “Metro” teams to conduct investigative stops in affected areas. According to Chief Michel Moore, officers are “held to a high standard” and only act when there is “reasonable suspicion” or “probable cause.” So far officers have made 74 stops, arrested fifty and seized 38 guns. But libertarians worry that abuses are inevitable.

**11/14/20** Young non-violent arrestees who reside In Chicago’s poor, violence-stricken North Lawndale neighborhood can opt out of the criminal justice system and be processed, instead, by a “restorative justice” court comprised of area residents. “Repair of harm agreements” include assignment to job training, drug treatment and counseling. Since 2017, none of the 63 who successfully completed the full program have been rearrested.

**11/8/20** LAPD will implement its \$150 million budget cut by reducing its sworn force from 10,110 positions to 9,752 and shifting 234 officers from specialized units into patrol. Reductions will hit the Metropolitan division, other detective units and the air wing. In line with the agency's reformist orientation, its newly-established "Community Safety Partnership" will not be affected. Concerns about violence remain, with murders up 25 percent and set to exceed 300 for the first time since 2009.

**10/21/20** In a joint announcement with Minneapolis police chief Medaria Arradondo DOJ unveiled a "National Response Center Initiative" intended to help Minneapolis and police across the U.S. "adapt to the wide range of challenges" posed by gangs, drugs and social problems such as homelessness and "enhance and reform policies and practices to prevent the use of excessive force."

**9/22/20** In a sharply worded memorandum, the Department of Justice threatened to withhold funds from New York City and Portland, which severely cut their police budgets despite sharp increases in violence, and Seattle, which established a month-long police-free "safe zone." Each city was also criticized for rejecting assistance from Federal law enforcement agencies.

**9/4/20** Cleveland police detective James Skernivitz, a 22-year veteran, was shot and killed while working with an Operation Legend task force. He was in a vehicle with an drug informant, who was also killed. Three suspects were detained.

**8/19/20** A.G. William Barr cited examples of casework in eight Operation Legend cities. So far most of the Federal arrests are for felons illegally acquiring or possessing firearms, and for the possession or use of firearms in furtherance of a Federal drug offense or crime of violence.

**8/14/20** Indianapolis, where homicide has reportedly increased by 51 percent, joined DOJ's "Operation Legend." The roster now includes Albuquerque, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Memphis, Milwaukee and St. Louis. Operation Legend commits the ATF, FBI, DEA, and U.S. Marshals Service "to help state and local officials fight high levels of violent crime, particularly gun violence."

**8/13/20** A 22-year old man who allegedly harbored a grudge against the family of LeGend Tallifero and had made recent threats was arrested in the child's killing. He faces murder and weapons charges.

**8/12/20** Twenty major cities report a surge in homicides. Kansas City has been especially hard hit. Many of its killings are unexplainable. Some result from "random, angry" conflicts between citizens who aren't believed to be currently involved in crime but may be struggling to accept the lockdowns.

**8/6/20** DOJ announced that Memphis and St. Louis are joining Operation Legend. Among other grants, Memphis is getting \$9.8 million to hire 50 officers, and \$1 million is going to St. Louis to help with investigations and gunfire alert (“shot spotter”) technology.

**8/5/20** Chicago police are quickly turning over felons caught with guns to ATF agents brought in under “Operation Legend.” Federal penalties feature longer terms, and release requires that at least 85 percent of a term be served, avoiding what some consider the state’s “revolving door.”