

**House Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Web-Ex Briefing on
“Confronting Violent White Supremacy (Part IV): White Supremacy in Blue—The
Infiltration of Local Police Departments”**

Briefer: Mark D. Napier
Sheriff
Pima County, Arizona

The law enforcement profession shares the concern that any bad actors may infiltrate its ranks. Moreover, we share the community outrage at the conduct of a very few members of our profession when they act out with violence and racial animus. However, these are the actions of a very, very few members of law enforcement. Every day, in communities large and small, thousands of law enforcement officers make over a million contacts with the public that result in no use of force or give rise to the appearance of racial bias. Most public contacts are the result of response to a call for assistance.

The law enforcement profession makes every effort to weed out bad actors. Our hiring and training process is rigorous. Prior to employment we conduct comprehensive background checks, oral interviews, polygraphs, and written examinations. Today, we even scan the social media footprint of candidates looking for troubling posts and questionable associations. Successful candidates then go through extensive academy training. This includes training on cultural awareness, racial bias and use of force. Upon completion of academy training the new officer goes to field training where he/she is evaluated and observed by a tenured high-performing officer. At the conclusion of field training the new officer is on a probationary period for one-year during which his/her performance is reviewed and observed by a field supervisor. The officer is then evaluated for the duration of his/her career. We take every step possible to weed out bad candidates and then to professionally train/observe/evaluate our officers.

It would be dishonest to suggest that bad actors do not slip through despite our best efforts. However, this is not unique to law enforcement. Every profession risks the prospect of a bad actor infiltrating its ranks and tarnishing its standing. These isolated occurrences for any profession should not be used as an indictment of its entire membership or as a catalyst to assert that isolated bad acts are evidence of systemic prevalence. As Americans we do believe that the bad acts of a few members of any group provides justification for bias, stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against all its members. This is always wrong; even when cast toward law enforcement officers.

I have been in law enforcement since 1981. I have a bachelor's degree in social psychology and a master's degree in Criminal Justice. I do understand the manifestations of both overt and implicit racial bias. Moreover, I believe that racism, discrimination and socioeconomic inequality still exist in our country and constitute a

serious problem. Racism has been a scar on our country since its founding and is still alive today. During my three-decade career in law enforcement I have not found evidence to make me believe that racism or white supremacy is systemic in our profession. Assertions to the contrary I believe to be false, not out of naiveté, ignorance, or lack of personal exposure to the profession. Rather, because I have simply not been exposed to evidence that would lead me to reasonably believe a systemic problem of this nature is present.