

## **A Forensic Psychological Research Question of Whether or Not High Profile Cross-Racial Police Incidents Compromise Officer Safety: A Dissenting Voice on Bias Training**

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Research to date has offered few insights when examining the forensic psychological impact that assessed bias (i.e., explicit-implicit) may have on police officer safety as a consequence of high profile cross-racial police incidents. This editorial reflects on 21st Century law enforcement complexities as noted by the stressful in-the-street policing work performed through using a multilayered public safety framework. From a forensic psychological perspective, by default, the lawful execution of police duties means that the calculated creation of a culture of safety is a critical psychosocial trust factor in diverse communities. Most informed police departments fully understand that public safety is an immediate product signaled by community markers like ethnoracial values, attitudes, perceptions, officer cross-cultural competencies, trust and historical patterns of procedural justice. However, high profile cross-racial police incidents are actually more known for reactivating unresolved residual affect that stems largely from the trans-generational communication of the perceptions from previous law enforcement offenses. These perceived police misconduct incidents usually predate current technology. For example, today the explosive use of cell phone cameras, 24-7 news coverage and easy access to social media outlets allow the more pointed details of police conduct to be made immediately known to the public.

In fact, departments struggle to stay ahead of an unwanted public safety narrative that can reflexively emerge following these incidents. As a result, departments are too often left having to play catch up succeeding another high profile cross-racial incident. Forensically relevant research questions must be posed that ask whether or not the gathering storm of community outrage seemingly emerging from these cross-racial police incidents truly result in a rise in the violence directed towards police officers? Still, in order to address this police reality, post-offer forensic psychological screenings of applicants, academy preparation experiences and subsequent field training efforts continue to struggle to remain ahead of these diverse officer safety challenges. Perceived officer racial mistreatment remains a major concern in policing. As a result of another racial quick fix assessment, it has been determined that cross-racial incidents may in fact be a direct consequence of a paucity of officer training about their potential biases (e.g., implicit or explicit). There is some empirical basis that underscores a belief that Whites' unconscious or implicit racial biases can influence them to evaluate and then react more negatively towards some racial groups. Perhaps even more challenging, these unwanted ethnoracial behaviors can appear beyond their own level of awareness.