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Policing Sin City: The Creation and Impact of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, 1973-1985

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POLICING SIN CITY: THE CREATION AND IMPACT OF THE LAS VEGAS
METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT, 1973-1985

By

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Bachelor of Arts - English
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1997

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

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Abstract

This thesis examines the creation of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department in 1973 and its impact on the War on Crime. The first chapter examines the significance of race and policing in Las Vegas from the early twentieth century until the consolidation of the Clark County Sheriff's Office and Las Vegas Police Department in 1973. Chapter 2 then analyzes how the federal government's so-called War on Crime played out at the local and state level in Nevada from 1973 to 1985. The thesis argues that this period witnessed a punitive turn in policing that had long-term consequences for Las Vegas and its residents. Drawing on a range of primary sources, which include newspaper articles, trial records, and manuscript collections at Lied Library, the thesis analyzes some of these consequences on ordinary people through the lens of race, gender, and class. As the thesis demonstrates, these years marked the transition from the remnants of the Jim Crow Era to what Michelle Alexander famously labeled as the New Jim Crow.

Acknowledgment

I am grateful for the opportunity of a lifetime given to me by my adviser, Dr. Tanenhaus. I would like to thank all the members of the graduate committee for giving me advice and suggestions for revisions, especially Dr. Green who provided invaluable insights into Nevada history. I also would like to thank library staffs at the Lied Library Special Collections and Archives. Jim Rich at the UNLV Law library provided the help I needed to research the law cases. I would also like to extend the thanks to the law clerk at the Clark County District Court and staffs at the National Archives in Riverside, California. Araceli Bareng at the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada helped me to find the case records from the National Archives. Thank you all for making this journey exciting and memorable.

Dedication

Thanks mom for raising all three of us. Your sacrifice and love for all of us made our dreams come true.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|---|
| CCSO | Clark County Sheriff's Office |
| LEAA | Law Enforcement Assistance Administration |
| LVMPD | Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department |
| LVPD | Las Vegas Police Department |
| SWAT | Special Weapons And Tactics |

Introduction

This thesis is a history of the modernization of policing in Las Vegas. Specifically, it analyzes the 1973 consolidation of the Clark County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) and the Las Vegas Police Department (LVPD) and the subsequent role this new police force played in the so-called War on Crime from the early 1970s to the mid 1980s.¹ During these years, Las Vegas was one of the fastest growing cities in the United States.² Simultaneously, the years between 1973 to 1985 were especially significant for the historical phenomenon known as mass incarceration, which began in 1973, reached its peak in 2007, and will likely persist in the next three decades.³ I argue that studying the consolidation of policing in Las Vegas during this critical period can help us understand the transformation of policing power in the Age of Mass Incarceration.⁴ In the process, I examine how Las Vegas law enforcement expanded its authority and role within the criminal justice system. This includes analysis of the strategies and methods adopted by the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department during this critical period.

This thesis argues that the transformation of policing in Las Vegas largely followed the same patterns that historians of policing have charted in other cities in the 1970s and 1980s.⁵

¹ For the implementation of crime control by local police departments, see Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to War on Crime: Race and Federal Policy in American Cities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016). For policing of urban space, see Heather Ann Thompson, "Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History," *Journal of American History* 97, No. 3 (Dec. 2010), 703-734.

² For the growth of Las Vegas as an urban city, Geoff Schumacher, *Sun, Sin & Suburbia: An Essential History of Modern Las Vegas* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2015); see also, Larry Gragg, *Becoming America's Playground: Las Vegas in the 1950s* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019).

³ See Franklin E. Zimring, *The Insidious Momentum of Mass Incarceration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020). Zimring uses the term hyper incarceration to describe the five-fold increase in imprisonment in the United States from 1973 to 2007.

⁴ See Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771-1965* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

⁵ For historical background on the origins of modernizing law enforcement and government policies, see Naomi Murakawa, *The First Civil Right: How Liberals Built Prison America* (New

During this same period, the federal government abandoned social programs to help and educate the poor, homeless, and children at risk and it poured money into expanding the local and state law enforcement agencies. In response, the LVMPD applied for federal funds to expand its police force, develop specialized units such as Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT) and incorporate new technology such as computer systems. In Las Vegas, the so-called War on Crime increased the level of arbitrary and inconsistent law enforcement by police officers and, at the same time, police violence against people of color, especially Blacks, rose dramatically. More important, the historical incarceration rate in Nevada followed the historical incarceration rate of the United States known and the people of color were disproportionately incarcerated.⁶ This thesis argues that policing in Las Vegas reflected the old-fashioned institutional racism entrenched in white supremacy and unsupervised police violence against people of color echoed the historical pattern of punishing the people of color, especially Blacks.

Historiography

The thesis makes a contribution to the field of carceral studies, which examines the historical phenomenon of mass incarceration. Recently, Black perspectives on mass incarceration have added more layers and depth to the research into and conversation on mass

York: Oxford University Press, 2014). Risa Goluboff's *Vagrant Nation: Police Power, Constitutional Change, and the Making of the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016) shows how invalidation of vagrancy laws, which were used to control the lives of socially marginalized segments in the 1950s, gave rise to modern policing in the 1960s. Simon Balto, in his *Occupied Territory: Policing Black Chicago from Red Summer to Black Power* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019), examines policing Chicago from the 1910s to the 1970s, where policing by means of violence and racial injustice formed the underpinnings for mass incarceration. Max Felker-Kantor's *Policing Los Angeles: Race, Resistance, and the Rise of the LAPD* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018) investigates the transformation of the police force from the 1965 Watts riot to the 1992 Los Angeles riot. He argues that, intertwining race and criminality, the Los Angeles Police Department expanded their power, authority and resources to control urban unrest rising in urban spaces.

⁶ See the Bureau of Justice statistics (www.bjs.ojp.gov).

incarceration. Angela Davis questions the very foundations of the American criminal justice system, in which “many people in black, Latino, and Native American communities now have a far greater chance of going to prison than of getting a decent education.”⁷ In her bestseller, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (2010), Michelle Alexander points out that the criminal justice system in the United States cages a disproportionate number of Black people. By focusing on the experience of African Americans in her analysis of slavery, Jim Crow laws, and mass incarceration, Alexander traces the origins of mass incarceration, which she argues is America’s latest racial caste system. She challenges the notion that in the age of supposed colorblindness race no longer matters in the United States.⁸

Following in Alexander’s footsteps, in her *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime* (2016), historian Elizabeth Hinton argues that the Great Society’s utopian visions of social service and surveillance programs laid the foundations for the carceral state. Broadening the periodization of the carceral state by going back to 1960s legislation on crime control and juvenile delinquency, Hinton examines the modernized and militarized urban police force, which started the War on Crime, from the perspective of policymakers and Black community members.⁹

This thesis also contributes to the conversation about police power in the carceral state literature. In *Vagrant Nation: Police Power, Constitutional Change, and the Making of the 1960s* (2016), Risa Goluboff illustrates how vagrancy laws were used to control the lives of marginalized segments of American society (e.g. the poor, minorities and nonconformists) who did not fit into the ideals of the law-abiding white Protestant patriarchic community. Goluboff

⁷ Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 10.

⁸ See Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2012).

⁹ See Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*.

argues that as courts invalidated repressive vagrancy laws, the policing of public space changed fundamentally.¹⁰

Policing necessarily involves the police officer's discretionary use of authority over citizens and the history of policing in America shows how it has evolved over time. In *Policing the Open Road: How Cars Transformed American Freedom* (2019), Sarah Seo analyzes how the police acquired discretionary power over motorists, which raised concerns over unsupervised state power. In *Chokehold: Policing Black Men* (2017), Paul Butler argues that the abuse of police power originates more from institutional racism and less from rogue racist cops. Analyzing institutional racism in the U.S. criminal justice system, Butler questions inherent violence and denial of human dignity in the practice of coercing submission from minorities, especially Black men.¹¹

As part of the carceral state literature, police departments in large cities have been the subject of several excellent monographs. These works include Max Felker-Kantor's *Policing Los Angeles: Race, Resistance, and the Rise of the LAPD* (2018), which investigates the transformation of police power from the 1965 Watts riot to the 1992 LA Uprising. Through the lens of racial violence, Felker-Kantor argues that the LAPD expanded their power, authority and resources, which racialized and militarized police power by means of the get-tough response to urban uprisings and anti-police protest. Similarly, in his *Occupied Territory: Policing Black Chicago from Red Summer to Black Power* (2019), Simon Balto examines the origins of policing Black Chicago in the early 20th century. Reflecting on James Baldwin's essay on racial injustice, Balto analyzes how the violence against Black communities played a central role in the exercise

¹⁰ See Risa Goluboff, *Vagrant Nation*.

¹¹ See Sarah A. Seo, *Policing the Open Road: How Cars Transformed American Freedom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019) and Paul Butler, *Chokehold: Policing Black Men* (New York: The New Press, 2017).

of police power for much of the twentieth century.¹²

The best books on police forces tell a compelling story about the transformation of policing, rather than a recitation of colorful events and figures. This thesis contributes to the conversation on the history of police and law enforcement through its case study of Las Vegas. In this regard, it differs from the existing popular history of this subject. For example, Dennis Griffin, who spent 20 years in law enforcement in New York State, has written *Policing Las Vegas* (2010), which tells the story of law enforcement in Las Vegas from the perspective of law enforcement. Although Griffin touches briefly on the 1973 consolidation in his survey, he neither investigates the transformation of the police force as a result of the 1973 consolidation nor contextualizes this history within the framework of the War on Crime.¹³

This thesis, therefore, builds on the emerging literature on modern policing. It explains the transformation of modern policing through the historical lens of consolidation of an urban police force. The story of finding a balancing point between what is permissible and what is not in Sin City not only tells us something about the emergence of the modern police force, but also contributes to contemporary debates about the proper role of the police in the twenty-first century.

The consolidation of the LVMPD in 1973, which involved local and state governments coming to grips with the problems of increasing population and conflicting jurisdiction, is a history that needs to be told because it provides a much-needed historical perspective on current issues in twenty-first century policing.

Sources and Methods

¹² See Max Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles* and Simon Balto, *Occupied Territory*.

¹³ See Dennis Griffin, *Policing Las Vegas: A History of Law Enforcement in Southern Nevada* (Las Vegas: Huntington Press, 2005).

For primary sources, I analyzed local newspapers (e.g. *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, *Las Vegas Sun*) and national newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times*, which have reported on Las Vegas. In addition, I used court records, state government archives, law enforcement records, and manuscript collections held by the UNLV Special Collections & Archives. For the federal records on the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), I researched the digital archives of the Justice Department, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) database. I also examined civil lawsuit cases against the LVMPD during this period in the Clark County Court archives, along with the digital archives of Nexis, WestLaw Next, and the Clark County Law Library.¹⁴

In addition, I drew on oral histories of historical actors involved in the 1973 consolidation such as government officials, and police officers.¹⁵ Other sources included local and state and federal government archives, the state legislative counsel bureau, national archives, the Las Vegas mob museum, transcripts of the legislative sessions before and after 1973, the Las Vegas Department of Police Handbook, and the LVMPD Use of Force Policy Manual.¹⁶

¹⁴ For example, I looked at the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* from 1968 to the present. Using the search term Las Vegas 1973 Police Consolidation, the Lied Library NewsBank showed 1,599 articles from the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, the Lied Library NewsBank showed 18 articles from the *Las Vegas Sun*, and the Lied Library ProQuest showed 159 articles from the *Los Angeles Times*. Using the search term Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, I also looked at the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* from 1972 to 1985. By using the search term police, the Lied Library NewsBank shows 200,583 articles from 1973 to 1985; using the search term Las Vegas Police consolidation, the Lied Library NewsBank shows 3,443 articles from 1973 to 1985; using the search term Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department 1973 consolidation, the Lied Library NewsBank shows 645 articles; with the search term Las Vegas Sheriff 1973 consolidation, the Lied Library NewsBank shows 590 articles.

¹⁵ *Oran K. Gragson Papers, 1955 - 1998*, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. *The Journal of the Senate of the Legislature of the State of Nevada* and *The Journal of the Assembly of the Legislature of the State of Nevada*.

¹⁶ The UNLV Special Collection and Archives has an extensive library of digitalized records and interviews.

By taking into account race, class, and gender as categories of analysis, this thesis analyzes the changes that occurred in the historical context of the War on Crime and War on Drugs. For instance, I looked at the *Uniform Crime Reports*' demographics of police officers and arrested suspects through the lens of race, class, and gender, along with the analysis of the changing definitions of crime during the critical period from 1973 to 1985. I analyzed how the LVMPD used violence and applied police force by looking at types of weapons and tactics used by the SWAT.

Chapter 1 is a brief summary of dual policing Las Vegas from the early 1900s to 1973. This chapter traces the origins of the Las Vegas Police Department and the Clark County Sheriff's Office by examining the Nevada state legislative history. Focusing on primary sources such as local newspapers and legal documents, Chapter 1 highlights some of the key events that led to the 1973 merger of two local law enforcement agencies.

Drawing on local newspaper sources (e.g. *Las Vegas Review-Journal*), local media coverage of the LVMPD, national archives and oral history in the UNLV Special Collections & Archives, Chapter 2 shows that policing in Las Vegas largely followed the national outlines that historian Elizabeth Hinton has described in her work.¹⁷ According to Hinton, American police forces during the 1970s began to modernize and, at the same time, they employed methods of fighting crime at the state and local enforcement level with federal guidance and funding.¹⁸ The chapter focuses on several topics that include police violence, prostitution raids, drug busts, fighting organized crime, the militarization of the LVMPD, casino workers strike, and concludes with the Justice Department's lawsuit against the LVMPD.

The conclusion summarizes my findings and charts out a path for additional historical

¹⁷ See chapter 5 of Elizabeth Hinton's *From the War on Poverty the War on Crime*, 180 - 217.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

research on policing in Sin City after President Ronald Reagan declared a War on Drugs in 1985.

Chapter 1 - Race and Policing Before the 1973 Consolidation

On February 5, 1971, Ralph Lamb, who had served for a decade as Sheriff of the Clark County, Nevada, applied for a Law Enforcement Assistance Administration grant from the U.S. Department of Justice. Lamb, who was born in 1927 in the small town of Alamo about 90 miles north of Las Vegas and grew up on a ranch, had been an Army intelligence officer during World War II before later becoming the 11th sheriff of Clark County, which was home to Las Vegas, one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the nation. In 1968, the federal government had established the LEAA to provide financial assistance via grants to local and state agencies to help them reduce crime and increase the efficiency of their governmental operations.¹⁹

From 1968 to 1981, the LEAA dispensed and supervised federal grants to local law enforcement agencies. “Housed within the Department of justice,” according to historian Elizabeth Hinton, “the LEAA became the fastest-growing federal agency in the 1970s, its budget swelling exponentially from the \$10 million Congress allotted to the War on Crime in 1965 to some \$850 million by 1973.”²⁰ Thus, Lamb’s application for funds was a local chapter of the larger national story about using federal funds to modernize the policing of urban areas. As Hinton points out, “When the LEAA was finally disbanded in 1981, during Reagan’s first year in office, it had funded roughly 80,000 crime control projects and awarded 155,270 grants amounting to nearly \$10 billion in taxpayer dollars - roughly \$25 billion in today’s dollars” and “no less than three out of every four dollars the LEAA dispersed during its fifteen-year life span

¹⁹ See *1st Annual Report of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, Fiscal Year 1969* by U.S. Department of Justice, which states “Nevada will improve police communications and equipment”. See also *Las Vegas Library Regional History Files Collection, 1909-2007*, Box 7, folder on Clark County (Sheriff’s Department), 1960 - 1971, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

²⁰ Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*, 2.

went to police operations, for a total outlay equivalent to some \$15 billion today.”²¹ She adds, “The result was a significant expansion of America’s carceral state: the police, sheriffs, and marshals responsible for law enforcement; the judges, prosecutors, and defense lawyers that facilitate the judicial process; and the prison officials and probation and parole officers charged with handling convicted felons.”²² Thus, during these years, cities like Las Vegas, led by sheriffs like Lamb, built their modern police departments.

In his application to the LEAA, Sheriff Lamb explained that a consulting firm had recently recommended “short and long term solutions to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of law enforcement activities for the prevention and control of crime in the metropolitan Las Vegas area” and the city had “entered into a Joint Powers Agreement for the conduct of this project.”²³ “In addition,” as Lamb pointed out, “endorsements have been obtained from the Nevada Commission on Crime, Delinquency, & Corrections, the Southern Regional District Allocation committee, and the three additional police agencies in the metropolitan area, i.e.; North Las Vegas, Henderson, and Boulder City.”²⁴ He added, “In this context, the proposed project will ultimately become the foundation for a southern regional system in subsequent years.”²⁵ Then, he noted, “In addition, the proposed project will be compatible with the statewide information communications system development soon to get underway.”²⁶ He noted, “The overall project will require 33 months to complete over three fiscal years.”²⁷ And Las

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ *City of Las Vegas, Nevada Records (1927-1982)*, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Box 3, folder 4, Joint Records/Command and Control Grant Application, 1971.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ The first of the LEAA grant was given in the amount of \$268,744.00 in 1972, according to Ralph Lamb, which includes discretionary funding through block grants that Lamb asked for

Vegas prepared to modernize and centralize its police force.

Known as Mr. Metro, the cowboy hat-wearing Lamb sought to forge the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department out of two local law enforcement agencies, which had historically competed and fought with each other over jurisdiction and funding. It is significant, therefore, that Lamb successfully sought federal funding to secure a 1973 merger between two law enforcement agencies because that merger ultimately transformed what had been rural law enforcement agencies into a modern urban police force.²⁸

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, America witnessed a grass-roots resistance movement against the urbanized modern police force that increasingly used violence against civilians.²⁹ It was the beginning of the Johnson Administration's War on Crime, which provided federal funding to the state and local law enforcement to control and contain urban riots.³⁰ Nevada received federal funding similar in size and scope to smaller states like Vermont and Delaware.³¹

fighting "sky-rocketing" crime rates in Nevada that ranked third in the nation in 1969, see "Sheriff department wins \$250,000 grant," *Las Vegas Review Journal*, June 20, 1973. See Budget Summary, *City of Las Vegas, Nevada Records (1927-1982)*, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Box 3, folder 4, Joint Records/Command and Control Grant Application, 1971, p.12, which shows that the Joint Records/Command and Control grants requested were \$168,744 for the 1972 fiscal year, \$234,500 for the 1973 fiscal year, and \$301,300 for the 1974 fiscal year.

²⁸ According to the Census Bureau, rural areas have a comparatively smaller population than the urban areas, whose minimum population changes over time. In 1960, for instance, urban areas had at least 1,000 people per square mile. See *Urban and Rural Areas* (www.census.gov). A. D. Hopkins, "Ralph Lamb (1927 -): Mr. Metro," *Las Vegas Review Journal*, The First 100, Part III: A City in Full, September 12, 1999, p. 201, 202. *Technical Assistance for Clark County and City of Las Vegas, Nevada: Concerning the Joint Records Command and Control System and Project SCOPE*, Westinghouse Public Management Services, R-73-113, March 1973.

²⁹ Hinton reports that there were 5 racial uprisings or Black rebellions in Las Vegas in 1969 and 7 such incidents in 1970. See Elizabeth Hinton, *America on Fire: The Untold History of Police Violence and Black Rebellion Since the 1960s* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2021), 313 - 338.

³⁰ Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*.

³¹ *LEAA 1st Annual Report*, U.S. Department of Justice, 1969. *LEAA 2nd Annual Report*, U.S. Department of Justice, 1970. *LEAA 3rd Annual Report*, U.S. Department of Justice, 1971. *LEAA 4th Annual Report*, U.S. Department of Justice, 1972. *LEAA 5th Annual Report*, U.S. Department

This first chapter contextualizes Sheriff Ralph Lamb's application for federal funding within the longer history of policing in Nevada and the specific context of the emerging War on Crime. The chapter begins with the early history of policing during the first half of the twentieth century before turning its attention to the state of policing in Las Vegas in the 1960s and 1970s. Throughout its analysis, the chapter highlights the relationship between race and policing. The chapter concludes by analyzing the legislative process that produced the consolidated Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department.

Progressive Era Foundations of Policing

The dual system of policing that Lamb sought to consolidate in the early 1970s dated back to the Progressive Era. In August 1907, the Lincoln County Board of County Commissioners created the Las Vegas Police Department by enacting Ordinances for the City of Las Vegas. The system of policing was based on an elected Office of Police Judge or the Justice of the Peace of Las Vegas Township, who had jurisdiction over the Office of Night Policeman and the Fire Marshal in the Town of Las Vegas. Initially, the Lincoln County Board of County commissioners had the authority to remove the Night Policeman and Fire Marshal, along with the power to determine their salaries.³²

After 1907, the organizations of local law enforcement in Las Vegas expanded as the town of Las Vegas grew. For example, after the 1907 miners' strike at Goldfield, the Nevada

of Justice, 1973.

³² "Ordinances Relating to the Town of Las Vegas," *Las Vegas Age* Vol. III, No. 51, Dec. 21, 1907, p. 4. See *City of Las Vegas, Nevada Records (1927 - 1982)*, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Box 1, folder 2 containing Ordinances relating to the Town of Las Vegas Lincoln County Commission, 1907-1910. See also Senate Bill 34, which amended the 1865 Act entitled "An Act to provide policemen in unincorporated cities, towns, and villages", *The Journal of the Assembly of the Twenty-Third Session of the Legislature of the State of Nevada, 1907*, xxiii, 42, 82, 85, 155. *(index lists 72, 80, 98, 118, 119)

State Police was formed in 1908 by the passage of Senate Bill 4.³³ And then in 1909 Assembly Bill No. 27 established Clark County, which had originally been part of Lincoln County, and led to the creation of the Office of the Clark County Sheriff.³⁴ Finally, in 1911, Las Vegas was incorporated as city government in Clark County with the passage of Assembly Bill No. 186.³⁵

Under this dual system, the chief of police in each city and the sheriff of any county had the discretionary power to appoint policemen.³⁶ The law enforcement leadership such as chiefs of police in Las Vegas and sheriffs of Clark County have been mostly reserved to white males, and there was no civil service system in place until after the consolidation of the forces in 1973. From the 1910s to the late 1960s, the size of the police force grew from only a handful of police

³³ On the passage of Senate Bill 4, “An Act to provide for the creation, organization and maintenance of the Nevada State Police, prescribing the powers and duties of the officers and members thereof in maintaining peace, order and quiet in the State of Nevada, fixing their compensation, providing certain penalties and other matters relating thereto, making an appropriation therefore, and repealing all Acts or parts of Acts in conflict therewith. Special Joint Committee”, see *The Journal of the Senate of the Special Session of the Legislature of the State of Nevada, 1908*, 5, 28, 29, 30, 31, 35, 39, 61. See also “Mines Closed,” *Las Vegas Age*, Vol. III, No. 14, April 6, 1907, p. 6; “U.S. Troops Will Leave Goldfield,” *Las Vegas Age*, Vol. IV, No. 52, Dec. 28, 1907, p. 2 ; “U.S. Troops Will Remain at Goldfield Indefinitely,” *Las Vegas Age*, Vol. IV, No. 4, Jan. 25, 1908, p. 2 ; “State of Nevada to Have Big Police Force,” *Las Vegas Age*, Vol. III, No. 5, Feb. 1, 1908, p. 2.

³⁴ On the passage of Assembly Bill No. 27, “An Act creating and organizing the County of Clark out of a portion of Lincoln County, and providing for its government, and to regulate the affairs of Lincoln County and Clark County,” see *The Journal of the Assembly of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Legislature of the State of Nevada, 1909*, 24,31,35,52. See also, “Clark Organized, Proceedings of the Board of County Commissioners of Clark County, Nevada: Officials Appointed, Take Oath of Office and File Bonds,” *Las Vegas Age*, Vol. V, No. 20, May 15, 1909, p1, 8.

³⁵ On the passage of Assembly Bill No. 186, “An act to incorporate the town of Las Vegas, in Clark County, and defining the boundaries thereof, and to authorize the establishing of a city government therefore, and other matters relating thereto,” see *The Journal of the Assembly of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Legislature of the State of Nevada, 1911*, xix, 170, 177, 230, 236, 271, 319.

³⁶ James G. Sweeney, *Revised Laws of Nevada: Containing State Statutes of Nevada: Containing State Statutes of a General Nature from 1861 Revised to 1912, and Pertinent Acts of Congress with Annotations from Volumes 1 to 34, Nevada Reports, and from Federal and State Decisions*. Vol. I (Carson City, Nevada: Superintendent of State Printing, 1912), 271, 274.

officers to 396 Las Vegas Police Department police officers and 276 Clark County sheriff deputies.³⁷ According to the *Uniform Crime Report*, the largest increase in the number of police officers occurred during the 1960s. During that decade, as Clark County population more than doubled from 127,016 to 273,288, the Las Vegas Police Department personnel grew from 143 police officers and 33 civilian employees in 1960 to 374 police officers and 72 civilians in 1970.³⁸

During the dual system era, the Las Vegas Police Department and the Clark County Sheriff's Office also had their share of scandals and jurisdictional confrontations, such as the 1928 shooting of Sheridan Bradshaw, when Sheriff Sam Gay arrested the Chief of Police R. E. Lake Jr. and city police officer Henry Deadrich, and the 1954 federal raid on the Roxie's brothel, in which Las Vegas city police officers arrested 19 professional women when District Attorney Roger Foley accused Sheriff Glen Jones for failing to act as sheriff.³⁹

³⁷ For the number of police force, see *Las Vegas (Nev.) Board of Commissioners Records, 1921 - 1946*, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, two folders containing Las Vegas Board of Commissioners, 1921-1946. For the funding and budget of the police department, see *Las Vegas Age*, for example it was reported in "County Budget, 1918," *Las Vegas Age*, March 16, 1918 that the County Officers Salaries were \$1,364.03 and it was reported "Regular Meeting of City Commissioners," *Las Vegas Age*, March 11, 1922 the budget for the police and fire funding was included in the licenses, \$9,500, and fines, \$1,500. For the 1970 figure of the Las Vegas Police Department and Clark County Sheriff's Office, see *Law Enforcement Consolidation Study Committee's Preliminary Recommendations to the Las Vegas City Commission and Clark County Commission, 1972*, UNLV Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

³⁸ For the largest increase in the number of police officers from the 1910s to late 1960s, see the police employee data, police employees in individual cities, *Uniform Crime Reports*, 1941 (Vol. XII, No. 2), 1944 (Vol. XV, No. 1), 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970. On the population increase in the 1960s, see *Census '90*, 1990 CPH-2-30, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration Bureau of the Census.

³⁹ For the Sheridan Bradshaw trial, see "Preliminary is Set July 3rd," *Las Vegas Age*, No. 53, June 19, 1928; "Ex-Policemen Held for Manslaughter," *Las Vegas Age*, No. 64, July 12, 1928; "Lake-Deadrich Trial Under Way," *Las Vegas Age*, No. 92, Sept. 18, 1928. On the federal raid on Roxie's, see "L'Affaire Roxie Sets Officials to Bickering," *Las Vegas Review Journal*, April 30, 1954.

The city of Las Vegas and Clark County policemen shared jurisdiction and territory from the beginning. The dual force policed Las Vegas during the city's overlapping and assorted prohibition eras, which included Alcohol Prohibition (1920 - 1933), Gambling Prohibition (1910 - 1931), and Prostitution Prohibition since 1942.⁴⁰ During national prohibition, organized crime got its foot in the door in Las Vegas after the 18th Amendment and the Volstead Act were passed in 1919 and created the black market, which enabled the underworld business to operate and thrive.⁴¹ Historian Lisa McGirr notes that organized crime syndicates thrived in the black markets in gambling, prostitution, and alcohol during the Prohibition, which resulted in the corruption of the public officials who did not serve in the best interests of the public good.⁴² According to historian Kathleen J. Frydl, the America's War on Alcohol formed the historical background for the War on Drugs that came after, which the federal government employed in order to police inner cities and illicit drug trades around the world.⁴³

America's drug war developed as a result of the growth of the state power and choosing drug wars as one of its agendas.⁴⁴ Las Vegas followed a similar pattern, although the Las Vegas

⁴⁰ For Assembly Bill 74 - An act prohibiting gambling, providing for the destruction of gambling property, and other matters relating thereto, see *The Journal of the Assembly of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Legislature of the State of Nevada, 1909*, x. For Assembly Bill 98 - An Act concerning slot machines, gambling games, and gambling devices; providing for the operation thereof under license; providing for certain license fees and the use of the money obtained therefrom; prohibiting minors from playing and loitering about such games; designating the penalties for violations of the provisions thereof; and other matters properly relating thereto, see *The Journal of the Assembly of the Thirty-Fifth Session of the Legislature of the State of Nevada, 1931*, xiii. See Eugene P. Moehring and Michael S. Green, *Las Vegas: A Centennial History* (Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2005), 104.

⁴¹ See James B. Jacobs, "The Rise and Fall of Organized Crime in the United States," *The University of Chicago Journals, Crime and Justice*, Vol. 49, p. 17 - 67, in which Jacobs says that organized crime organizations established roots in the early twentieth century.

⁴² Lisa McGirr, *The War on Alcohol: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016), 196.

⁴³ See Kathleen J. Frydl, *The Drug Wars in America, 1940-1973* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Police Department and Clark County Sheriff's Office also shared a mutual interest in loosely enforcing the various prohibitions. Since the founding of Las Vegas, areas known as Blocks 16 and 17 had helped to build the reputation of Sin City as railroad passengers stopped to visit the vice district.⁴⁵ For instance, Sheriff Gay had no desire to enforce the prohibition laws. Accordingly, alcoholic consumption, gambling, and prostitution continued and prospered in Las Vegas during the 1920s and 1930s. Historians Eugene Moehring and Michael Green point out, "In Las Vegas, not only had gambling continued in back rooms, but Sheriff Sam Gay also considered the laws silly and unenforceable anyway ...[and] his own staff often visited those back rooms."⁴⁶ During World War II, prostitution was finally outlawed in Las Vegas.

Race and Policing in the Jim Crow Las Vegas

Significantly, the city of Las Vegas was a Jim Crow town from the beginning in 1905. Accordingly, the police officers in Las Vegas preserved the color line dividing people along vague notions of race and white mystique. Slavery did not die with the Civil War. In fact, as soon as the Thirteenth Amendment ended de jure slavery, de facto slavery or the process of making African Americans into second-class citizens began, along with cruelty and violence against freed people.⁴⁷ Emboldened by the *Plessy* decision by the Supreme Court in 1896, white racism against people of color instituted a color line in public space. In the North and the West, the law enforcement agencies enforced segregation in public space.

Jim Crow laws in Nevada sanctioned racial segregation and Nevada state laws sanctioned policing public space and constitutional rights of Nevada citizens by means of racial

⁴⁵ See Eugene P. Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt: Las Vegas, 1930 - 1970* (Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1989), 11.

⁴⁶ Eugene P. Moehring and Michael S. Green, *Las Vegas*, 48.

⁴⁷ See Douglas A. Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* (New York: Anchor books, 2008).

categorization and the people were divided into white and nonwhite.⁴⁸ As long as the racial lines were drawn across the town of Las Vegas, white leaders believed that law and order existed and peace preserved under white supremacy. For example, on April 17, 1909, the *Las Vegas Age* reported that the attractions for the independence celebration “suggested” in Las Vegas were “barbecue dinner, ku-klux-klan, races, ball game, patriotic exercises and music at the Opera House, grand ball in the evening, balloon ascension, and a splendid display of fireworks.”⁴⁹

Nancy MacLean analyzes how the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s as “most powerful movement of the far right” shaped and molded the relationship between the mainstream American culture and white supremacy, which left an indelible imprint on notions of morality and public order in American society.⁵⁰ The KKK and “law and order” ideology blended official policing with vigilantism and maintained a system of white supremacy, which sought to uphold racial hierarchy through surveillance and control over people of color.⁵¹ The Ku Klux Klan’s basic tenet or Original Creed maintained to uphold “the distinction between the races of mankind as decreed by the Creator,” and also to remain “ever be true to the maintenance of White

⁴⁸ For the notion of whiteness according to the defining spirit of times, see Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890 - 1940* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998). In *State ex rel. Stoutmeyer v. Duffy*, 7 Nev. 342 (1872), the Supreme Court of Nevada ruled that segregation in public schools is unconstitutional. However, the Court allowed segregated schools by race. See Rachel J. Anderson, “Timeline of African-American Legal History in Nevada (1861-2011),” *Scholarly Works* 689 (2012), in which Anderson points out Nevada Supreme Court ruling in *State ex rel. Stoutmeyer v. Duffy*, 7 Nev. 342 (1872) to hold separate schools by race constitutional presaged the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896) to mandate “separate but equal” education as constitutional.

⁴⁹ “Glorious Fourth, Birthday of Clark County and of the Nation to be Celebrated in Style, Vegas Plans Blowout to Eclipse Anything in the State,” *Las Vegas Age*, Vol. V, No. 16, April 17, 1909, p 1.

⁵⁰ Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁵¹ For the role of KKK and the enforcement of Prohibition during the 1920s, see Lisa McGirr, *The War on Alcohol*, 132 - 142, 146 - 153.

Supremacy and strenuously oppose any compromise thereof.”⁵² Mixed with the “law and order” ideology, white supremacy appealed to fears and bias of the mainstream American culture, which reflected values and belief systems of ordinary citizens. Historian Perry Kaufman noted that in Las Vegas the Klan branch actively policed the arbitrary public space boundary between whites and Blacks until the 1930s.⁵³ Moreover, policing Jim Crow Las Vegas necessarily involved Jim Crow justice and violence because police officers had the means and legitimate use of violence in Las Vegas, where lynching Black people was openly advocated in a public forum.⁵⁴

More importantly, white racism had created Black ghettos in the North and the West outside the South. Isolating people of color, white racism redefined the boundary of public space. White supremacy meant excluding Black people from the economic prosperity and opportunities for a better life such as education, jobs, and business. After the Civil War, Jim Crow rose and established white supremacy as the mainstream culture.⁵⁵ Framing blackness from the white perspective, white supremacy sanctioned and preserved Black ghettos alongside white neighborhoods. The concept of whiteness, juxtaposed with and contrasted against blackness, demanded justification in public space. Accordingly, white supremacy gave birth to Black ghettos and policed Black people inside Black ghettos. Moreover, white males had moral and legal justifications to protect vulnerable white females from non-white males, especially

⁵² *Leon Rockwell Papers, 1829-1986*, MS-00013, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Box 2, folder on Women of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), rituals, constitution, and application, 1923.

⁵³ Perry Kaufman, *The Mississippi of the West: The Growth of the Black Community in Las Vegas, 1930-1960* (Las Vegas: s.n., 1974), 1-44.

⁵⁴ Perry Kaufman, *The Mississippi of the West*, 5; “Only Thing That Seems to Fit,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Nov. 20, 1934, p. 6.

⁵⁵ See C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974) and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Stony the Road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow* (New York: Penguin Press, 2019).

young Black youths.

Blacks long had been part of the Las Vegas population, but in small numbers-befitting the small population of Las Vegas itself. Although Black Las Vegans had begun organizing as early as the 1910s, a more substantial Black community in Las Vegas started as a result of Black migration from the South in places such as Fordyce, Arkansas and Tallulah, Louisiana during World War II.⁵⁶ Tallulah was a typical Southern town where Jim Crow laws of racial segregation separated whites from Blacks. Ruby Duncan, who lost her parents when she was only a child, made the journey from the Deep South plantation fields to the Nevada desert in 1952 because Las Vegas offered better opportunities such as higher paying jobs, even though any minorities, especially Blacks, hired were relegated to menial labors under degrading conditions.⁵⁷ Coming from Louisiana, Joe Neal moved to Las Vegas two years later to escape American apartheid in the Deep South, but he came to realize in Las Vegas the same ugly racist attitudes ran deep.⁵⁸

Historian Perry Kaufman noted that as more Black people settled in Las Vegas, racial boundaries between whites and Blacks (e.g., in housing, jobs, and schools) forced Blacks to be isolated and segregated into a ghetto area, the Westside.⁵⁹ With the influx of Black migrants, however, the Las Vegas Police Department increased its enforcement of racial segregation in Las

⁵⁶ Numerous Black churches were founded and formed a network of support; see, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. *The Black Church: This Is Our Story, This Is Our Song* (New York: Penguin Press, 2021). Kate Hovaness and Anne Oliver, *The African American Civil Rights Experience in Nevada, 1900-1979*, Nevada State Historic Preservation Office, August 2020, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

⁵⁷ Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005).

⁵⁸ John L. Smith, *The Westside Slugger: Joe Neal's Lifelong Fight for Social Justice* (Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2019).

⁵⁹ Perry Kaufman, *The Mississippi of the West*.

Vegas by surveillance and intimidation.⁶⁰ When the Black workers protested the inhumane conditions and went on strikes, the LVPD closely monitored the Black community.⁶¹ Racial tensions between Black soldiers and white police officers in Las Vegas, for instance, escalated into violence and would ultimately lead to violent confrontations in the 1940s, which laid the groundwork for racial uprisings in Las Vegas decades later.⁶²

From the perspective of the Black community, Las Vegas harbored one of the most restrictive Jim Crow laws outside Mississippi, where the white leaders expressed racist views in public and in private, native Texan Howard Hughes said in the late 1960s that Blacks already made “enough progress for the next 100 years.”⁶³ Racial segregation in Las Vegas meant drawing an arbitrary line that divided people and, at the same time, created differentiated racial identities.⁶⁴ Kaufman explained different meanings of policing the Mississippi of the West, which included enforcing Jim Crow laws that encoded racial superiority along racial identities of the Blacks inside the ghetto and the whites outside.⁶⁵ The spirit of the 1950s and 1960s in Las Vegas galvanized by the Civil Rights movement around the nation raised the awareness of racial discrimination and injustice. The Black community in Las Vegas fought racial barriers and racial integration in Las Vegas started in the mid 1950s. Las Vegas experienced the white community’s opposition to legally enforced racial integration in schools in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁶⁶ Still, the police enforced racial segregation in Las Vegas, where transition to

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Such uprisings were common and Elizabeth Hinton explains the criminalization of such events in her *America on Fire*, 4, 6, 7, 88, 103 - 4, 298 - 299.

⁶³ Armstrong, Stan, and Desert Rose Productions, *Invisible Las Vegas*, Part 1 (Las Vegas, NV: Desert Rose Productions, 2006).

⁶⁴ Perry Kaufman, *The Mississippi of the West*.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Carol Gelfand, “Death Brushes Mothers’ March In Protest of no School Buses, Irate Driver Ignores Stop For Children,” *Las Vegas Sun*, Sep. 3, 1969; Nedra Joyce, “Schools to bus whites to

racially mixed schools in the late 1960s changed de jure segregation into de facto segregation.⁶⁷

Joey Tillman, a retired North Las Vegas police officer, observed that “it does happen ... there are people who treat others” in certain ways and “in the 1950s and 1960s racism was prevalent in Las Vegas,” and he continued, “In 1969, three days of race riot broke out in Las Vegas,” and “in 1971 Las Vegas racial tension and conflicts erupted in high schools” where amid protests and fights, one of those involved said that “you had to participate in” the fights.⁶⁸ It was the spirit of the times, and it explained why people participated in protests and fights in the context of the Civil Rights Era in which America witnessed police officers, with K-9 dogs, water hoses, Billy clubs, and riot gears, brutalized innocent civilians.⁶⁹ Hinton has shown how police brutality causes more violence from the Black community and also how militarized policing of civilians

west LV,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Apr. 9, 1971; “Integration plan under attack,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Apr. 13, 1971; Bobbe Dabling, “Blacks, Whites Oppose Integration Plan, Grassroot Dissent On ‘Busing’ Grows,” *Las Vegas Sun*, Apr. 29, 1971; “Judge stays integration ruling, No Forced Busing in Vegas This Fall,” *Las Vegas Sun*, June 4, 1971; Nedra Joyce, “Parents fight LV school integration, Board Recall Threatened,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May 14, 1971; Nedra Joyce, “integration Stall Asked for Vegas Area Schools,” Apr. 6, 1971; Nedra Joyce, “LV Whites Threaten Strike... while LV blacks propose new plan,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Apr. 29, 1971; Nedra Joyce, “Anti-busing fever mushrooms in LV,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Apr. 27, 1971; Maureen Reilly, “15,000 Students Stay Home From Clark County Schools In Anti-Busing Boycott,” *Las Vegas Sun*, May 8, 1971; Bobbe Dabling, “Claim Court Rule Doesn’t Apply, Suit Opposes ‘Busing’ Plan for Las Vegas,” *Las Vegas Sun*, Apr. 28, 1971; Nedra Joyce, “Thousands of LV Students Stage Anti-Busing Boycott,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May 7, 1971 from Las Vegas Library Regional History Files Collection, 1909-2007, UNLV Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Box 14, Folder 4, Las Vegas School Busing (1969-1971).

⁶⁷ Professor Green pointed out that in 1872 the Nevada Supreme Court held school segregation unconstitutional and it really was de facto segregation rooted in residential segregation.

⁶⁸ Winston, Lee, Greg Morris, KLVX, Arkansas Educational T.V. Network, and Louisiana Public Broadcasting, *The Road to Las Vegas: A Black Perspective*, 1984; Armstrong, Stan, and Desert Rose Productions, *Invisible Las Vegas*, Part 1 (Las Vegas, NV: Desert Rose Productions, 2006); Armstrong, Stan, and Desert Rose Productions, *Invisible Las Vegas*, Part 2 (Las Vegas, NV: Desert Rose Productions, 2014); Armstrong, Stan, and Desert Rose Productions, *The Rancho High School Riots* (Las Vegas, NV: Desert Rose Productions, 2014).

⁶⁹ Michael J. Klarman, “Race and Rights,” *The Cambridge History of Law in America*, Vol. III, p. 403 - 441.

perpetuates the cycle of violence.⁷⁰

Policing Gambling, Poverty, and Resistance

Las Vegas prospered and expanded with legalization of gambling in Nevada in 1931. Moreover, the gambling industry expanded and spread in the 20th century United States.⁷¹ In addition to enforcing racial boundaries, the policing of Las Vegas was intertwined with gambling. And, as historian Larry Gragg notes, the sheriff deputies and city police officers policed workers in the Las Vegas gambling industry and “hoodlums”.⁷² He added, “Typically, law enforcement authorities arrested these men and charged with them with vagrancy” and “once they made bail, officers told them ‘to get out of town and stay out.’”⁷³ And then, according to Gragg, “In 1960 local law enforcement got help from the state when Governor Grant Sawyer supported the gaming control Board’s creation of a List of Excluded Persons, or the Black Book.”⁷⁴ This list banned eleven people with criminal records involving organized crime from setting foot in hotel-casinos.⁷⁵

In 1951, the Nevada legislators passed Senate Bill 79 that made Nevada a right-to-work state, which contained prohibitions on strikes and modified the 1911 labor control act or so called “1911 yellow dog act.”⁷⁶ Senate Bill 79 eroded the power of the organized labor and workers in Nevada by making it harder to go on a strike or protest unfair treatments under inhumane conditions. To be brief, the Nevada laws favored the Las Vegas casino industry

⁷⁰ For an overview of the cycle of violence in the 1960s and 1970s, see Elizabeth Hinton, *America on Fire*, 19 - 21, 44 - 45.

⁷¹ See Jonathan D. Cohen and David G. Schwartz, ed., *All In: The Spread of Gambling in Twentieth-Century United States* (Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2018).

⁷² Larry D. Gragg, *Becoming America’s Playground*, 129, 141 - 142.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Mary Ellen Glass, *Nevada’s Turbulent 50s: Decade of Political and Economic Change* (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1981), 73-75.

employers over the rights of the workers to strike, which meant that the law enforcement officers in Las Vegas had been taking the employers' side in labor disputes.

Police violence has a long history in Nevada. One of the earliest recorded police brutality in Las Vegas involved the 1943 police beating case of Andrew J. Rafael and Ted Joslyn. A 17-man grand jury investigated the incident, and Judge George Marshall told the Grand Jury that "it was within their province to investigate the enforcement of liquor and gambling laws within the city and in the county."⁷⁷ Rafael suffered "a depressed skull fracture and a shattered little finger on his left hand" and doctors stated that "an operation was necessary to relieve the pressure from the brain."⁷⁸ Police charged Ted Joslyn, steel worker, with "disorderly conduct and resisting arrest" for having "engaged two police officers in a brawl."⁷⁹ However, the Grand Jury Report condemned the Las Vegas city jail as "appalling and inhumane" and recommended "removal of the police commissioner," R. "Pat" Clark, but it remained silent on police brutality.⁸⁰

In 1952, Airman Captain John Davis suffered rough treatment from detective John Moran, who used "force greater than was required" to cause "a ruptured liver."⁸¹ Davis, who was arrested "on a drunk charge," was hospitalized after his alleged beating in jail.⁸² The detective was transferred briefly to the uniform division "as a disciplinary action."⁸³ The

⁷⁷ "Grand Jury is Chosen Today," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, May 15, 1943, p. 1.

⁷⁸ "Andrew J. Rafael Is Seriously Hurt Early This Morn," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, May 8, 1943, p. 2.

⁷⁹ "Joslyn Case Is Delayed Monday," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, April 13, 1943, p. 2. "Joslyn To Leave For Another Job," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, April 22, 1943, p. 8.

⁸⁰ "Grand Jury Report Condemns Police Station Set-Up," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, June 18, 1943, p. 1.

⁸¹ "Brutality charge Results In Transfer of Detective," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, February 20, 1952, p. 2.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

investigations by the city attorney concluded that it was Davis' fault that the detective Moran lost his temper and "necessitated use of excessive force."⁸⁴

On August 1, 1966, Las Vegas Mayor Oran Gragson assigned the Human Rights Commission in Southern Nevada to investigate "all complaints of alleged incidents of police brutality."⁸⁵ The commission noted that the term police brutality was used and understood differently as physical violence by the white community and as "acts, words, and gestures" meant to degrade human beings in addition to physical violence by the Black community.⁸⁶ For instance, one of the complaints filed and investigated involved a disturbance surrounding a car accident in the Westside on August 24, 1966, in which the Black community members voiced out that police use of language, weapons and methods in segregated Las Vegas made it difficult to trust the police officers.⁸⁷

On October 5, 1969, two Black police officers pulled out a Black cab driver by force in West Las Vegas, and the resulting race riot lasted three days.⁸⁸ Racial tension between white and Black communities started a year before when a federal judge approved a controversial school desegregation plan. A few weeks before the race riot, welfare mothers protested by sitting in the Nevada State Welfare department office.⁸⁹ Las Vegas policemen, equipped with riot control weapons, used tear gas and fog guns tried to control the angry mob

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ The Southern Nevada Human Relations Commission, *A Report to the Honorable Oran K. Gragson, Mayor*, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, *Oran K. Gragson Papers*, Box 12, folder containing over 100 pages of Las Vegas Police Brutality Report.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace*, 126.

⁸⁹ "Race Tension Flares at School," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, October 6, 1969, p. 1 - 2. Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace*, 126.

of mostly teenagers to no avail.⁹⁰ The *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reported that “roving bands of youths continued to terrorize West Las Vegas in the third night of widespread disturbances,” in which two people were killed.⁹¹

In the wake of the 1960s civil rights movement heating up in Las Vegas, in the early 1970s came the rise of the Welfare Rights Movement that publicly and demonstratively challenged the criminalization and policing of poverty. In *States of Dependency: Welfare, Rights, and American Governance, 1935-1972*, historian Karen Tani examines the evolution of the welfare state in the United States, in which the language of states’ rights challenged the legalization of welfare rights in the federal New Deal relief programs for the poor.⁹² As times progressed, however, the hostility toward welfare recipients, who were mostly poor Blacks, intensified and the New Right encoded it into its language in the 1980s. At the same time, the problem of funding the legal aid to the poor in West Las Vegas, where mostly poor Blacks resided, exacerbated the problems that the poor people faced.⁹³ In Las Vegas, Ruby Duncan, a civil rights activist, fought for the welfare rights of the 3,000 people whose state welfare aid was cut off in December 1970.⁹⁴ Losing her parents early, Duncan grew up working to eke out a

⁹⁰ Penny Levin, “More Violence Feared,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, October 7, 1969, p. 1, 3.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Karen M. Tani, *States of Dependency: Welfare, Rights, and American Governance, 1935-1972* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

⁹³ See Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace*, 1, 155 - 161. In *Goldberg v. Kelly* 397 US 254 (1970), the Court decided that welfare benefits are statutory entitlements, rather than “privileges.” For the history of legal aid to the poor, the legal mantra after the Supreme Court ruling in *Gideon v. Wainwright* in 1963 from the Earl Warren Court, see Sara Mayeux, *Free Justice: A History of the Public Defender in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020).

⁹⁴ “Governor chooses to stay clear of welfare fight,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Jan. 14, 1971, p.13. Dale Mead, “Welfare Group Vows to Disrupt LV Gaming,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 17, 1971, p.1. John Hanna, “Marchers invade Caesars,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 7, 1971, p.1.

living. She understood the problems and difficulties that the people on welfare faced.

In her *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty*, historian Annelise Orleck tells the story of the 1971 civil protest at the Caesars Palace led by a coalition of single mothers and civil rights activists in Las Vegas. In this grass roots social movement to fight poverty and homelessness in Las Vegas, dedicated Operation Life participants such as Duncan and Father Louis Vitale worked together to provide safe havens for children, elderly, teenage mothers, drug addicts, and homeless people.⁹⁵ As the “ragtag army” of 1,500 protestors marched on the Strip, Orleck noted that the police helicopter and the motorcycle cops on “walkie-talkies” kept a close eye on the marchers, singing the civil rights songs, on their way into Caesars Palace.⁹⁶ But, undaunted, on March 13, 1971, the marchers moved on and several police officers drew guns and pointed them at the protesters, who were arrested and jailed at the Convention Center.⁹⁷ Ultimately, Duncan pled not guilty on the charge brought against her by the Clark County Sheriff’s Office, which arrested 86 civil rights marchers, including a Catholic priest.⁹⁸

The lack of violence toward the grass roots welfare movement actually obscured the nature of police brutality in Las Vegas. For example, John L. Smith noted that, “Deputies from the Clark County Sheriff’s Office and casino security heavily monitored the marches.”⁹⁹ He added “Although Sheriff Ralph Lamb’s men had a reputation for brutality on the Westside, they spared the baton.”¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the “increased media presence” and national awareness of the

⁹⁵ See Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace*, 1, 155 - 161.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ John L. Smith, *The Westside Slugger*, 69.

grass roots social movement in Las Vegas helped to save the protestors from violence.¹⁰¹ Smith noted that “the O’Callaghan administration toed the line and repositioned itself as leading the battle for progress.”¹⁰²

In 1971, a Consent Decree resulted from the United States Department of Justice civil rights lawsuit against major hotels and local unions based on charges of years of violations of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.¹⁰³ It held that the casino industry defendants:

(hereinafter referred to individually as hotel or collectively as hotels), their officers, agents, employees, successors, and all persons in active concert or participation with them, shall hire and assign applicants for employment, and shall promote, transfer, train, demote and dismiss employees, without regard to race, and without engaging in any act or practice which has the purpose or the effect of discriminating against any individual because of his race or color in regards to his employment opportunities, and shall promote and transfer employees in such a way as to provide employment opportunities to black persons which are equal to those provided to white persons.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Title VII prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin; see, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Pub. L. 88-352 (Title VII)

¹⁰⁴ *United States of America, Plaintiff, v. Nevada Resort Association, an employer association; Prell Hotel Corp., dba Aladdin Hotel, Hughes Tool Co., dba Castaways Hotel, Desert Palace, Inc., dba Caesars Palace, Hughes Tool Co., dba Desert Inn Hotel & Country Club, M & R Investment Co., Inc., dba Dunes Hotel and Country Club, Flamingo Resort, Inc., dba Flamingo Hotel, Hughes Tool Co., dba Frontier Hotel, Las Vegas hacienda, Inc. and Casino operations, Inc., dba Hacienda Hotel, Las Vegas International Hotel, Inc., dba International Hotel, hotel Properties, Inc., dba Landmark Hotel and Casino, Hotel Riviera, Inc., dba Riviera Hotel, Sahara Nevada Corporation and Consolidated Casinos Corp., dba Sahara hotel, Hughes Tool Co., dba Sands Hotel, Silver Slipper, United Resort Hotels, Inc. and Karat, Inc., dba Stardust Hotel, Dewco Services Inc. and Consolidated Casinos Corp., dba Thunderbird Hotel, hotel Conquistador, Inc. and Tropicana Casino, Inc., dba Hotel Tropicana, Local Union No. 995, Professional, Clerical, Ground Maintenance, Parking lot Attendants, Car Rental Employees, Warehousemen and helpers; Local union no. 720, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees and Moving Picture Machine Operators of The United States and Canada; Local*

Nevertheless, racial discrimination would remain a difficult challenge as Las Vegas communities would continue to face the insurmountable obstacle of overcoming racial bias, stereotypes, and racially discriminatory history.

Consolidation and Creation of Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Force

The larger context of changing race relations and resistance in the late 1960s and early 1970s set the stage for the movement to consolidate policing in Las Vegas. The rationale behind consolidation was to solve metropolitan problems by creating a better government with less overlap between jurisdictions. Urbanization of Las Vegas meant more public demand for government services needed in an expanding metropolis. Consolidation of government services did not translate into addressing the fundamental problems of racial inequality, however.¹⁰⁵ According to the government study group called the League of Elected City and County Officials or LECCO, “Cities and Counties must patch up their differences and solve common problems voluntarily, or risk new pressures for area-wide ‘Super-Governments.’”¹⁰⁶ In addition, the government study discussed some of “metropolitan problems” (e.g., crime, public utilities, school, etc.) in areas such as Las Vegas, where local state governments experimented with different forms of “cooperative agreements” and “joint exercises” of local government powers.¹⁰⁷

In the early 1970s, local government studies were being conducted on the cooperative

Union No. 226, Culinary Workers Union; Local Union No. 165, Bartenders Union; Local Joint Executive Board of Las Vegas, Culinary Workers Union, Local No. 226, and Bartenders Union, Local no. 165, Defendants, Civil Action No. LV 1645, filed on June 4, 1971, Consent Decree.

¹⁰⁵ For the post war history of urban crisis, see Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

¹⁰⁶ See *City of Las Vegas, Nevada Records (1927-1982)*, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Box 1, folder 9, Clark County LECCO plan, 1963 - 1965, p. 1 - 3.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

agreement between the City of Las Vegas Police Department and the Clark County Sheriff's Office. These studies pointed toward more efficiency through eliminating government waste. For example, one such study done by Public Safety Systems Incorporated on the communication, information, and command-and-control systems of the LVPD and CCSO recommended updating the police records database and upgrading the systems with new technologies to meet the growing public demands for more efficient and dependable public service.¹⁰⁸

Other historical factors drove the need for modern policing in the United States. America's War on Crime started in the 1960s as President Johnson pledged to fight crime and poverty at home, while engaging communist enemies abroad in the Vietnam War. The 89th United States Congress passed the Law Enforcement Assistance Act, which gave the Attorney General the authority to provide the federal funding under the direction of the National Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice.¹⁰⁹ From March 2, 1967 to January 20, 1969, Attorney General Ramsey Clark oversaw the distribution of federal funding to local and state law enforcement agencies and criminal justice systems. The 90th United States Congress passed the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act, which established the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration that managed the federal funding for over a decade.¹¹⁰

Beginning in the 1950s, America also witnessed for the first time on television police

¹⁰⁸ *City of Las Vegas, Nevada Records (1927-1982)*, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Box 3, folder 3, Law Enforcement joint Venture Program, 1970.

¹⁰⁹ *Law Enforcement Assistance Act of 1965*, "To Provide Assistance in Training State and Local Law Enforcement Officers and Other Personnel and in Improving Capabilities, Techniques, and Practices in State and Local Law Enforcement and Prevention and Control of Crime, and for Other Purposes," U.S. Government Printing Office Washington, 1965. Public Law 89-197, Sep. 22, 1965 [H.R. 8027].

¹¹⁰ *Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets*, "An Act to assist State and local governments in reducing the incidence of crime, to increase the effectiveness, fairness, and coordination of law enforcement and criminal justice systems at all levels of government, and for other purposes," 1968.

violence against the civil rights movement. Law enforcement officers around the country, who were determined to keep Black people back in their place, applied intimidation and physical violence, which ranged from dousing with water hoses, inflicting dog bites, painful blows to the body and shooting, on civil rights leaders such as John Lewis marching for freedom from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama.¹¹¹ For instance, in 1964 officers of the Mississippi Police Department used their position, power, and authority to murder three civil rights activists, Michael Henry Schwerner, James Earl Chaney, and Andrew Goodman.¹¹² In 1969, officers of the Chicago Police Department shot and killed civil rights leaders Fred Hampton, Mark Clark, and others with a barrage of bullets. In stark contrast, inspired by Doctor Martin Luther King's nonviolent resistance, civil rights activists protested racial injustice and social inequality by marching peacefully even though they faced imminent dangers.

During the 1960s, Las Vegas was expanding at an unprecedented pace after becoming one of the most popular tourist destinations in the 1950s.¹¹³ The consolidation of the LVPD and the CCSO occurred in a fast changing and growing tourist destination of the United States that pushed the urban police force to its limit. The LEAA that employed the latest "knowledge and technology" to reduce, if not eliminate, crime at the local and state level marked the watershed moment in the postwar expansion that witnessed unprecedented population growth, along with increase in the crime rate.¹¹⁴

The local and state government officials wanting change ran for public offices and won.

¹¹¹ John Lewis with Michael D'Orso, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 1998).

¹¹² See *United States v. Price*, 383 US 787 (1966).

¹¹³ Larry D. Gragg, *Becoming America's Playground*, 7.

¹¹⁴ Robert F. Diegelman, "Federal Financial Assistance for Crime Control: Lessons of the LEAA Experience," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, Vol. 73, Issue 3, Fall 1982, Article 7, p. 993-1011.

For example, in 1959 Oran K. Gragson decided to run for the mayor of Las Vegas and reform the local police force and curb police corruption. As the mayor of Las Vegas from 1959 to 1975, Mayor Gragson oversaw the consolidation of the LVPD and the CCSO and the expansion of the LVMPD police force.

In the early 1970s, America's War on Crime switched into full gear as the Nixon Administration pledged to fight the use of controlled substances as part of the campaign.¹¹⁵ As the local law enforcement agencies began to take active part in the War on Crime, the enforcement of drug laws transformed the local law enforcement agencies through their interactions with crime control at the grass-roots level.¹¹⁶ At the same time, the War on Crime transformed the landscape of the local and state law enforcement agencies and criminal justice systems by framing the narrative of fighting crime at the local and state level.

The 1973 Nevada State Legislature met as usual in Carson City, the state capital of Nevada.¹¹⁷ Located about over 400 miles from Las Vegas, Carson City became the center of

¹¹⁵ Whitman Knapp, "The War on Drugs," *Federal Sentencing Reporter*, Vol. 5, No. 5 (Mar. - Apr., 1993), 296. For a brief historical background on the War on Crime, see Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*, 1-20 and Jonathan Simon, *Governing Through Crime*, 262.

¹¹⁶ Elizabeth Hinton, "Why We Should Reconsider the War on Crime," *Time*, March 20, 2015. Richard Harris, "The Turning Point: The rise of police-state America," *Annals of Legislation*, Dec. 14, 1968.

¹¹⁷ For the history of Carson City, see Robert Laxalt, *Nevada: A Bicentennial History* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 46-47; Michael W. Bowers, *The Sagebrush State: Nevada's History, Government, and Politics*, 5th ed. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2018), 150; Effie Mona Mack, *Nevada: a history of the state from the earliest times through the Civil War* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1935), 324-35; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Nevada, 1540-1888* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1981), 86,163. The origins of the name Carson City is contested. Carson City, according to Willa Oldham, was named after its nearby Carson River. See, Abram Curry, *Carson City: Nevada's Capital City* (Genoa, Nevada: Desk Top Publishers, Inc., 1991), 9. Susan J. Ballew and L. Trent Dolan say that Abraham Curry came up with the name in 1858 "for his new city in Eagle Valley." See, Susan J. Ballew and L. Trent Dolan, *Images of America : Early Carson City* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2010), 2. Richard Moreno says that Frank Proctor in 1864 at the Nevada State Constitutional Convention called "a town site" after the Carson River, which "was named in

state legislative activities since Nevada joined Lincoln's Union in 1864 in the middle of the Civil War. Historian Michael Green says that the Carson City population multiplied in the 1960s to such an extent that it forced the consolidation of two local government services of both Carson City and Ormsby County into one government service under Carson City in 1969.¹¹⁸ From then on, according to Richard Moreno's history of the area, Carson City transformed rapidly from a rural town into a well-organized urban city.¹¹⁹ Amidst Carson City's historic landmarks that date back to the late 19th century, the 1967 Nevada Legislature hired the Architectural firms of Ferris & Erskine and the Walker Boudwin Construction Company to design and build the new Legislative building.¹²⁰

Inside their new three story Legislative Building, state legislators debated problems facing the state of Nevada in 1973, such as the growing public demand for better government services by reorganizing and ending government waste.¹²¹ Among the 20 State Senators and 40

honor of explorer Christopher 'Kit' Carson, who had served as a scout for John C. Fremont during his expedition through Nevada and the West in 1843-44". See, Richard Moreno, *A Short History of Carson City* (Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2011), 17 -18.

¹¹⁸ See Michael Green, *Nevada: A History of the Silver State* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2015), 310. The Carson City population grew from 5,100 in 1960 to 15,624 in 1970. See Eugene P. Moehring, *Reno, Las Vegas, and the Strip: A Tale of Three Cities* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2014), 33.

¹¹⁹ For the legislative debate on Carson City as the Nevada state capital, see Andrew J. Marsh & Samuel L. Clemens and Amos Bowman, *Reports of the 1863 Constitutional Convention of the Territory of Nevada* (Carson City: Legislative Counsel Bureau, State of Nevada, 1972), 333, 340-348. For the 1970s Carson City, see Moreno, *A Short History of Carson City*, 8-9, 132-135.

¹²⁰ For the history of the Legislative Building, in Carson City, Nevada, see, the Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau, *The Nevada Legislature* (1971 and 1973 Session of Nevada Legislature); see also, Moreno, *A Short History of Carson City*, 1 - 9, 132 - 135.

¹²¹ For the summary list of bills discussed, among the 654 Senate Bills, 30 Senate Joint Resolutions, 1 Senate Joint resolutions of the 56th session, 41 Senate Concurrent Resolutions, 16 Senate Resolutions, 1 Vetoed Senate Bill of the 56th session, 968 Assembly Bills, 49 Assembly Joint Resolutions, 4 Assembly Joint Resolutions of the 56th session, 62 Assembly Concurrent Resolutions, 22 Assembly Resolutions, and 1 Vetoed Assembly Bill of the 56th session. see *The Journal of the Assembly of the Fifty-Seventh Session of the Legislature of the State of Nevada, 1973*, vii - liii and *The Journal of the Senate of the Fifty-Seventh Session of the Legislature of the State of Nevada, 1973*, vii - xlii. See also Eugene P. Moehring and Michael S. Green, *Las*

State Assemblymen, who were mostly white men, present at the 1973 session were historical figures who would play important roles in Nevada and national history such as Harry M. Reid (D), Lieutenant Governor, serving as the President of the Senate Chamber, and later a United States Senator and Senate Majority Leader; Richard H. Bryan (D), State Senator, representing Clark County, who later served as both the governor of Nevada and United States Senator; Joe Neal (D), State Senator, representing Clark County in his maiden session as the Nevada's first African American State Senator and civil rights activist; and William J. Raggio (R), State Senator, began his long tenure representing Washoe County.¹²²

One of the pressing issues that the legislators had to address was that the city of Las Vegas has rapidly grown from its early years as a railroad stop in 1905 as a result of a dramatic postwar explosion in the 1950s and 1960s.¹²³ The census figures show that Las Vegas had a population of 24,624 in the 1950, but by 1972 its population had increased over fivefold to 136,137.¹²⁴ In general, a growing population meant higher crime rates for the local and state police agencies. The metropolis of Las Vegas was no exception: as the city grew so did the number of criminal activities along with its complexity.¹²⁵ Responding to the call for better

Vegas: A Centennial History (Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2005), 185.

¹²² *The Journal of the Senate of the Fifty-Seventh Session of the Legislature of the State of Nevada, 1973*, xliii. For the biography of Joe Neal, see John L. Smith, *The Westside Slugger*. For the biography of William Raggio, see Michael Archer, *A Man of His Word: The Life & Times of Nevada's Senator William J. Raggio* (Ashland, Oregon: Hellgate Press, 2011).

¹²³ Eugene P. Moehring and Michael S. Green, *Las Vegas*, 271. Ray Hebert, "Las Vegas---It's Growing Up," *Los Angeles Times* (1923-1995) Sep. 16, 1973, p. 16.

¹²⁴ See, the Local Government Study Committee of the Nevada State Legislature, *The Report on Local Governments in Clark County, 1973* (Las Vegas, Nevada, 1973), 14. By the 1960s with a population of 64,405, Las Vegas became a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area. See Michael S. Green, *Nevada*, 310-311 and Eugene P. Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt*, 108 and Eugene P. Moehring and Michael S. Green, *Las Vegas*, 10-11; see Elbert B. Edwards, "Clark County: From Wilderness to Metropolitan Area," *Nevada: The Silver State*, Vol. 2 (Carson City: Western States Historical Publishers, Inc., 1970), 683.

¹²⁵ For the issues of metropolis and population, see Eric H. Monkkenon, *America Becomes Urban: The Development of U.S. Cities & Towns, 1780-1980* (Berkeley: University of California

managed and less costly government agencies, which had been growing louder in the 1960s, the Committee on Federal, State, and Local Governments at the 57th session of the Nevada Legislature on March 1, 1973 introduced Senate Bill 340, which proposed to create the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department by combining the Clark County Sheriff's Office and the City of Las Vegas Police Department.¹²⁶

The idea of consolidation had been floating around since the 1960s, when Las Vegas started to grow as a metropolis and expand its government services. For instance, historian Eugene Moehring states that the idea of streamlining government services and operation costs came from the County Commissioner Bill Briare, who spoke out against government waste of public funds in the early 1960s.¹²⁷ *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reporter Darrell Dreyer reported that at the 1968 Convention Center meeting "called by Mayor Oran Gragson to find a solution to the city's financial ills brought about by the firemen's pay increase," the mayor suggested "that consolidation would save a great deal of money."¹²⁸ The mayor "explained a recent study pointed out money could be saved in combining the police and fire departments alone."¹²⁹ Gragson stated "the commissioners are evaluating the study" and he also said "he had advocated consolidation of city and county services for eight years."¹³⁰ However, according to historian

Press, 1988), 70 - 90.

¹²⁶ See Senate Bill 340, "Act that Establishes procedure for creation of metropolitan police department," *The Journal of the Senate of the Fifty-Seventh Session of the Legislature of the State of Nevada, 1973*, xx. Moehring, *Reno, Las Vegas, and the Strip*, 60.

¹²⁷ Moehring, *Reno, Las Vegas, and the Strip*, 61.

¹²⁸ Darrell Dreyer, "Consolidation Pay Plan Urged," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* Nov. 28, 1968, p. 68. For the study, see *Oran K. Gragson Papers, 1955-1998*, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada, Box 5, Folder 1 (Consolidation), 2 (Consolidation: Fire Services), 3 (Consolidation: Local Government Study Committee), 4 (Consolidation: Police/Sheriff Services). See Assembly Bill No. 299 - Committee on Government Affairs, February 15, 1973, which contains local law enforcement in sections 49 to 58.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

Michael Green, the local government officials in Las Vegas and Clark County had been unsuccessfully trying to start the process of consolidating local governments to eliminate duplication of government services since the 1960s.¹³¹

The 1971 Nevada State Legislature acted on the idea of consolidating the Las Vegas Police Department and the Clark County Sheriff's Office by forming the Law Enforcement Study Committee on Consolidation of Services in January 1972.¹³² The members of the Law Enforcement Consolidation Committee included sheriff deputies and county officials, along with police officers and city officials, who had inside knowledge about the law enforcement operations.¹³³ By negotiating over a year on the details of the merger and planning the organization, administration, and personnel of the new law enforcement agency, the representatives of the City of Las Vegas Police Department and the Clark County Sheriff's Office played a critical role in the passage of Senate Bill No. 340. The committee concluded that the partial consolidation of law enforcement services without eliminating separate and independent operations by two distinct law enforcement agencies would neither work nor lower costs.¹³⁴

The central issues of Senate Bill 340 dealt with the postwar population explosion and the corresponding increase in the crime rate in the Las Vegas Valley. For instance, the *Uniform Crime Reports* from 1960 to 1970 showed a substantial increase in the number and rate per 100,000 inhabitants of crimes of violence (e.g. murder, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated

¹³¹ Green, *Nevada*, 310-311.

¹³² Nevada Legislature, *Law Enforcement Consolidation Study Committee's Preliminary Recommendations* (10/5/72), 1-3, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

assault) and crimes against property (e.g. burglary, larceny \$50 and over, and auto theft).¹³⁵ Moreover, the City of Las Vegas Police Department and the Clark County Sheriff's Office had jurisdictional problems over the boundary that divided the two law enforcement agencies. A history of old feuds and jurisdictional conflicts existed between Clark County sheriff's deputies and Las Vegas city police officers. The proponents of consolidation of law enforcement agencies argued that the growing city needed a bigger and better police force that could handle "24 hour patrol or dispatch services."¹³⁶ The opponents of consolidation, on the other hand, argued that bigger police departments cost more money and were "less responsive to neighborhood problems."¹³⁷

Senate Bill 340 was a legislative response to the growing problems between two law enforcement agencies. As two law enforcement agencies had interacted with each other, jurisdictional problems arose (e.g. the Sheridan Bradshaw trial and the federal raid on Roxie's) and the tension over dual policing grew. Sections 2 to 37 of Senate Bill 340 created a new municipal government agency by dissolving the county and the city law enforcement. Sections 1 and 38 through 53 of the legislation amended the Nevada Revised Statutes and the City

¹³⁵ See Table for Number of Offenses Known to the Police in Las Vegas, *Uniform Crime Reports*, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970.

¹³⁶ Kevin Krajick, "Consolidation," *Police Magazine* Vol. 2, No. 1 (January 1979), 47 - 56.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

Charter.¹³⁸ The key Section 2 of Senate Bill 340 stated the purpose of the legislation.¹³⁹ Sections 8 through 25, which would create with police commission, and sections 41 and 42, which deal with the power of the sheriff as the chief police officer, would be amended. *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reporter Mary Hausch noted that the changes included, “Instead of a five member police commission board with three from the city and two from the county as proposed originally” and, Senate Bill 340 passed, as amended, “would create a six member board with three representatives each from the county and city.”¹⁴⁰ Hausch added, “The board would also have power over budgetary matters and employee negotiations in addition to advisory powers recommended by the county commissions.”¹⁴¹ Hausch also pointed out that “Chief administrative officer for the combined police force would be Sheriff Ralph Lamb” and that

¹³⁸ Nevada Legislature, Senate Bill 340 - (4/25/1973). James G. Sweeney, *Revised Laws of Nevada. The Code of the City of Las Vegas Nevada, 1949* (Charlottesville, Virginia: Michie City Publications Company, 1949). In 1968 the article 4, section 37A, was added to the Nevada Constitution, which contains the provisions on consolidation of city and county governments to form a municipal government. Michael Bowers, in his *The Nevada State Constitution*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), makes a note of the case *County of Clark v. Las Vegas*, 92 Nev. 323 (1976), in which the Supreme Court of Nevada found that the consolidation scheme set forth in Chapter 648, which allows commissioners to represent both the Clark County and the City of Las Vegas, to be unconstitutional. Citing the Equal Protection of the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution, the court found that discrimination against qualified voters to participate in the political process violates the constitutional rights of voters.

¹³⁹ Nevada Legislature, Senate Bill 340 - Committee on Federal, State, and Local Governments (4/25/1973) states that:

1. The legislature finds:
 - (a) That there is substantial duplication of functions, manpower and expenses between the city and county law enforcement agencies in this state.
 - (b) That merger of city and county law enforcement agencies would increase the efficiency of such agencies by increasing communication facilities, lowering purchasing costs and coordinating law enforcement efforts throughout metropolitan areas.
2. It is the purpose of this chapter to provide the means whereby the respective law enforcement agencies of the cities and counties in this state may merge into county-wide metropolitan police departments.

¹⁴⁰ Mary Hausch, “Clark police merger compromise okayed,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, April 19, 1973, p. 16.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

“under the compromise, he would not be allowed to remain on the liquor and gaming boards.”¹⁴²

Senate Bill 340, which Governor Mike O’Callaghan signed into law on April 25, 1973, formally merged the Clark County Sheriff’s Department and the City of Las Vegas Police Department into the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department.¹⁴³ On April 27, 1973, *Las Vegas Review Journal* reported, “The 57th Nevada Legislature, characterized as the longest, costliest and most law-and-order-minded session yet, neared adjournment Thursday in its 102nd day.”¹⁴⁴ The newspaper added that “More than 100 law-and-order bills surfaced during the session although many never made it through the legislature” and “Among those that went to the governor was the mandatory death penalty bill for slayings of on-duty lawmen, prison guards and firemen.”¹⁴⁵ Then, the newspaper noted that “The rash of such measures prompted one legislator to term the session ‘ultraconservative’ to the point of even giving up basic rights of the citizens.”¹⁴⁶

On July 1, 1973, when Senate Bill 340 went into effect as the Chapter 568 of the Nevada Revised Statutes, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reported on the consolidation of the Las Vegas Police Department and the Clark County Sheriff’s Office into the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department under the heading “Laws touch citizens from cradle to grave.”¹⁴⁷ The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department retained the same personnel from two law enforcement agencies

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ RJ Legislative Report, “Senate bill would merge metro police,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, March 2, 1973, p. 15. Mary Hausch, “Clark police merger compromise okayed,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, April 18, 1973, p. 1. Nevada Legislature, Senate Bill 340 - Committee on Federal, State, and Local Governments (4/25/1973).

¹⁴⁴ “’73 LEGISLATURE QUILTS: RECORD 102-DAY SESSION,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, April 18, 1973, p. 1.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ “Laws touch citizens from cradle to grave,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, July 1, 1973, p. 6.

and instituted the Civil Service system.¹⁴⁸

The system of dual policing in Las Vegas led to tensions between two law enforcement agencies, which crossed paths as the population of Las Vegas expanded and jurisdictional conflicts resulted in the absence of cooperative agreements. By the early 1970s, the call for merging the two law enforcement agencies into one agency became loud enough for the Nevada Legislature to act. Consequently, Senate Bill 340 consolidated the LVPD and the CCSO into the LVMPD, which became effective on July 1, 1973. However, tensions and conflicts within the new local law enforcement agency did not disappear, and new problems associated with the War on Crime compounded the existing tensions and conflicts.

The next chapter will analyze the impact of the consolidation on policing in Las Vegas after 1973. To do so, it will examine the professionalization of policing in Las Vegas and the militarization of urban police forces in the 1970s and 1980s. It will show how the LVMPD changed as a local law enforcement agency with federal assistance. More important, the second chapter will look at how the War on Crime, along with the War on Drugs, shaped the policing of Sin City from 1973 to 1985.

¹⁴⁸ Gale Metcalf, "Is Metro for the better?," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Aug. 10, 1976, p. 8.

Chapter 2 - Race and Policing After the 1973 Consolidation (1973-1985)

This chapter examines the first twelve years of the newly constituted Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department through the analysis of historical changes that occurred in three areas: the professionalization of the LVMPD as a local law enforcement agency, the actual practices of policing Las Vegas as Sin City, and the consequences of the War on Crime on the peoples of Las Vegas. During this critical period, the LVMPD underwent a sweeping transformation from a rural western country law enforcement agency to a modern police force.¹⁴⁹ This chapter analyzes those changes that occurred as a result of the interactions between the federal law enforcement agencies (e.g., FBI, DEA, Secret Service) and the local law enforcement agency (i.e., LVMPD). During these years, federal law enforcement's increased presence in Las Vegas changed the landscape of local law enforcement. For example, FBI raids on organized crime eviscerated the roles that organized crime played in Las Vegas, DEA drug raids tackled drug trafficking, and the Secret Service cracked down on counterfeiting operations.¹⁵⁰ In addition, federal funding enabled the LVMPD to reach out to fight local crime by means of undercover investigations, fencing operations, and increased patrolling of communities of color.

This chapter situates the Las Vegas experience within historian Elizabeth Hinton's national story on the expansion of policing in America during the 1970s. From 1973 to 1985, as this chapter demonstrates, Sheriffs Ralph Lamb, John McCarthy, and John Moran modernized

¹⁴⁹ In 1910, the Census Bureau set the minimum population of 2,500 for an urban place. By 2000, the Census Bureau defined the urban areas based on population density without boundaries. For the history of urban and rural, see *Urban and Rural Areas* (www.census.gov).

¹⁵⁰ Jane Ann Morrison, "LV cop reports found in raids," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 24, 1978, p. 1. Jane Ann Morrison, "Glick charged as front for Spilotro," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, July 13, 1978, p. 3. "Witness tags Rosenthal," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Oct. 20, 1978, p.79. "Strike Force moves to keep Spilotro property," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Nov. 22, 1978, p. 4.

the LVMPD. This entailed using federal funds to update police training, acquire new technology and equipment, and implement new tactics and weapons.

As carceral scholars such as Max Felker-Kantor and Simon Balto point out in their respective studies of policing in Los Angeles and Chicago, racism played a key role in the expansion of modern police power during this period. In the War on Crime in Las Vegas (e.g., the police raids, stings, and surveillance operations), the LVMPD targeted people of color disproportionately and maintained its personnel of mostly white male officers in Las Vegas until the late 1970s and after. Federal funding helped local law enforcement in Las Vegas to increase the number of arrests, mostly on misdemeanor charges, but the LVMPD did not break from the unwritten rule of keeping Las Vegas' reputation as Sin City, where the culture of drugs, prostitution, and alcohol proliferated despite the War on Crime. On the other hand, the problem of jail overcrowding and funding the overburdened LVMPD police force made policing Las Vegas more difficult as time progressed.

To understand this history, we first need to examine the professionalization of the LVMPD that led to the creation of a modern police force.¹⁵¹ Sheriff Ralph Lamb started the transformation of the local law enforcement by enlisting the help of federal law enforcement and federal funding.¹⁵² Police training took on a new meaning as the LVMPD police academy incorporated federal guidance and competitive spirit in shooting and sports.¹⁵³ Becoming a police officer for the LVMPD required passing written and physical exams, along with

¹⁵¹ On the origins of the police, see Eric H. Monkkenon, *America Becomes Urban*, 89 - 110.

¹⁵² On the professionalization of police, see James F. Richardson, *Urban Police in the United States* (Port Washington, NY: National University Publications, 1974), 132 - 157.

¹⁵³ "26 trained in police class," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Apr. 19, 1974, p. 52. "FBI school grad given promotion," *Las Vegas Review Journal*, June 11, 1974, p. 45. "Fatal mishaps topic of confab," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 12, 1974, p. 136. "Local police shooting teams win state contest," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 27, 1974, p. 49. "North Las Vegas police reserve unit trains here," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Oct. 13, 1974, p. 27.

psychological tests and questionings by an oral examination board.¹⁵⁴ In addition, to become a motorcycle officer, a police officer needed experience as a patrol officer and six month training.¹⁵⁵ To qualify for the SWAT unit for the LVMPD, a police officer with 2 years of patrol needed to pass an oral examination.¹⁵⁶

From 1973 to 1985, the LVMPD grew from 696 police officers and 214 civilian employees to 1,021 police officers and 508 civilian employees.¹⁵⁷ The police budget more than doubled from \$22,932,673 to \$49,542,995.¹⁵⁸ However, crime rates reported by the *Uniform Crime Reports* did not subside. Instead, they increased manifold. The LVMPD also experienced a series of major crises during this critical period that ranged from jail overcrowding to constitutional problems and institutional challenges, which posed existential threats to the LVMPD. While the federal government funding directed the aggressive growth and expansion of the local and state law enforcement agencies, the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984 imposed longer and harsher punishments.¹⁵⁹ On February 29, 1984, LVMPD budget requests consisted of \$16,776,926 for the patrol unit, \$1,357,758 for the narcotics unit, \$1,310,714 for the

¹⁵⁴ “Police department exams for new recruits slated,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Jan. 14, 1976, p. 4.

¹⁵⁵ Gale Metcalf, “Motorcycle cop: ‘Hazardous Duty’,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Dec. 22, 1975, p. 17.

¹⁵⁶ Richard Cornett, “SWAT team prepares for action,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Jan. 2, 1982, p. 1B.

¹⁵⁷ *Uniform Crime Reports, 1973, 1985*, Table for Number of Full-time Law Enforcement Employees, Cities 25,000 and over in population and Table for Number of Offenses Known to the Police, Cities, and Towns 10,000 and over in Population..

¹⁵⁸ For the 1972-73 public safety final budget, the figures for the Clark county’s \$9,660,376 and the City of Las Vegas’ \$13,272,297, see The Local Government Study Committee of the Nevada State Legislature, *The Report on Local Governments in Clark County, 1973*, Las Vegas, Nev.: [s. n.], 1973, Exhibit 8, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. For the 1984-85 LVMPD final budget, see *Final Budget: Fiscal Year 1984-1985*, s. l.: s. n., 1984, p. 2, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

¹⁵⁹ See chapter 9 of Hinton’s *From the War on Poverty to the War on Drugs*.

intelligence unit, \$987,017 for the SWAT-canine unit, and \$896,891 for the vice unit.¹⁶⁰

A New Beginning

On July 1, 1973, the LVMPD police officers were supposed to start the day with new LVMPD uniforms, new badges, new police guns, new police cars and a new identity; however, financial problems delayed the consolidation process, which took months to implement.¹⁶¹ The combined “super police agency” headed by Sheriff Lamb, who set out to place “little substations in the neighborhood” and establish “normal eight-hour, five-day week,” instead of the usual “ten-hour four-day work week” offered to some police officers, met resistance within the organization from those who did not want to change their work routine.¹⁶² During its first year, the LVMPD employed tactics of undercover agents, community patrol, prostitution raids, and surveillance to combat rising crime and drug use; in sum, the new police force in Las Vegas waged its first War on Crime in Las Vegas during the 1970s.¹⁶³ However, as time progressed the LVMPD faced new unexpected problems, along with older problems such as police violence

¹⁶⁰ 1984-85 LVMPD final budget, see *Final Budget: Fiscal Year 1984-1985*, s. 1.: s. n., 1984.

¹⁶¹ Dennis Baughman, “Metro cop woes tackled,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 17, 1973, p. 9. Dennis N. Griffin, *Policing Las Vegas*, 43-45.

¹⁶² “Lamb favors neighborhood substations,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May 18, 1973, p. 13; Brent Whiting, “LV police irked by change: Four-day week schedule destined to end,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 2, 1973, p. 1.

¹⁶³ Crimes ranged from vagrancy and possession of controlled substances to prostitution and burglary. Among the arrested included, actress Linda Lovelace, see “Linda Lovelace bails out after Strip cocaine arrest,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 1, 1974, p. 1 and “Ski mask burglary ring solved, policemen feel,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 26, 1974, p. 3. “Narc cops here enjoy occupational highs,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June. 10, 1974, p. 13. “Las Vegas vice crackdown ends in 59 more arrests,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 11, 1974, p. 4. Gale Metcalf, “Police arrest 10 clinic patients in drug bust,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal* Jan., 12, 1974, p. 1. “LV cops named year’s policemen,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Jan. 16, 1974, p. 16. “Vegas crackdown on crime merited,” R-J viewpoint, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 4, 1974, p. 130. Ron Vacchina, “Financial woes, crime won’t quit,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Jan. 2, 1974, p. 16; Gale Metcalf, “Las Vegas burglary rate up by 47 per cent,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Jan. 2, 1974, p. 16. “Metro narcotic unit gets federal grant,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 25, 1974, p. 11. “More cops needed for Vegas,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 28, 1974, p. 2.

from the pre-consolidation period that resurfaced in new forms.

In 1972, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration awarded the first of its grant in the amount of \$268,744.00 to the LVMPD to install the \$1.2 million “Command and Control” computer dispatch system.¹⁶⁴ Lamb envisioned a new future for the Las Vegas police force using the system which could connect to the “computerized files on about 326,000 persons” or Sheriff’s Computer Operations for Protection and Enforcement.¹⁶⁵ Two decades after the introduction of radar, policing Las Vegas incorporated new technology such as “the most sophisticated combination of computer equipment and programming in the field of law enforcement today” and new automatic weapons.¹⁶⁶ However, police officers soon found themselves having to deal with the problems of new technology such as alarm systems that sent out false alarms.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, by the early 1980s new technology became old and needed costly repairs and updating.¹⁶⁸

Three years after the 1973 consolidation of the LVMPD, assessments of the merger ranged widely.¹⁶⁹ Complaints included delayed police response time, manpower shortages, lack

¹⁶⁴ “Sheriff department wins \$250,000 grant,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 20, 1973; “Latest computer equipment for police here,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Jan. 24, 1974, p. 10; “Drug data bank opens in state,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, July. 19, 1974, p. 11; “County’s best bet: Crime data system,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Nov. 27, 1974, p. 15; “Police to get computer dispatch system,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 20, 1975, p. 4. “Vegas communications center now open,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Dec. 15, 1974, p. 13.

¹⁶⁵ Ron Vacchina, “Space-age gadgetry seen for police future,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Aug. 26, 1973, p. 6. Gale Metcalf, “Metro uses advanced technology,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Dec. 21, 1975, p. 3.

¹⁶⁶ Gale Metcalf, “30-year Vegas police veteran retires,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 30, 1975, p. 4. “Police change phone number,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Jan. 15, 1974, p. 2. “Automatic weapons bid discussed by Vegas cops,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 18, 1974, p. 2.

¹⁶⁷ Charles Zobell, “Police, alarm firms at odds,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 7, 1975, p. 15.

¹⁶⁸ Review-Journal Legislative Bureau, “Metro radio gear bond sale OK’d,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Apr. 6, 1983, p. 12.

¹⁶⁹ Gale Metcalf, “Is Metro for the better?,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal* Aug., 10, 1976, p. 8.

of city representation over police budget, and supposedly unnecessary bureaus such as “the Internal Affairs Bureau, Community Relations Bureau, Inspection Services and the Task Force.”¹⁷⁰ Positive comments ranged from “computerized communications system, ... utilization of forces from the Jeep Posse, Aero Squadron and police helicopter” and increased accountability of police conduct.¹⁷¹

The new organization also worked closely with federal law enforcement. In addition, working with federal Drug Enforcement Administration officers, Sheriff Lamb’s LVMPD narcotics division set out to battle illegal drugs in Las Vegas.¹⁷² In the meanwhile, joint federal and local law enforcement operations increased, along with federal intervention into local law enforcement.¹⁷³ With the U.S. Secret Service agents, the LVMPD Intelligence unit targeted counterfeiting operations in the Las Vegas valley.¹⁷⁴ In 1979, for instance, the intelligence unit of the LVMPD in conjunction with the Secret Service seized \$10 million in a counterfeit operation in Las Vegas.¹⁷⁵

From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime, the federal government changed its focus and funding from addressing social problems such as poverty and racial segregation to blaming the poor and minority communities by reinventing race and policing. While the federal government pumped money into local and state law enforcement agencies, the funding for social

¹⁷⁰ *Las Vegas - Clark County Urban Action Committee Task Force Records, 1973-1974*, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

¹⁷¹ Gale Metcalf, “Is Metro for the better?”

¹⁷² “Officers praised in narco raid,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 20, 1973, p. 3.

¹⁷³ “Vegans nabbed by FBI agents,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Nov. 15, 1973, p. 1. Gale Metcalf, “Gunfight ends burglary of police storage room,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Dec. 22, 1978, p. 4.

¹⁷⁴ David Hill, “4 face bogus bill charges,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 10, 1977, p. 3.

¹⁷⁵ James Castello, “\$10 million in bogus bills seized,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Aug. 15, 1979, p. 17.

programs geared to help the poor and uneducated communities of color shrank.¹⁷⁶ As the Nixon Administration tried to reduce and ultimately eliminate the federal government's role of providing social services for the vulnerable poor and helpless segments of the population, George Miller, the Nevada state welfare director appointed by Governor Mike O'Callaghan, began in 1971 to pave the road, which would make the lives of the poor and homeless people of color more difficult.¹⁷⁷ To contest these practices, Ruby Duncan led Operation Life, which provided needed social services for the poor and people of color the federal government discarded for being undeserving poor and homeless, more importantly for being not white.¹⁷⁸

With the federal funding funneled through the LEAA, the LVMPD aggressively targeted and enforced laws in highly segregated poor areas such as the Westside. Moreover, the LEAA funding increased the local and state law enforcement agencies' arrests and the corresponding imprisonment of the vulnerable population on federal welfare assistance.¹⁷⁹ While the LVMPD actively engaged in making arrests and locking up the criminals, over time the overcrowding in prison population worsened. Just four years into its existence, LEAA director James Barrett believed that federal funded programs were working, despite a lack of complete financial account records.¹⁸⁰ However, a *Los Angeles Times* reporter called the LVMPD "a unique and oppressive system of law enforcement" controlled by "the most powerful lawman in Nevada."¹⁸¹

As Las Vegas grew as an urban city, the nature of policing changed. More automobiles

¹⁷⁶ See Karen M. Tani, *States of Dependency*; Loic Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

¹⁷⁷ Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace*, 137.

¹⁷⁸ See *Ruby Duncan Papers on Operation Life, 1972-1992*, Special Collections and Archives, UNLV Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, which contain extensive records of the Operation Life.

¹⁷⁹ Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*.

¹⁸⁰ Cy Ryan, "Federal police funds misspent," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 2, 1977, p. 15.

¹⁸¹ "Sheriff Lamb controls the system," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Apr., 20, 1977, p. 13.

on the open road required discretionary policing of the freedom of driving and more police officers to handle road fatalities.¹⁸² On the other hand, the FBI statistics on crime raised the national awareness of crime and the *Uniform Crime Reports* helped local enforcement agencies such as the LVMPD to expand with the federal funding.¹⁸³ Lurking in the shadows, however, the problem of funding haunted the expanding LVMPD operations.¹⁸⁴ The tension within the LVMPD started to build, as the debate about the increasing LVMPD budget funding between the city of Las Vegas and the Clark County went on in public.¹⁸⁵ While Lamb's urban police expanded its operations, police conduct came under the scrutiny of the Civil Service Board of the LVMPD.¹⁸⁶ In addition, according to the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, the consolidation created the "first official law enforcement Internal Affairs Bureau in Las Vegas" that investigated police misconduct.¹⁸⁷ In 1976, Internal Affairs investigated 419 cases and found "185 instances of police officer or [civilian] employee misconduct."¹⁸⁸

Sheriff Lamb's police officers also took part in community policing, such as the Sheriff's

¹⁸² Gale Metcalf, "Auto deaths keep officers on the go," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May 25, 1975, p. 15. Gale Metcalf, "Cops set for heavy holiday traffic," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 30, 1975, p. 13.

¹⁸³ Gale Metcalf, "FBI statistics compare Vegas crime," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* Mar., 20, 1977, p. 22. Gale Metcalf, "FBI has its hands full in Nevada," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May 23, 1977, p. 11.

¹⁸⁴ Ron Vacchina, "Cop budget furor raging," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Oct. 3, 1973, p. 17; Ron Vacchina, "Sheriff requests 180 additional policemen," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Nov. 15, 1973, p. 1; Ron Vacchina, "Police department may exceed funds," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Dec. 5, 1973, p. 1;

¹⁸⁵ "Police budget better settled locally," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 6, 1974, p. 33. "Cop budget row 'hurting everyone'," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 15, 1974, p. 13.

¹⁸⁶ "30-day city budget delay foreseen" *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 12, 1974, p. 13. "Jan. 8 for 2 fired cops," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Jan. 2, 1974, p. 16. "Cop fired for burglary gets chance for appeal," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Apr. 18, 1974, p. 10. "Las Vegas' cop manual is completed," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 12, 1974, p. 136.

¹⁸⁷ Gale Metcalf, "Police misconduct probes two-fold," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 28, 1975, p. 17.

¹⁸⁸ Gale Metcalf, "Report reveals police, employee misconduct," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Jan. 23, 1977, p. 25.

Junior Police Program, in which police officers candidly talked about crime to children.¹⁸⁹ Still, race played an important role in the LVMPD, which targeted crimes committed by people on the margin of Sin City. In 1975, LVMPD police officers dealt with a race riot at the Valley High School, where “about 50 white students armed with baseball bats, chains, scissors, knives and other weapons” clashed with Black “students from West Las Vegas,” by arresting and driving Black and white students in separate buses to Juvenile Hall.¹⁹⁰ The LVMPD associated Black Panthers in Las Vegas with criminal activities in Las Vegas such as murder and prostitution.¹⁹¹ More important, the LVMPD always carried out its prostitution raids, fencing operations, and drug busts in urban space without disrupting the business of the casino industry, and as far away as possible from white affluent neighborhoods.

The FBI’s campaign against organized crime in Las Vegas unearthed mob ties to the LVMPD during Sheriff Lamb’s final years.¹⁹² As the FBI searched the former detective of the LVMPD’s Organized Crime Bureau, Joseph Blasko, the Las Vegas Strike Force found evidence that tied him to Anthony Spilotro, a well-known mob figure.¹⁹³ FBI also engaged in break-and-entering and wiretapping operations to gather evidence against organized crime in Las Vegas. For instance, in December 1982 Joseph Lombardo, allegedly a mob hit man, was convicted of conspiring to offer U.S. Senator Howard Cannon, Democrat from Nevada, on the wiretapped telephone “a piece of land in Nevada owned by the Teamsters Pension Fund in return for his

¹⁸⁹ Olivia Stewart, “‘Have YOU ever shoplifted?’” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Nov. 16, 1975, p. 143.

¹⁹⁰ Mary Hausch, “Valley High race riot averted as 80 arrested,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 13, 1975, p. 1.

¹⁹¹ Sherman Frederick and Pete Mikla, “Vegas murder try linked to Panthers,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Nov. 23, 1977, p. 1. See Sarah A. Seo, *Policing the Open Road*.

¹⁹² Jane Ann Morrison, “FBI lists final ‘rackets’ warrants,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 27, 1978, p. 1.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

influence in Congress.”¹⁹⁴ As federal intervention into local and state law enforcement increased, the local law enforcement moved more towards community policing and patrolling. In 1982, the LVMPD’s Special Weapons And Tactics unit, which consisted of 15 officers in two squads, started to concentrate on uniform patrol duties away from investigations.¹⁹⁵

Gendered Policing and Policing of Gender

On the night of February 4, 1974, Sheriff Lamb’s LVMPD launched a special Task Force and arrested 17 people on the Strip on various charges related to prostitution.¹⁹⁶ However, only a couple of years after the Task Force’s inception, the LVMPD police officers themselves started to question the idea of the Task Force fighting crime associated with prostitution in Sin City.¹⁹⁷

Priscilla Alexander, the former co-director of the National Task Force of Prostitution and chairman of the Economic Justice Committee for California’s National Organization for Women, noted that the LVMPD’s selective crackdowns on prostitutes showed that women did not have the rights to control their bodies and “prostitution laws should be decriminalized.”¹⁹⁸ Even 100 years after Susan B. Anthony was arrested and convicted for her right to vote, the United States reflected a white male-oriented society that consistently served to satisfy white male interests. The mostly white male police officers in the LVMPD enforced the laws to preserve, protect, and defend values and interests of a white male-oriented society that controlled women’s bodies and decided when, where, and how to enforce the so-called prostitution laws in Sin City.

¹⁹⁴ Senator Cannon was never charged. See Associated Press, “Lombardo: I’m a victim of the justice system,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May 11, 1983, p. 1.

¹⁹⁵ Surprisingly, the SWAT officers faced heavily armed suspects only in rare occasions. Richard Cornett, “SWAT officers replaced,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May 22, 1982, p. 25.

¹⁹⁶ Gale Metcalf, “Is Metro’s Task Force worth it?,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb., 9, 1976, p. 13.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ C.J. Boyer, “Feminist to discuss prostitution,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 10, 1983, p. 32.

The LVMPD was born out of the white male-oriented society that belittled and denigrated women's qualifications and fitness to be a police officer. At the same time, a study of the LVMPD case records in 1973 and 1974 showed that Las Vegas working women "going to and from work" were vulnerable targets for rapists "in areas containing the majority of Clark County's tourist population."¹⁹⁹ Meanwhile, the necessity of having women on the police force such as vice squads brought women into the LVMPD, which led to tensions with mostly white male police officers who opposed equal treatment for women.²⁰⁰ On the other hand, prostitution ordinances in Sin City have been tried time after time but never managed to curb prostitution in Las Vegas. For instance, in 1976, a Las Vegas city ordinance made the prostitutes liable for the criminal activity of prostitution.²⁰¹ By 1980, no right-minded legislators would dare to propose another prostitution ordinance.²⁰²

Meanwhile, tensions and conflicts showed up within the LVMPD leadership. Running against Sheriff John McCarthy in the 1982 election, former Undersheriff John Moran and other challengers did not see the future of the LVMPD in the same way that McCarthy did.²⁰³ As a matter of fact, Moran, who had been Undersheriff since the 1973 merger, openly criticized his boss Sheriff McCarthy in public for spying on his political enemies, and in 1980 McCarthy fired

¹⁹⁹ Gale Metcalf, "Rapes study warns women," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 5, 1975, p. 19.

²⁰⁰ "Women cops: Sure get for Las Vegas," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Apr. 21, 1974, p. 59.

"Rape unit in money trouble," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May 29, 1974, p. 15. "First lady cop turns sergeant," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Aug. 1, 1974, p. 13. "Vegas gets four more women cops; total now 9," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Aug. 13, 1974, p. 3.

²⁰¹ "Prostitution ordinance to be proposed," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Jan. 18, 1976, p. 17.

²⁰² Ed Vogel, "New law flops; hookers flourish," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 17, 1980, p. 17; Ed Vogel, "Vegas prostitutes: Block 16 to 1980," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 17, 1980, p. 17;

²⁰³ "Sheriff demotions urged," *Las Vegas Review Journal*, Feb. 13, 1980, p. 12. Rebecca Kuzins and Dolores Wood, "Moran nixes McCarthy offer of reinstatement, demotion," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May. 31, 1980, p. 1. James Kastelic, "Davis plans to challenge Sheriff McCarthy," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 12, 1982, p. 2.

Moran.²⁰⁴ Mirroring the traditional role of a good woman behind a good man in the White House, Goldie Moran acted as a helpmate and supported her husband, who said that he asked her input on police programs because “We men sometimes get tunnel vision, and think only in the macho way.”²⁰⁵ Moran’s views on policing minorities, women, and juveniles opened a public debate on the nature of policing in Las Vegas.

By the early 1980s, the LVMPD became a modern police department with a forensics lab and criminologists investigating crime scene evidence.²⁰⁶ In Sin City, the problems and tensions within the LVMPD flared up in the 1980s after the Equal Rights Amendment failed to pass. The coming of the late 1970s and early 1980s bespoke the spirit of times as Ronald Reagan and the New Right movement slapped down the ERA.²⁰⁷ Women’s rights neither to their bodies nor to equal pay for equal work were respected. Against all odds, Lieutenant Debra Gauthier became an LVMPD police officer in 1980, however, after 21 years of service in the LVMPD her career ended after her character and fitness as a leader were called into question when she scored the highest on the captain’s promotional exam in 1997.²⁰⁸ Gauthier was accused of retaliating against a senior sergeant who filed a gender discrimination complaint on her and she was subsequently dismissed by Sheriff Jerry Keller.²⁰⁹

To compound the lives of the people who practiced the world’s oldest profession, in the early 1980s, a mysterious disease called Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome caused by

²⁰⁴ Clyde Welas, “Undersheriff Moran fired,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Apr. 7, 1980, p. 91.

²⁰⁵ A. D. Hopkins “Helpmate,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Aug. 4, 1985, p. 159-160.

²⁰⁶ Brad Peterson, “Metro crime lab cracks tough cases,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Dec., 4, 1983, p. 175.

²⁰⁷ Melvin Urofsky and Paul Finkelman, *Documents of American Constitutional and Legal History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), Vol. II, p. 807 - 816.

²⁰⁸ Debra Gauthier, *Bright Lights Dark Places: Pioneering as a Female Police Officer in Las Vegas* (Middletown, DE: Alliance for Indie Publishers, 2015).

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

Human Immunodeficiency Virus started to haunt prostitutes.²¹⁰ In Las Vegas, prostitutes not only became vulnerable to this deadly infectious disease as baits to lure men to Sin City but also became easy target of the LVMPD's prostitution stings in the early 1980s when this infectious disease started to spread among the general population in the United States. In 1981, a teacher from Illinois filed a lawsuit against the Sheriff McCarthy and the LVMPD for arresting her for vagrancy prostitution because the Internal Affairs Bureau refused to listen to her complaint.²¹¹

The fact that workers in Las Vegas form the backbone of the casino industry did not stop the police department from using violence.²¹² More specifically, Las Vegas witnessed two major strikes in 1976 and 1984, in which the LVMPD got involved and violence erupted between the strikers and the police. In 1976, Al Bramlet, the Union leader, led the 22,000 Culinary Union members into a 15-day strike against the 15 Strip hotels, which resulted in arrests of the picketers and protesters clashing with police officers.²¹³ The next year, Al Bramlet was kidnapped and murdered by Tom Hanley and Gramby Hanley.²¹⁴ During the more costly 75-day Culinary Strike in 1984, when some 30,000 hotel workers struck against the Strip hotels, the LVMPD riot

²¹⁰ "AIDS tests planned for legal brothels," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Nov. 22, 1985, p. 23. For a history of policing vice, see Anna Lvovsky, *Vice Patrol: Cops, Courts, and the Struggle Over Urban Gay Life Before Stonewall* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021).

²¹¹ "Illinois woman sues over prostitution arrest," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Dec. 1, 1981, p. 37.

²¹² John J. Glitch, "Police brutality charge," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, April 5, 1984, p. 1.

²¹³ Nevada Resort Association took out an excerpt, "Culinary Union strike would hurt everyone," *The Valley Times*, Mar. 4, 1976, as an advertisement in *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 15, 1976, p. 7. Gail Wesson, "Strikers blockade Caesars in massive showdown effort," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 23, 1976, p. 1. "Strikers' mass protest cut short," *Las Vegas Review Journal*, Mar. 24, 1976, p. 1. "Vegas losing \$15,000 a day," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 23, 1976, p. 1. "Strike leaves violent scar," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Apr. 4, 1976, p. 3. Gail Wesson, "1976 Strip walkout took its 'toke'," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Apr. 4, 1976, p. 3.

²¹⁴ Gale Metcalf and Gary Ebbels, "Bramlet Discovery Won't Mean Arrest," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 18, 1977, p. 1. Brent Whiting, "\$1 million bond set for Hanleys," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Apr. 29, 1977, p. 1. Gary Ebbels, "Bramlet death tale recounted," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May 11, 1977, p. 1.

police officers arrested and jailed about 900 picketers on the Strip.²¹⁵ Las Vegas culinary workers would strike again and the relationship between the Culinary Union and the Strip hotels remained strained at best.

Furthermore, policing Sin City meant drawing an arbitrary line between what was permissible and what was not. Police officers went after poor communities of color, prostitutes, drug dealers, and casino industry workers at times with the help of federal funding. Cherry picking targets and selective law enforcement did not curtail rising crime rates and policing in Sin City did not address the underlying causes of poverty and homelessness, such as lack of access to education, trainings for new jobs, and business opportunities.

Black Crime and White Racism

For hundreds of years, public space has been used to justify white racism in the United States. White male identities have subordinated identities of color in policing public space through violence such as lynching in the Jim Crow Era and so-called justified homicide in what Michelle Alexander has called the New Jim Crow Era.²¹⁶ Fear and hatred fed on each other to bring racist attitudes toward other human beings and segregation in public space transformed into systematized incarceration of Black people through policing so-called “Black Crime.” When Black on Black Crime is discussed, the focus of the conversation is the Blackness of crime, not the crime itself, as if criminality is inherent in being Black.²¹⁷ The concept of Black

²¹⁵ Iver Peterson, “Strike dims the Glitter of Las Vegas,” *The New York Times*, Apr. 22, 1984, Section 1, p. 14. Myram Borders, “Strike ends on Las Vegas ‘strip’ ,” *UPI Archives*, June 15, 1984.

²¹⁶ See Erwin Chemerinsky, *Presumed guilty: How the Supreme Court Empowered the Police and Subverted Civil Rights* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2021) and Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*.

²¹⁷ Tera Eva Agyepong, *The Criminalization of Black Children: Race, Gender, and Delinquency in Chicago’s Juvenile Justice System, 1899 - 1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

Crime contained bias against people of color, especially Blacks, embedded in white supremacy, which claimed being white was the highest form of human evolution based on eugenics and social Darwinism although the white gaze on Black Crime revealed white racism against people of color more than anything else.²¹⁸

The federal government was largely responsible for the making of the myth of Black Crime in America. In the 1960s and 1970s, the LEAA aided the local and state law enforcement agencies with federal funding and in the process infused the intoxicating ideology of white supremacy embedded in the white male perspective of the Others.²¹⁹ For instance, it was the view of the LEAA that “Black Crime” existed in the United States.²²⁰ In Las Vegas, the 1960s and 1970s signaled a transition period from the segregated Jim Crow era to modern times, the white perspective on urban crisis consisted of crimes committed by Blacks, which were categorically labeled as Black Crime.

Black Crime, the phrase itself, signifies a psychopathic hatred of the Other described by Edward Said. By distinguishing Black Crime from crimes in general, the LEAA signified that Black criminality was somehow different from crimes in general. Black Crime reflects how much bias and prejudice dominated the LEAA agenda. For example, the LEAA framed crime in poor Black communities in terms of “violent and property crimes” against Blacks, especially “black teenagers.”²²¹ More important, Black on Black crime justified not only white domination

²¹⁸ The myth of white supremacy gained considerable traction with the Scopes Trial, in which William Jennings Bryan, who believed that eugenics and social Darwinism would lead mankind into violence against each other, was ridiculed and shamed by Jim Crow society. See *The State of Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes* (1925).

²¹⁹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978).

²²⁰ See Herrington J. Bryce, ed., *Black Crime: a police view*, Joint Center for Political Studies, Police Foundation, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, Washington, D.C., 1977, p. 1-168 *LEAA/OJP Retrospective: 30 Years of Federal Support to State and Local Criminal Justice, Summary, July 11, 1996, Washington DC.*

²²¹ See Herrington J. Bryce, ed., *Black Crime: a police view*, p. 1 - 18.

of public space, but also subjugation of Black criminality. Black criminality exemplified how narrow-minded and obsessed law enforcement officials targeted and persecuted minority communities in the Black ghettos especially.

White supremacy harbored hatred of the unknown and, at the same time, white male insecurity. Police violence toward vulnerable minorities, women, and children showed that white supremacy was deeply embedded into our society, which condoned police violence against people who could not defend themselves against such violence. However, when the public lost trust in the police officers who were supposed to protect and serve the public interests, civil uprisings and the cycle of violence destroyed the very foundations of our society. Police officers acting on the ideology of white supremacy lost the public trust because white supremacy served only mistaken and outdated white male interests.

During the War on Crime, so-called Black Crime had special meanings in the 1960s and 1970s. In the United States, the white perspective on the definition of crime set the standards for the enforcement of the laws. For instance, by providing a white perspective on Black problems, the 1965 Moynihan Report under the Johnson Administration set the tone of law enforcement in Black neighborhoods in the United States.²²² Moreover, employing white perspective on civil disorders, the 1968 Kerner Commission Report laid the foundation for police relations in Black community.²²³ Misguided and misinformed understandings of urban problems and civil disorders set the racist framework of the law enforcement in urban space, which exacerbated growing urban problems such as lack of jobs and access to education and training for new vocational skills.

²²² Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, Office of Policy Planning and Research, United States Department of Labor, March, 1965.

²²³ *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*, Kerner Commission, 1967.

The 1968 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act, which created the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, was both reactive and proactive. It funded local and state law enforcement agencies for crime fighting activities, updating record-keeping, police education and training. According to William J. Bopp and Donald O. Schultz, in their *A Short History of American Law Enforcement*, the civil unrests and urban riots in the 1960s prompted police militancy.²²⁴ In the early 1970s, Special Weapons And Tactics was created as a direct response to “deal with rare acts of extremist violence, barricaded suspects, or armed confrontations with police.”²²⁵ Social protests against police action in the 1960s also became the impetus for transformation of local and state police unions to organize and form professional organizations.²²⁶ The federal government during the ten years of the LEAA provided the money needed to fund local and state law enforcement agencies in their unsuccessful War on Crime.²²⁷

As the new police force interacted with people in Las Vegas, they felt the increasing presence of the LVMPD in their neighborhoods and their awareness of systematic failures of the criminal justice and prison systems.²²⁸ In just three years of the LVMPD’s existence , the cost of the LVMPD’s campaign against urban crime (i.e. jail overcrowding) began to appear.²²⁹

²²⁴ William J. Bopp and Donald O. Schultz, *A Short History of American Law Enforcement* (Springfield, Illinois: Banner Stone House, 1972), 135 - 159.

²²⁵ Alex S. Vitale *The End of Policing* (New York: Verso, 2021), 11. According to Griffin, the LVMPD changed the Tactical Unit into SWAT in 1976; see Griffin, *Policing Las Vegas*, 53.

²²⁶ David R. Johnson, *American Law Enforcement: A History* (Saint Louis, Missouri: Forum Press, 1981), 185 -194.

²²⁷ Lawrence M. Friedman, *Crime and Punishment in American History* (New York: BasicBooks, 1993), 261 -276.

²²⁸ “Prison system failures eyed,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June. 6, 1974, p. 7. “Lamb nixes prison move to LV,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, July 25, 1974, p. 2. “Judge wants court help - case load heavy,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, July 29, 1974, p. 9. “South Vegas, downtown crime up,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Nov. 25, 1974, p. 1. “Sheriff Lamb orders personnel changes,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Dec. 3, 1974, p. 10.

²²⁹ Gale Metcalf, “Metro Jail Annex overcrowded,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 26, 1976, p. 33. Rick Keir, “Prisoners still not getting promised medical attention,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Dec. 5, 1976, p. 71.

Inmates in Clark County Jail filed a lawsuit, which resulted in a Jail Consent Decree.²³⁰ In 1978, Sheriff Lamb agreed on a Consent Decree to address jail conditions.²³¹ On August 22, 1980, Judge Foley ordered the LVMPD jail system to limit the population.²³² This revealed the costs of Sheriff Lamb's War on Crime in Las Vegas.

Tensions and conflicts within the LVMPD clashed over the conditions of the jail overcrowding. Sheriff John McCarthy defeated Lamb in the 1978 election after criticizing Lamb's special crime fighting police force. Moreover, McCarthy argued against Las Vegas City Commissioner Ron Lurie's work program to use Clark County Jail inmates' labor.²³³ The *Las Vegas Review Journal* noted that "a series of pretrial release programs" could ease the overcrowding crisis in Clark County Jail.²³⁴ However, according to Attorney General Dick Bryan, there was no other place for prisoners brought in by state law enforcement officers.²³⁵

²³⁰ *Earl E. West, individually, and on behalf of all unconvicted persons who are, or may be, inmates in the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department jail system; Jack McAllister, individually, and on behalf of all persons who are, or may be, inmates in the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department jail system, and who are incarcerated for the service of any sentence of conviction or violation of parole or probation, Plaintiffs-Petitioners, and United States of America, Plaintiff-Intervenor, v. Ralph J. Lamb, in his capacity as Sheriff of Clark County, Nevada, and as Chairman of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Commission; and Manuel Cortez, Sam Bowler and David Canter, in their official capacities as members of the City Commission; William Briare, in his capacity as Mayor of the City of Las Vegas; Roy Woofter, in his capacity as a member of the City Commission of the City of Las Vegas, Nevada, and Thalia M. Dondero, R. J. Ronzone, Jack R. Petitti and Robert N. Broadbent, in their capacity as members of the County Commission for the County of Clark, State of Nevada, Defendants-Respondents*, No. Civil LV 77-118 RDF, Aug. 22, 1980, 497 F. Supp. 989, United States District Court, D. Nevada. *Clark County, Nevada Jail Consent Decree Implementation Plan, 1979*, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. "Jail suit decree studied," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 28, 1978, p. 3.

²³¹ *West v. Lamb*, 497 F. Supp. 989; 1980 U.S. Dist. Lexis 13388.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ Tricia White, "Lamb, McCarthy fire charges," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Oct. 26, 1978, p. 5. J.L. Dinoff, "McCarthy criticizes prisoner work plan," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May, 2, 1979, p. 7.

²³⁴ Jane Ann Morrison, "Solving the jail crisis," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Dec. 2, 1979, p. 73.

²³⁵ "Sheriffs must find place for prisoners," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Jan. 25, 1980, p. 21.

The Clark County Commissioners proposed building another county jail as a way out of the city-county conflicts over police budget and overcrowding jail.²³⁶ Sheriff McCarthy also created a constitutional crisis when he appointed police officers who did not have the highest civil service ranks in the department into positions of assistant sheriff and commander.²³⁷

An existential threat appeared in January of 1980 when Clark County District Judge Joseph S. Pavlikowski granted the City of Las Vegas' partial summary judgment for declaratory relief against Clark County and ruled that Chapter 280 of the Nevada Revised Statutes, which mandated consolidation of county and city police agencies in any city that is the county seat of a county having a population of 200,000 or more, was unconstitutional.²³⁸ In the meanwhile, the LVMPD desperately looked for a solution for jail overcrowding and rising prison crime as the city and county struggled over the funding.²³⁹ On May 26, 1981, Justice Cameron Batjer, writing for the Nevada Supreme Court, ruled that Chapter 280 of the Nevada Revised Statute, which was first enacted in 1973, was constitutional but the amendments in 1977 and 1979, which came up with the funding formula for the LVMPD between Las Vegas and Clark County, were

²³⁶ "\$28 million bond sale proposed for county jail," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 5, 1980, p. 5.

²³⁷ Judge Manoukian held Sheriff was not required to select appointive officers with the highest civil service ranks on June 4, 1980. See *Acklin v. McCarthy*, 96 Nev. 520; 612 P. 2d 219; 1980 Nev. Lexis 635.

²³⁸ See *County of Clark, By and Through its Board of County Commissioners, Thalia Dondero, Chairman, David Canter, Vice Chairman, Robert N. Broadbent, Sam Bowler, Richard Ronzone, Manuel Cortez and Jack Petitti, constituting said Board, and Sheriff of Clark County, Ralph J. Lamb, Appellants, v. City of Las Vegas, By and Through its Board of City Commissioners, William H. Briare, Ron Lurie, Paul J. Christensen, Roy Woofter and Myron E. Leavitt, constituting said Board, Respondents, No. 12626*, Supreme Court of Nevada, May 26, 1981, 628 Pacific Reporter, 2d series., Nevada, p. 1120 - 1123 and 97 Nevada Reports, 97 Nev. 1981, p. 262 - 265. I thank Jim Rich, UNLV Law librarian for locating the court case records.

²³⁹ "\$28 million bond sale proposed for county jail," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 5, 1980, p. 5. Ed, Vogel, "Prison crime eats up attorney general's budget," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 20, 1981, p. 9.

unconstitutional.²⁴⁰

The following day, the Nevada State Legislature passed Senate Bill 386, which Governor Robert List signed into law as Chapter 347 of the Nevada Revised Statutes, and this legislation made changes to iron out conflicts between the city and county on funding the LVMPD and jails. According to Sheriff McCarthy, as a 24-hour tourist destination, Las Vegas attracted about 1,000,000 visitors per month and the LVMPD needed to grow with better legislation.²⁴¹ SB 386 solved the problems of funding city and county jails by assigning jail duties to city and county governments; in addition, the bill saved the LVMPD's consolidated structure by apportioning the police commissioners between city and county.²⁴²

But the problem of institutional racism remained and the experience of Larry Bolden as a Black police officer in Las Vegas sheds light on how it was embedded in the LVMPD. Officer Bolden joined the Las Vegas Police Department in 1958 and served 33 years as a police officer until 1991.²⁴³ In 1970, City Attorney Earl Gripenrog charged Lt. Bolden with cheating on a police exam. Six police officers who took the exam testified and accused Bolden of cheating, because they believed that Bolden was guilty of wrongdoing, although none of the accusers had seen Bolden cheating.²⁴⁴ For the defense in the Civil Service Commission hearing, Bolden's

²⁴⁰ Tricia White, "County has copies of cop merger suit," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Oct. 11, 1978, p. 88. Gary Ebbels, "Metro Merger Ruled Unconstitutional," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 14, 1980, p. 1. Chris Broderick, "Nevada Supreme Court upholds legality of Metro," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May 28, 1981, p. 4.

²⁴¹ See Senate Bill 386, "An Act relating to metropolitan; police departments; making various changes to the law governing their organization, powers, duties and financing; and providing other matters properly relating thereto," *Nevada Legislature Sixty-First Session, 1981, Summary of Legislation*, prepared by Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau, Sep. 30, 1982.

²⁴² James Kastelic, "Metro police's legality confirmed," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May 28, 1981, p. 2. James Kastelic, "Police association opposed to county control of jail," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 11, 1981, p. 12.

²⁴³ Ed Koch, "Bolden, pioneer Las Vegas police officer, dies at 63," *Las Vegas Sun*, Apr. 4, 2000.

²⁴⁴ Penny Levin, "Five accuse officer of cheating," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Nov. 11, 1970.

attorney Harry Reid stated that no evidence was presented and no police officers saw Bolden cheating.²⁴⁵ The Las Vegas Civil Service Board, in a three-to-two split decision, ruled against promoting Lieutenant Bolden to captain.²⁴⁶ Bolden fought the Las Vegas Civil Service Board's decision all the way up to the Nevada Supreme Court and on November 26, 1973, the court overruled the Las Vegas Civil Service Board's order to deny his eligibility for promotion to the rank of police captain.²⁴⁷ In 1976, Captain Bolden became a founding member of the National Organization of Black Police Officers and he was promoted in 1979 to deputy chief in the LVMPD.²⁴⁸ It is important to note that Black police officers themselves identified and addressed racism within the police institution that unjustly discriminated the people of color.²⁴⁹

On December 28, 1984, the United States Justice Department filed a civil rights lawsuit against the LVMPD.²⁵⁰ Prohibited discriminatory policies and practices named in the lawsuit involved employment, testing, promotion, transfer, assignment, supervision and compensation of

²⁴⁵ Penny Levin, "Bolden ruling expected in week, Ashworth says," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 1970.

²⁴⁶ "Four police officers promoted to captain," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Apr. 28, 1970; Ray Leydecker, "Bolden Loses Bid for Captain's Rank," *Las Vegas Sun*, Dec. 29, 1970.

²⁴⁷ Thompson, C.J., and Mowbray, Gunderson, Batjer and Zenoff, JJ., concur., *City of Las Vegas v. Bolden*, No. 7270, Supreme Court of Nevada, 89 Nev. 526 (Nev. 1973), 516 P. 2d 110.

²⁴⁸ James Forman Jr. discusses the effect of the rise of Black police officers in the third chapter of his *Locking Up Our Own; Crime and Punishment in Black America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017).

²⁴⁹ Tera Agyepong, "In the Belly of the Beast: Black Policemen Combat Police Brutality in Chicago, 1968 - 1983," *The Journal of African American History*, Vol. 98, No. 2, p. 253 - 276.

²⁵⁰ *United States of America, Plaintiffs v. Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department; Moran, John in his capacity as Sheriff, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department; Las Vegas metropolitan Police Department; Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Fiscal Affairs Committee; Guinn, Kenneth C., in his capacity as President and, Lurie, Ronald, Levy, Al, Cortez, Manuel and, Hayes, Karen W., in their capacities as members of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Fiscal Affairs Committee; Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Civil Service Board; Campbell, Robert, in his capacity as Chairman, and Clark, John, Agonia, Robert, King, Chuck, Boyer, David, in their capacities as members of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Civil Board; City of Las Vegas; Clark County, Defendants*, CV-LV-84-809, RDF. Phil Pattee, "Black cops take action with Metro," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 13, 1985, p. 1.

black, Hispanic, and female police officers.²⁵¹ On June 12, 1985, the Nevada Black Police Officers Association filed a motion to intervene in the federal racial discrimination case.²⁵² The Nevada Black Police Officers Association stated that no new Black officers were hired from 1973 to 1983, that no Black officers served in Homicide, Intelligence, Vice and Narcotics, except one, that no Black officers were paid the same as white officers for overtime, that Black officers received less for wage, and that less than five percent of the police force were Black.²⁵³ The litigation involved a number of witnesses and testimonies of police officers over a couple of years that showed a history of policies and practices that resisted and violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, and the State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act of 1972, as amended by State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act of 1976.²⁵⁴ According to James J. Jimmerson, who represented the Nevada Black Police Officers Association, the LVMPD had one of the most ““overwhelming and outrageous”” records in the country.²⁵⁵ The public debate stormed in after Sheriff John Moran stated that minorities and female candidates did not have qualifications that white males possessed.²⁵⁶

²⁵¹ *USA v. LVMPD*, National Archives and Records Administration, The National Archives at Riverside, 21, Records of District Courts of the United States, U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada, Las Vegas, Civil Case Files, 1952-2005, NAID 603762, Folder Title 84-809, Vol. 1 [2/2], Documents 1-19 [2/95], Box Number 1984-143, p. 1 - 9.

²⁵² *USA v. LVMPD*.

²⁵³ *USA v. LVMPD*, Folder Title 84-809, Vol. 1 [1/2], Documents 1-19 [1/95], Box Number 1984-143, p. 1 - 7.

²⁵⁴ *USA v. LVMPD*, Folder Title 84-809, Vol. 1 [2/2], Documents 1-19 [2/95], Box Number 1984-143, p. 1 - 9.

²⁵⁵ Phil Pattee, “Black cops take action with Metro,”.

²⁵⁶ Public record request - NPR2021-0015922 - to the LVMPD, asking questions about the number of police officers who were of color from 1973 to 2008 and the same for police officers who were of women was answered with burdensome and no duty to create record. Ned Day, “A reader raps the sheriff’s minority hiring stance,” Commentary, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Jan. 27, 1985, p. 27. “Judge approves group’s request,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Aug. 9, 1985, p. 23. Phil LaVelle, “Police seek to keep feds from viewing two employee files,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 19, 1986, p. 19. Alan Tobin, “Police OK new exam after suit,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, July 2, 1987, p. 12, 15. Alan Tobin, “Police to seek more recruits,” *Las Vegas*

On October 20, 1987, U.S. District Judge Roger Foley ordered Consent Decree to stop the practice of racial discrimination and to give equal opportunities to minorities and to replace written exams.²⁵⁷ The Consent Decree was agreed upon by the United States, the Nevada Black Police Officers Association, Metro and the City of Las Vegas and Clark County as a settlement of the case.²⁵⁸ Nevertheless, despite the Consent Decree, the LVMPD would remain mostly white and male afterward.²⁵⁹

In 1983, the sobering fact that less than 5 percent of the LVMPD officers represented minorities such as Blacks and Hispanics, well below the national average of 8 percent, had

Review-Journal, July 10, 1987, p. 13. Alan Tobin, "Policeman demoted for violating rules on sex, ethnic, racial slurs," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Oct. 10, 1987, p. 35. Warren Bates, "Consent decree on police employment procedures filed," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Oct. 16, 1987, p. 13. I thank again Jim Rich, UNLV Law librarian for research assistance.

²⁵⁷ *USA v. LVMPD*, Folder Title 84-809, Vol. 10 [7/7], Documents 210-278 [35/95], Box Number 1984-143, p. 1 - 29.

²⁵⁸ *USA v. LVMPD*, Folder Title 84-809, Vol. 10 [7/7] Documents 210-278 [35/95], Box number 1984 - 143, p. 1 - 29. The Consent Decree consists of eleven sections:

Section I. (General)

1. to ensure women, Blacks and Hispanics equal treatment in all employment positions
2. not to engage in any act or practice with respect to the recruitment or hire of applicants for employment in Metro on the basis of sex, race or national origin
3. not to retaliate against any person

Section II. (Qualification and Selection Criteria)

4. design replacement of current written exams
5. retain testing firm for police officer
6. agree to analysis of jobs,

Section III. (Qualification and Selection Criteria),

Section IV. (Transfer Relief for Incumbent Women, Black and Hispanic Police Officers and Corrections Officers),

Section V. (Recruitment for Non-Commissioned Positions in Metro),

Section VI. (Remedial Relief),

Section VII. (Implementation of Individual Relief),

Section VIII. (Reporting and Recordkeeping),

Section IX. (Compliance with this Decree),

Section X. (Costs), and

Section XI. (Retention of Jurisdiction).

²⁵⁹ Dana Gentry, "Metro predominantly white and male as it nears milestone," *Nevada Current*, Aug. 2, 2021.

special meanings for Blacks and Hispanics who were stopped by the white LVMPD officers with lethal weapons drawn and pointed at them.²⁶⁰ Up until 1983, few Black or Hispanic officers made it to supervisory positions in the LVMPD, which applied racial profiling methods to both suspects and officers alike.²⁶¹ In Las Vegas, where Jim Crow laws were enforced by police officers in the past, the fact that policing in Black and Hispanic communities was left to mostly white officers, who did not share the views that problems of disparity in minority representation in the LVMPD existed, not only had different meanings but also reminded those who remembered of the painful past.²⁶² Senator Joe Neal, known as “the Westside Slugger,” started his Nevada State Senate service in 1973 as the first Black senator in Nevada.²⁶³ Fighting for social justice for the people in Nevada who do not have the means to defend their rights, Neal addressed social injustice in Nevada for over three decades.²⁶⁴ In 1983, Senator Neal criticized Sheriff Moran’s LVMPD for police brutality in West Las Vegas Black neighborhoods and proposed an independent review board to investigate police misconduct on top of the internal affairs unit of the LVMPD.²⁶⁵ In his reaction to the fact that the bill, which the LVMPD opposed, died in the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator Neal stated that people have the rights to defend themselves against police violence by “any means necessary.”²⁶⁶

²⁶⁰ Larry Werner, “For blacks, Latinos: A painful legacy,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 4, 1983, p. 1.

²⁶¹ Larry Werner, “Culture Shock: Minority officers feel caught between two worlds,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 6, 1983, p. 13.

²⁶² “Moran’s ‘Get tough’ getting into trouble,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 6, 1983, p. 13. James J. Dillon, “A word on police and the minorities,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 20, 1983, p. 19.

²⁶³ John Smith, *The Westside Slugger*.

²⁶⁴ John Przybys and Glenn Puit, “Joe Neal dies, first Black state senator in Nevada,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*,

²⁶⁵ Dale Pugh, “Formation of independent officer review board urged,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 1, 1983, p. 13, 28. Review-Journal Legislative Bureau, “Metro criticizes officer review plan,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 12, 1983, p. 22.

²⁶⁶ Dale Pugh, “Neal urges constituents to defend selves,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 15,

Consequences

The United States Supreme Court sanctioned police violence and, in consequence, the police officers in Las Vegas and other cities across the nation had the position, power, and authority to use deadly force against civilians. The Supreme Court ruled in *Terry v. Ohio* (1968) that police officers had the right to “stop and search” suspects.²⁶⁷ In *Tennessee v. Garner* (1985), the Supreme Court held that police officers had the right to use deadly force against the fleeing or resisting suspect.²⁶⁸ In Las Vegas and other cities across the nation, the police officers had the legal rights to shoot to kill civilians based on selective enforcement of federal laws. The police officers, in turn, aggressively targeted poor communities of citizens of color and made judgment calls to arrest and use deadly force against the suspects.

Police officers in Las Vegas have a reputation for using violence and police violence was used as a method of intimidation to silence and control the subject by means of physical and mental pain inflicted upon the subject. While the LVMPD built its reputation for violence, complaints against the LVMPD police violence started to pile on top of its notoriety for its rough treatment of civilians, especially Blacks.²⁶⁹ In his *A Pattern of Violence: How the Law Classifies Crimes and What It Means for Justice*, David Sklansky argues that police violence gets little or no supervision from outside the institution.²⁷⁰ Tera Agyepong addresses the institutional racism within a police department in her “In the Belly of the Beast: Black Policemen Combat Police

1983, p. 11.

²⁶⁷ Royce Brier, “Supreme Court Gives Patrolmen a Break,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, July 2, 1968, p. 17.

²⁶⁸ Associated Press, “Court will decide police shooting law,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, March 20, 1984, p. 17.

²⁶⁹ “3 blacks testify in rights case,” *Las Vegas Review Journal*, June 12, 1974, p. 41. “Shooting ‘justifiable homicide’,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Nov. 22, 1974, p. 2.

²⁷⁰ David Alan Sklansky, *A Pattern of Violence: How the Law Classifies Crimes and What It Means for Justice* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2021).

Brutality in Chicago, 1968-1983,” in which she demonstrates how racial bias within police culture determine the relations between the criminal justice system and the African American community.²⁷¹ It is important to note that the history of police-involved shootings in Southern Nevada shows a pattern of questionable use of police violence towards civilians.²⁷² Examining case studies of police brutality before and after the 1973 consolidation reveals not only a history of violence associated with the police force in Las Vegas, but also how police violence changed over time at local and state law enforcement agencies.²⁷³

²⁷¹ Tera Agyepong, “In the Belly of the Beast,” p. 253 - 276.

²⁷² The Southern Nevada Human Relations Commission, *A Report to the Honorable Oran K. Gragson Mayor, City of Las Vegas on Complaints of Police Brutality*, October, 1966, Oran K. Gragson Papers, 1955-1998, Box 12, folder 9, UNLV Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada: Las Vegas.

²⁷³ Lawrence Mower, Alan Maimon, and Brian Haynes, “A Dangerous Business,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Deadly Force: When Las Vegas Police Shoot, and Kill, Part I: Always Justified, November 27, 2011, p. 108. Alan Maimon, “A History of Violence,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 27, 2011, p. 110. Lawrence Mower, “Shoot? Don’t Shoot?,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 27, 2011, p. 113. Lawrence Mower, “Troubles Follow Some,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 27, 2011, p. 114. Alan Maimon, “Above Reproach?,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 27, 2011, p. 115. Lawrence Mower, Alan Maimon, and Brian Haynes, “In Numbers, Deadly Trends,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Deadly Force: When Las Vegas Police Shoot, and Kill, Part II: 142 Dead, and Rising, November 28, 2011, p. 55. “Where the shots were fired,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 28, 2011, p. 57. Alan Maimon, “Now it’s time for change,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 28, 2011, p. 58. Alan Maimon, “National data on shootings by police not collected” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 28, 2011, p. 58. Lawrence Mower, “Justifiable Yet Avoidable,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Deadly Force: When Las Vegas Police Shoot, and Kill, Part III: Quick to Shoot, Slow to Change, November 29, 2011, p. 51. Lawrence Mower, “Few Tough Questions,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 29, 2011, p. 54. Lawrence Mower, “Fewer Shoots, But Why?,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 29, 2011, p. 56. Alan Maimon, “Justified, But Still a Lesson,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 29, 2011, p. 57. Lawrence Mower, “Policing Themselves,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Deadly Force: When Las Vegas Police Shoot, and Kill, Part IV: Broken System, Shattered Lives, November 30, 2011, p. 69. Lawrence Mower, “Face to Face with Death,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 30, 2011, p. 72. Alan Maimon, “The Survivors,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 30, 2011, p. 73. Brian Haynes and Lawrence Mower, “Can Police Shoot Less?,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Deadly Force: When Las Vegas Police Shoot, and Kill, Part V: Better ways, December 1, 2011, p. 74. Brian Haynes, “The Search for the Ideal Weapon,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, December 1, 2011, p. 76. Alan Maimon, “Nowhere to Turn,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, December 1, 2011, p. 77. Lawrence Mower, “‘We’ve got a problem’,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Deadly Force: When

More important, the police brutality in Las Vegas had different meanings for different Las Vegas communities. For instance, in 1975, attorney Charles L. Kellar filed a civil rights lawsuit against Sheriff Lamb on behalf of a Black couple, whose only means of livelihood - their janitorial service truck - was repossessed while they were filing for bankruptcy, and “all black residents of Clark County who are being denied their civil rights and equal protection of the law and the opportunity to own and control property.”²⁷⁴ In 1977, a federal jury found that the police officers did not violate the civil rights of the destitute Leslie and Vicki Cleveland, who needed their only means to make a living.²⁷⁵

Perhaps Bertha Walker, supervisor of the LVMPD tailor shop, best expressed the culture and mood of the LVMPD in the 1970s when she stated casually “If a guy gets too rough and his uniform does not last, it’s my job to get on him,” but she added, “It’s much harder to tailor women because they must be fit in a man’s uniform and the shape is not the same.”²⁷⁶ In the 1970s, mostly white LVMPD police officers’ promotion, marriage and death often made the news in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*.²⁷⁷ In 1977, Grace McCullough, a secretary at the LVMPD and a happily married wife of a police officer, stated, “I’m a very sentimental person, I

Las Vegas Police Shoot, and Kill, December 4, 2011, p. 1. Lawrence Mower and Brian Haynes, “Groups call for federal probe,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Deadly Force: When Las Vegas Police Shoot, and Kill, December 4, 2011, p. 15. Dane Claussen, Staci Pratt and Katrina Rogers, “We need independent accountability on shootings,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Deadly Force: When Las Vegas Police Shoot, and Kill, December 18, 2011, p. 63. Chris Collins, “Police union only entity standing up for officers,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Deadly Force: When Las Vegas Police Shoot, and Kill, December 18, 2011, p. 63.

²⁷⁴ “Black couple’s suit seeks truck taken in bankruptcy,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Jan. 16, 1975, p. 11.

²⁷⁵ “Repossession suit nixed,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 15, 1977, p. 9.

²⁷⁶ Gale Metcalf, “Trio cuts it right for Vegas cops,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 11, 1975, p. 16.

²⁷⁷ “Couples recite vows,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 1, 1976, p. 56. “Marriages and engagements,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 5, 1978, p. 137.

cry all the time.”²⁷⁸ Preserving her feminine public image, a female computer data technician at the LVMPD could be “stylish” and an “elegant woman.”²⁷⁹

On the other hand, the LVMPD as an institution suffered from its discrimination of women. For instance, the LVMPD’s lack of women police officers was being noticed by officials outside the LVMPD from the beginning.²⁸⁰ In 1976, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* carried an article noting critical roles that civilian women play “in the protection of the daily lives of residents” as staff members.²⁸¹ However, in 1977 City Attorney Carl Lovell noted that the four-man vice squad made “significant inroads in the fight against vice” and the vice squad’s 567 arrests from 1976 to 1977 showed a “71 percent increase over the previous year.”²⁸² Yet, in 1975, the Clark County Civil Service Board ruled against Georganna Lee, who accused the LVMPD of sex discrimination in her demotion from a uniform patrol officer to traffic enforcement officer, and stated that “there were many training officers whom did not like the idea of female officers” and that “those officers made a conscious effort to ‘wash us [women] out.”²⁸³ In contrast, white male officers had the support of the whole department and police culture, which relied on the personnel of white male officers. That same year, the Clark County Civil Service Board ordered the reinstatement of officers William Litton and Christian Goetzke, who appealed the Internal Affairs Bureau’s disciplinary action for “disorderly conduct, false

²⁷⁸ Gale Metcalf, “McCullough attributes life’s happiness to following ‘golden rule,’” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 27, 1977, p. 98.

²⁷⁹ “Elegance belies female technician,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Feb. 27, 1977, p. 96.

²⁸⁰ “Lady cops needed for hooker war,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sep. 21, 1976, p. 4.

²⁸¹ Gale Metcalf, “The women behind Metro Police Dept.,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Nov. 21, 1976, p. 38, 43.

²⁸² Sheila Caudl, “Lovell praises vice squad,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Apr. 20, 1977, p. 13.

²⁸³ David Hill, “Area police woman appeals job change,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Dec. 4, 1975, p. 15. “Las Vegas police charged with sex bias,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Dec. 10, 1975, p. 4. “Policewoman loses appeal in discrimination charge,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Dec. 19, 1975, p. 7.

information in a crime report and transporting unhandcuffed prisoners.”²⁸⁴ On the other hand, in 1976, Pam Sullivan filed a lawsuit against the LVMPD for refusing her based on height and weight requirements.²⁸⁵ The *Las Vegas Review-Journal* noted that “a backlog of cases” against the LVMPD existed and the Nevada Equal Rights Commission first held the public hearing before the case could go to the District Court.²⁸⁶

Moreover, as sophisticated and military grade guns such as the American 180 rifle that can fire 30 rounds per second were sold to law enforcement agencies in the United States, the LVMPD’s potential for violence grew also.²⁸⁷ In the 1970s and 1980s, America’s gun rights culture created a boom market, which made it easy to get powerful guns such as a pistol-stocked 12-gauge riot gun with extended combat magazine and .357 magnum revolver with full-power rounds.²⁸⁸ In Las Vegas, the Nevada Machine Gun championships were held with three categories for contestants, which included the LVMPD officers such as the LVMPD patrolman officer Steve Franks as the defending title holder and Undersheriff Bill Cooper.²⁸⁹ However, more lethal weapons such as Teflon-coated, armor-piercing, “cop-killer” bullets for sale on the market made the job of policemen more difficult and dangerous, along with innovations in the old fashioned Billy club.²⁹⁰ Scott Phillips, in his *Police Militarization*, states that police officers made the transition from revolvers with “six rounds of ammunition” to higher capacity semi-

²⁸⁴ “Detectives reinstatement ordered by Civil Service,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Dec. 18, 1975, p. 8.

²⁸⁵ “Police charged with sex discrimination,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Aug. 16, 1980, p. 17.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ “Laser gun,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 8, 1977, p. 3.

²⁸⁸ A. D. Hopkins, “Guns boom,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Jan. 31, 1982, p. 139.

²⁸⁹ “Nevada Machine Gun championships at Desert,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 6, 1983, p. 60.

²⁹⁰ Review-Journal Legislative Bureau, “Panels Oks banning bullets,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May 6, 1983, p. 16. Associated Press, “Washoe County to test billy club,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, July 5, 1983, p. 19.

automatic weapons with “16 or more rounds” starting in the 1970s and by the 1980s the semi-automatic became “standard.”²⁹¹

At the same time, the LVMPD’s reputation for violence did not wane. For example, in 1982 LVMPD officer Rod Harris was involved in a physical confrontation with professional boxer Michael Dokes, who was arguing with Las Vegas attorney Robert Archie over a woman.²⁹² However, Harris with a nightstick was no match for Dokes, who knocked out his opponent outside the ring.²⁹³ At the same time, the LVMPD’s community relations did not improve in the 1980s. The LVMPD officer, Captain Ken Campbell, in 1983 explained the changing culture in Las Vegas that the police manpower shortage on foot-patrols made it hard to control “an angry mass of adolescent humanity” that hurled obscenities and bottles at the patrol officers on Fremont Street in downtown Las Vegas.²⁹⁴ The so-called unruly adolescents became easy targets of the LVMPD police officers authorized to use deadly force.

In 1974, Officer Ed Jensen shot and killed a robbery suspect, Johnny Lee Booker, who was shot to the back of the head while he was running away from a stolen car.²⁹⁵ Asking for an investigation, Senator Joe Neal called the police shooting of a young Black man “an ‘execution,’” which the Clark County Coroner ruled justifiable homicide.²⁹⁶ This was despite

²⁹¹ On the history of police militarization, see Scott W. Phillips, *Police Militarization: Understanding the Perspectives of Police Chiefs, Administrators, and Tactical Officers* (New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 36 - 51. Phillips states that “Contemporary measures of officer-involved shootings suggest that police officers kill approximately 1,000 citizens each year.”

²⁹² “Trial date set in Dokes incident,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, July 17, 1982, p. 29.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Carlos Harrison, “Age-old form of recreation hits Glitter Gulch,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 5, 1983, p. 216, 217.

²⁹⁵ Gale Metcalf, “Fleeing robbery suspect slain by cop shotgun blast,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, October 19, 1974, p. 1. “Coroner refuses inquests in cop shootings,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, October 24, 1974, p. 13.

²⁹⁶ “Solon asks inquest in suspect shooting,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, October 30, 1974, p. 1. “Shooting ‘justifiable homicide’,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 22, 1974, p. 12.

conflicting accounts by a fourteen year old witness who said that he was coerced to say that the officer fired his weapon after yelling “halt” twice and another witness who said that he did not hear such warnings.²⁹⁷

In 1976, a coroner’s jury found officers Jerry Weaver and Arthur Summers criminally negligent in the shooting death of a young Black man named Darryl Taylor, who allegedly fired his gun at the officers.²⁹⁸ Later when the grand jury ruled the death a justifiable homicide, Neal wrote a letter to District Attorney George Holt, denouncing the shootings of Blacks and pointing out that “white officers engage in the selective execution of blacks, created by the opportunity where justifiability can be used to cover a racial motive.”²⁹⁹ The fact that a year before, the Nevada State Legislature passed Senate Bill 294, in which Senator Neal had voted on and supported, made it even harder to accept police violence against Blacks.³⁰⁰ However, SB 294, which was supposed to set stricter standards for justifiable homicide, did not curb the rise of police shootings in Las Vegas.

In 1980, Frank Daniel Bluestein, a 35 year old Hacienda Hotel worker was shot to death during a traffic stop.³⁰¹ Two undercover detectives fired at him and Bluestein suffered a gunshot

²⁹⁷ “Death inquest ‘coverup’ charged,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, October 30, 1974, p. 17. “Coroner refuses inquests in cop shootings,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, October 24, 1974, p. 15.

²⁹⁸ Gale Metcalf, “Slaying of black draws investigation demands,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 9, 1976, p. 2; Gale Metcalf, “Cops criminally negligent in shooting, jury finds,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 19, 1976, p. 1; “Holt to submit shooting case to the grand jury,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 20, 1976, p. 1; Gary Ebbels, “Officers absolved in shooting,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 29, 1976, p. 1; Gary Ebbels, “Four blacks protest jury exoneration,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 30, 1976, p. 3; “Mother files shooting suit,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Nov. 19, 1976, p. 3.

²⁹⁹ “Neal raps police killings of blacks,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Mar. 17, 1976, p. 66.

³⁰⁰ See Senate Bill 294, “An Act relating to crimes against the person; Imposing a stricter standard for justifiable homicide by public officers,” *The Journal of the Senate of the Fifty-Eighth Session of the Legislature of the State of Nevada, 1975*, p. 231, 304, 305, 332, 634, 677.

³⁰¹ Diane Russell, “Police cleared in death,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 21, 1980, p. 1.

to the chest and another to the stomach.³⁰² According to the police officers, the victim allegedly pointed a gun at the detectives of the intelligence bureau and the officers took down the armed suspect in a rain of bullets.³⁰³ The fact that Bluestein was not Black showed that even the white community was not safe from police violence.³⁰⁴

In 1984, Airman George DuBose filed a complaint against three officers.³⁰⁵ DuBose claimed that three police officers pointed guns at him and kicked him in the mouth and then stepped on his hands and kicked him again.³⁰⁶ Then, the officers let a police dog bite him while he was lying down.³⁰⁷ The LVMPD refused to listen to the complaint against the police officers and demanded only DuBose, not the three officers involved, take a lie detector test and DuBose did not take the test.³⁰⁸ One of the officers supposedly passed “a police union arranged polygraph test and passed,” but the other two officers did not take the test.³⁰⁹

What is so remarkable about all the police brutality cases in Las Vegas is the fact that police violence has been always justified in one way or another. The police organization found no fault with the officers involved and the internal police investigation cleared itself of any wrongdoings. The police violence without any outside supervision in Sin City has followed the

³⁰² Mark Dent, “Someone shadowed maitre d’?,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 12, 1980, p. 1.

³⁰³ Jeanne M. Hall, “Lawsuit filed in Bluestein death,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 27, 1984, p. 1.

³⁰⁴ Although the Bluestein family had ties to the Chicago mob, according Professor Green, the Chicago mob refused to retaliate against the LVMPD.

³⁰⁵ Kent Lauer and Phil Pattee, “Special prosecutor to oversee case,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, August 22, 1984, p. 13.

³⁰⁶ Phil Pattee, “ACLU might probe airman’s charges against LV police,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, August 9, 1984, p. 19.

³⁰⁷ Phil Pattee, “Investigation slated into alleged beating,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, August 8, 1984, p. 17.

³⁰⁸ “Clear the air on airman’s charge of police brutality,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, August 26, 1984, p. 17.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

pattern of being justified, especially against minorities, women, and the vulnerable populations such as the poor and drug addicts. The first twelve years of policing Sin City after consolidation follows the pattern of racialized and militarized policing. The lens of race, gender, and class show that mostly white male police officers maintained power relations between white and Black communities, male and female, and those who have and those who do not.

From examining the War on Crime as it played out in Las Vegas from 1973 to 1985 through the lens of race, gender, and class, it is clear that the federal government imagined that fighting crime at the local and state level involved policing the criminal elements in public space primarily reserved to the white male interests. The federal government and the LVMPD were so obsessed with fighting Black Crime that policing public space in Las Vegas translated into targeting vulnerable minorities, women, children, and the poor. The concept of fighting criminal activities in Las Vegas centered around policing Black Crime.

In America, the nonexistent concept of White Crime and the benign neglect of policing White-Collar Crime tells us a great deal about white male-centered American society. The huge gaps in the history of the element of White Crime in our society exists and it is fundamentally changing our society and the world around us. White Crime originated in the Progressive Era during Prohibition when the laws against alcohol consumption were flagrantly violated and organized crime syndicates began exploiting the black market of alcohol consumption. White Crime in Las Vegas kept the spirit of resisting federal laws that tried to control the consumption of alcohol, gambling, prostitution, and narcotic drugs. White Crime flourished in Sin City because the rights and freedom of white males ruled in the entertainment capital of the United States.

Conclusion

The power to change our ways of life gives us infinite possibilities to evolve and transform. White supremacy is rooted in institutional racism, deeply embedded into the very fabrics of our society in the United States from the earliest days of slavery to the present age of mass incarceration, and seemingly resists change. The United States government has sanctioned slavery, the massacre of Native Americans, concentration camps for Americans of Japanese origin, and mass incarceration of Blacks and Hispanics. The War on Crime, as scholars such as Angela Davis, Michelle Alexander, Elizabeth Hinton, Simon Balto, Max Felker-Kantor have all shown, systematically targeted and subjected ethnic and racial minorities. It followed this historical pattern because police officers selectively enforced federal laws at the local and state level and their actions reflected their beliefs and values of the times.³¹⁰ White supremacy in all its dimensions and manifestations restructured the policing of Las Vegas from the Progressive Era through the War on Crime.

The transition from Jim Crow policing to modern policing resulted in the New Jim Crow. Following an earlier script from the days before the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, police officers in Las Vegas used their position, power, and authority to enforce laws at their own discretion. Significantly, the federal government made this possible by providing the funding that enabled the growth of a modern police department, which continued historically entrenched practices of policing minorities, women, and children. At the same time, the Supreme Court sanctioned police officers to use deadly force against suspects. The War on

³¹⁰ Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*. Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*. Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*. Simon Balto, *Occupied Territory*. Max Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles*.

Crime, as it played out in Las Vegas, was a tragedy because the mostly white male police officers targeted and policed vulnerable segments of the population such as minorities, the poor, the uneducated, and people addicted to drugs. In Las Vegas even today, most minorities, especially Blacks, it remains difficult to land a decent job or keep it for a meaningful time than it is for whites.³¹¹ Furthermore, ordinary people of color still have to face racial discrimination, racial slurs, and negative racial stereotypes in school and society at large, along with lack of opportunities and sometimes, intimidation and threats of violence.

In the course of my research, I discovered that this outdated ideology still lives on very much in the hearts and minds of many people, not just inside the institutional bounds of the LVMPD but also outside the mainstream culture of Las Vegas that looked at me as if I was invading a sacred public space where I do not belong. Amidst much misinformation and roundabout directions to look elsewhere, I persisted because I felt that as a minority UNLV history graduate research student I had a mission to accomplish and finish my thesis on policing urban space in Las Vegas.

What was also interesting about my research was that the concept of White Crime does not even exist in the American vocabulary. White Crime is such an alien concept to American society and policing it would bring forth accusations of racial bias against white communities across the United States. As opposed to Black Crime, the historical vacuum and nonexistent category of White Crime in the American Criminal Justice system reveals that the War on Crime translated into policing any threats to white male values, morals, and beliefs. This often-meant police violence against people of color.

³¹¹ Hedwig lee, Michael Esposito, Frank Edwards, Yung Chun, and Michal Grinstein-Weiss, "The demographics of racial inequality in the United States," Brookings, July 27, 2020 (www.brookings.edu).

My research shows that for just a little over a decade, the LVMPD or the local law enforcement agency in Las Vegas sought to fight crime with federal guidance and funding. In the process, the people in Las Vegas witnessed what the nation as a whole started to experience, which was the expansion of local and state law enforcement agencies and the corresponding problems in the criminal justice system. In addition, the crime rate in Las Vegas reported in the *Uniform Crime Report* did not go down but it went up instead, and the reputation of Sin City, where drugs, alcohol, prostitution, and gambling proliferated despite the War on Crime. Moreover, just as Hinton has pointed out in her scholarship, racialized and militarized policing targeted minorities, especially Blacks, in cities across the nation, including Las Vegas. In response, people in Las Vegas resisted. This included Black police officers in Las Vegas who joined in the civil rights lawsuit against the LVMPD, which revealed the internal tension and conflicts within the LVMPD. The consolidation of the Las Vegas Police Department and the Clark County Sheriff's Office into the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department may have reduced administrative duplication or jurisdictional disputes, but it did little to change the overall culture of policing.

A testament to the legacy of this unfortunate history is that there has never been a person of color or a woman Sheriff of the LVMPD. One of the reasons may be that people of color, especially Blacks, and women in authority pose a direct threat to white supremacy. The leadership positions of the LVMPD remain almost completely closed to minorities and women because white supremacy lives on not only in the Sin City culture of Las Vegas but also in the mainstream of American society, which has a hard time accepting the fact that the people of color are mothers, fathers, sons and daughters who have families and they should be treated as human beings with dignity and respect.

There remains a lot to explore and research. This thesis only examined the first twelve years after consolidation of policing. Scholars still need to examine how Ronald Reagan's declaration of a War on Drugs in 1985 affected the policing of Sin City and how that history may have contributed to the systematic racism that persists to this day. As law professors Stewart Chang, Frank Rudy Cooper, and Addie C. Rolnick point out in *Nevada Law Review*, analyzing the intersectionality of race, gender, and policing helps us to understand the role of police violence in our society where white male patriarchy still dominates the institution of policing.³¹²

³¹² Stewart Chang, Frank Rudy Cooper, & Addie C. Rolnick, "Race and Gender and Policing," *21 Nevada Law Journal* 885, Vol. 21: 3, Spring 2021.

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