



Why Law Enforcement Organizations Fail: Mapping the Organizational Fault Lines in Policing

Patrick O'Hara

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Why Law Enforcement Organizations Fail dissects headline cases to examine how things go wrong in criminal justice agencies. New second edition cases include the deadly police assault on New Orleans' Danziger Bridge after Hurricane Katrina; the deaths of Amadou Diallo and Trayvon Martin; and Bernard Kerik's fall from 9/11 hero to federal prisoner. Highlight cases that remain from the first edition include the Jon Benet Ramsey murder investigation and the conflagrations that ended the sieges in Waco and at the MOVE house in Philadelphia. These human tragedies and organizational debacles serve as starting points for exploring how common structural and cultural fault lines in police organizations set the stage for major failures.

The author provides a framework for sorting through these cases to help readers recognize the distinct roles of operational mechanics, organizational structures, rank and file culture and executive hubris in making criminal justice agencies vulnerable to failure. The book examines how dysfunctions such as institutional racism, sexual harassment, systems abuse and renegade enforcement become established and then readily blossom into major scandals.

Why Law Enforcement Organizations Fail also shows how managers and oversight officials can spot malignant individuals, identify perverse incentives, neutralize deviant cultures and recognize when reigning managerial philosophies or governing policies are producing diminishing or negative returns.

This book is jargon-free and communicates plainly with students and criminal justice professionals. This is a highly-teachable book that also provides pragmatic long-term guidance for how to deal with crises, prevent their recurrence and restore organizational legitimacy. This book is an excellent centerpiece for any class on police organization and management, criminal justice policy, or police-community relations.

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