

## Level of Anxiety or Third Culture?

There is considerable discussion as to the high percentage of Latinos' that resign or are terminated from the police academy and the Field Training officers Program.

Realizing that there will always be a certain percentage of candidates that for one reason or another fail through the training process, the high percentage of Latinos that constantly fail the program indicates a certain problem. The answer is not that the candidate could not perform assigned tasks, or that the candidate has reached the level of anxiety where he/she cannot perform properly.

When a person enters into the field of Law Enforcement, that individual steps into a completely different life style, "the cop culture." This culture has not only its particular prejudices and language but also its own unique dress, the uniform.

Consider the candidate regardless of which ethnic group he represents. This candidate automatically evaluated by a second culture, a value system and total lifestyle which is different and distinct from both the civilian and ethnic culture of the candidate. The individual must learn to function within this culture if he is to survive because this cop culture is the one which will evaluate, promote, pass judgment or dismiss any and all candidates.

The person that is bilingual, bicultural and enters into a law enforcement career is forced to juggle three cultures; one that is "cop", another that is "civilian" and the primary which is "ethnic," often a single action will demand "Cultural balancing" since the cultural responses are in many instances diametrically opposed. This means that he will be functioning within three very different lifestyles. The candidate will require special attention not because this individual is not qualified, but that he/she is attempting to operate within three cultures.

All training must take "culture balancing" into consideration. Training programs must be designed to diminish racism and cultural bias in such a deliberate manner that hiring, transfer and promotion is equitable; training must be ongoing in that the perpetrators and perpetuators of bias are neutralized and not allowed singular arbitrary authority. Such training must be examined within the context of systematic change, which creates a more effective police operation.

The final product will be a well rounded officer and the beneficiaries will be the department and the community served.

Si Se Puede

Vicente Calderon

10/25/76

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