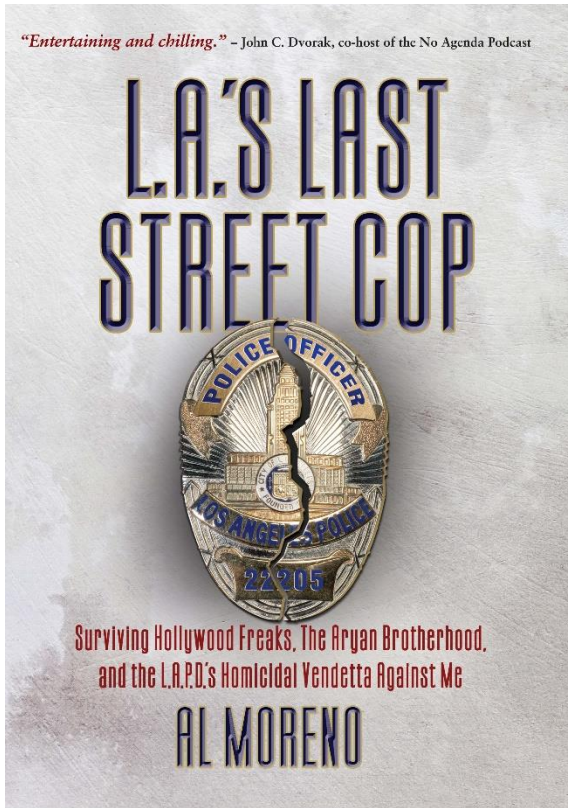


NEW BOOK!

L.A.P.D. Officer Survives Gang Wars and Shootouts Only to Be Targeted for Murder While His Department Looked Away

Whistleblowing on L.A.P.D. Corruption Sealed His Fate



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How could one of the largest police departments in the United States step back and do nothing as an ex-con from the Aryan Brotherhood came after one of its own officers? In *L.A.'s Last Street Cop: Surviving Hollywood's Freaks, The Aryan Brotherhood, and the L.A.P.D.'s Homicidal Vendetta Against Me* (Highpoint Lit; May 4, 2020) author Al Moreno paints a chilling picture of official retribution for his whistleblowing on Los Angeles Police Department corruption. He lived to tell this tale but learned that even a life-saving cop doesn't have a shield big enough to protect him from a few bad guys in the Department wearing the same uniform.

Moreno had overcome tremendous odds to achieve his dream of becoming an L.A.P.D. officer. He was one of 12 children raised in a 874-square-foot, three-bedroom home in the gang-infested streets of Florenai-13/Watts with a neglectful ex-con father who didn't even attend his graduation from the police academy. As a child, he

suffered from a rare childhood disease, Legg Calves Perthes, which required the use of crutches and metal braces for four years. If that wasn't enough, he was a poor student in grade and high school due to an undiagnosed case of dyslexia and dyscalculia (learning disabilities in processing language and math). He dropped out of high school his senior year and was arrested three times, drifting from one meaningless job to another until he enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1968 at the height of the Vietnam War.

Upon returning home from the war, went on to fulfill his childhood dream of becoming Los Angeles Police Officer, but was disqualified nine separate times for non-existent medical conditions. After fighting the erroneous disqualification for five years he realized his dream and entered the L.A.P.D. academy in August of 1975 at 29 years of age. His Mexican heritage made him a groundbreaker, since in those years the Department generally was not hiring women and people of color.

Years of Commendations while Saving Lives

Once he became an officer, Moreno accelerated in all his assignments and in five-and-a-half years earned an unprecedented 71 commendations. Because of his superior street cop acumen, he was one of 40 police officers selected from the ranks of the entire L.A.P.D. to launch what became the

nation's premiere specialized gang unit, CRASH (Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums). Within a year, he led his colleagues in the number of arrests, and had been frequently commended for his uncanny ability to control and arrest heavily armed suspects without the use of lethal force.

His L.A.P.D. commendations often noted his skill to avoid bloodshed. One of them reads: "Regardless of how hectic the situation may be, Moreno never compromises completeness for speed. Officer Moreno displays particular skill when handling armed suspects, as he recovers more weapons in the field than any other CRASH officer yet has avoided involvement in an officer-involved shooting."

And Then Came the Fall...

Officer Moreno's troubles began when he challenged his unit's commander for underreporting the true number of gang-related crimes in the city. His commanding officer administratively transferred him out of the specialized gang unit to a street patrol assignment in another division. Moreno filed and won a grievance and was returned to the CRASH. It was around this time he reported the corruption of his commanding officer to the bureau commander. Two of the four sergeants in the CRASH unit verified Moreno's allegations and there was going to be an investigation. As Moreno describes it, "heads were going to roll."

But then two incidents occurred within a two-week period, destroying the life and career he had built. In the first, Moreno grabbed and pushed an Avenues gang member while interviewing him for the brutal shotgun drive-by murder of an innocent 16-year-old. The second incident involved an off-duty fight while he and some friends were on a water-skiing trip on the Colorado River in Arizona. One night they went out for dinner and drinks to a bar that unbeknownst to them was a hang-out for white supremacist and the Aryan Brotherhood. Before they were able to exit the bar, they were attacked by armed members of the Brotherhood. Moreno physically subdued the ringleader, "Crazy Gerry" Hallam, while the others ran to safety. Then he ran out of the bar and dove into the nearby river while being closely pursued by the enraged Hallam, who was carrying a sawed-off shotgun. Miraculously they all were able to escape with their lives.

When the L.A.P.D. group returned to work, they reported the off-duty incident to the Department. That gave Department heads the tool they needed to get rid of Moreno and stop the investigation of his unit commander's corruption. The Department initiated a corrupt Internal Affairs investigation and ordered Moreno to an equally corrupt Board of Rights and was charged with "conduct unbecoming an officer."

The kangaroo court twisted the facts in the off-duty fight and fired one of L.A.P.D.'s most decorated officer for misconduct. Most chilling is the fact that the Aryan Brotherhood ex-con told two the Department's investigators that he with the help of "La Eme," the Mexican mafia, was going to murder officer Moreno, but throughout the seven months investigation two lieutenants, four captains, the bureau commander and the chief's office refused to initiate the standard security protocol to protect officer Moreno and his family.

After he was terminated, Moreno drifted from one sleazy security guard job to another while wondering when the ex-con would strike. During this period, he applied for jobs with nineteen police departments and five fire departments. Two years later, he was hired by the Culver City police department after they conducted an exhaustive background investigation into the corrupt L.A.P.D. charges. The investigation included a polygraph examination that conclusively proved Moreno's innocents. However, after only two weeks on the department, Moreno, left the force. Culver City was much too civil for an L. A. cop. who had become habituated to the daily intensity and mayhem in the City of the Angels.

For the last four decades Moreno has hand-carried a “Request for Rehearing” (RFR) to every L. A. Chief of Police from Daryl Gates to Charlie Beck, and recently took another polygraph examination that again proved his innocence of any misconduct. Recently he submitted the RFR to the fifteen members of the L. A. City Council and both Mayors Antonio Villaraigosa and Eric Garcetti. All have turned their backs on Moreno’s innocence.

For the past 34 years Moreno’s firm, Global Investigations and Global VIP Security Services, has conducted high-level private investigations and security services for multiple VIP clients in the entertainment industry and Corporate America.

Moreno is available to discuss:

- What it’s like to be a heroic cop in the line of fire each and every day.
- How policing has changed since the time he served – and why he doesn’t recommend it as a career choice to anyone.
- How he overcame so many obstacles growing up to become a highly commended officer.
- What today’s upper police management might be doing to cook the books on crime stats.
- Insights on the phenomenon of gang violence – and how to stop it.
- Gripping stories of how he was able to often avoid use of lethal force, despite confronting life-death situations.
- Why Americans don’t trust the police and believe there is a Blue Wall.
- How he closed the door on unsolved crimes in his private security work of the past 34 years.
- Why his name deserves to be cleared after getting fired from a corrupt police department.
- The challenges and opportunities for law enforcement in the Black Lives Matter era.

Praise for L.A.’s Last Street Cop

“Probably the most entertaining and chilling police tale you’ll read this year. An incredible romp, surprisingly well-written, fast paced, and serious page turner.” – **John C. Dvorak, co-host of the No Agenda Podcast**

“If you love a street-gritty crime drama set amidst one man’s heroic rise and fall, this is the book for you. Cinematic in its sweep and tragedy, it also happens to be true – told by police officer who was in the middle of all these events. Sometimes life itself is more compelling than fiction.” – **Paul David Walker, Fortune 500 leadership coach and author**

“Al Moreno's commitment and dedication to the citizens of Los Angeles were always at the forefront of his service, but he also had a compassionate side for the victims of gang violence, and at times for the criminals he encountered. When one mentally ill suspect came at him wildly swinging an axe, Al made a split-second decision to shoot him in the legs instead of fatally to the torso. The suspect’s father later thanked Al in court for not killing his son. It’s all here in this book!” – **Frank R. Flores, retired L.A.P.D. Sergeant**

For more information, please consult: www.laststreetcop.com or www.globalinvestigations.com. Moreno resides in Long Beach, California.

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Al Moreno
Q & A
L.A.'s Last Street Cop

1. **Al, what inspired you to tell your story now, nearly 40 years after you fell victim to police corruption?** From the time of my tragic termination in 1982 to the present I must have written hundreds of letters to news agencies, Hollywood directors, producers, T.V. talk shows, authors, and politicians to tell my story. However, no one seemed to give a damn. I continued my crusade for justice and approximately four years ago, Mark Bowden, author of *Black Hawk Down*, answered a letter I wrote to him in the hope that he would write this unbelievable story. He advised me no one would take my story because they all have their own projects. So, I decided to take matters into my own hands and write *L. A's Last Street Cop*.
2. **You had dozens of commendations and received some amazing job performance reviews. Does it shock you that your own police department, after nearly seven years on the force, would go after you for being a whistleblower?** Yes, it was a totally unexpected shock. I was so immersed in my work as an officer in our anti-gang CRASH unit and so confident in my outstanding police record that it never, *ever* occurred to me that the department I so loved would turn on me for exposing the corruption in our unit. Our unit's boss, Lt. Bill Lynch, had been cooking the books for years to lower the real gang crime stats to placate his superiors, City Hall, the Mayor's office, and LAPD staff management.
3. **Corruption in any police department seems possible. How do we stop it?** Someone from the inside must be willing to throw their life into a meatgrinder and lose everything! Unfortunately, few are willing to step into that irreversible vortex of despair and misery, as illustrated by one scandal after another, year after year in all sectors of our society. Mirroring society at large, corruption from one degree to another occurs at all levels of policing, from small towns to big cities, as well as throughout state and federal law enforcement agencies. This will continue to be a fact of life until our society changes its moral compass for good. However, from my personal experience I can assure the public that the great majority of our men and woman in uniform will forever do what is necessary to maintain justice and security in this great country.
4. **Do you feel like Serpico, the famous NYC whistle-blowing cop?** Yes, there are undeniable similarities in my story to Serpico's crucifixion. I foolishly thought I would be commended for stepping up to expose the corruption that everyone in the L.A.P.D.'s Central Bureau knew was occurring. It was blatant and had reached a level beyond what I could morally accept. So, I reported the corruption to our new bureau commander, Mark Kroeker. At that time, two of the units' sergeants stepped up and confirmed my information, and heads were going to roll. However, higher-ups in the department decided to discredit and dispose of me instead. They found their vehicle for doing that by embracing two murderous gang members – one an ex-con member of the Aryan Brotherhood – who had attacked my friends and me during an off-duty weekend trip.

5. **You seem to have three amazing stories in one. Let's start with how you overcame the odds to become a police officer at age 29. How did you, one of 12 growing up in Watts and the barrio, overcome three juvenile arrests, dropping out of high school, dyslexia, and a physical disability to become a cop?** It wasn't easy. I dropped out of high school in my senior year and was subsequently arrested three separate times – for burglary, armed robbery and felony assault, but was found not guilty for all three arrests. In 1968 I joined the Marine Corp at the height of the Vietnam war, and from that point on I worked hard to make the best of myself. After my return I attended Cerritos College in Norwalk, California, and finally learning how to address my learning disabilities, I graduated with an Associate of Arts in Administration of Justice in a year-and-a-half as opposed to the standard two years and made the honor roll. In September of 1971, I applied for the L.A.P.D., but was barraged with one erroneous disqualification after another. In August of 1975, after successfully fighting a total of nine disqualifications. I was hired onto the Department. I excelled in all my assignments and was awarded an unprecedented 71 commendations at the five-and-a-half-year mark. Nobody should ever give up on their dreams.
6. **Next, you were a warrior as a cop, especially when you worked on L.A.'s first gang-wars taskforce. You had a penchant for avoiding lethal force and taking down some very dangerous criminals. Why were your fellow officers so surprised that you often avoided "the kill shot"?** I first heard whispers of disbelief from inexperienced officers' bravado that officer Moreno, didn't have what it took to make the kill shot when I shot one axe-swinging suspect in the legs instead of taking lethal action. I've seen more violent death than most people, but not as much as some. Taking a single human life is like killing all of humanity. It is an irrevocable act that will forever live with a decent man or woman 24/7. I was blessed with a unique gift of walking the razor's edge in confronting armed suspects and taking them into custody without firing a kill shot, although, they would have killed me and my partner in a heartbeat.
7. **The third part of your story is how you became a whistle-blower and paid a huge price for it. Tell us what you exposed.** From the jump, the department had it wrong in fighting the ubiquitous gangs. Los Angeles is recognized as the Gang Capitol of the United States with over 450 active gangs and 75 to 100,000 gang members. The department picked 40 of its elite officers to dispatch the criminal gangs that in some cases were formed as far back as the late 1880s. Within a short time, our unit commander, Lt. Lynch, recognized the math didn't work! 40 super cops vs. 100,000 gang-members! Like any clever crook, he continually rewrote what constituted a gang-related crime, thereby on paper showing many more gang-related arrests and "success" in reducing those types of crimes in the city. Simply, he was cooking the books. L. A. County Sheriff Sherman Block confirmed my disclosures on several occasions to public officials. I have copies of said disclosures.
8. **Why wasn't anything done about it?** For the past 40 years, I have petitioned every L.A.P.D. Chief of Police, from Daryl Gates to Charlie Beck, including the 15 members of the Los Angeles City Council, Mayor Antonio Villaragosa, and Eric Garcetti, with a formal "Request for Rehearing," via the City Charter section 202 subsection 16. Not one of them ever responded to my cry for justice. Hopefully, the unbelievable revelations I uncovered in the L.A.P.D. Internal Affairs investigations and corrupt Board of Rights will disgrace the City of Los Angeles to address this historical corruption and my unwarranted termination.

9. **How did they eventually get you kicked off the force?** I was fired after a corrupt Internal Affairs investigation and corrupt Board of Rights. I was charged with two separate complaints of misconduct. One for grabbing and pushing a gang member while interviewing him for the sawed-off shotgun killing of an innocent 16-year-old kid. The other complaint was for being involved in an off-duty altercation while on a skiing trip to the Colorado River. At one point in our mini-vacation, our group of five went to a bar for drinks and dinner and unbeknownst to us the bar was a hang-out for the Aryan Brotherhood. Within minutes, we were attacked by the ex-cons and defended ourselves. At the conclusion of the bar fight, one of the ex-cons came at us with a shotgun. The department tailored the two complaints against me to their advantage and fired me for misconduct.
10. **What happened after you heard the guilty verdict?** There are no words in the English dictionary to express my shock and disbelief after going through five hellish years of successfully fighting nine erroneous medical disqualifications and realizing my childhood dream of becoming a member of Los Angeles Police, only to be fired by the Department I so loved. The LAPD management is no different from any other major corporation that will stop at nothing to protect their criminal misbehavior. I pray that *L. A.'s Last Street Cop* will warn my brothers and sisters in uniform to watch their six. Do what is dutifully mandatory on the street, but they should recognize the big picture, for they too could end up like me. Everyone else should read this book to understand the mischief, great and small, that has and is happening throughout law enforcement and get an insider's view on how upper police management can sometimes deceive the public about what is really happening on our street.
11. **You later worked security guard jobs and never realized the fulfillment of your dreams to work on S.W.A.T, but did you feel great when another police department hired you?** Yes, the Culver city police background investigator conducted an exhaustive investigation into my termination, including administering a polygraph exam. They determined that I was innocent of the L.A.P.D. charges and hired me. I took a second polygraph a few years ago and the findings were the same, I am not guilty of any misconduct. I have updated my Request for Rehearing with both polygraphs and have submitted the documentation to the LAPD, the City Council and the Mayor's office. So far, there has been no response.
12. **What, if anything, will make you feel vindicated?** I fear that no one in authority in L A.'s city government or the L.A.P.D. will ever acknowledge this historical injustice. It's predictable how they are going to respond once they are confronted with this story. They are going to close ranks an attempt to distance themselves from any culpability. However, that will prove their undoing. I submitted the evidence of my innocence for the last four decades and they have all turned their back to the irrefutable truth. It's their own internal documents that prove my innocence. Yes, this disgraceful and criminal action did not happen on their watch. But once they received the exculpatory documents, they have both a fiduciary and moral mandate to right this shameful wrong!

I'll be damned about that Blue-Wall (BW) phenomenon! I've heard about it since before I became a Los Angeles police officer. Is it a "Blue Wall" thing when law enforcement turns its eyes away from blatant dishonesty within the ranks of our street cops? I'm here to tell you that that BW accusation is a tsunami of bullshit! If I (or the men and women I worked with) ever saw some cop doing something that would dishonor our reputation, we would get medieval on their ass and roll them over in a heartbeat! Obviously, I'm not saying that some police officers never do dreadful things in the past, today or in the future, but from my personal experience the

overwhelming number of coppers that I worked with are the best souls our Lord has ever created. And I strongly feel that if any evil seed in law enforcement has violated the public trust, he or she must receive the harshest punishment possible!

13. **Does it boil your blood to have seen so many injustices go unpunished while you were a cop, but to know you are innocent of the bogus charges that were leveled against you?** Through the four decades of fighting the disgusting behavior of the Los Angeles city government and P.D., there have been times when I almost lost it and was tempted to walk on the dark side. But, through my indomitable faith in this blessed country, the United States, and my faith in my Catholicism, I know that somehow justice will prevail before I leave the Good Earth.
14. **Take us back to the 1970s. What was L.A. like back then?** There isn't enough time here to fully describe the darkness in parts of L.A. in the 1970s. I recall when I transferred to Hollywood Division in early 1977, I "lucked out" and was assigned to work the busiest and most crime-ridden part of the Division; the east-end, with some of the most experienced and badass street cops in the Department. Extensive sections of Hollywood and Sunset Boulevards were hemorrhaging with pimps, whores, street hustlers, petty thieves, drunks, dopers and serious felons, so we stayed very busy. The one thing that bothered me was the epidemic of naïve teenage boys and girls who came to Hollywood from across the country looking to be discovered by the entertainment business. Within months they, with little exception, were hustled by pimps and petty criminals into selling their bodies for survival. I have some hair-raising stories about this.
15. **What can be done to decrease the gang wars now?** This is a question that all in the behavioral sciences have considered and pontificated on for decades. In my opinion you could fill the Library of Congress with their longitudinal and cross-sectional studies. However, from my personal experience of being raised in the gang-infested barrio of Florencia/Watts, all of that behavioral minutia has fallen radically short of resolving any problems in our Hoods and Barrios. I'm as old as dirt and can speak with authority from my real-life's observations. It's simple as hell! A family with a mother and father; a family that understands what dedication and hard, hard work will produce; a family that believes in raising their little ones in a faith-based home; a family that ensures their children do well in school, and teaches them what a historically blessed country they live in as opposed to 80% of the populace on earth.
16. **How do you explain what police work is like to those who never served?** What does the public need to understand? All the cerebrum messaging from law enforcement alone won't bridge the misunderstanding between the public and our gatekeepers. We need all forms of the media to get involved and apprise the public of the *mental and physical dread* our law enforcement experience in a single day. Unfortunately, I don't have much faith that will ever happen, most of all in today's alphabet of "isms" world. Funny...it's those who require more police help who are the biggest critics of our brave men and woman in uniform. But, that's part of being in that type of work. However, unlike any time before, the wheels have come off. Just look at what some of the public has done to our police officers on the east coast. It's horrifying! The videos of New York police officers being attacked on a daily basis with buckets of water, being spit on, verbally denigrated and attacked is a harbinger of what's to come in the near future – total disintegration of law and order in this country.
17. **So, are you saying that not only does a Blue Wall exist to protect all cops, but within the police force, a wall exists between the corrupt and those who get in their way?** I'll be damned about that Blue-wall (BW) phenomenon! I've heard about since before I became a Los Angeles police officer. Is it a "Blue Wall" thing when law enforcement turns its eyes away from blatant dishonesty within the ranks of our street cops? I'm here to tell you that that BW

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18. **You are the first in your family to serve in the U.S. Marines [in Vietnam] and as a police officer. What did it feel like to protect us from the bad guys?** I am profoundly proud to say that there are three boys in the Moreno family that enlisted to serve the Motherland when she called for service. The Moreno family had warriors in Vietnam from 1967 to 1971. Art and Tony were 11 Bravos in the Army infantry, and both were awarded Purple Hearts and Bronze Stars for valor. Tony was the most seriously wounded and nearly died from his wounds. I hard-assed-it and joined the Marine Corps in 1968. My second war on the mean streets of L. A.'s gang wars in East L.A. and South-Central L. A. as a cop. Those were some dangers times, but I tried to act with a level head.
19. **What was advice would you give to someone aspiring to wear the uniform, to serve and protect?** This may sound shocking, but I can no longer encourage any young man or woman to pursue that thankless job in today's environment of disgraceful treatment of our police officers. (In the past, I mentored two female and two males onto the L. A. County Sheriff Department and Los Angeles Police Department.) However, I will do everything in my power to encourage our young patriots to seek employment as a fireman or enlist in the United States Marines Corps' Officers Candidate School.
20. **When you joined the force, as a Hispanic, you were just one of a handful of non-white officers on the force. Now the L.A.P.D. is 51% non-white. Does that make for better policing of the community?** I was one of the few Hispanics on the job in the middle 1970s. Today's LAPD is indeed a department of diversity! I feel that a police department should reflect its community racial demographics while assuring the highest standards and not depend on quotas! Unlike any other profession, those that serve as our gatekeepers must be a head above the general populous, in morality, honesty, intelligence, and fitness. I enthusiastically support a merit-based system that demands excellence. I recall having conversations with individual I knew trying to get on the L.A.D.P. More than once, I heard them declare that you had to be a superman to get on the Department. Hell yes! If a candidate has the right stuff, and he/she can turn the worn, then good on them. That is the caliber of men and women we want walking about with a firearm strapped on their hip, making impossible life and death decision in a nano-second.

Testimonials & In The Media

“Al Moreno's commitment and dedication to the citizens of Los Angeles were always at the forefront of his service. He also had a compassionate side for the victims of gang violence, and at times for the criminals he encountered. When one mentally ill suspect came at him wildly swinging an axe, Al made a split-second decision to shoot him in the legs instead of fatally in the torso. The suspect's father later thanked Al in court for not killing his son. It's all here in this book!” –**Frank R. Flores, Retired L.A.P.D. Sergeant**

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who ever worked within any bureaucracy will find disconcerting. A must-read.” –**John C. Dvorak, Co-Host of the No Agenda Podcast**

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“A 62-year-old leatherneck hopes to earn his stripes on ‘American Gladiators’ ...

“Al Adams Moreno refuses to act his age. To be precise, at a point in life most guys are looking forward to more time on the golf course or the couch, the 62-year-old private investigator hopes to get in the arena with the ‘American Gladiators’ and show them what a tough old dude can do.

“I think it’s a real positive story,” Moreno says of his quest. “It’s not only inspirational to the baby boomers, but to be able to participate and bang heads with those gorillas in a credible way will give people pause.”

“It’s a dream, Moreno says, he’s been waiting to fulfill since the tender age of 50, when after making it through the auditions for the original “American Gladiators” he was crushed to see the show canceled before he had his shot on TV.”

Orange Counter Register

“A war only he can end....

“Al Moreno has fought all his life against the shame of his father’s desertion of the Navy in 1944. At 60, he wants a tour in Iraq as redemption.

“For almost two decades, Moreno has been trying, in any way he knows how, to close the gap between the bodies in that snapshot. He’s written to presidents, to congressmen, to the Justice Department, to anyone who might listen. What he wants is simple: a posthumous pardon for his father, who died destitute in 1977, nearly three decades after the Navy released him from the brig with a dishonorable discharge.

“He died a broken man both physically and mentally,” Moreno says. “He saw himself as a total failure.”

Los Angeles Times

Selected Excerpts ***L.A.’s Last Street Cop***

The “Widow Maker”

“If the robbery came down to a firefight, all of us in the department had little to no confidence in our standard-issue Smith and Wesson piss-ant.38 six-shot revolvers. They had absolutely no knockdown power. The .38 fired a 58 -grain soft-nosed lead slug at an ineffective muzzle velocity of 767 feet per second with little to no stopping power. The weapon earned the nickname “Widow Maker” because of its repeated failure to knock down suspects, putting both the officers’ lives and the public in great jeopardy.

Death

“Death is always just a heartbeat away when you’re on the street protecting folks you’ve never met. And in today’s America, more than ever before, there are endless forces out there that wish you ill.

Growing Up With Challenges

“My father did not attend my graduation. Our unnatural estrangement began at my birth twenty-nine years ago when I was born in Tijuana, Mexico. At that time, my father, Alfonso Antonio Moreno, was on the run from the federal for deserting his naval unit in World War II. After the war, he surrendered to the federal authorities and spent some years in a federal penitentiary in Terminal Island, California. After his early release, he spent the rest of his life as a crushed and lost soul with an ugly disposition toward his first-born son.

One need not have a degree in the behavioral sciences to understand the psychological complexities and damage that type of relationship has on any offspring. There were twelve children in all, four girls and eight boys (I was the second-born, three years after my sister Irene). We were raised in an 874-square-foot, three-bedroom home in the gang-infested streets of Florencia -13, next door to South Central Los Angeles. It was the 1940s, ‘50s and ‘60s, when America was still sorting itself out from its racist history.

In 1954, when I was attending the second grade at Saint Aloysius Catholic school, I was diagnosed with a rare childhood disease, Legg Calves Perthes, which required the use of crutches and metal braces for the next four years. This physical disability was exacerbated by an undiagnosed case of severe dyslexia and dyscalculia (a difficulty in learning or comprehending arithmetic). I was branded the dumbest kid in class and forced to repeat the sixth grade. The embarrassment was so overwhelming that I acted out in class in an attempt to distract everyone from my learning disability.

And I paid for it in spades. It was a decade and a half of punishments from the nuns, my father, and the Christian Brothers in high school. My teachers came at me with writing repetitive penances on the chalkboard of “I shall not dos.” On occasion, I was slapped across the face or struck on the palm of my open hand with a heavy wooden ruler. It was much of the same in the three high schools I attended before dropping out my senior year, six weeks before graduation.

In 1965, when most Americans were enjoying the era of *A Summer Place*, I was arrested three times – once for burglary, once for armed robbery, and once for felony assault.

Police Work

Police work is much too often spiritual as well as physical carnage, and our modern-day gatekeepers mentally pay for it for the rest of their days. God help them and their families.

Avoiding The Kill Shot

Incredibly, all those distractions did not interfere with my calculations in dealing with the ax-wielding madman. I knew precisely what kind of a shot I had to make if he turned and rushed at me – it would have to be a heart/lung shot, or a clean shot just above the eyes to bring him down straight away – nothing else would work because of the inefficient knock-down power of the .38 revolver. Just then, the suspect wheeled around, holding the ax over his head in a striking position. I held my position and tried to verbally scare him into submission. No luck. His face was bloodied from glass fragments, and he looked possessed. All at once he screamed out, “Shoot me, shoot me! God wants me to do this; this world is fucked up!”

He repeated the same thing over and over and took a couple steps toward me. I instinctively evoked the USMC B.R.A.S.S. firing system: breathe, relax, aim, slack, squeeze. All Marines are taught this firing system on the rifle range. I held my fire but was ready to shoot. By now, it was apparent that I was not going to be able to scare or reason with this suspect. He was hell-bent on murder or dying.

Shit! This fuck was “dusted” (under the influence of PCP). He was just a few feet away, and I could smell the tell tale odor of ether emitting from his person, along with that crazed glassy-eyed stare. That changed everything; dusters can tolerate unbelievable pain, including a fusillade of bullets, before they can be brought down. No wonder I was unable to scare him.

Time was running out, and I needed to secure this damn thing before he bolted into the crowd and started mutilating innocent bystanders and officers. He started walking westbound across the street, facing me the whole time. I mimicked his every step until he stopped at the northwest corner in front of a shoe store. Good, the store was closed and there were no innocents behind him in case I was forced to fire. He still had the ax over his head in a striking position while looking directly into my eyes. I was confident I was going to be able to do what I needed to do when he went for it. He took that glazed state away from me now and looked over to his right, then moved his right leg as if he was about to bolt into the crowd of onlookers.

I needed to fire now or risk losing the kill shot. I started to B.R.A.S.S. the round off when he torqued his head back toward me and stepped forward to plant that ax in my skull!

God, I didn't want to kill this human being, but he was sure as hell about to end my life. The ax started to come down when I fired, but instead of putting the round in to his heart or face, I lowered my weapon and fired at his right leg, just above the knee. It was all so fucking surreal. I felt the kick from the .38 recoil. I saw the flash of fire from the muzzle of the .38. I saw the impact of the round go through his right leg and make a small dark hole on his white pants followed by a gush of blood on his jeans. My Lord, he didn't go down, nor did his face show any reaction to being shot.

I precisely wheeled my weapon to the left leg and fired a second round, just above the knee. Again, I felt the recoil of the shot, saw the flash of fire from the muzzle, and the dark spot of the bullet on his pant leg, followed by another gush of blood against his white jeans.

Astonishingly, his response was no different from when the first shot went through his right leg. I fired a third round back at his right leg again. It was another through -and-through hit. He slowly looked down at his legs and finally went down. My brothers swarmed him on the ground, and after a short struggle, cuffed his hands behind his back. Dear God, it was over.

War On Gangs

In effect, the CRASH unit had declared war on L.A.s street gangs and were going to use a scorched-earth policy to bring order and peace to the communities that they had wreaked terror and mayhem on for the last fifty years.... These forty CRASH officers and detectives were the equivalent of Achilles Myrmidons. But the forty were going up against 450 gangs with an estimated 120,000 gang members. This lot were brought up on the murderous streets of East L.A. and South Central, and most Americans were clueless and unable to comprehend what the forty were going up against!

12-Year-Old Killer's Eyes

What was striking about this shooting, besides all the blood and gore, was that the other kid showed no emotion over this blood-soaked crime scene. Any normal twelve-year-old would be freaking out of his mind. We transported the kid to our new CRASH office, and John tried to contact his parents with no luck. After about an hour and a half, the kid went from witness to suspect when he admitted he was "Diablo" from 38th Street Peewees.

I have never arrested anyone so young and so indifferent about being in police custody for his age. He was an angelic-looking child and didn't appear to be a day over nine years old.

Cover-Up Closed

Fast forward ten years later, to February 19, 1988. The city's criminal cover-up would surface at a Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors meeting when Sheriff Sherman Block courageously disclosed the cover-up and told the five county supervisors the truth about the suppressed gang-related statistics. Block told the board that several law enforcement officials said political pressure had resulted in some law enforcement officials said political pressure had resulted in some crimes not being listed as gang related with the intent of reducing the potential fear level of people coming into the community.

I apologized to Rick and my brother Rampart patrol officers at the murder scene. However, my role in eventually bringing the underreporting policy to light would, in time, have life-threatening consequences for me.

Useless Arrests

I was committed at this point to saying what everyone in the Bureau wanted to say to Lynch regardless of his retribution and from those in higher places. I brought up his obsession with mandating high-arrest numbers to justify the existence of the unit with piss-ant arrests like "drinking in public," a worthless infraction with no more teeth than getting a traffic ticket. Our units would sweep through parks or neighborhoods and arrest countless groups of gang members and anyone who resembled a gang member for drinking in public.

In fact, once or twice a year, a platoon of METRO officers would come to assist the CRASH officers to see who could bring in the most arrests in a single p.m. watch. This was a shameful waste of time, money, and manpower that could have been spent on tracking down the real hard-core gang members.

Several of the unit's sergeants had pressed the Lieutenant for years on doing away with this worthless obsession of his "high arrest numbers." Their approach was to concentrate our unit's efforts on hard-core gang members and their leaders, to dismantle their leadership to demoralize them into nonexistence. I suggested that if the department was really serious about forever stopping the gang murders in L.A.'s neighborhoods, the unit should be increased to divisional strength.

Terror At Home

The shameful truth is these true stories of Michael Mitchell and Ramona Sanchez are not the exception to the rule. I personally experienced the same type of intimidation and murder in my neighborhood as a child and young adult in the 1950s and 1960s growing up in the Florence and Watts communities of Los Angeles. It was daily terror for all the families in the barrio.

Any civilized society must have zero tolerance for such inhuman behavior. Yes, I grew up in a shithole with an abusive, alcoholic, ex-con father, with eleven brothers and sisters, and we were extremely poor. I was a pathetic D and F student all through grade and high school because of an undiagnosed case of dyslexia, and if that wasn't enough, I was crippled for four years. I got in

trouble with the law as a young man. So, don't anyone dare try to feed me the bullshit and perennial excuses that those raised in the barrio and hood haven't got a chance to make it in America.

Bite The Bullet

Poppin Fresh threw me in his car and rolled Code-3 to White Memorial Hospital in Hollenbeck. By the time we arrived both my hands were badly swollen. The staff ordered x-rays. The right ring finger was broken in three places at the joint of the metacarpal. The left hand had two separate hairline fractures on the small bones of the palm. The pain became unmanageable at this point, but I was told that I had to wait for the on-call orthopedic surgeon before they could give me any pain medication.

It was almost two hours before he arrived, and by then I was about ready to eat my gun. The surgeon examined the x-rays and told me he needed to manipulate the break into the correct anatomical position. My right hand would need a plaster cast halfway up my forearm. My left hand also needed to be placed into a plaster cast, what the fuck! How was I going to do anything? Worst of all, I was going to be placed on the "Geek Squad" for God knows how long.

Poppin' Fresh stepped up and upholstered his .38, unchambered a bullet, then stuck it in my mouth. "Go doc, he'll be okay," he said. I bit down on the bullet and mumbled for the doctor to do his thing. The doc and nurse looked at us like we were crazy. The doctor went about pulling and twisting, then pulling and twisting some more. I never screamed, but I felt like I was going to pass out a couple of times. When he was done, I had just about chewed through that bullet. Poppin' Fresh and the other CRASH officers all had looks of revulsion – I thought they were about to hit the deck. When it was over, my shirt was drenched in sweat, and I felt like I had given birth to a twenty-pound baby. Both hands were in casts halfway up my forearms.

Ticket Quotas?

Unfortunately, Laura at one point mentioned that I was a police officer. And, as always, here came the ignorant questions about some bullshit ticket they got. Isn't it true that the police have ticket quotas? There were questions about police brutality and cops shooting down innocent citizens on the street. This is precisely why cops keep an insular circle of friends, America doesn't have a clue! Your run-of-the-mill citizens aren't cop haters, they just live in what I call "different conditions" when it comes to comprehending what their Keepers of the Gate experience on a daily basis.

Man With A Gun

"Man with a Gun" is the ultimate radio call; it's life or death, and I had a unique talent in handling these highly volatile calls without using deadly force."

Not Shooting To Kill

"He narrowly killed you; why didn't you shoot?" By now I could have been in three or four dozen justifiable Officer Involved Shootings, but I had this unique gift of walking the razor's edge and feeling bulletproof. I'm not saying that I wouldn't have put an asshole down if necessary. I fully understood that my actions in the field didn't stop with me alone – if I got it wrong, that could mean the death of my partner or perhaps an innocent bystander. There's absolutely no way in hell I would ever encourage any brother or sister officer to do what I've gotten away with so many times. We took the suspect to the station to get booking approval for Attempted Murder of a Police Officer and Possession of the stolen gun. Sergeant Wynn didn't look any too pleased with my story of the incident. Then he loosened up and said, "Moreno, I've never met anyone else like you who would rather kick someone's ass instead of shooting them." We both started laughing, and he shook his head and walked away.

Corruption Confronted

Commander Kroeker had a unique reputation for caring for his troops, unlike most of the other staff officers in the department, and I experienced it firsthand in our two-hour meeting. I told him about my time in OCB CRASH. He rarely interrupted me while I enumerated the unit's grievances. I could see he was totally aware of them, but no one had dared to risk his future in the department by stepping forward.

Everyone in CRASH knew that the five captains of the bureaus had complained for years about CRASH officers pushing off gang-related crimes to patrol officers, hereby taking them away from their primary responsibility for calls for service.

I told the Commander how the Lieutenant went sideways when the CRASH officers made dope arrests; how METRO came in once or twice a year for a contest to see who could make the most arrests in a single p.m. watch; and how the majority of arrests were for drinking in public and other low-grade infractions, giving the Lieutenant high-arrest numbers to justify his leadership. We were also fiercely encouraged to underreport the true number of victims in shootings by listing intended victims as witnesses even when they came within inches of being hit with the gunfire.

Payless Security

There are times when I think to myself that if Hallam had been successful in killing me, it would have been exponentially more merciful than what I have mentally endured all these years.

In addition to losing my job, I lost all the money I had put into the city pension fund. Finding work was impossible – I was viewed as an outcast by society and seen as a disgraced corrupt cop. The shame, anguish, and despair I've endured to this day is incalculable. The only work I could find was shithole security jobs in places like "dime-a-dance" halls in the seedy bowels of downtown Los Angeles.

In those years, 1979 to 1992, it was the height of the low-intensity wars in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Masses of young girls from those war-torn countries were illegally streaming into the United States to find refuge and work in places like those degrading dance halls. My job was to keep them safe from the hordes of drunks and drugged-out customers, most of whom were also from those countries. And many of the other patrons were from the ranks of L.A.'s street gangs and our local dopers, drunks, and pimps.

I also found some part-time work at a Payless shoe store in downtown L.A. My job was to stand at the center of the store entrance giving the potential low-life thieves the thousand-yard stare to dissuade them from stealing the store empty. I worked ten-hour shifts with only a single half-hour break. That type of employment was a good as it was going to get for years.

Request For Rehire

Some months after my termination, I went before the Board of the Los Angeles Police Protective League and asked if they would appeal my firing to the Los Angeles County Superior Court. They agreed to champion my case and initiated the arduous legal process. The League appointed attorney Steve Pingel to prepare the brief. Steve interviewed countless witnesses, dissected the entire personnel complaint, including my police record, and he drove to Arizona and developed the critical "line-of-sight" issue. In effect, he did everything Hank Hernandez did not do.

Then came a hit that I have never recovered from. Both the Los Angeles Superior and Appellate Courts rejected my case in favor of the Los Angeles Police Department.

To this day, I have continued to file a "Request for Rehiring" (RFR), starting with Chief Daryl Gates on May 28, 1984. The brief included the "Fruit of the Poisonous Tree" argument regarding the statements made by Internal Affairs Sergeants Sewell, Lamb, and Zinman.

I emphasized the genesis of my troubles with the department when I reported Lieutenant Lynch underreporting the true number of gang-related crimes in Central Bureau to the Commander of the Bureau, Mark Kroeker. I included my unparalleled record of service and restraint, as well as the department's duplicity in finding Officer Bunker and Detective Skyys not guilty, and Captain Jess Rodriguez's revelation that I did not receive an adequate defense.