

# Patrick V. Murphy

Oral History Interview  
with Patrick V. Murphy

*Interviewed by Jeffrey A. Kroessler  
on January 18, 2006*

## Justice in New York: An Oral History

### Preface

President Jeremy Travis initiated Justice in New York: An Oral History in 2006. Based in the Lloyd Sealy Library, the project was made possible through a generous grant from Jules B. Kroll, President of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice Foundation. The goal was to interview criminal justice leaders – district attorneys, police commissioners and members of the department, elected officials, defense attorneys, and advocates, individuals concerned with the workings of the system.

Each interview is recorded on cassette tapes and/or a digital recorder. The original is deposited in Special Collections in the library. Each transcript is bound and the volume is cataloged and placed on the shelves. A digital copy is available through the library's web site, as are selected audio clips from the interviews (<http://www.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/>).

Oral history is a problematic endeavor. The interview is only as good as the questions asked and the willingness of the interview subject to be open and honest. Some remain guarded, others become expansive. Sometimes memory fails, and details, names and dates are confused. Some individuals have their own set story, and an oral history will add little that is new or especially insightful. Other individuals use the interview as an opportunity to sum up a career; on occasion that means gliding over unpleasant or difficult details. Our purpose was to allow each individual to tell his or her story. In each case, the final transcript has been approved by the interview subject.

Even with those caveats, what emerges from these interviews is more than a collection of personal reminiscences. The interviews shed light on controversies and policy decisions of a particular historical moment. At times, the interviews verge on the philosophical, as with discussion of capital punishment, race relations, or the decriminalization of controlled substances. Always, the interviews contribute to our understanding of the many facets of the criminal justice system – law enforcement, prosecution, incarceration, prisoner re-entry, and electoral politics – and reveal how New York has changed over the decades, as have social and cultural attitudes.

Justice in New York: An Oral History stretches across more than half a century, from the 1950s to the 2010s. Those years saw an unprecedented rise in social unrest and violent crime in the city, and then an equally dramatic drop in crime and disorder. If the interviews have an overarching theme, it is how the city – the police, courts, elected officials, and advocates – addressed and, yes, overcame those challenges. These men and women were actors in that drama, and their narratives stand on their own. The truth or mendacity of the story is for the reader to assess.

Chief Librarian Larry E. Sullivan guided this project from the start and participated in several interviews. Interim Chief Librarian Bonnie Nelson oversaw the creation of a new website for Criminal Justice in New York, a portal for the oral histories, trial transcripts, images and documents from Special Collections, and other resources. Special Collections librarian Ellen Belcher, cataloging librarian Marlene Kandel, and emerging technologies librarian Robin Davis contributed to the success of this project.

Jeffrey A. Kroessler  
2013

Patrick V. Murphy  
Chronology

- May 15, 1920 Born in Brooklyn, son of a patrolman.
- 1942 Joined the Navy at Floyd Bennett Field; served as a pilot until the end of the war.
- June 2, 1945 Married Martha E. Cameron
- Dec. 12, 1945 Joined the NYPD; he had passed the examination before the war.
- 1950 Instructor at the Police Academy with the rank of sergeant.
- 1954 Received his B.A. from St. John's University; he had completed three years of studies before the war.
- 1960 Received M.P.A. from Baruch College with a major in police administration.
- 1963 Took a leave of absence from the NYPD to become Chief of Police of Syracuse, New York.
- 1964 Returned to the NYPD; named head of the Police Academy.
- 1965 Retired from the NYPD with the rank of Deputy Chief.
- 1965 Joined the Federal Office of Law Enforcement Assistance in the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.
- 1967 Appointed Washington's first Public Safety Director, with responsibility for both police and fire departments. During the riots following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in April 1968, instituted the "fleeing felon rule," ordering police officers not to fire at fleeing suspects. "Violence begets violence," he said at the time. There were thousands of arrests, mostly for looting, but only 12 deaths in the rioting.
- 1968 Appointed head of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration by President Johnson.

- March 1969 Selected to direct the Urban Institute's research on public order and justice.
- Jan. 1970 Named Chief of Police in Detroit, Michigan.
- 1970 With information from David Durk and Frank Serpico, the *Times* ran a story by David Burnham detailing endemic police corruption involving graft, narcotics, and gambling. Mayor Lindsay said, "This government must root out corruption and wrongdoing with every means at its command." He appointed Wall Street Lawyer Whitman Knapp to head a commission to investigate. Durk (an Amherst College graduate) and Serpico were the star witnesses. Ultimately the Knapp Commission indicted no high ranking officers, only beat cops.
- 1970 Police Commissioner Howard Leary left office October 1 to become vice president for security for the Abraham & Straus department store chain. Under Leary, the force grew from 28,000 to 32,000. Mayor Lindsay had disagreed with Leary over a pending corruption inquiry, police handling of the recent attacks on anti-war protesters by construction workers, and the increasing attacks on patrolmen. The mayor then appointed career officer Patrick V. Murphy commissioner. During his three-year tenure Murphy replaced 90 percent of the department's top brass above the precinct level.
- January 15, 1971 Disgruntled over the lack of a new contract, the police began a five -day wildcat strike on January 15; 85% of the officers scheduled for patrol stayed out; but members of the other police unions representing detectives, sergeants, and higher ranking officers did not strike, so patrols continued. The city invoked the Taylor Law, and members of the PBA who went out were docked two days' pay for each day out.
- October 15, 1971 Removed Chief of Detectives Albert A. Seedman, a close friend, after receiving information that Seedman had accepted a dinner for himself and his wife and another couple at the New York Hilton Hotel (the dinner check was \$83). Seedman, honest and dedicated, was reinstated after five days.
- January 27, 1972 JoAnne Chesimard and Herman Bell of the Black Liberation Army ambushed Police Officers Rocco Laurie

and Gregory Foster at Avenue B and East 11<sup>th</sup> Street. Both officers were shot in the back multiple times and died of their wounds. Laurie, who was white, and Foster, who was black, had served together as Marines in Vietnam.

April 14, 1972

Responding to a false report of an officer in trouble, patrolmen Philip Cardillo and Vito Navarra entered a mosque on Lenox Avenue and 116<sup>th</sup> Street, where they were set upon by Black Muslims. Officers Vic Padilla and Ivan Negron ran in to assist and they too were set upon. Cardillo was shot once in the chest with his own gun and died at the scene. The police eventually forced everyone into the basement, but made no arrests and abandoned the crime scene after Louis Farrakhan and Charlie Rangel arrived and warned that if the police did not vacate the site there would be a riot. Deputy Commissioner Ben Ward ordered his men from the scene and Chief of Detectives Albert Seedman ordered the release of the suspects. Neither Mayor Lindsay nor Police Commissioner Pat Murphy attended Cardillo's funeral a few days later. Ward was later quoted in the *Amsterdam News*: "I believe that my investigation has pointed out, at least to my satisfaction, that there were some errors made on the part of the police. For the errors, and for the consequence of those errors, I apologize to Minister Farrakhan." In 1974, Louis 17X Dupree, "dean" of the mosque's school, was arrested for Cardillo's murder, but, with no physical evidence linking him to the killing, was acquitted at trial.

August 15, 1972

In the New Brighton section of Staten Island, Patrolman Francis Ortolano shot and killed 10-year old Rickey Bodder as he ran from a stolen car; another youth was wounded. In succeeding days Deputy Commissioner Ben Ward went to the neighborhood and listened to the residents' complaints about the police. On August 18, Commissioner Murphy announced a new deadly physical force policy (it had actually been drawn up the previous year but never implemented). The new rule defined situations when an officer was prohibited from firing, most notably from "discharging his weapon at or from a moving vehicle, unless the occupants of the other vehicle are using deadly physical force against the officer or another person, by means other than the vehicle." The number of incidents of officers firing their guns dropped by 40 percent almost immediately.

- October 20, 1972 In a major departmental shake-up, Police Commissioner Patrick Murphy transferred or promoted 17 high-ranking officers. Among the changes, Captain Richard Condon took over the First Precinct in Lower Manhattan, and Deputy Chief Inspector John Guido was appointed commander of the Internal Affairs Division. In 1977 Police Commissioner Michael Codd named Guido chief of the Internal Affairs and Intelligence Divisions; Guido retired in 1986 following the arrest of 13 officers in the 77<sup>th</sup> Precinct in Bedford-Stuyvesant.
- June 1973 Resigned as Police Commissioner to become president of the Police Foundation, founded with a 5-year, \$20 million grant from the Ford Foundation in 1970; remained president until 1985. Donald F. Cawley succeeded Murphy as Commissioner.
- 1977 Published *Commissioner: A View from the Top of American Law Enforcement*.
- 1978 Helped found the Police Executive Research Forum.
- 1985-1998 Directed a police policy board under the United States Conference of Mayors.
- December 16, 2011 Passed away at age 91.

## Patrick V. Murphy

January 18, 2006

Murphy        Six of seven of them were born at Victory Memorial. And at that time we were living at 7712 Sixth Avenue. But I was raised at 933 77<sup>th</sup> Street.

JK        I know. My father was raised at 927 77<sup>th</sup> Street, Andy Kroessler.

Murphy        Oh, Kroesslers. Really? Ah!

JK        That's right.

Murphy        Oh, that was two houses down from us.

JK        That's right. And I called my father this morning; he's still fine. I said, "I seem to remember when we were visiting your father's house in Bay Ridge once that you all said that Pat Murphy, who lives two doors down, is going to be the new police commissioner." And that just stuck in my head after all those years.

Murphy        How old was your father?

JK        He just turned 88.

Murphy        I'm 85 ½. There was, you know, two big houses up on a hill on this street of development houses. And the people, when I was a kid, in the next house were Syrian people, and I can't remember their name now. But my mother and father bought this two-family that we lived in in 1924. What would they have paid for that? Six thousand. My niece sold it last year, \$1 million. You know, they were close to the subway and the subway is 20 minutes to Wall Street.

JK        And it's a beautiful neighborhood.

Murphy        Out there on the end with water on two sides. You can't beat it; we love it. So my wife, we've been living in Bethesda for 32 years now. When I left the commissioner's job to become president of the Police Foundation, where I stayed for 12 years, we had a thought that, we came back. We had lived in Brooklyn. My wife was a World War II war widow. Her husband was lost at sea and was a Navy pilot. I was a Navy pilot. So we met in '45 and married, expecting the war to go on for another four or five years when the big one was dropped. We married in June. By September I was out of the Navy. October, I was back living in Brooklyn and went back to National City Bank, where I'd been, down to 20 Exchange Place. And December 12<sup>th</sup> of '45 I was sworn in. I had taken an exam before I went in the Navy.

JK When did you join the Navy?

Murphy '42. Yeah. Right after Pearl Harbor I went down to Floyd Bennett Field, Flatbush Avenue, where there was a naval air station, and was screened and accepted. That felt like March but I was not called up until August and went to preflight training at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the University of North Carolina campus. And then out to Hutchinson, Kansas for basic flight training and then to Corpus Christi, Texas for advanced training.

JK It must have been a shock for a Brooklyn boy to go to America.

Murphy It was an experience. Dog gone! It was an experience, because the Navy has a kind of southern tradition. A lot of southern guys and a few Annapolis guys at the top of the squadron, lieutenant commander and maybe a commander. So it was a new world but, of course, World War II started bringing all kinds of people in. And in the room we had at Chapel Hill, a four-bed room. One guy was a fireman from New York and another guy, Joe Zachinski, a Polish kid from Brooklyn. And another fellow was at NYU at the time. So we had a little New York group.

JK You were all Catholics?

Murphy Not Joe Angel. Joe was a fireman. Three of us were Catholics. My wife wasn't a Catholic when she met me, but she had eight kids. We could've warned her about that, right? And Joe Angel, a heck of a nice guy. He went Marines, a fighter pilot in the Marines, came through the war, joined a Reserve squadron on Long Island. I think they flew out of Floyd Bennett and he was killed in his first jet solo, and it was very sad. But it was quite an experience.

JK You had finished your schooling before you joined in '42.

Murphy I had finished three years at St. John's out in Lewis Avenue in Brooklyn. And when I came back, well, I came in in December of '45, it took me until '54 to finish that degree. And then we had started the program with Baruch school. You know that story about how the higher education came about? When O'Dwyer quit as mayor, Impellitteri succeeded him, the president of the City Council. And, you know, the corruption O'Dwyer got burned with was Fire Department, not police. There was a pad, a plain clothes pad in every division and borough of the city. But what the hell was O'Dwyer? And O'Dwyer had been a cop; he was an Irishman from County Mayo. And he had attended seminary in Spain, so he spoke Spanish. And when he quit the mayor's job, Truman saved him by making him ambassador to Mexico. He could speak Spanish. Well, Impellitteri, because of all the pressure, had management studies done in about four or five departments, one of which was the Police Department. And the study was headed by Bruce Smith, who was then a police consultant and doing

management studies. But he came out of California, so we had the California police culture, higher education, college cops. And so Bruce Smith recommended that, because of the many institutions of higher learning in the city, the department should form a partnership with one of them to encourage and make available higher education for its officers. And when Wagner then came in as mayor, that was one of the first things they turned their attention to. And I was an instructor at the academy. I served on two different committees, one under the chief of staff to write an answer to the whole Bruce Smith report. And then I got put on the committee for liaison with City College. Buell Gallagher was the president of City College and Manny Sachs was the dean of the Baruch School. And of course those were the days when City College had more Nobel Laureates than Harvard, right? So from the very beginning, I was involved here. It started off as College of Police Science, COPS, and then in '64 it became John Jay. I'm not an alumnus of the college. I am of Baruch school. They were very nice to honor me last year as a distinguished alumnus. And that was really the sparkplug for moving Baruch from just business administration to public administration as well. And Jerry Lynch used to say to me, "You know, if you ever wanted to teach a course at the college, we'd love to have you." And I liked teaching. In fact, at St. John's I was taking an education major with math. And so when I retired from the Police Foundation I came up and taught for two years from '85 to '87. But I was really in a full time job then with the U.S. Conference of Mayors. So I did it for two years and enjoyed it very much. I just taught undergraduate courses. And then Jeremy Travis, who I've known going all the way back to Benjamin Ward. Benjamin Ward was the deputy commissioner when I became commissioner. He was a lawyer. But he was deputy commissioner of trials. So in the Police Department that was 90 percent white, you had a black bad guy. So I immediately asked Ben to go over to youth programs. And he did a remarkable job on the gang problem, especially in the Bronx. We had a few fighting gangs up there. So Jeremy Travis, I've known and then he's in Washington. We lived nearby, meet him in a restaurant and whatnot. And I didn't realize he admired me as much as he apparently does. And so as soon as he became president, I came up and we visited and talked. And now he's going to have a lecture series in my name. Ray Kelly has agreed to give the first lecture, March 20<sup>th</sup>, I guess.

JK And you'll be back for that.

Murphy Yeah, I will be up for it. I'm very honored. So my wife said to me, we're thinking of moving to Florida because our oldest daughter lives in Jacksonville and her son's a police officer in Jacksonville, John Kelly. My family, we have 189 years. My father was sworn in in 1908 and he became a traffic sergeant, and then two older brothers before me and a nephew we had dinner with last night retired about nine years ago as deputy chief. And then three members of the fourth generation, but all three of them retired the same year. Young John was injured at 9/11 and went out on disability. So we're keeping the tradition alive in Jacksonville right now.

JK It must have been unusual for you, coming from a family with a police tradition, to decide to go to college. Was that a discussion in your family?

Murphy There were eight of us in my family, and four girls.

JK It's not common for working class kids to decide to go on to college. Did any of your other brothers, sisters go on?

Murphy No, of eight children I'm the only one who went to college. Two of my three older brothers came into the department. My two older sisters were nuns. And my father was a traffic sergeant. And as I told you, he came in in 1908. And he died in 1935, had 27 years in the department and was still active. What had happened was, he was a traffic sergeant in Midtown Manhattan, and back then you had cops directing traffic, before the traffic agents, I think that's their title. So in Midtown you'd have a traffic cop on one corner after another. He had a car at his disposal, I guess, but he'd get into a trolley and he could supervise, give the C, the salute to a half dozen cops on the ride up. And then one day he's standing up front with the motorman and the trolley hit a truck and went underneath the back of the truck. So he was injured and he was off duty for the injury and then developed a heart condition and died in the department at 58. But now there was another thing. So my mother had myself and two younger sisters. I was 14 when he died. But because we had a two-family house with a little rental income and two brothers, one brother in the job, one came in the next year. They were all trying to help. My sisters threatened to leave the convent to come home to help. My mother would have no part of it. She took a course in practical nursing and went out and spent 24 hours with a patient, and two hours a night in the evening she would come home for dinner. And she wanted me to be a priest in the worst way. And so when I got out of high school a year or so after my father died, and I was doing well in school, she insisted I had to go to college. And that's what happened.

JK In the hopes that you would become a priest?

Murphy Yeah, that was her ambition. However, yeah, that was the generation ahead. But then, by my generation, all the Irish Catholic cops were sending their kids to college now, an awful lot of them. And so we kid about it, that in 1870 there were 100 murders on one block at Five Corners, and both the victims and the perps were predominantly Irish Catholic. It was the Red Light District. But as that changed, and my father, my father came in in 1908, of course, I wasn't born until '20. But I remember coming home when we lived on 77<sup>th</sup> Street. And he'd say, "Those damn Dutchmen." Well, there'd been a wave of Germans through before then. And probably still some, the Steuben Society, all the organizations they have.

JK You went to Catholic school your whole time.

Murphy        Yeah, that's right, to grade school, St. Ephan's Parish right there at 75<sup>th</sup> and Fort Hamilton. St. John's Prep, the high school that was with the college then, in Williamsburg. But after the war St. John's moved out to Jamaica Estates and built the new college. And so I did until I finished, I went back to St. John's in downtown Brooklyn to finish the degree and got that in '54 and then the Baruch camp put together a special graduate program to pick up an MPA with a police administration major. So I got that degree in '60.

JK        When you joined the force after the war, it's highly unusual for a police officer to have a college degree, and even more unusual for a police officer to get an advanced degree.

Murphy        Yes.

JK        Why did you finish?

Murphy        Except. Except. Did you ever hear about the famous class of June, 1940? I doubt that you have. LaGuardia came in in '33 in the midst of the Depression. So they were not replacing officers who were retiring. Until it shrank to the point that, incidentally, when I was commissioner, 32,000 shrank down to 22,000 during Beame and the beginning of Koch. So LaGuardia finally announced that they would appoint a class of police officers.

JK        There had been no classes during the '30s at the Police Academy?

Murphy        Well, I won't say—I can't give you the exact dates but there had been this shrinkage in cities across the country. All the unemployment. So he announced and a class went into the academy in June of 1940. Two other police commissioners were in that class. I didn't come in until '45. That class was full of college graduates, lawyers, and one M.D. That's how bad the Depression was. The fellow who was an M.D. came into the Police Department to make a living, and several lawyers. And Mike Murphy, who was commissioner, he was the third Murphy, I was the fourth. Mike was the last commissioner under Wagner, I guess, which would have been '64 or '65, something like that. Oh, there were several guys I could name off the top of my head—Sean Ronanes, Syd Cooper—that were lawyers that became cops in 1940, in that famous class. So there was some. And then when I went to the Police Academy as an instructor in about 1950, I guess, I was a sergeant. A number of guys from that June, '40 class were Police Academy instructors. But there never had been a commanding officer of the Police Academy with a college degree until Wagner took office, appointed Frank Adams commissioner, and they promoted Mike Murphy from captain to deputy inspector and sent him to the academy as the first commanding officer with a college degree. And Mike was a lawyer. And the next commanding officer of the academy was Bob Gallati, who also had a college degree. Now, Mike did not have military service but Bob Gallati had come back out of the Navy. And also, Syd Cooper was an instructor at the academy, and then I'd guess a half dozen

fellows who had bachelor's degrees. They were college graduates. But then, you know, we reverted after the war to the usual pattern. You wouldn't find college graduates, a rare one maybe now and then until about '54-ish when the John Jay beginning occurred. The first agreement we made was that they were looking at giving college credits to recruits to credit some of the recruit training. And so a fellow named John Griffith, a professor at Baruch, came down and taught the first course in the old Police Academy building at 7 Hubert Street, a condemned public school.

JK      Condemned for kids but good enough for police officers.

Murphy      Good enough for cops. And then it just grew like wildfire and more and more instructors came over to teach classes in the Academy building. The first building that COPS had, College of Police Science, before John Jay. Weren't they on Park Avenue South at one time? There was a building before 56<sup>th</sup> Street, 56<sup>th</sup> Street between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, I think it was. And that's where I taught in '85, '86, '87 in that building on 56<sup>th</sup>. I can't place the year they came in here but it's a good while now.

JK      Yeah, it's been 15 years, at least. Now, how did you make the decision to switch from going into the priesthood, as your mother wanted, to taking the police exam while you were still in college. I mean, you've got three contradictory.

Murphy      Okay. I had three years at St. John's when Pearl Harbor occurred. And I enlisted in the Navy for flight training and did not go back for the fourth year to college. Now, I was never convinced myself that I wanted to be a priest, but the possibility was there. And I was in a flight squadron in Norfolk, Virginia, VJ4, a utility squadron, and one Friday one of the fellows in the squadron said, "We're having a little get together tomorrow night, Saturday night," at so and so. "A woman's coming who's a war widow. Her husband was a Navy pilot like us. Would you be interested in matching up with her for the party?" I said, "Of course. I'd be honored." And then it happened and that was, that was.

JK      No more priesthood.

Murphy      That was March 17 and on June 2<sup>nd</sup> we were married, anticipating four or five more years in the Navy before we'd ever face that question of where to settle down. But I had taken the exam for the department and had been passed over, of course, years before. So my job was waiting. The big bomb was dropped in—when was that? We were married in June.

JK      August.

Murphy      August. Two months and the world changed. Right? September, I was already out of the Navy. And, well, I really hated to take her away from her mother, who was a saint. And they had had a tough time in the Depression. Her

father was a steamfitter. He'd been, he went in in the Mexican campaign and was sent in in World War I and was cast. And he was a steamfitter. I think I told you, but he was born in Brunswick, Georgia. Her mother and father were both southerners. And so, having to follow the work around the country, she was raised in Chicago and Denver and Seattle, and then back to Norfolk to work in the Navy yard. And he was a World War I veteran, disabled veteran. He wasn't getting much of a pension. But these are our options. So we stay in Norfolk and decide on what career is available or we go back to New York where there's a job waiting, which at the end of '45 was still a pretty good, competitive job. You know, in the Depression, well, right there on 77<sup>th</sup> Street, houses were being foreclosed and people were losing jobs. Well, if you had a steady civil service job you were in the gravy train. So police jobs still looked like a pretty good job then. I absolutely cannot believe what's happened with the Suffolk County salary and so forth. The PBA yesterday, they had some kind of a bulletin, which lists where the salary ranks in the country. Amazing, amazing.

JK I found it remarkable that the NYPD's so-called reform was to lower the incoming salary of police officers in these times. It made no sense to me.

Murphy That's right. I hadn't fully realized, but the department grew like crazy during David Dinkins administration. Now, I was responsible for Lee Brown coming here. When David won his election, I knew he was very close to Charlie Rangel. They called one another brother. And I called Charlie Rangel. I said, "What's he going to do about police commissioner?" He said, "Gee whiz. You know, with all the things we've discussed, we've had no discussion about that. I don't know if he wants to keep whoever's there now. I don't know who's there right now." So I told him it was Richard Condon. He said, "Why do you call?" I said, well, I didn't know if he might be interested in an African American chief who's the best police chief in the country. "What the hell are you talking about?" "Lee Brown." "Never heard of him." He was a chief in Houston at the time. When he went back, eventually he became mayor there for a while. So he says, "Hey, Pat. If this guy is half as good as you say, don't be surprised if David's in touch with him." And the next day Dave Dinkins, "Could you get this Lee Brown to come see me?" He was up in a few days and he had the job. But there were 32,000 when I was commissioner, and by the time Bob McGuire finished, or before, it was down to 22,000. So they were rough times and you know why David Dinkins, well, I guess maybe it was a smart political strategy for the first African American mayor to rebuild the Police Department. But why it's remained, that's a good while ago now, I don't know. If they can get away with it, they get away with it. But in the job market Nassau and Suffolk must draw the whole cut above when you're drawing. And you do need good people. Firm, I'm a firm believer in professionalization. It's an absolute must. And I noticed that some of the college's literature refers to "leading role in the professionalization of the police." However, there are some major impediments, like 15,000 small department chiefs. And in IACP [International Association of Police Chiefs] every chief gets one vote. So if Ray Kelly marches in to the next IACP meeting

with a friend from the Canadian border who has five cops, those five cops will have one vote and Ray Kelly's 37,000.

JK You really went after that for several years, that kind of wrong-headed thinking that disproportionately advantaged the small departments in rural America, as opposed to the nexus of where the crime and policing activity took place.

Murphy That's exactly right. And it's crazy. Now, you know the small departments have such low crime rates because they really have the ultimate, they don't have the poverty. They tell their cops, you know, "If a poor person walks into town, get the bus fare to go to New York where they go on welfare." So then another powerful motive, the power structure. Like, a banker couldn't get a traffic ticket if they caught him going a hundred miles an hour. If the banker's kid goes joy riding in somebody else's Porsche because he never drove a Porsche, that kid couldn't get locked up if he asked to be. But what's more important than all that is the professionalization that should be occurring, especially for the urban areas where crime, you know, with the poverty and unemployment, the root causes of crime are concentrated. Hell, you take that list of the 16,000 police departments we have, and you wouldn't go down too far before you have more than half the cops in the country and two-thirds of the crime. But of course, the chief's associations, both IACP and the state, so many of them are a hundred years old and they've been in bed with the state legislature for a hundred years, and that's their strategy.

JK And no legislature is going to say, "We're going to take your eight departments and turn them into one."

Murphy No. No, that word consolidation is a no-no. But now for 10 years they were fools. In the 1964 campaign Goldwater, for the first time in a presidential campaign, brought up crime in the streets. You and I know why he did—the long, hot summers, civil rights movement getting stronger, so he brought up crime in the streets quite prominently. When Johnson won the election, one of the first things he said was, "We have to do something about this crime and law enforcement problem." So we created a crime commission, a distinguished crime commission. I think Wagner was on it, he was the mayor here at the time, and then created the first federal program, a \$7 million budget to assist local and state law enforcement, OLEA, Office of Law Enforcement Assistance, which preceded LEAA. Well, I was a deputy chief at the time, commanding officer of the Police Academy, and I was recruited to be assistant director of OLEA by Jim Vorenberg, who was the executive director of the Crime Commission. He was a Harvard law professor and later dean of Harvard Law School. So Jim came over to the Police Academy, asked me, and I said, well, my hope was that I just remain with the mayor, Lindsay, till the end of his term this December. This was in the spring. And Lindsay had pretty much decided not to try for third term.

JK Wisely.

Murphy Yeah, wisely, to be sure. And Vorenberg said, “Well, I’m sorry but my assignment from”—he had already been appointed to the board of the Police Foundation, which Ford Foundation established with a \$20 million grant for five years. So he said, “I’m sorry. The board—we had a good discussion about this and they felt we should have a president on by June.” Actually, they were getting rid of the first president, Charlie Rogovin, who was a lawyer, had been an assistant D.A. in Philadelphia. So, “I’d like to accommodate you but it’s impossible. If you couldn’t be on board by June we’ll have to look elsewhere.” So I agonized about it and talked to John Lindsay. He’s a very gracious guy. He said, “Well, you know. I’d like you to stay.” We’d gone through the Knapp Commission, Black Liberation Army, corruption reform, and he said, “I understand and from what little I know about that Police Foundation, it would be the right place for you.” Et cetera, et cetera. So I came with the Foundation, and I stayed 12 years, from ’73 to ’85. And we did a lot of good stuff. We had a couple of good research directors. Larry Sherman was the second one. A fellow was there when I got there. I think he either lost his wife or something and he’d left. But we did the Kansas City Prevent and Patrol Experiment, and Women in Policing, it’s a good experiment with the Washington Department where the supervisors evaluated their officers, male and female, and very consistently found that the women could do patrol satisfactorily. Of course, on the domestic violence cases they often had an advantage. They’d hit their male partner on the elbow and take them in the corner and say, “She’s the problem. Not”—[laughter]—and we limited males could not have that insight. So we did loads of good things there. And then when the Crime Commission reported in ’67, Congress passed the LEAA legislation. And they had a real budget and every state got a planning grant, a significant amount of money. So every state did its first inventory of what they had. They didn’t know how many police departments or jails or—they might have known how many prosecutors and judges, maybe not. And so that was very valuable, but it kind of got by IACP and the small town chiefs. So maybe the climate at that time was such that the snowball was rolling; you couldn’t stop it.

JK Well, you’d never really had federal dollars going that deeply into the states for this kind of activity or research.

Murphy Yeah. Now, they had to give all of them the Planning and Standards Grant. But then, beyond that, they were giving weapons carriers to 10-man police departments. And so from the day that legislation passed, the chief’s associations were hard at work cleverly, behind the scenes, not much national publicity, and then started building up the fire in each state, because they could get people to complain that that feds were giving out the money unfairly, you know.

JK You know, it sounds like the fuss over national security funds after 9/11.

Murphy        It's a replay. It's a replay. And of course, Nixon, this legislation passed in '67 and I was appointed the first administrator, never confirmed. And then Nixon comes in January, '68. And Pete Feldy [?], who was the son of a Republican congressman, his father had been in Congress for many years. He was on the troika. The LEA administration consisted of an administrator and two associates. And so I left. John Mitchell was the attorney general. He was gracious about it, having been a New Yorker and so forth, and said all the nice things to me. And I had been Public Safety Director in Washington in between there when we had the riot. And so the chiefs, it took them 10 years but they were working on killing this damn thing, because that one word they feared, consolidation, would appear on reports. Consolidate. Oh, the president of the Commission Report, what were the words that they'd use referring to the non-system? But you know, they just defined it very carefully as being crazy. There's no coordination. There are no standards. There is no planning. And every country needs a police system. I mean, in a modern industrial society where the criminal has mobility and communications are what they are. And thinking about terrorism, how the hell do 16,000 departments, no in-between level. Suppose we assume the FBI's coordinating, not that they ever would. Hoover was too clever for that.

Side 2

Murphy        In the beginning, Hoover preached against a national police force, the danger of a national police force. It's so contradictory to our sense of government, home rule, local control, independence. You know, in a federal government with 50 states we must let them. Well, hold the phone. One of the first things a guy in an English police department will tell you is that we're local, because there are 42 police departments in England, England and Scotland. And we have 16,000. The first thing the guy will tell you is, "Oh, we're local police," because they do have a board. I think there are elected boards to control that. But there are only 42 of them; you can coordinate that. And so they have a home office and a national government. And they're quick to tell you that they're not over the police, that they have a local. But home office pours out research and standard best practices. Nobody knows what the best practices are about so many fundamental things, like patrol. But the home office also does an inspection of every department. I don't know if it's annual or whatever. So now you have a group going in, very knowledgeable about everything that goes on in that world. And as I understand it, they have no authority to do much about their reports. But once that report is out there the local commission is on the spot. Your department isn't doing it the way Birmingham is or someplace else. That immediately raises the alarm. And the Canadians, they have the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. They do have a national police force. And of course, Hoover always just said, "The FBI is not a national police force." And the critics say it has every damn one of the flaws of a national police force without the title. And it's true. It's worse. When I went to Syracuse, here in New York you don't interact with other police departments, but I went to Syracuse that second week, phone call, "Chief, there's a call from the Chief in Oshkosh. "Where is it? How big?" "Oh, 10,000 people,

5,000 people.” “How are you, Chief? Welcome to our area. I have a big problem. We have had our first murder in 31 years. Could you lend me a homicide detective?” They don’t know how to set up a crime scene. They know from nothing. And that was the English argument. When they studied this 40 years ago, not that they were ever as fragmented as we are, but they came up with the finding that there should be no police department of less than 500 officers because it takes 500 to have a full service police department, homicide, juvenile, drugs, laboratory, and very few have laboratories, they go outside for that. But just look at a big department in a city, you know, one tenth the size of New York, or maybe even a hundredth the size of New York. They have these specialists. And so that was their theory and they adopted it. Every department should be full service. And without the experience on a lot of these specializations these smaller departments screw up a lot of procedures.

JK But they’re good at setting up speed traps.

Murphy Boy oh boy, are they good at that. And you’ll read about them bragging, “We’re self supporting.” And the president’s Crime Commission way back in ’67 cited some of the—they actually cited departments that did not have a car. So the single officer who probably called himself chief, but he would go out, literally would go out on the highway and position himself strategically to catch a traveler either going through the red light or exceeding “You are now in town, 20 miles an hour.” And he hailed them down. He’s in a uniform and makes them drive him to the magistrate or whatever they call it and pay the fine. That was right in the Crime Commission Report.

JK You were mentioning Barry Goldwater and crime. I remember that when John Marchi was running for mayor the big cry was “Law and Order,” and that that was a code word—some people said, “That’s a code word for race.”

Murphy Sure. Staten Island—perfect political strategy. Right? All those cops and firemen out there, they will agree with that.

End

Patrick V. Murphy  
Index

Brown, Lee, 13  
Crime, 10, 14  
Dinkins, David, 13  
Hoover, J. Edgar, 16  
International Association of Chiefs of Police, 13-14  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 9, 11-12  
Lindsay, John V., 15  
Murphy, Patrick V., education, 8-12; family, 7, 9-10, 12;  
    in World War II, 7-8, 12  
New York Police Department, 8-9, 11-13  
Office of Law Enforcement Assistance/Law Enforcement Assistance  
    Administration, 14, 16  
Police Foundation, 15  
Policing, 14-17  
Travis, Jeremy, 9  
Ward, Ben, 9