

Mollen Commission Report (7/7/94) :

“What we found is that the problem of police corruption extends far beyond the corrupt cop. It is a multi-faceted problem that has flourished – because of a police culture that exalts loyalty over integrity; because of the silence of honest officers who fear the consequences of “ratting” on another cop no matter how grave the crime; because of willfully blind supervisors who fear the consequences of a corruption scandal more than corruption itself; because of the demise of the principle of accountability that makes all commanders responsible for fighting corruption in their commands.

All these factors contributed to the state of corruption we uncovered. To cover up their corruption, officers created even more: they falsified official reports and perjured themselves to conceal their misdeeds. Thus, while more limited in extent, police corruption has become more serious and threatening than ever before.

In the face of this problem, the Department allowed its systems for fighting corruption virtually to collapse. It had become more concerned about the bad publicity that corruption disclosures generate than the devastating consequences of corruption rather than rooting it out. Such as institutional reluctance to uncover corruption is not surprising. No institution wants its reputation tainted – especially a Department that needs the public’s confidence and partnership to be effective. A weak and poorly resourced anti-corruption apparatus minimizes the likelihood of such taint, embarrassment and potential harm to careers. Thus there was a strong institutional incentive to allow corruption efforts to fray and lose priority – which is exactly what this Commission uncovered. This reluctance manifested itself in every component of the Department’s corruption controls from command accountability and supervision, to investigations, police culture, training and recruitment.

Basic equipment and resources needed to investigate corruption successfully were routinely denied to corruption investigators; internal investigations were prematurely closed and fragmented and targeted petty misconduct more than serious corruption; intelligence-gathering was minimal; integrity training was antiquated and often non-existent; Internal Affairs uncover officers were often placed in precincts where corruption was least prevalent; reliable information from field associates was ignored; supervisors and commanders were not held accountable for corruption in their commands; and corruption investigators often lacked investigative experience and almost half had never taken the Department’s “mandatory” basic investigative training course. Most Internal Affairs investigators and supervisors embraced a work ethic more dedicated to closing corruption cases than to investigating them. Most volunteered for Internal Affairs to get on a quick promotion track rather than to get corrupt cops off the job. Indeed, a survey of Internal Affairs investigators we conducted through an Internal Affairs “insider” revealed that over 50% of Internal Affairs investigators’ time was spent on non-investigatory matters. And no one said a word about this state of affairs until this Commission commenced its investigations.

This was no accident. Weak corruption controls reduced the chances of uncovering serious corruption and protected police commanders’ careers. Since no entity outside the

Department was responsible for reviewing the Department's success in policing itself, years of self-protection continued unabated until this Commission commenced its independent inquiries.

This abandonment of effective anti-corruption efforts did more than avoid public exposure of corruption, it fueled it. It sent a message through the Department that integrity was not a high priority and that Department bosses did not really want to know about corruption. In short, it gave everyone in the Department an excuse for doing what was easiest: shutting their eyes to corruption around them.

And that is precisely what happened. The principle of command accountability, which holds commanders responsible for fighting corruption, completely collapsed. Supervisors and commanding officers were largely complacent about maintaining integrity. Few were concerned with corruption on their watch – **unless it exploded into an embarrassing corruption scandal.**”