UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Screening Racial Visions, Scripting State Violence: The Performance and Visual Culture of Patrol Work and Police Training in San Diego

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DEDICATION

To my mother
And her mother
And every mother
That brought us here

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PREFACE

It is May 2019, and I am tracing my fingers along the touch-sensitive displays that decorate the walls of the National Law Enforcement Museum, an underground facility adjacent to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Judiciary Square, mere blocks from the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Opened in the fall of 2018, its 57,000 square feet of exhibition space invites museumgoers to "walk in the shoes" of American law enforcement through a tour of policing's material history, from grand displays of police equipment like state trooper vehicles to behind-glass displays offering a chronological history of American policing from the 19th century to 21st-century community policing, punctuated by an autographed copy of "The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing" bearing former President Barack Obama's signature. In addition to historical documents, the museum's archival collections include police-themed board games, signed memorabilia from "pop cop" programs like *The Andy Griffith Show* (1960-1968), and set props and costumes from Hollywood films such as *RoboCop* (1987), ever present reminders that the U.S. history of policing is a televisual and cinematic history as well.

Elsewhere, the museum's many interactive displays offer museumgoers the ability to play a variety of roles associated with law enforcement. Using touchscreen technologies, viewers can click their way through glossy interactive menus and video prompts in the style of a choose-your-own-adventure game. One section of the museum called "Take the Case" features a variety of touchscreen podiums that invite viewers to *see* like detectives and is, according to the signage above the exhibit, "generously funded by Target." For example, one podium displays seemingly uneventful scenes of people enjoying a public park followed by

prompts challenging the viewer to see if they can put on the detective vision required to identify the crime that took place in the previous scene. A radio dispatch section of the museum, with large lettering proudly announcing "911 Emergency Ops: Motorola Solutions," invites museumgoers to sit in a 180-degree diorama command center and play the role of radio dispatchers to make sense of the many screens real-life dispatchers must navigate to prioritize calls for service. One of the most impressive sections of the museum's main floor is a nearly floor-to-ceiling exhibit entitled, "A Day In The Life," and uses a series of screens and knobs for viewers to replay, rewind, and fast forward through in-car footage of officers on patrol across different law enforcement departments in the U.S. It is no surprise that this shiny display is "Generously funded by Panasonic."

While perusing the exhibits, I notice a line of people standing together in front of a closed white door. When it swings open, a crowd exits, and soon a museum staff member invites this new group in. Beyond this door are bleachers in the style of a proscenium theater, and I follow the others into this "black box." This room contains the first public-facing police firearms training simulator in the U.S., virtual, immersive reality technology increasingly adopted by police departments nationwide and purchased from companies like VirTra, AXON, and InVeris Training Solutions, formerly known as Meggitt Training Systems, whose own projector technology is fixed to the ceiling of this training simulator room. Using infrared technologies and software responsive weapons, this shoot-or-don't-shoot simulator invites museumgoers to "suit up" in the style of police officers, offering people the ability to strap on a Velcro belt with only a single object attached: one firearm.

Following my experiences at San Diego's police academy beginning in 2014, I have become familiar with this training simulator technology, so I begin to zone out a bit as I take a seat on the bleachers and the staff member describes the tech, illustrating the different kinds of scenarios the Meggitt system can project onto the blank wall in front of us. After a few minutes, the staff member asks for volunteers in order to stage a demonstration of the simulator. Seated a few rows down are a family of three, and a father with a British accent is patting his child in an encouraging gesture. The boy stands up for a moment, then sits back down; he seems nervous, and the father concedes to his refusal to participate.

"Come on, it's not so bad," says the staff member, now standing at a computer terminal where he is queuing up a filmed training scenario pre-programmed into the Meggitt system. His selection on the screen shows a variety of "decision trees" – branching possibilities of action – that he can select in order to advance the video to the next scene in response to the actions of the museumgoers using the simulator.

As with students in a classroom, there is an awkward silence while museumgoers look around at each to see who will be the first to hazard the intimacy of participation. The father stands up with a conciliatory shrug, playfully nudging his reluctant son as he steps to the front. Content to observe for the moment, I am writing a few notes about the staging of the room and its uncanny similarity to a theater, including two big black felt boxes "on stage" that seem like abstract set pieces presently pushed up against opposite walls. I had come to the museum in an effort to do my due diligence as a researcher studying police training, and to let myself mindlessly drift through a narrative river of policing so confident in its origins and its forward trajectory, a unified storytelling of America's "blue family." After a difficult

question-and-answer session at NYU Gallatin's campus following a panel where I presented my research, including a proposal to prototype a community-scripted police training simulator with community members in San Diego, I needed something to take the edge off. While late chef and travel writer Anthony Bourdain might have sought out a piece of crispy pork and a shot of near-lethal liquor, I required total immersion, a way to dull my senses with the easy overtures and overripe rhetorical devices of "police culture." These affective and aesthetic devices bled across the boundaries of each exhibit, every interactive display, and across every telegraphed smile from Black, Brown, Asian, and White officers waiting to be activated on the museum's many screens, implicitly and implacably insisting: *You, too, can be one of us.*

"No one?" inquires the simulator wrangler, gesturing between the small-seated audience and the lone British ranger on stage, "Not a single volunteer to help this man out on patrol? He's gonna need back-up. *Every* cop needs a buddy!"

I raise my hand, and a mother with a Wisconsin accent encourages me along – "You can do it, girl!" – as I descend the stadium seating. The British man and I shake hands briefly before strapping the belts around our waists, gun holsters at our sides while a video scenario loads in front of us. The video begins, and we take on the first-person perspective of a secondary patrol unit that arrives on-scene to witness a scuffle between a suspect in a grey sweatshirt and another police officer. The suspect manages to wrestle the gun away from the officer before taking off on foot near a warehouse. The camera shakes as it advances after the man, simulating our running bodies. When our collective camera body reaches the man, he is standing with his back to us, arms resting by his sides and visibly holding the gun, muzzle down, in one hand. I look over at the British man standing to my right, nodding for him to

take the lead, and he meets my gaze with a somewhat confused expression; he seems uncertain about how to practically proceed.

"Uh," he starts, addressing the staff member off-stage, "What… should we do? Is something going to happen?"

"Well, are you going to do something?"

I put my hands on my sides, considering the question and trying to give my British partner the opportunity to find his way to an act of improvisational performance. Two seconds later, the video begins to play and the man turns around, firing at us instantly. The screen goes black, and the staff member scolds us, "See what happens when you take too long to decide what to do? Police work is about making split-second decisions. You cannot dawdle and wait for something to happen. You need to take decisive action, or else you put your life and the life of your beat partner in danger. Before you know it, you're forcing your family to *bury* you. So, you want to try that again?"

We agree, and the same scene resumes. We reach the man with the firearm again at a loading dock ramp, his back turned to us while holding the gun.

A moment passes.

A heartbeat.

Then, a possession.

I draw my firearm from its holster, side stepping with my left foot behind one of the black boxes and taking partial cover. I drop to one knee, the backstrap of the handgun pressed securely against the meat of my palm while my left hand supports the gunstock. Slight bend in my elbows, I bring the gun up steady to eye level, aiming it at the projected suspect. These

gestures emerge as one motion, and a stream of orders are flowing from my throat like a ventriloquist's doll.

"Drop the fucking gun! Put your hands in the air, right now!" I yell at the top of my lungs, the sound of my booming voice filling the black box theater. "Drop the gun right now or I *will* shoot you. Do you fucking understand me? Drop it! Drop your weapon!"

There is no sound in the theater save for a single keystroke on the staff's computer terminal. Prompted by my performative recitation, the staff member proceeds to the next branch of the scenario's decision tree, digitally summoning the conditions evoked by my words like a witch casting a séance and channeling the J.L. Austin ghost-in-the-machine: *this* is how you do things with words. The suspect on screen drops the weapon, and before he can finish his own preprogrammed actions I am on top of him with more verbal commands.

"Turn around. Turn around *slowly*. Do not reach for anything. Put your hands on your head and get down on your knees. If you reach for your waistband, your shirt, under your shirt – wherever – I *will* shoot you. Do you understand me?"

"Okay, please don't shoot me, man," says the projected suspect with a listless performance of fear.

The scenario facilitator exclaims his approval, and then my British partner unknowingly reveals me, "Wow. So you've clearly done this before, haven't you?"

***

The spoken words and bodily repertoire that emerged from my performance in the firearms simulator hit me like a truck, a feeling as if they had come from nowhere. Whose words were they? How did they get here? What scripts had carried me into this room and had

shaped my vision, had moved me like a veritable marionette to a shooting position without – and, I do mean this literally – *any* hesitation? This dissertation is an invitation to consider what it means to performatively address the scripts that constitute performances of policing such as mine. It is an invitation to stand with me across the many stages where policing is performed, enacted, and rehearsed as I *stand with* the ethical imperative of Dwight Conquergood's call for doing dialogical performance ethnography research that "resists the closure and totalizing domination of a single viewpoint," and, in doing so, "counters the normative with the performative" (1986, 47). I invoke Conquergood's (1995) metaphor of the caravan here to ask the reading audience to join me in *moving* through policing's many scripts and how they travel through the performative practices of police officers, police recruits, film makers, television producers, community members, and academic researchers. This is a story about the scripts that undergird policing and police vision, scripts that move and mobilize. They are not just scripts for policing or bound to police officers. They are scripts that live in unexpected places, from 1970s experimental film to nineteenth-century cinematic architectures. These are the police scripts that sustain, to borrow the words of Saidiya Hartman, "the terror of the mundane and quotidian" (1997, 4). They might be capable of bringing us to a deeper understanding of the historical and material history of American law enforcement training regimes, or bring some of us to our knees with the brutal certainty of racialized state violence.

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Of all of the pages that compose this dissertation, I have spent more time staring at this once-blank page unsure of how to begin. It is not the agony of structuring an argument or the difficulty in simply *beginning* the writing that has placed me here for longer than I'd like to admit, staring into a seemingly infinite expanse of white pixels, but the sheer gravity of the task at hand: how to express the depth of my gratitude for all of the people in my life that brought me to this moment so that this dissertation could be in the world. I don't know that I can do this task justice here, but I console myself with the idea that perhaps this can be a beginning of gestures of thanks rather than any final word.

First, to my advisor, chair, and Jewish mama Elana J. Zilberg. Thank you for never giving up on me. That sounds so cliché, and maybe that's okay; cinematic clichés and their mobilities are the very stuff of this dissertation, and, as I've argued throughout, they can move us toward possibilities for action. Here, it moves me to hold a simple truth, and I offer it as an expression of immeasurable thanks: I don't think I would have made it here without you. From the moment I walked into your ethnographic methods course, you opened so many doors for me, from invitations to participate in the Studio for Ethnographic Design to the cross-disciplinary Citizen Culture project. You are the kind of mentor that seems a rarity in the academy, and I am so lucky to have been mentored, supported, and cared for by you over the past nine years. You have shared the generosity of your emotional and material labor to shape me into a critical scholar, pushing me further and harder toward asking the kinds of questions that would allow me to deepen my own research praxis and political commitments. In addition to challenging me academically (and dealing with my impatient, petulant tears at

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Screening Racial Visions, Scripting State Violence:
The Performance and Visual Culture of Patrol Work and Police Training in San Diego

by

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This dissertation considers sites where policing is visualized, staged, rehearsed, and performed to theorize how performances of racialized police violence become ordinary in the constructed training worlds of police officers. Through methods in performance and visual culture, I ethnographically examine the materials that shape officers' and recruits' training

and professional vision. By focusing on the ways these visual logics travel across sites of policing, I argue that racialized police violence emerges as a tacit expectation of police training rather than an object of its address. Through tracking the violent logics embedded in policing's historical and lived material culture, I theorize how training performances become citable in the field of patrol work, work which "feeds back" into acts of training. Based on more than 24 months of fieldwork conducted between 2015 and 2021, I examine the material history and contemporary practices of the police ride-along by observing police-civilian encounters from behind the windshield of the on-duty patrol car. While "riding along" with officers from the El Cajon Police Department through heavily policed communities of refugees in East San Diego County and while performing as a role-play actor in San Diego's regional police academy, I turn my interpretive attention toward the scripts officers and recruits mobilize to stage and rehearse police vision. I historicize this vision through 19th-century parallel mobile technologies of automobility and cinema that prefigure the ride-along and its cinematic mobilities. I trace this "mobile police vision" through the methodological entanglements between press, police, and academic researchers, and the consequences of this vision for Assyrian, Chaldean, and Arabic policed communities in El Cajon. Lastly, I employ performance ethnography to "read against the grain" of training scripts in the police academy by role-playing in scenes opposite officers and recruits. I argue that engaging policing's scripts – from cinematic architectures to role-play scenarios – figures new language for theorizing the mobility and visuality of these performances as they travel between the academy's "backstage" and the "front stage" of everyday policing, appearing in both sites as mimetic re-enactments of racial violence, anti-immigrant sentiments, and anti-Blackness.

Introduction

I.1 Introduction: "They call it 'command presence,' but it's actually acting."

A chair flies across the room, tumbling steel limbs ricocheting off the wall next to me. Before it can settle to stillness, the man is already on his feet, rushing toward the Mexican-American female recruit frantically yanking at the Glock Model 19 replica firearm in her holster. As she struggles to free the weapon from the holster's autolocking mechanism with one hand, she holds a spiral-bound field notepad in front of her like a tiny shield in a futile gesture to stop his advance. The man, broad-shouldered and built like a linebacker, draws a concealed pistol from his waistband, aiming it squarely at her chest.

"Put the gun down! Stop, sir! Stop!"

"How about this? Fuck you, bitch."

Wielding paper and polycarbonate, she stumbles backwards toward the door she entered from, exiting the scene. The man drops his arms by his side, momentarily scratching the side of his head with the muzzle of the gun. He shoots a frustrated look at the Scenario Evaluator standing in the corner with her clipboard, a white woman in her 30s pulling loose strands of blonde hair from her ponytail. She stops writing and slides the pen behind her ear.

"Um, recruit?" the evaluator asks, projecting her voice through the sliver of light between the doors leading to the stairwell where the recruit is taking refuge, "Are you going to come back in here?"

"I...I call for back-up," the recruit shouts, trying to reassert resolve into her words.

"The nearest officer is ten minutes away," the evaluator replies, provisionally summoning new narrative constraints to coerce the recruit toward inevitable conflict in this

"Deadly Force" role-play scenario. She continues, "So, *you* need to deal with this. No one else is coming to help you right now."

The recruit wedges the tip of her steel-toed boot between the doors, propping them open further and gestures with her raised pistol toward the circular table at the opposite end of the room where I sit as still as the overturned chair. Even 20 feet away, her vice-like grip on the weapon's handle is as plainly visible as is the sweat trickling over her winged eyeliner.

A long silence precedes the recruit's stilted inquiry: "Can she help me?"

Seeing past the invisible boundary separating my side of the room where I watch and wait "out of play" from the classroom-*cum*-rehearsal stage laid out before me, the recruit hails me with this small gesture. She traces my form midair with her trembling firearm, breaking the fourth wall of this violent stage play.

"No, recruit," the evaluator responds with measured irritation, "I already told you: that side of the room is out of play. *She* is out of play. *He*, on the other hand, is obviously *in* play. The only person who can deal with this threat right now is *you*."

The sights of the recruit's imitation training pistol locate me here, sitting "off stage" in one of the many unassuming classrooms of the San Diego Regional Public Safety Training Institute (hereafter referred to as the "Training Institute"). This is one of San Diego's primary police training facilities, and one of my key field sites where I conducted ethnographic research. Here, police recruits, academy instructors, and role-play actors collaboratively participate in the final phase of police academy instruction known as Scenario Test Week. After six months of police academy training observing lessons and lectures on officer safety, practicing defense tactics and weapons training, and enduring hundreds of hours of physical

exercise and hands-on combat techniques, recruits are funneled one at a time through a series of immersive simulations scripted and designed by California's Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (hereafter abbreviated as "POST").[1]

During this week-long event, academy staff stage and direct "reality-based" scenarios based on these POST-developed scripts; each scenario is a scene of crisis recruits are trained to anticipate in the patrol field, from performing vehicle stops to practicing deadly use of force against weapon-wielding actors. They enter each scene in the role of "responding officer" and are provided limited information about the scenario they are about to walk into. This is a structural limitation designed to mimic the role of patrol officers in the field who enter police-citizen encounters with as much information as dispatchers provide, but the onus is on officers to respond improvisationally to any crises that unfold when they arrive "on scene" to a call. With Scenario Evaluators watching their actions (or inaction, as in the case with the recruit above) and decision-making in real-time, recruits' performances in each scenario determine whether they successfully graduate or must reapply for the next police academy session. Scenario Test Week is the academy's grand finale and the "final training grounds" (Rice 2016, 3) before recruits are deployed in the field as working patrol officers in San Diego.

Funneled toward a seemingly inevitable violence, Recruit Calderón[2] tries once again to gain control by shouting at the man to drop his weapon. Her verbal command is met with a

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[1] POST is the primary state certification body responsible for regulating and enforcing state-mandated policies for all law enforcement agencies and training sites in California.

[2] To protect the identities of those I interacted with in the performance of this research, all participant names in this dissertation are pseudonyms.

panoply of colorful expletives as he raises his gun at the door. She takes a cautious step into the room, and, seeing the gun aimed at her, retreats once more.

"Okay, stop," the evaluator announces forcefully, and the recruit reenters, wisps of black baby hair coming undone from her neatly gelled bun as she rakes her fingers across her scalp in slow, despondent strokes.

Scene interrupted, the role-play actor stashes the replica firearm at his lower back and crosses his arms over his chest as Training Officer Ripley scolds the recruit for not firing her duty weapon at what is "so clearly a justifiable moment to use deadly force." As Ripley critiques the recruit's performance in this "Deadly Force" scenario test, the male actor, unable to contain his agitation, intervenes. Ripley seems to welcome the actor's interruption, stepping back with her clipboard as the man offers tips and suggestions for how the recruit could have taken control of the situation quickly. The recruit follows the actor across the room as he walks her through the previous scene of role-playing *as* the recruit in an effort to make her own performance *visible* to her. Here was the moment – still holding her fieldnote pad when she should have prioritized only drawing her weapon – that she, in the words of the actor, "lost all authority" in the scenario. He is directing now, demanding the recruit pull her firearm "like she means it," towering over her as she wrenches the pistol from its holster, cheeks flushed and visibly nervous. Emphatic but not yet pleased, the actor barks "Again!" before kicking her heels further apart with his own steel-toed tactical boots with violent emphasis. Grimacing, the recruit accommodates this wider stance while attempting a steady aim at an imaginary target across the room. Soon they are side-by-side, holstering and drawing their weapons in a repetitive gesture until her movements more closely match his.

The evaluator nods throughout the actor's improvisational instruction, affirming his points with an occasional anecdote or explicit comment that underscores and reinforces the core objective of this role-play scenario: testing recruits on their ability to recognize when the use of deadly force is not only reasonable and appropriate, but necessary. Ripley directs the recruit to review the academy's official lessons on use of force when she gets home, but plainly asserts deadly force is "absolutely reasonable in situations where someone is pointing a gun at you." The recruit acknowledges Ripley's comments with a steady "Yes ma'am" before the actor rounds on her again, clapping his hands in a gesture of rude awakening.

"When you're in the field, you can't just let someone draw down on you like that, recruit," he begins, "Or else you're fucked. I've been doing this work for a long time, and I'm telling you *that guy* is out there, and he isn't going to think twice about blowing you away."

The encounter between the recruit and role-play actor comes to an abrupt end when Training Officer Ripley announces, "Alright, recruit, double time it to the next scenario, and remember what we said." Her noncommittal response offers little indication as to whether the recruit passes or fails the scenario. The recruit acknowledges the instruction with a stiff nod and stands at attention, her body an iron rod of ritualized discipline before turning to the other officer standing arms akimbo, and salutes him with a chaste, "Sir, thank you, sir." After she exits the room, Bill Reyes – veteran patrol officer-turned-actor and obvious scene-stealer – expels a laugh of disbelief. Training Officer Ripley, performing her own state-mandated role as "Scenario Evaluator," similarly drops her performance and joins in with a playful groan.

"Oh my god, she was a disaster," Reyes starts, seeming to relish the ability to speak freely absent a formal recruit audience, "She just backed right out of the room!"

"She had *zero* command presence. She just froze. Why didn't she drop her notepad? The moment you see a gun, just drop the damn thing," Officer Ripley says coolly and jotted down a few notes on the evaluation paperwork fixed to her clipboard before sliding a new evaluation sheet beneath its steel clamp. "Okay, I'm going to grab the next one. Let's see if they can do any better. I'll be right back."

Ripley exits and Officer Reyes turns back toward the small table where I have been watching with rapt attention. He arches his eyebrows before asking, "Well, what do you think?"

"I think you're very good," I answer, tempering praise with a follow-up question, "As far as the recruit, though, was the issue that she wasn't decisive or commanding enough?"

"Listen, they call it 'command presence,'" Officer Reyes begins, righting the chair he threw minutes earlier and accenting his next words with a flourish suggesting he is letting me in on a little secret, "but it's *actually* acting."

Through the explicit language of performance, Officer Reyes marks the pedagogical site of Scenario Test Week as a theatrical stage *par excellence*. It is a stage upon which recruits must sustain a performance of police authority as actors and Scenario Evaluators make dramaturgical and directorial choices that press upon and extend the textual limits of the written scenario scripts provided by POST.[3] Explicit in Officer Reyes' explanation, as well as implicitly demonstrated in his unfolding interactions with the recruit in the scene above, is the understanding that police training and recruit evaluation are grounded in strategies of

[3] Though I am making a quick reference to these written scripts here, I will present these scripts more fully as text in the Conclusion of this dissertation.

improvisation and revision, the very techniques at the heart of performance and theater. His assertion that "command presence" – an enduring emic and epistemic category in both the formal language of police organizational pedagogies and sociological analyses of policing – becomes recognizable through a convincing "acting" performance presents a revealing entry into the training of police recruits. This is not a proposal for engaging theater as metaphor, but an insistence to consider the theatrical arrangements – staged scripts, rehearsed performances, and divisions between observers and performers – crucial to police training and praxis.

I barely finish writing a few scattered notations inspired by Officer Reyes' incitement of performance before he is standing next to me, the decommissioned third-generation Smith & Wesson Model 5903 9-millimeter pistol extended in offering. I must temporarily drop my own role as the ethnographer writing field notes *in situ*, and take up the other role I came here to play: a volunteer role-play actor opposite my scene partner.

"Alright," he sighs with satisfaction, handing me the firearm and taking a seat in front of his chai latte, "Your turn."

I.2 Scripting Vision: Ethnographic Feedback Loops from Academy to the Field

I begin this dissertation with a scene of critical failure in the police academy – a scene where a recruit fails to use deadly force – to illustrate a contradiction at the heart of police training, and one around which this dissertation is organized: even as scripted materials circulate in sites of police training like Scenario Test Week and are taken up and performed improvisationally by both officers and recruits, the institution of policing is not answerable to how its own improvisational performances meet the world in practice with routinely deadly

consequences. In police encounters with civilians on the street, police officers are trained to seek compliance at all costs with no regard for the cultural and situated scripts that civilians bring with them to encounters with police, whether they are recent refugee arrivals to San Diego lacking prior experience with American law enforcement, longtime residents living on the street who experience ongoing harassment by officers tasked with cleaning up "homeless encampments," or any number of other circumstances heavily policed peoples invariably of color occupy. This inflexibility cuts both ways, from the patrol field where policed citizens, those with complex legal status, or altogether without a path to citizenship are under the routine optics of patrol vision to academy scenes where recruits are taught to see and anticipate violence in the field, and punished when they step outside of the delimited roles *prompted* by the script. It is through these punishing revisions in real time that training officers pedagogically enforce a tacitly violent police vision that can be carried forward by recruits into the patrol field.

For example, in the opening scene of this introduction, Officer Reyes, moving from playing the role of gun-wielding misogynist to hard-ass training officer, tells the recruit in no uncertain times: "I've been doing this work for a long time, and I'm telling you *that guy* is out there." Here, he does not merely ask the recruit to imagine a nameless, threatening John Doe; he invites her to performatively *inhabit* the intimacy of his own experience on patrol, where dangerous men will relentlessly aggress and assail her with violent language and pursue her by even more violent means. Invoked by the stressed signifier "that guy," this compelling, rhetorical move expands the pedagogical ambit of threat to officer safety beyond theatrical "as if" hypotheticals, grounding this lesson on deadly force in the situated, lived experience of

everyday police work "out there." As a gendered performance of violent masculinity, Reyes' enactment illustrates what happens when the gendered power differentials at the very core of policing's tacit, normative repertoires of alpha-male aggression meet the bodies of recruits tasked with mirroring these performances (Kraska and Cubellis 1997). For women of color like this recruit who have been subject to the gendered conditioning of San Diego's police academy training before reaching this final testing phase, the consequences of a "weak" performance are grounds for academy dismissal. They must bring all of these lessons to bear upon their performances in Scenario Test Week, a final opportunity to demonstrate their ability to, in the words of anthropologist Aisha M. Beliso-De Jesús, "consume and absorb the ideological conditioning and internalization of white supremacy, perform deference and malleability, and attain physical athleticism with macho comradery" (2020, 5).

The recruit is not simply asked to make sense of what she sees, but to put on the gendered *vision* of another officer in order to perform a mode of seeing that is legible and passable, a police vision that can be replicated and cited when – *if* – this recruit makes it into the patrol field as an on-duty officer. While Officer Ripley is tasked with officially evaluating the recruit's performance in this "real world" simulation, the officer's participation as both a role-play actor in the scene and fellow patrol officer also unofficially shapes the evaluation of recruits in this scenario, offering idealized models for police vision grounded in his embodied experiences. Through performance, the officer summons his field experiences *into* the room, a material and improvisational excess – lived, embodied scripts beyond POST's "official scripts" – for testing recruits. His dual subject position authorizes him to directly intervene in

one of the academy's most charged scenarios, an intervention that is *both* performative and performance.

The revelation that Reyes is both a volunteer role-play actor and working patrol officer from a local police department is by no means extraordinary; it is an ordinary occurrence and structural condition of police academy training in San Diego that materially shapes and reinforces the production of recruit vision during Scenario Test Week. Unlike much larger federal police and military training programs, San Diego's regional police academy does not employ professional role-play actors.[4] Instead, the majority of its cast is comprised of volunteer patrol officers from San Diego County law enforcement agencies. Perhaps more significantly, however, was an earlier revelation, expressed in prior conversations with training officers like Ripley, that officers from across California are invited to submit their own proposed training scenarios to POST. Though the exact process by which these scenario scripts are selected, vetted, or revised by POST is beyond the scope of this dissertation, the relationship between the lived, situated experiences of officers and the standardized, "objective" training protocols upon which police pedagogies depend presents a site of entry into see how police vision practically and materially emerges "on the ground" once it travels beyond these seemingly bounded training and testing stages.

[4] As a theater of "real world" simulations, Scenario Test Week coheres with the federal training stages of the FBI's Training Academy in Quantico, Virginia (Colborn-Roxworthy 2004), as well as with other military training sites that include Fort Irwin National Training Center in California's Mojave Desert (Rice 2016) and the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center in Indiana (Belcher 2014). These other training sites, however, employ role-play actors from both the professional worlds of theater and through private contracting companies.

If role-play scripts are both sourced from the lived experiences of working patrol officers and *mobilized* by officers through acts of performance, then examining the scripting of police vision in praxis behooves us to consider how training materials are not simply aspirational, *a priori* models for police behavior, but are rather, *ethnographic* texts that travel on a feedback loop: from the patrol field, to the academy, and back again. This opening vignette demonstrates the stakes for how these feedback loops manifest and travel between spaces of training. It further illustrates how, though these performed portrayals and methods for inhabiting a role are shaped by lived, personal experiences, the *scripts* that circulate actually limit and constrain the agency of individual recruits in the academy and thus cops in the field to perform otherwise. In scenarios like the one above, the work of demonstrating competency and authority in reacting to emergent threats depends on a recruit's ability to respond to crises that are "in play" within the invisible boundaries of a scene while relegating what remains "out of play" to the background of their attention and which constantly threatens to distract their constrained vision. In calling the recruit's attention to what remains "out of play" – the stacks of dust-covered chairs, the large plastic bins overstuffed with printed training materials, and me, the volunteer role play actor sitting at the far corner of the room – Training Officer Ripley reinscribes the boundaries of the scene, foreclosing the recruit's wayward attempts to move beyond the script. This process forecloses the possibility that recruits can improvise beyond these scripts, but also points us to the historical racialized, racist, and gendered scripts upon which violent repertoires of contemporary policing are founded.

This dissertation analyzes histories of racialized police violence against Southwest Asian and North African (hereafter abbreviated as "SWANA") refugees and Mexican immigrants in the American Southwest and expressions of anti-Blackness foundational to the formation of American law enforcement inscribed in sites of police training and everyday patrol work in San Diego, California. Much of the critical work written on police as a racial formation focuses on the history of policing Black Americans and its intersection with white supremacy (Balto 2019; Boyles 2015). This dissertation builds on that literature as well as a growing body of research on how policing histories interact with anti-Mexican U.S. state security policies (Hernández 2010, 2017; Martinez 2018) and anti-Arabic and anti-Muslim counterterror practices in San Diego's borderlands (Abumaye 2017; Sun and Wu 2018). My attention to the policing of SWANA civilians in El Cajon builds extends the concerns of these prior literatures to think these engtanglements through global imperial histories. This includes the intersection of local policing and military operations abroad (Zilberg 2011) and their combination in producing refugee flows in El Cajon.

My ethnographic project foregrounds performance and theater to examine the tacit conventions of police training that teach police recruits and new patrol officers how to see, and how this scripted vision produces both banal and spectacular forms of racial violence in the afterlife of the police academy. I trace lines of activity across sites where policing unfolds through these scripts as precarious performances, from the role-play scripts used to train and test recruits in the police academy to the scenes that unfold at the front of the police vehicle on active duty. In doing so, I argue that the production of police power – the power to see, categorize, and make knowledge about observed others – is performatively *scripted*, taking

seriously the cinematic and performance scripts embedded in the sociocultural worlds of police officers that allow us to see what unfolds in the "backstage" of police training sites and in the "front stage" of televisual and cinematic images of policing.

A central objective of this dissertation is to contribute to a better understanding of how tacit repertoires of police violence are materially and socially organized by these police scripts – prefigured formations I locate in histories of film, spectatorship, and performance – and how these scripts constrain, shape, and mediate "ways of seeing" (Berger 1972) as a police officer. I seek to find different ways of understanding everyday policing by bringing the materials that construct officers' visual and performance worlds under ethnographic analysis. These materials include cinematic and virtual images used in police academies to teach recruits how to *see* like officers, and scripted role-play scenarios used to evaluate recruits in the final 40 hours of academy instruction, known as Scenario Test Week, where they are dramaturgically directed on how to *perform* as officers.

As an interdisciplinary ethnography of police training and everyday patrol work in San Diego, California, my dissertation asks how we might understand the tacit conventions of police vision that shape encounters of racial violence between patrol officers and refugee communities of Black and Brown civilians through histories of cinema and spectatorship. This relationship between cinema and policing is not limited to representations of police performances – figurations of "good cops" versus "bad cops," or "good cops" versus "bad civilians" on the silver screen – but a much more entangled, material history between the advent of the mobile camera and the mobile police car and how this entanglement has historically shaped the screening practices of police. In this sense, I am concerned with both

film as cinematic material circulates in the social training worlds of officers and recruits, and in considering how histories of film are embedded in the vernaculars and performances taken up at police academy, in the police ride-along, and in patrol encounters with policed communities of refugees and newcomers in El Cajon. Such theoretical considerations are only possible due to discipline-defining interventions of feminist scholars and historians of technoscience like Lisa Cartwright (1995, 2008, 2011) and Kelly Gates (2011, 2019) whose commitments to historicizing vision in medical praxis and in architectures of surveillance, respectively, paved the way for this dissertation to take up the language of screening and screens as they intersect with policing's many scripts. These scripted encounters illustrate how the tacit repertoires that uphold white supremacist logics shape officers' visions of these policed communities, but also maintain the constancy and force of sweeping epistemological categories like "officer safety." Through everyday interactions between police and civilians, epistemic and emic categories like those that emerge in this chapter's opening scene – "command presence" – come into performative being as routinely and reasonably violent acts as they are rendered visible through repetitive and iterative stagings in the academy and in the patrol field.

In examining the parallel developments of cinema and policing in the United States, this dissertation proposes that, following the feminist film theories of scholars like Anne Friedberg (2002), the police vehicle is a kind of mobile "viewing machine" (184) – a camera in itself – that brings together the practices of police, journalists, media producers, and academic researchers. I argue that the intimacies between these different "communities of practice" (Lave and Wenger 1991) allow us to see how the police ride-along and the moving

patrol car is co-constitutive of these communities through which a violent police vision normatively emerges. To make this argument, I travel between sites of police training and patrol to theorize how – through *performative* acts of citation – *performed* acts of police violence become not only ordinary in training situations both inside and outside of official academy spaces, but *citable* in the everyday field of patrol work through cinematic and performance scripts. These performances become embodied "acts of transfer" (Taylor 2003) as officers and evaluators bring their own experiences from the patrol field to bear upon the staging and revising of scenario scripts, imparting "social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity through reiterated" performances. In highly circumscribed spaces of police training, recruits and new officers are directed to see, act, and respond to the racial imagination of more experienced officers whose lived experiences constitute citable performances that can be rehearsed and re-played by recruits over and over again, a repertoire of policing that we might consider along Richard Schechner's understanding of such ritualized performances as "twice-behaved behavior" (1985, 36).

Guided by the work of Performance Studies scholars, such as Diana Taylor's theorization of a *scenario* as a meaning-making paradigm that is "formulaic, portable, repeatable, and often banal because it leaves out complexity" (2003, 54), my analyses in this dissertation demonstrate how police scripts are constituted through improvisational stagings and interpretations by officers, recruits, and evaluators as they travel between the field of patrol and the academy. In the words of Kim Fortun (2009), this dissertation attempts to "force a figuring out of figure and of ground" (180), where the figure of situated police knowledge and the ground of the police training sites in the patrol field and academy

"continually oscillated" (172) in the reflexive "figuring out" of my ethnographic fieldwork. Ethnographic engagement with the training of new police officers provides a revealing entry into the ways in which racialized state violence becomes normalized and *portable* in the violent rehearsals of the police academy and in the afterlife of the academy. My project traces these citations through the mobile proscenium of the on-duty patrol car and histories of spectatorship that prefigure contemporary police praxis in order to see how ordinary racial violence iterates and travels as a structural condition of policing rather than a behavior of individual officers.

In response to ongoing crises of police violence mobilized by the ordinary, this dissertation locates performance and the political commitments of performance ethnography as research methods and theories for engaging with the production of police vision. Rather than eschew the methods of policing as intractable in their continued enactments of racialized, embodied violence, I argue that a feminist ethnographic approach is uniquely situated to examine how these methods shape policing not as a disembodied power structure or set of discrete behavioral patterns, but as a *repertoire* and *genre* of performance. In the tradition of performance ethnographers and feminist anthropologists, I explore the possibilities for engaging reflexively with performance as a form of collaborative participant-observation precisely because performance and ethnographic praxis are *embedded* in police worlds: as an apparatus for police training that informs how sociality, negotiating role-taking, and performing "authority" and "objectivity" are practiced in the field of everyday patrol field of law enforcement officers. These practices structure ways of seeing and acting that, following Judith Butler (1993), constitute a "citational practice" by which police subjectivity is

continuously constituted. In this way, my dissertation contributes a significant intervention into research on contemporary policing and police training by examining police scripts not as rigid cultural objects that tell us something about police culture *writ* large or which only have representational significance, but as *texts* that travel. This is what I describe throughout the dissertation as "ethnographic feedback loops," or pathways between the complexity of policing's own ethnographic field where officers work to create knowledge about policed communities and sites where police vision is trained.

Throughout the different sections of this dissertation (outlined below), I examine ethnographically how quotidian rehearsals of police scripts and situations such as performing pedestrian stops, investigating domestic violence, and learning to use deadly force constitute performative productions of anti-Black and anti-immigrant citational models of racialized state violence. Cloaked in the institutional language of "command presence" and "officer safety" – two of the most important pedagogical frameworks for training and testing recruits – these performative formations emerge through an apparent contradiction: they are central to the staging and testing of an officially, purportedly "colorblind" police vision and actively *formalize* racialized and normatively violent citational models that prime recruits' perceptions of embodied others before they enter the field.

To perform this research, I insist on the importance of an embodied feminist praxis that offers new language for grappling with the seemingly intractable methods by which officers are trained. By engaging in embodied acts of co-present research with El Cajon officers on police ride-alongs and as a volunteer role-play actor in San Diego's police academy during the past five years, my dissertation proposes that a performative analysis of

policing reveals 1) how everyday policing and police training are constituted as "scripts" and citational practices officers are taught to perform, illustrating how officers are themselves constituted as subjects through a series of iterative, embodied citations, and 2) that performance ethnography methods not only demand we account for the dialogical process of making work together in the process of research – as in the case of the police academy where recruits, training officers, and the ethnographer stage role-play scenarios to and for each other – but renders us answerable to our making.

The *doing* of police research not only entails the ethnographer observing how officers become disciplined through training and patrol work; the ethnographer of policing and state power is called to attend to how her own body becomes disciplined in the performance of research, learning through mimetic performance how to stand, move, and breathe in time with officers in order to blend into the scenes of patrol, and, in some ways, to "yield into and become Other" (Taussig 1993, xiii). Here, this dissertation project remains indebted to the works of trained anthropologists and performance theorists like Patrick Anderson, Roshanak Kheshti, and Ricardo Dominguez for whom remaining answerable to our research also entails a keen awareness of the politics of bodies as they are rendered (in)visible through acts of pleasure and suffering. Here, Patrick Anderson's examination of how hunger strikes and acts of self-starvation interpellate both the lethal power of the state and those of us called to witness these twinned performances of survival and dying guides my own interpretation of violent scenes between police and the policed. Anderson's work highlights how viewing and experiencing violence intimately conjoins a precarious "we" that witnesses by offering "a model for the politics of morbidity, a model in which the subject and the state are entwined as

coproductive, in which the specters of death and dying underwrite our most intimate experience of subjectivity" (2010, 19).

I build on these considerations in conversation with the work of Roshanak Kheshti whose ethnography tracks the production of aural pleasures in the figuration of "world music," locating moments where the ethnographer herself is interpellated into the racial fantasies of the World Music Culture Industry. In one unforgettable scene, Kheshti is asked by one of her interlocutors, a creative director, to pose as a model for an album cover: "How does he want me to look, I ask him? 'I'm going for that sexy, sultry, exotic thing and you're perfect.' The tables have turned. I, the ethnographer, am the object" (2015, 109). With the *click* of a digital camera, Kheshti becomes another exoticized, racialized object of the World Music Culture Industry and the reluctant object of her own ethnography. Ethnography, as a project of transformation, is not unlike the transformative processes that undergird making embodied performance.

While this research relies on the conceptual work of performativity to make an argument about police vision, I also turn to explicit methods of bodily performance, building a tradition of experimental performance artists and art practitioners, invoking legacies of theorists and artists like Anna Deavere Smith (1994, 2019), Xandra Ibarra/La Chica Boom (2013, 2015, 2017), Dorinne Kondo (2018) and Koritha Mitchell (2011). I also stand rooted in the words of my first performance maestro Ricardo Dominguez whose enduring address is as clear to me now as it was 15 years ago when I walked into my first undergraduate seminar on performance art: "Performance art emerges from personal risk, and the work of performing calls us to encounter the many boundaries within us and *transgress them*." I summon this

quote here, excavated from the pages of an old Moleskine notebook, to frame my attempts to discipline my researching body in the ethnographic field. Through repetition and rehearsal, my attempts to embody a certain kind of ethnographer are more than a response to the implicit address of the ride-along or proximity to officers with state-sanctioned licenses to kill; they are, at times, a transgression and ongoing reply to the address and discipline of experimental performance art-making as well. In the conclusion of this dissertation I turn explicitly to the language and practice of performance – embodied art-making praxis in which one's own body is the primary material for (inter)action – to foreground the disciplinary traditions that shape my methodological approach toward examining how police and recruits rehearse a racialized, violent vision of policing.

As a performance ethnographer with a background I understand the imperative to perform through Smith's (1994) description of her own praxis in the making of her one-woman play *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*. Like Smith, I am not proposing solutions to the normalized acts of violence performed in the police academy and patrol, but rather "I am looking at the *processes* of the problems. Acting is a constant process of becoming something. It is not a result, it is not an answer…I see the work as a call" (1994, xxiv). Performing alongside recruits in Scenario Test Week – taking on the proposals of each script by taking them into my body in the process and act of "becoming something" – is a call to experience how intractable these training worlds are. As the concluding chapter argues, this pedagogical performance training that I first learned as an 18-year-old college student enables the performance ethnographer to analyze how roles are learned and taken up by police recruits in the theater of Scenario Test Week by openly crossing the boundaries between researcher and

researched through committed acts of co-performance with police recruits and training officers.

Across the different training sites and scenes of police patrol in El Cajon, I demonstrate how "epistemologies of ordinary violence" (Jauregui 2013, 126) – rooted in the official training paradigms and histories of colonial and anti-Black oppression – are practically *inscribed* into the material history of the ride-along and onto the bodies of officers and recruits. In order to ground these scripts in the larger historical vision of racialized state violence identified by anthropologists like Elana Zilberg (2011), Didier Fassin (2013), Beatrice Jauregui (2013), Jeffrey T. Martin (2019) and historians of state violence like Dennis Childs (2015), Marisol LeBrón (2019), Andrea Ritchie (2017), and Micol Seigel (2018), as well as to situate the logics supporting proposed policy measures and campaigns for police reform precipitated most recently by a series of extrajudicial deaths of Black Americans in 2020, I insist on methodologically enacting, through the praxis of ethnography, Donna Haraway's (1988, 590) claim: "The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular."

I.3 Setting the Stage: Ethnographic Research Sites

This dissertation draws on two years of fieldwork during which I logged more than fifty hours on police ride-alongs with officers from the El Cajon Police Department from behind the windshield screens of on-duty police vehicles and uncounted hours with officers at banquets, bars, and backyard barbeques. As one of my primary research sites where I observed daily law enforcement contacts with members from diverse communities, the city of

El Cajon, California grounds my theorizations throughout this dissertation. Its unique history as a place of overlapping waves of migration and SWANA refugee resettlement from the turn on the century onwards offers a grounds-eye view for examining how local policing in East County San Diego has always been connected to broader concentric circles of global security-making praxis and the enforcement of the nation-state's borders within its urban centers, especially across the American Southwest (Hernández 2010; Zilberg 2011; 2016). Throughout this dissertation I will refer to the decolonial acronym SWANA – a term used to identify South West Asian and North African communities – used by feminist scholars of what many have called "Middle East studies," a term that ontologically centers the West in its epistemic efforts to construct knowledge about racialized Others (Hall 1992).

As an Iraqi-Assyrian and Colombian-American woman of color, I observe how racialized police violence emerges in encounters with policed civilians who are similarly racialized as me: immigrants and newcomers from Iraq, and Latinx community members. However, as a first-generation American child of two immigrant parents who speak different languages from each other – Neo-Aramaic Assyrian and Spanish – I do not possess their multilingual abilities as they necessarily communicated with each other through a shared understanding of English. This is a limitation to doing this kind of fieldwork and shapes how community members interact with me in the field which are evident across the ethnographic scenes of the dissertation. Despite my lack of fluency, however, I am uniquely positioned to pick up on meanings and spoken dialects while in the field due to prior life experiences being exposed to my parents' mother tongues. As my parents both worked and could not afford childcare, I grew up before and after school on the circuit board manufacturing floors, a *de*

facto daycare where migrants and undocumented workers from many different diasporas – Mexican, Salvadoran, Guatemalan, Vietnamese – shared the labor of watching over me. In these spaces I was immersed in a mix of spoken languages and dialects. Moreover, because of my visibly mixed ethnocultural identity, community members in the field, be they of SWANA or Latin American origin, invariably approached me speaking in their native languages, thereby interpellating me in the field. I also recognized myself in them, and oftentimes this mutual shock of recognition would impress itself upon my ethnographic interpretations. Sitting in the patrol car with police, these gazes would meet me from the other side of the patrol car's windshield.

After meeting a few police officers through mutual contacts and getting to know them, I was granted permission to ride-along with officers from the El Cajon Police Department in 2015. Through participant-observation, I observed patrol officers *in situ*, both from within the mobile police vehicle and outside of the car while accompanying police on routine calls for service in El Cajon. Through my professional relationships developed with patrol officers over the past five years while performing ethnographic research during police ride-alongs, I was permitted to observe role-play training scenarios during Scenario Test Week at San Diego's Training Institute in 2015 and to perform as a volunteer role-play actor in another iteration of the academy's Scenario Test Week in 2019. The conclusion to the dissertation remarks on the significance of shifting from observing to performing, a shift that both transforms how the ethnographer engages with the scripted texts of police training and also asks us to consider the intimate complicities that sustain this kind of "privileged" research with police.

The disciplinary mandate of participant observation asks the ethnographer to commit to a shared space of sustained social interaction with her research subjects. However, as feminist ethnographers have noted (Visweswaran 1994; Tallbear 2014), this orientation to fieldwork is neither apolitical nor innocent. This is, of course, not just a feminist observation but inflects most anthropology from the 1960s onward, finding fuller expression in post-1980s ethnographies, including black feminist critiques and calls to decolonize the discipline (Harrison 1991, 1993; Marcus and Fischer 1986). Indictments of anthropology's complicity with projects of empire and the epistemic violence produced by ethnography's mission to "write culture" based on categories of otherness continue to resonate for research that includes such powerful interlocutors as the police. Julia Hornberger foregrounds the historical complicity of the ethnographer in systems of structural violence, noting that "during late apartheid, ethnography and its related methods of participant observation were seen as the ultimate form of colonial complicity" (2017, 52).

Complicity calls us to be answerable to the material and affective impacts of our work without losing sight of the larger intractable conflicts in which we are always embedded with others (Marcus 1998; Fortun 2001). Elana Zilberg's (2011) ethnographic research among former and current members of La Mara Salvatrucha (MS or MS-13) and the 18th Street Gang illustrates the complexities of finding oneself caught within the same systems of power as her interlocutors. Similarly, Zilberg writes within the "double binds" of complicity – the tensions between the ethnographer's ethical and research commitments – is an important framework for conceptualizing this dissertation as a kind of sustained project made possible by collaborations with police. This kind of research encourages ethnographers like myself to

reflect on "the politics and ethics of ethnographic research conducted in deeply charged contexts where the stakes for the people with whom we engage are very high – be those stakes incarceration, detention, deportation, injury, or death" (Zilberg 2016, 720). This is no small call to action considering the consequences for overly policed and economically depressed neighborhoods in my field site of El Cajon, which includes routine, tragic, and often preventable deaths of community members at the hands of the police.[5] Seeking ethnographic complicity with the powerful demands an attunement to the ways in which state power shapes our own vision in the performance of research.

In this sense, the research I describe in the following chapters could be described, in the most basic methodological consideration, as "studying up" (Nader 1972) with training officers and patrol officers whose everyday roles in both the police academy and on the street of daily patrol suffuse their positions with authorized power from the state. This method is not entirely incommensurable with the Geertzian edict to see "from the native point of view" (Geertz 1983, 57), a position that has been long critiqued for insisting that anthropologists embed themselves alongside historically disempowered others.[6] These critiques emerge from

[5] As an intervention in making knowable the scale of deaths committed by on-duty police officers, I situate a project here known as "The Counted." Created by *The Guardian*, this online database tracks the number of people killed by police in the United States since 2015. Drawing on original reporting and crowdsourced data, this project underscores the work activists have been engaged in to make accessible information about those slain by law enforcement. See https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2015/jun/01/the-counted-police-killings-us-database

[6] In her foundational essay "Up the Anthropologist—Perspectives Gained from Studying Up" (1972) in Dell Hyme's collection *Reinventing Anthropology*, Laura Nader calls upon researchers in anthropology to turn their ethnographic eye *up* toward studying elites as opposed to studying *down* amongst those disempowered by colonialist and capitalist projects abroad as well as at home. She argues traditional ethnographies tend to "study down" social and cultural hierarchies: "If we look at the literature based on fieldwork in the United States, we find a relatively abundant literature on the poor, the ethnic groups, the disadvantaged; there is comparatively little field research on the middle class, and very little first-hand work on the upper classes" (289). More than forty years after Nader's essay was published alongside the works of other anthropologists questioning the

methodological concerns as well as ethical ones, shaping the question of how knowing is translated, and attributed, and, per the "textocentrism" Dwight Conquergood (1991) designates as part and parcel of the academy, published into single-author monographs.

Anthropological literatures on embeddedness and its politics take on both a historical and contemporary urgency when examining the state-sponsored role of the embedded anthropologist in theaters of war abroad (Gusterson and Besteman 2019). One of the most egregious examples of this kind of imperial immersion of the anthropologist within militarized zones is the case of the Human Terrain System (HTS), a United States military funded program that employed anthropologists across theaters of war to perform ethnographies with locals to enable the U.S. military and allied military forces to better understand the customs and decision-making practices that might impact imminent and ongoing military occupations (Renzi 2006). This is an important precedent when considering that police have long relied on counter-intelligence as a means of infiltrating communities of color and activist networks fighting for Black and Brown liberation (Vargas 2008). Anthropologists continue to debate the merits of anthropology in militarized zones versus critical ethnographies of the military, especially in the wake of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (Lutz 2009), both of which are accomplished through the anthropologist's being

discipline's relationship to projects of empire and issues of epistemic violence, the theoretical commitments posed by the "study up" method continue to resonate in a time when anthropologists are becoming ever-more embedded on payrolls for private corporations and government agencies alike, on boards of non-profits, and as design experts for the global tech industry (Murphy and Marcus 2013). For more recent literature on "Studying up" in anthropology, see Aguiar and Schneider (2012) and Stryker and González (2014).

embedded in or alongside military units in the field.[7] The methodologies employed by these militarized projects, however, also provide this dissertation with precedent models to both visualize ethnography and to push against the normative stylistic constraints of "thick description" that remain hallmarks of the discipline.

I.4 Scenes of Impact: Tracing the Methodological Entanglements between Ethnography and Policing

Research concerning the everyday patrol work of police officers provides critical insights into how the role of the ethnographer – as observer, interlocutor, and producer of texts – becomes complicit in the project of policing itself, especially for those in the field with police while on patrol, and thus distinctly visible to the policed as well. In *Writing the World of Policing: The Difference Ethnography Makes* (2017), Didier Fassin and fellow contributors to the edited volume reflect on this often fraught and entangled relationship, each suggesting how ethnographic praxis may continue to offer critical insights into a world where police power is an uncertain object that both the police and the ethnographer are after in their respective (and sometimes overlapping) interpretive realms. By blending ethnographic methods and film analysis, I employ an experimental approach to answering the following questions posed by Fassin: "What difference does it [ethnography] make for the study of the police? What difference does it [policing] make for the practice of ethnography?" (2017, 3).

[7] The very existence of issues like the *Annual Review of Anthropology* on "Anthropology and Militarism" (2007) by Hugh Gusterson illustrates the discipline grappling with its own historical involvement in and coproduction of imperialistic and epistemological violence alongside military institutions and infrastructures.

By exploring how police vision emerges between the screens of Hollywood cinema and the screening practices of patrol officers, I argue that ethnography's attunement to the visually fleeting, the unnamed, and the unknown offers a reflexive lens that can benefit both anthropologists of policing and police officers through which to look back and reflect on their own visual practices in the field. When both ethnography and policing are conceived as cinematic, new conceptual frames for understanding police vision become available. Likewise, ethnography's limits and possibilities also emerge in this analysis and enable this discussion to turn the reflective lens back on the work that ethnography performs in making the visual worlds of research subjects legible, intelligible, and knowable to the vast knowledge projects of academia. Like the disciplinary conditions of ethnography, this dissertation demonstrates what is at stake in the claim that policing shapes its objects of inquiry.

Rather than move away from or argue against the methodological similarities between policing and ethnography – or other knowledge projects that depend on acts of seeing to make knowledge claims, for that matter – this dissertation insists on examining these methodological entanglements between policing, photography, journalism, and academic research praxis at the site of the police ride-along. As the ethnographic scenes throughout the following chapters will demonstrate, the ethnographer who is invited to ride along with police must encounter how she is positioned in a surveillance apparatus beyond her control. It also asks her to meditate on how the seemingly oppositional practices of law enforcement, researchers of state violence, and members of the press dovetail throughout different points in history. These interwoven histories and practices suggest that modes of seeing, and here I

focus specifically on my chosen method of ethnographic praxis, are figured as a kind of visual *profiling* practice. My approach to profiling here builds from a basic understanding of the practices by which patrol officers "use subjective impressions of civilians to classify them as 'suspects'" (Brucato 2015, 469). While I do not locate "racial profiling" as the object of my analysis, the dark underbelly of profiling has always been the visually arresting work of making Black and brown bodies subjected to state violence. As Simone Browne argues, the contemporary landscape of profiling mechanisms are historically tied to the surveillance of blackness (Browne 2015). This is not a rhetorical move, but an insistence that the similarities between policing and ethnography behoove a researcher studying police violence to take this unlikely intersection seriously. Unlike policing, however, the process of ethnography calls the ethnographer to be answerable to a set of ethical commitments in ways that far exceed the ethics of law enforcement. While policing is committed to a totalizing view of the world and the mandate of participant-observation asks the ethnographer to immerse herself in a field site in order to *see* and make sense of another culture's practices and points of view (namely, the police), the writing method that I employ across the chapters of this dissertation is one that *resists* totalizing views of either a singular "police culture" or of policed subjects.

My writing method is a meditation on anthropologist Kathleen Stewart's claim that, "Scenes of impact...have an afterlife" (2007, 68). I take up Stewart's engagement with the scenic to investigate ethnography's cinematic qualities and to argue for the utility of ethnography for studying policing's visual practices. Not unlike the "windshield ethnographies" (Burke 2010) of the Human Terrain System which involved military researchers driving through "hot" conflict zones and practicing visual survey techniques from

behind the protective windshield of the military vehicle, the chapters unfold primarily through ethnographic scenes from behind the patrol car's windshield. Here I build on Stewart's work in *Ordinary Affects* (2007) to illustrate how a mobile police vision moves through scenes of ordinary life in El Cajon. I invite the reader to experience this police vision through a series of cinematic smash cuts, stylistically episodic moments from my fieldwork that interrupt the pace of analysis precisely because they are scenes of impact where the ethnographer struggles to interpret and make sense of the images temporarily captured by the car's windshield screen before passing out of view. These smash cuts, like in film, transform the temporality of what can be seen in the field, including how scenes flow and crash into each other as a reflection of my ethnographic praxis itself; while on patrol, calls for service interrupt conversations, scenes of violence offer no tidy conclusions, and there is little exposition as we come across scenes *already in motion*. This cinematic writing style is an invitation to consider how resisting total views of the field allows the ethnographer's own interpretive vision to experience this speed – jarring and constant interruptions – as meaningful for her own analyses. This mode of observation and writing proceeds from Stewart's precedent writing method, where the ethnographer strives to "slow the quick jump to representational thinking and evaluative critique long enough to find ways of approaching the complex and uncertain objects that fascinate because they literally hit us or exert a pull on us" (2007, 4).

What Stewart proposes here is an approach to fieldwork that can account for, without knowing completely, those "uncertain objects" that emerge in the complexity of fieldwork: glances and gestures that elude easy categorization, unknown languages and interrupted speech, and an array of interpretive gaps in meaning that arise when different cultural

interlocutors – police, the policed, and the ethnographer – meet each other in the flesh. However, "uncertain objects" are as much a part of the police officer's world as they are of interest to the ethnographer. I am interested in thinking through the following question: Rather than falling into a nihilistic trap over the uncertain, the unknowable, the invisible, or the unintelligible, how might we – police and ethnographer – instead envision modes of looking, sensing, and categorizing that leave space for others to look back and make us answerable for our own interpretive practices?

Here I argue for a method of writing that is recursive rather than only reflexive. Anthropologist Kim Fortun's writing on recursivity and the ethnographer's reflexive positioning is striking and forms the basis of my writing in the following chapters: "Reflexivity asks what constitutes the ethnographer as a speaking subject. Recursivity asks what *interrupts her* and demands a reply" (2001, 23). As I move across different sites of police training and patrol while taking Stewart's imperative to slow down the pace of ethnographic analysis, I allow interruptions to shift my attention. Just as we drift with the ride-along through the street, making harsh and violent U-turns in different directions in the patrol car, so, too, must we respond to those moments of interpellation that interrupt the ethnographer, demanding that she not just see or write these moments into coherence, but that demand she reply even as she is embedded and immersed alongside patrol officers in the field.

Despite my insistence on an experimental writing style, my work is still very much indebted to precedent ethnographies as foundations upon which this dissertation necessarily builds from; indeed, like Didier Fassin, I rely on ethnographic praxis to "try to grasp the

fragments of the real world" (2014, 41), but the extent to which I trace racialized violence as a distinct behavior or characteristic of discrete subjects or law enforcement agencies may, as I suggest, occlude the more innocuous performances of violence that happen in sites of police training and in the field not categorized as explicitly "violent encounters." If, as anthropologist Jessica Katzenstein argues, "Framing violence as the heart of policing may obscure other functions police perform" (4), then perhaps the centering of violence in the genre of police ethnographies may also affect the way that we theorize and encounter the ethnographic field where officers, everyday citizens and neighborhood members, and the ethnographer share spaces of interaction. As the following chapters demonstrate, even as I strive to move away from these genre forms, my own ethnographic descriptions and analyses at times situate scenes as only heartbeats away from violence. I make this point to gesture towards how the ethnographic field speaks back to such theoretical delineations made by the performance ethnographer, whose understanding of the field is a series of interruptions to her interpretations that she struggles to make cohere and align with existing literatures.

In Kim Fortun's ethnography *Advocacy After Bhopal: Environmentalism, Disaster, New Global Orders* (2001), she describes this process of being interrupted as recursivity, rather than reflexivity (23, emphasis mine):

> Thinking in terms of recursivity is a way to hold ethnography responsible for advocacy. Attention to recursivity foregrounds how every articulation – whether ethnographic or in direct advocacy – *operates on previous articulations*, nesting every move and every word within multiple discourses and worlds. These nested worlds may be more or less contiguous with the world one considers primary, whether that is the world of law, literature, community organizing, or anthropology. But they implicate each other in significant ways. What is said in domains of law implicates what it is possible and necessary to say in community organizing – and vice versa. *What is said in*

> *direct advocacy implicates what it is possible and necessary to say in ethnography*.

Ethnography, like the world of policing itself, depends upon a performative citation of past experiences and expressions, or what Fortun identifies here as "previous articulations." This is a commitment to examining how performativity allows the ethnographer to grapple with the scripts that travel in her field site while also pointing her back to precedent ethnographies of policing.

I.5 Staging the Stakes: From Dramaturgies of "Police Culture" to the Performativity of Policing

Anthropological observations of tacitly-masculine displays of "police culture" – documented in both classic (Manning 1980, Skolnick 1966, Van Maanen 1973) and contemporary (Fassin 2013, Stuart 2016) ethnographies of American and European policing – reify a vision of police culture as an individual accumulation of behaviors rather than a set of practices embedded in materials and relations that construct the sociocultural worlds of recruits and officers. Across sociological and anthropological studies of policing, including a growing body of scholarship broadly identified as "Police Studies," figurations of theater and drama emerge as conceptual and metaphorical devices for explaining how police power is internally organized ("backstage") and externally communicated ("front stage") in the everyday performances of police cultures.

Distinctions between policing's front and back stages – described through the narrative "dramas" of crime management and social control – are developed most notably in "classic" studies of policing, including Manning (1977, 1982, 2003), Skolnick (1975), and

Van Maanen (1978). Following Goffman (1956) and others, organizational sociologists like Peter Manning, John Van Maanen, Egon Bittner and others mobilized the language of *dramaturgy* to consider how police perform as individuals within the organizational, professional structure of police departments, and in the wider context of an imagined "police culture." Jeffrey T. Martin (2019) expands on this commitment to the front stage/backstage metaphor in his ethnography of Taiwanese policing, writing, "My experience has been that every backstage has its own backstage: there is no end to the work involved in staging performances so the right people get the right message" (26).

Perhaps the most famous dramaturgical analysis of police interactions surfaces in Peter Manning's *Policing Contingencies* (2003), following his previous sociological works on police culture (1977, 1982, 1988). While Manning (2003) writes, "My concern, like that of Goffman, is with conduct – actions as assessed for their meaning. Each gesture, action, and presentation conveys interpretive possibilities." He also explains that, "the metaphor of drama is not only about individual consciousness; it is about the structure of relations…The social world is not simply seen, heard, or smelled, but it is interpreted" (5). Despite Manning's acknowledgement of interpretation here, making sense of police work as "drama" – with its implied, discrete boundaries between the "back stage" of police work and an adjudicating "front stage" populated by the social world's many actors (e.g. media pundits, everyday citizens, bureaucratic associations) – foregrounds a familiar narrative that individual, "good" officers may be innocently caught within larger "theaters" of violence beyond their control while also reinscribing divisions between a totalizing "police culture" and the world around it,

including the position of the ethnographer who imagines himself as outside of the interactions he hopes to observe.

Let us return to the opening scene at Scenario Test Week in which Officer Reyes suggests that performing authority and command presence is "*actually* acting." Characterizing the work of conveying command presence as a commitment to learning how to give a convincing *performance* suggests that only engaging theater's metaphorical power deflects attention from how performance methods materially organize and *performatively* construct recruit vision. Indeed, if we hold onto the theater metaphor and say that both Officer Reyes and the recruit are social actors on a stage, then how do we make sense of how Reyes' improvisation stands alongside the recruit's improvisation to run away, call for help, and otherwise seek a way around using deadly force that the academy script cannot accommodate? Peter Manning notes that in a dramaturgical perspective of policing, "Dramaturgy implies control because performances must be validated (positively or negatively sanctioned) if they are to be sustained," (2003, 16). The opening scene illustrates how the recruit's performance was clearly unsustainable in the eyes of the officers. Applying Manning's analysis primarily positions us to debate how these individual actors navigate the organization in which they are embedded and how a more powerful actor (officer) has the ability to invalidate a less powerful actor's (recruit) performance. However, what escapes undetected and undertheorized in such a metaphorical analysis are the material histories that shape the encounter between officers and recruits, and larger histories of racial violence that shape the very pedagogical forms officers use to teach others how to see and make sense of policing.

While the canon of interdisciplinary studies of policing illustrates important interventions into policing's representational power through the lens of symbolic action (Hall et al 1978, Loader 1997, Rumbaut and Bittner 1979), it remains firmly rooted in dramaturgical theories that limit how we can make sense of how police vision travels through what I have identified as ethnographic feedback loops. For these police researchers, theater is rich metaphorical terrain to describe how officers learn to perform distinct, professionalized versions of themselves for different audiences, from media outlets to police administrators (Goffman 1956; Manning 2003). This dissertation marks a critical divestment from these metaphors in favor of examining how police vision iterates through and with scripts. This is not about theatrical language, but material and historical *stagings* that undergird contemporary police praxis that enables police vision to continually reproduce itself. These analytical engagements across anthropological and sociological studies of policing reflect how the *genre of ethnographies of policing* structures a certain honed attention to the ethnographic field that recreates familiar behaviorist tropes about police masculinity and a discrete notion of "culture," obscuring the iterative, performative citations of policing and its historical, racialized practices of state violence that render the violence it both *sees* and *seeks* to police.

Even scholars of critical race theory and those committed to a radical and generative disciplinary undoing marked by the move toward abolitionist anthropology (Shange 2019) necessarily describe a unitary "police culture" as their object of critique. In forwarding significant frameworks for attending to the anti-Black legacies of racial capitalism that are not only foundational to American law enforcement, but a prerequisite for its endurance

(Goldberg 2021; Robinson 1983; Rodríguez 2021), these scholars' arguments are simultaneously taken up by police reformists who argue that policing can be transformed and shifted by better training and diversity hiring policies. However, enacting an explicitly performative analysis of police scripts calls these reform interventions into question. In the wake of unrelenting, extralegal murders of Black people (and lesser known Brown people) by police officers, policy researchers and academics continually turn to the language of reform and "implicit bias," arguing that agencies should overhaul their police forces and require officers to undergo more implicit bias training.[8] These reformist measures – from calls for better police training to promises by various data justice groups to increase their production of data on police use of force – have been proposed in waves, continuing to center reform as the organizing logic through which acts of police violence can be extinguished. Such discourses undergird calls for increased racial diversity of police departments nationwide in order to combat acts of racialized police violence.

As extensions of police reform policy, both of these suggestions problematically frame the systemic legacies of police violence as an *individual* pathology that can be treated. In this paradigm, implicit bias is configured as a measurable, discrete object of analysis that conveniently locates the crises of ordinary, racialized police violence in the bodies and minds of officers that are individually pathologized. In the discursive language of the clinic (Foucault 1973), racial bias becomes a neoliberal category used by social science researchers and policy makers to describe bias as a removable infection plaguing not only explicitly racist

[8] See, for example, John Kahn's (2018) *Race on the Brain: What Implicit Bias Gets Wrong About the Struggle for Racial Justice*

officers, but the "good apples" as well. University of Maryland sociologist Rashawn Ray, founder of the Lab for Applied Social Science Research (LASSR), describes his experiences overseeing implicit bias training programs with over 2,500 officers as being less than ideal. In his attempts to help officers face their own investments in racist stereotypes, Ray concedes: "'We're sitting in a classroom and I'm telling them a bunch of stuff, [and] rarely do any of them think, 'This is me,'" (McCartney 2020).

This dissertation proposes a paradigm shift for ethnographic studies of policing through frameworks of performance and performativity. Following J. L. Austin (1962) and Judith Butler (1988, 1990, 2004), I argue that police scripts – from films used to train recruits in San Diego's police academy to the academy's training scripts that model an institutionally-approved mode of police vision – can be understood as performative; through the collective process of staging scenarios and revising them in real time, officers, evaluators, and recruits actively shape and constitute seemingly-stable categories like "command presence" and "officer safety," performances which emerge as reiterations of preceding practices in both the academy and in the field of patrol work. Likewise, observable police practices in an on-duty patrol car are iterative models of vision roots in early nineteenth century cinematic architectures. By moving toward performativity, this analysis decenters the assumed and naturalized authority of individual social actors and their cultural understanding and mental maps in favor of examining the performativity of policing as "a reiterated acting that *is* power in its persistence and instability" (Butler 1993, 17).

Inciting performativity, however, is not an evacuation of theater nor theatricality from this research. Citing Butler and Austin's respective arguments against the presumed

artificiality of theater against which performativity must be positioned, Yelena Gluzman (2017) writes, "Butler specified performativity as distinct from theatricality because theatre and its role-playing presumes an *intentional subject,* one who can realize or 'de-realize' (1988, 53) an identity, masking the crucial 'compulsory' nature of the citationality through which that subject is formed (1993, 22)" (106). In the following chapters I do not abandon explicit performance for performativity. Rather, I unpack theatrical stagings as both ritualized performances of embodied, situated knowledge communicated by training officers to recruits (Haraway 1988; Madison 2006) and as instantiating compulsory citational models for police work that travel, again, on ethnographic feedback loops. Insisting on the performativity of police scripts also draws much-needed attention to the ritualized norms that govern how objects – from discrete objects such as handguns to forms of behavior that are read as "noncompliance" or "resisting arrest" – are made intelligible to law enforcement actors involved in processes of archiving, organizing, and analyzing visual phenomena beyond the police academy.[9] Centering my analyses around the heuristic of scripting allows me to track how policing produces its objects of inquiry in various sites where police vision is practiced and performed.

Like Elana Zilberg's work in *Space of Detention* (2011), I expand my analysis beyond discrete and seemingly bounded sites by taking up an expansive ethnographic attunement to

[9] Consider, for example, the "perceptual labor" involved in reading and interpreting facial expressions that video analysts and other police professionals are trained to *see* in police surveillance video that Kelly Gates (2011) describes. While these surveillance structures are touted as "smart" systems, such rhetoric eclipses the human labor required for maintaining and interpreting police databases. The stakes of a performative investigation of police vision illustrates the ways in which these norms enable the categorization and codification of human subjects and objects visually arrested by screens and screening techniques, becoming "citations" that can be read.

the "intensive mimetic interactions" (238) that shape performative repertoires of practiced state violence as they move across and between police and policed subjects in different spaces of interaction. Theorizing the observed practices of recruits and officers through the "mimetic improvisations of their object of transformation" (11) – broadly, police vision – in sites of police training and patrol offer longstanding anti-carceral, abolitionist projects (Rodríguez 2019) and networks (Critical Resistance, n.d) with different conceptual language for charting the ongoing crisis of police violence (Davis 2003; Gilmore 2007; Kaba 2021). Through these anthropological considerations of recursivity and mimetic structures, I situate the feedback loops inflected by officers' interactions with SWANA refugees and citizens in the patrol field of East County San Diego. To trace these intimate entanglements, this dissertation also employs frameworks of "coperformance" and "cowitnessing" offered by performance ethnographers like D. Soyini Madison (2006) and Dwight Conquergood (1991, 1992) to illustrate how the ethnographer herself becomes interpellated by the enacted scripts she both observes and participates in.

I.6 Play-by-play: Chapter outlines

Chapter 1 examines what is at stake in my claim that policing is cinematic by exploring how film images and police training are entangled at the site of the police academy. In conversations with police recruits, I learned that scenes from Antoine Fuqua's 2001 film *Training Day* are screened at San Diego's police academy in order to visually and cinematically model an idealized image of police vision in action, a pedagogical practice that also brings recruits into a form of collective spectatorship at the core of patrol work. I bring

this knowledge to bear upon ethnographic scenes from my first field experience observing role-play scenes during Scenario Test Week known as "Vehicle Stop" scenarios, in which officers drew on their own lived experiences to *move with* the scripted training texts they were tasked to perform. The chapter traces multiple ways that cinematic scripts emerge in sites of police training, not only in formal "Vehicle Stop" scenarios but also during informal practice sessions I observed, where recruits rehearsed together in advance of Scenario Test Week by improvisationally staging scenes from *Training Day*. The chapter moves across scenes of training at the academy to the car as camera during actual patrol duty, theorizing these sites as improvisational stages where recruits and new patrol officers cite and incite "cinematic clichés" (Keeling 2007) from *Training Day* as a way to inhabit a certain style of policing amplified by such Hollywood portrayals.

Chapter 2 historicizes police vision by attending to the cinematic architectures and the social and material relations of early cinema that undergird mobile police patrol. Feminist film theory provides a framework for a theoretical investigation of how the vision of officers is framed by the windshield of the patrol car. I take this up to examine how this mobile cinematic vision shapes interactions with citizens on the ground in one of my key field sites in El Cajon, California. I foreground the parallel developments in cinematic spectatorship and mobile patrol made possible by the automobile at the turn of the century. I then perform a close reading of one sequence from *Training Day* (2001) to illustrate how its cinematic visuals offers a racialized, anti-Black vision of patrol for recruits who are taught to see this film as an idealized model of police vision. I then turn to a discussion of 1970s mobile filmmaking techniques that prefigure these Hollywood images of the police ride-along,

demonstrating a transformation in the mobile visuality of policing when developments in mobile filming enable the camera to enter the interior space of the patrol car. To make this link, I draw on the experimental documentary work of Stan Brakhage's film *eyes* (1971) as one of the earliest cinematic "stagings" of the police ride-along. This intersection between mobile cinema and policing is particularly significant since the mobility of the automobile transformed officers' everyday practices of policing (Seo 2019) and, I argue, constituted the origins of the ride-along that are explored in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 offers a history of the ride-along and its commitment to a mobile vision – to ways of seeing that aim to see everywhere and everything at the speed of the automobile – by returning to nineteenth century technological developments that constitute the origins of mobile police patrol. Here the history of the police ride-along unfolds from two interwoven stories: a history of policing as a visual practice shaped by the mobility of the police vehicle that made the ride-along possible, and the visual work of making the police ride-along visible to the public as a recognizable, legitimized cultural form through the practices of journalists invited to ride along with police. These practices prefigure formal ride-along policies and would come to not only force police departments to formalize their ride-along policies, but would shape how televisual images of policing circulate as popular representations of the ride-along.

These two strands of historical inquiry are accounted for in the newspaper archives of the late nineteenth century, in legal court case documents illustrating the ride-alongs central role in creating tensions between citizens' Fourth Amendment rights to privacy and the First Amendment rights of journalists invited on ride-alongs by officers, and across personal

accounts of private citizens who have participated in ride-alongs through programs like the Boy Scouts of America's Explorer Program. I trace this history through the twentieth century when ride-along programs became more formalized in the 1980s along with the development of Citizens Police Academies that featured the ride-along as one of law enforcement's core methods for performing public outreach in cities across the nation. I situate these developments historically in the changing ethnic and cultural demographics of cities where the ride-along experienced rapid transformation, beginning with the Great Migration in the latter half of the nineteenth-century and in the waves of migration that marked California's Gold Rush.

Chapter 4 follows the ride-along to "Little Baghdad," El Cajon where I describe the backgrounds of militarization and migration streams in San Diego, its relationship to historical developments in policing the borders of the nation-state in the twentieth century and the anti-Black foundations that prefigure these techniques of policing immigrants from the end of the nineteenth century to the present. I offer this background in order to provide historical context for the presence of arrivals and residents in El Cajon who are of SWANA origins. The narrative arc of this chapter is how historical migration streams have created a complex site where refugees bring their own cultural scripts to encounters with patrol officers, including past encounters with U.S. military before they arrived as refugees, and how patrol officers with prior military affiliations are a part of this military entanglement as well that shapes how they interact with these newcomers to El Cajon. These conditions create police responses that invite SWANA community members to see themselves as needing to be "good

neighbors" – community members that can be legible to police – and to see officers as "good strangers."

The conclusion of the dissertation returns to the police academy during Scenario Test Week and describes my experience performing as a volunteer role-play actor in scenarios opposite recruits and officers-turned-actors. In order to examine how the ethnographic feedback loops constituted by the entwining of academy and patrol field shape recruit vision and frame my own participation in the ethnographic field of research, I describe my experiences volunteering as a role-play actor opposite recruits and officers in these scenarios, co-witnessing how enactments of policing's idealized performances of authority and command presence meet my racialized, gendered body in the act of performance. With every simulated "stop-and-frisk" search, recruits' hands sliding between my thighs and along my ankles probing for wayward weapons, and with every simulated deadly use of force that sends me crashing to the ground, I encounter my own visibility and legibility as a particular kind of body – multiracial Iraqi-Assyrian and Colombiana, fat, femme, brown – through the highly circumscribed ways of seeing practiced by police recruits and reinforced by training officers in the police academy. This chapter is an invitation to stand, fall, and lie prone in these rooms with me as I meet this vision with my flesh, and *stand with* the ethical imperative of Dwight Conquergood's call for doing performance ethnography research that "resists the closure and totalizing domination of a single viewpoint" (1986, 47). In the world of police training, however, the mandate of performance ethnography to commit to the openness of texts is challenging to uphold when the institutional endeavor of Scenario Test Week is the collective rehearsal of a narrow repertoire of police vision.

Moreover, it is the interpretation and performance of these scripts by patrol officers-turned-actors in the theater of scenario-testing that demands close attention as role players put the text "on its feet" by bringing them into their bodies and imbuing them with their lived experiences while on patrol (including their imagined relations to racialized others in the field) and transforming them into repertoires of ordinary violence. This is a significant difference that not only draws attention to the more modest resources typically available to law enforcement academy training in comparison to their federal and military counterparts,[10] but a *practical* difference that materially shapes how recruits learn during Scenario Test Week.

I.7 Lane Dancing: Drifting Thoughts on Abolition, Reform, and Revision

Across the narrative arc of this dissertation, I invite readers on a journey through a close reading of how police vision is shaped by sites of training like the ride-along in the patrol vehicle. As a visual culture and performance ethnography project, I approach sites where policing is taught, performed, and visualized: police academies and patrol work in El Cajon, California through the ride-along. Through methods of improvised (re)stagings and

[10]According to the City of San Diego's Police Department Budget for the 2021 Fiscal Year issued on October 19, 2020, the Academy Unit portion of San Diego PD's overall budget is allocated at $15,463,184. In comparison, the proposed 2021 Defense Budget Overview released by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer describes the cost for the U.S. military's "Combatant Command Exercise and Engagement (CE2) and Training Transformation (T2)" program, collectively referred to as "CE2T2," as $0.54 billion in order to support and "train fully capable Joint/coalition forces to restore readiness, improve lethality, strengthen alliances and attract new partners. In addition to training and readiness benefits, these exercises provide a realistic environment to support the rigorous validation of innovative concepts and capabilities to accelerate the fielding of capabilities to enhance our competitive advantage" (44).

examining how scripted training materials are taken up by police in practice, my project moves with the ride-along to see what if both reveals and conceals about racialized police violence. In the conclusion that marks the transition from seeing *through* the ride-along to performing on police academy stages with officers and recruits, I propose a move toward an abolitionist anthropology of policing. In order to challenge the fatal power of the state embedded in the praxis of patrols officers, I take up anthropologist Savannah Shange's call to develop an abolitionist anthropology in the study of policing that can engage with both "the ordinary facts of blackness" (2019, 9) that American policing and how anti-Black informs other histories of racialized violence within the U.S. and their contemporary expressions as extensions of U.S. empire and as a settler colonial state.

As Afro-pessimist writers like Frank B. Wilderson III (2018) and Jared Sexton (2017) illustrate, anti-Blackness is one of the foundational and enduring organizing principles of policing's "thin blue line" in the United States. Anti-Blackness is also of central concern to the work of police and prison abolitionists. Police abolition critically names efforts instantiated by abolitionist scholars to consider how police reform measures do not end police violence. Notable Black feminist theorists and activists like Angela Davis (2003), Mariame Kaba (2021), Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007), Saidiya Hartman (1997), and activist networks like Critical Resistance and Stop LAPD Spying Coalition have identified the praxis of abolition as an ongoing struggle. Their work, now center-stage in public debates about police abolition versus police reform, has long articulated how the carceral state, racial capitalism, and anti-Black violence are sutured together in historical scenes of subjection and death. They argue against modes of carceral feminism and liberal reformism that have upheld the racist

logics of the American carceral state by shifting the locus of violence to damaged individuals, the proverbial "bad apples" spoiling the bunch of law enforcement. As Shange notes with poetic and severe simplicity: "Abolition is a messy breakup with the state—rending, not reparation" (2019, 4).

The performance of this research is not a desire to repair relations with the state, nor with individual actors, naïve desires receding ever further in the rearview mirror of my own ethnographic research backgrounds. The arc of this journey across the dissertation chapters is one in which witnessing – either from inside of the moving patrol car or while "on the ground" with policed communities – not only rends us emotionally, but forces the ethnographer to confront the seemingly incommensurable methods by which she is able to do this work. I explore what possibilities exist to answer the call toward abolishing the historical structures of state violence I discuss in Chapter 4 while remaining committed to the difficult work, the "staying with the trouble" (Haraway 2016), of researching policing while embedded within its vision machines like the ride-along, or its theaters like the police academy. To imagine what an abolitionist anthropology of policing might be requires, for this ethnographer, to lean into the possibilities of embodied performance making for revealing how power and state violence are played out across scenes and screens of various kinds.

This is a call to imagine, as we roll through scenes of everyday police encounters and training simulations, how a radical revisioning of police pedagogy – of its performance scripts and methods – might make new kinds of stagings and acts possible. This is not a reformist vision mobilized through additive units, such as more sensitivity training, more racial diversity, or more emergency measures formalized into federal law enforcement policies, but

one that insists something *otherwise* might be staged, scripted, and materialized if we commit to the risks of copresent research with police. If we commit to letting "uncertain objects" shake us, and our vision, if we let ourselves be *rended* in the process, however momentarily, or devastating, other gestures may crash onto the scene. They might make us move, and thereby move us elsewhere. It might be a violent journey that brings us crashing onto scenes and stages we could not anticipate. Perhaps what I am offering as a point of departure here, is a cinematic invitation by way of my maestro Ricardo Dominguez (2012, 52): "Crash knowledge for a speed culture on the lost highway of education. Strap yourselves in – it's going to be a bumpy ride" (52).

Chapter 1

Scripting Traffic Stops in the Mise-en-scène of Police Academy Training

"All knowledge rests upon injustice."
– Michel Foucault 1977, 163

"You think you *know* me, pinche puta pig?"
– Officer Joaquín Contreras

"Today's a training day, Officer Hoyt…Unlearn that bullshit they teach you at the academy. Don't bring none of that shit in here. That shit'll get you killed out here."
– Alonzo Harris, *Training Day* (2001)

1.1 Introduction: "This Ain't a Training Day, Baby."

Recruit Daniel Vasquez, a Mexican-American San Diego native in his early 20s, is seated in the driver seat of a 2014 Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat, a V8-powered American muscle car *par excellence*. Its polished chrome rims reflect the distorted faces of the nine other police recruits standing watch on the sidewalk. Idling in park, he presses down on the accelerator and the audience of fellow police recruits clap and whistle in admiration of the engine's growl. Leaning over the console toward the passenger-side open window, Vasquez sucks in air through his gritted teeth and smiles at the car's owner, Recruit Eric Zhào, sighing longingly, "Goddamn, she feels *nice*. It'd be a shame to fuck her paint up with a pit maneuver, though, you know? Even if the asshole deserved it."

"If we were practicing pit maneuvers today, I'd ask Sergeant Moore if we could borrow his soccer mom van," Zhào retorts, playfully insulting the absent training officer's personal vehicle and invoking a chuckle from his fellow cadre of twenty-something trainees. The Chinese-American recruit, mid-30s and hailing from a historically working class beach town in Los Angeles County, addresses the assembled group of police recruits from San

Diego's regional police academy. "Luckily, this is only a vehicle stop for an expired registration tag. Who's going to be the Responding Officer?"

"I'll do it," replies Recruit Shawn Osborn, an Oceanside-raised white recruit in his mid-20s. He retrieves a keychain from his jeans pocket and spins the assorted collection around his index finger, selecting the plastic key fob for his Honda SUV in mock triumph. When he pulls off his sweatshirt, the waning sun casts amber light across the Marine Corps sigil woven into his intricate sleeve tattoo. "Let's dance, Vasquez. Just don't try to race me down the street when I signal for you to pull over."

"Let's keep the scenario simple," Zhào cautions the pair, eyes narrowing at Vasquez who, appropriately chastised, releases the gas pedal. The other recruits nod in agreement, conceding the unofficial role of training officer understudy and role-play scene director to the eldest amongst them. "We just have to make sure we cover off on our bases because you know the TOs [Training Officers] are going to pull some stupid shit during Test Week to mess with us. Maintain situational awareness of your surroundings at all times, approach the vehicle cautiously, keep dispatch updated on what you're doing, request an ID check, and so on. We know this stuff. Follow the procedure."

Over the next two hours, I watch this group of recruits role-play a series of traffic stops, each of them taking turns performing the role of "Responding Officer" and "Perp," colloquial law enforcement terminology for motorists pulled over by police and thereby rendered a possible "perpetrator" of some perceived crime or wrongdoing. They begin with the Responding Officer climbing into Osborn's SUV – the improvised on-duty patrol car – and driving down the street to wait for the "Perp" to drive by. Zhào instructs the recruit

playing the role of "Perp" to "be the type of asshole who thinks he can speed in a residential zone because he's too important to slow the fuck down." With each iteration of the scene, a new recruit hops in the Hellcat's front seat and takes on the shifting persona of a non-compliant motorist: refusing to roll their window down, cursing at the Responding Officer, arguing that their registration tags are not expired, and complaining that they are being racially profiled. As the implacable director, Zhào watches and critiques his fellow recruits for failing to gain compliance with expediency, acting the role of Vigilant Training Officer prepared to advise, instruct, and correct behavior with colorful insults.

The point of the exercise, Zhào reminds us – recruits and ethnographer watching scenes assemble on the asphalt stage – is to force each recruit to encounter a scenario where a motorist consistently refuses to comply with an officer's "reasonable" requests to present identification and proof of vehicle registration. Far from passive observers, the recruits seated and standing next to me often interject their commentary while the scene is underway, arguing with each other about what the current Responding Officer's performance is missing, or commenting on perceived weaknesses in the choreographed moves in an officer's physical approach to the vehicle. Sometimes they act as a Greek chorus, a shared consensus arising as a harmonious and homogenous critique between them in the face of an error so seemingly egregious that their cries cannot be restricted from crossing the invisible line separating petroleum proscenium from sidewalk. For example, when Recruit Jesse Wallace, early 20s,

fails to remember the correct dispatch code, the recruits' unrestrained cries echo across the street, "It's an *11-50*, genius!"[1]

From July 2015 to December 2015, I observed role-play scenarios – simulations of what recruits were trained to understand as "real-world" situations – and recruits' collective critiques of each other's performances as they role-played in preparation for their final week of academy testing. After befriending a recruit who had enrolled in San Diego's regional police academy in October 2013, I became acquainted with members of his academy class and later classes of recruits from the San Diego Regional Law Enforcement Academy, one of several regional police academies across California following state-mandated guidelines for police officer training outlined by the state's Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). Known officially as the San Diego Regional Public Safety Training Institute (henceforth, the "Institute") at Miramar College, the Institute offers POST-certified police academy training through Miramar's Public Safety program and is responsible for preparing recruits for their work as patrol officers in several of San Diego County's law enforcement agencies, from local municipal police departments to sheriff's offices. The bulk of official training is completed at Miramar College in facilities equipped with administrative offices, teaching classrooms, and various outdoor training areas for running recruits through obstacle course routines, police vehicle maneuvers, and physical combat exercises. However,

[1] An "11-50" is a specific dispatch code – also called "basic ten codes" – used by law enforcement to communicate when an officer is requesting a license check during a Vehicle Stop. The recruits' collective exclamation during this interaction reveals their surprise and confusion at how the recruit playing the role of Responding Officer could fail to remember the correct ten code required to communicate with dispatch during a Vehicle Stop scenario.

I came to discover, a significant portion of recruits' training activities took place in "unofficial" spaces, outside of academy instruction time.[2]

With a fall graduation looming on the horizon, recruits assembled on weekends in each other's homes and after weekday instruction in public spaces like residential streets in the Mira Mesa neighborhood of San Diego where we were presently gathered. It was in such informal spaces, outside regular class hours, that I spent time and developed a rapport with this group of recruits, many of them twenty-somethings who had grown up across Southern California and a smaller contingent of recent transplants from branches of the military who were, on average, 10 to 15 years older than their non-military counterparts.[3] During these informal gatherings, recruits discussed their impressions of police academy training and shared insights about their experiences, including the kinds of written and visual material training officers presented in lectures.

It was during one such iteration of the scenarios, after academy instruction had adjourned for the day, that an offhand comment revealed the unexpected entanglements between academy pedagogy and Hollywood cinema. "Alright," Zhào announces about 90 minutes into the scene after another recruit has just returned from picking up a large phone order of Taiwanese bubble tea from a nearby strip mall that we distribute amongst us, "We're

[2] Recruits attend academy instruction at the Institute Monday through Friday, eight hours a day, for 25 weeks. The 25-week training program totals 928 hours of instruction and includes traditional classroom lectures, technical skills training and physical conditioning classes.

[3] Many of these recruits had served in military units and returned from multiple deployments in theatres of war abroad before enrolling in San Diego's police academy. For the sake of their anonymity, I do not offer specific military affiliations or deployment information here that may identify these research participants.

going to run this again but ratchet up the intensity a bit. We're going to pretend the motorist blows through that stop sign back there. Who do we think needs the extra practice?"

Recruit Josh MacKenzie, a white, mid-20s transplant from an East Coast metropolis, finally says, "Fuck it. Me," and other recruits nod encouragingly at the slight apprehension in his voice. In an earlier scene, he was more hesitant than his classmates when approaching the back of the pulled-over sports car, and, across the 16 iterations of this Vehicle Stop scenario that I witnessed the hour and a half, MacKenzie's scene lapsed for nearly twice the amount of time as his peers. While time constraints are not a formal meter for evaluating recruit performances in the academy, it is both implicitly understood and explicitly noted by training officers that the longer recruits take to bring motorists under compliance, the more at risk they are of losing control of a scenario which requires them to escalate their state-mandated uses of force outlined in their "Force Matrix" (a paradigm discussed in a later chapter).

Indeed, the notion that officers are at a disadvantage if they fail to engage actively and offensively with motorists or pedestrians during a stop is a narrative fantasy supporting the core and consistently false claim that such aggressive styles of policing – what goes by another name as "proactive policing" – actually work to keep citizens safe by ensuring that a situation cannot develop into an *even more violent* situation (Harmon and Manns 2017; Vitale 2018). As sociologist and abolitionist Nikki Jones (2021) reminds us, however, "Officers are typically trained to *ratchet up the force* until they reach compliance (officers refer to this as 'the easy way' or 'the hard way')" (6, emphasis added). While televisual and viral images of racialized police violence demonstrate how quickly acts of increased force *produce* the very brutality and death these methods claim to avoid (discussed later in this chapter), cycles of

escalation continually mark recruits' sense that they must anticipate wielding force "the hard way" not "the easy way," to perform well for the instructors tasked with evaluating them in the academy. Such concerns are reflected in Zhào's suggestion that in the next iteration of scenes they "ratchet up the intensity a bit," mirroring Jones' analysis of how officers are trained to "ratchet up" their uses of force.

Bubble tea in hand and notebook in lap, I sit on a low brick wall next to Recruit Mark Nolan, mid-30s, and Recruit Anthony Marino, early 20s, as the recruits assemble a new scene to meet Zhào's mandate. Eager to test drive the Hellcat once more, Vasquez volunteers to play the motorist again, climbing behind the wheel and waiting for his scene companion to ready himself. Before resuming the role of Responding Officer, a voice from behind me interrupts our assembly and causes MacKenzie visible discomfort at the implicit critique of his masculinity:

"Don't forget, Kraft Mac," Recruit Brooke Alvaro, early 20s Latina and San Diego local, adds from the driveway where her lifted pickup truck is parked adjacent several other recruits' vehicles. Hailing MacKenzie by his academy nickname,[4] she pauses to sip from a standard-issue water bottle emblazoned with the academy's logo-cum-coat of arms in faded black screen-print before lobbing the punch line. "Be the Alonzo, not the Jake."

[4] It is common for training officers in the academy to bestow typically derogatory nicknames upon recruits in an effort to acclimate them to the heteromasculine repertoires of police academy instruction. MacKenzie relayed that his nickname was given to him by a training officer who, admittedly unable to come up with a suitably insulting name at the time, settled on "Kraft Mac" before screaming at MacKenzie to run up a series of concrete stairs on Miramar's campus.

The recruits erupt into uncensored laughter, and Marino slaps his knees before extending Alvaro's abstract suggestion into a more concrete choreography: "Yes, exactly. No more pussy shit. Let's see you walk up to that vehicle like Alonzo in that one scene. Don't let him intimidate you. You're the king of the jungle, not Vasquez."

"Órale, they're right, ya gotta be like my boy Denzel," Vasquez laughs from the Hellcat's interior, pointing squarely at MacKenzie before reciting a line spoken by African American actor Denzel Washington in Antoine Fuqua's 2001 film *Training Day*. In a perverse reversal of American law enforcement's enduring tagline, Vasquez offers his best cinematic impression of Washington's Alonzo Harris, the unscrupulous LAPD narcotics detective at the heart of Fuqua's film before pulling the car away from the curb to drive further up the street in preparation for the Vehicle Stop scenario. "'Protect and serve, brother.'"

Two minutes later, we watch as MacKenzie flashes the Honda's high beams at the Hellcat's rear in an improvisational simulation of an on-duty police vehicle's mounted, flashing LED lightbar. Vasquez pulls over, comes to a stop next to another parked car, and engages the emergency lights to both simulate what an actual driver might be expected to do if pulled over and to signal to motorists on this small residential street to practice caution. A few passing cars slow down to see why this Honda and Hellcat are pulled over on the side of the road while others attempt to maneuver around in response to Mac's failure to park as close to the curb as possible.

MacKenzie briefly mimes speaking into his shoulder-mounted radio as though in contact with a police radio dispatcher before exiting the vehicle, his utility belt fastened

tightly around his waist. He walks to the driver's side door of the Hellcat, right hand resting two inches from the plastic training gun in its holster as he leans down to inquire, "Do you mind turning off the car, please? I'm going to need to see your license and registration, sir."

"Yeah, I fucking *mind*. What's your problem, puta?" Vasquez deflects MacKenzie's rhetorical request with questions of his own and does not turn off his car. MacKenzie tries to assert himself again, putting his palm up in a gesture to stop Vasquez's verbal onslaught. Seeing an opportunity to rile up MacKenzie further, Vasquez continues to interrupt him. Not only has he succeeded in evading the questions MacKenzie needs to ask in order to access the requisite information, but Vasquez has inverted and effectually *flipped the script* for how MacKenzie imagines the Vehicle Stop should unfold: a courteous introduction, followed by an escalation in what training officers at the regional academy describe as "verbal judo," a form of verbal persuasion typically associated with de-escalation training (Giacomantonio et al. 2020), and which now has its own institute – the national Verbal Judo Institute – helmed by officers in Auburn, New York.[5]

It is Vasquez who is in charge of the scenario now. Seeing an opportunity to belabor Alvaro's and Marino's earlier comments about MacKenzie's failure to stand firm in the face

[5] Often attributed to Dr. George J. Thompson (1983) in police practice research and social psychology literatures on policing (Anicich et al. 2015; Felson 1982; Miller 2008), "Verbal Judo" is a broad communication framework with philosophical roots in principles of nonresistance associated with the martial art techniques developed by Japanese doctor Shirobei Akiyama. The martial art of judo, while derived from traditions and techniques of jujitsu that emphasize the use of control holds and leverage in *unarmed combat* to unbalance opponents, has been powerfully refashioned within law enforcement training contexts. It is often cited as a de-escalation technique that officers should use in any compliance-gaining situation and that all verbal tactics should be exhausted as Verbal Judo calls for "physical force only as a last option" (Keathley 2012, 4).

of intimidation, he opens his door as a direct challenge to MacKenzie's authority, forcing him to "ratchet up" reasonable use of force.

"Oh, I see. You didn't stop enough n****s today, is that it?" Vasquez asks, stepping out of the car and grabbing a fistful of his own genitals, "Why don't you suck on this?"

"Get back in your vehicle!" MacKenzie demands, retreating backwards toward the Honda.

A few recruits mutter questions of disbelief to each other (e.g. "Why is Mac letting this shit happen?" and "Is he really letting Vasquez control this thing?"), and an even fewer number are wide-eyed and nonplussed as if to ask: in the world of patrol where unforeseen events arise beyond the expected, what *could* happen next?

"This ain't a training day, baby," Vasquez teases MacKenzie while advancing on him, "Lot of *clikas* out here, and they won't think twice 'bout jumping your goofy ass."

Vasquez feigns reaching for MacKenzie's belt where the training gun is snapped into its holster. Zhào, silent for most of the scenario, now intervenes in the scene, a forceful voice from off-stage that seems to steady the Responding Officer: "Take him, MacKenzie. Take him *now*."

MacKenzie grabs Vasquez's arm, brings it up between his hands and traps the forearm while pressing down on the back of Vasquez's hand in a forced position of wrist hyperflexion; what may appear to the uninitiated as an act of violent puppetry is, to the recruits and the ethnographer, the rote application of a common fast action control hold technique taught in police academies nationwide and referenced in the San Diego Police Department procedure manual as "escorting or compression and pain compliance techniques" (4). Vasquez gasps in

seemingly genuine surprise as MacKenzie "goose walks" him back toward the Hellcat. One of several force options, this escort hold is what policing experts Seth W. Stoughton, Jeffrey J. Noble, and Geoffrey P. Alpert (2020) describe as a common "softs hands" technique (as opposed to "hard hands" techniques like strikes, blows, or takedowns) for addressing noncompliance by subjects in the field, and are "intended to set up or establish officer control over a subject or to move an individual in a controlled manner" (199). After Vasquez's noncompliance is successfully rendered inert, Zhào winces as the Responding Officer shoves the younger recruit against the newly waxed exterior of the sports car and simulates handcuffing the Motorist. A collective applause emerges from the audience of recruits, and MacKenzie releases Vasquez who turns around with a wide smile, shaking his wrist in an act of relief.

"'My n****,'" Vasquez breathes, citing Denzel Washington's Oscar- and meme-worthy one-liner from *Training Day* (2001).[6] The Responding Officer and Motorist share a fist bump that echoes across the "the cinema of policing" (Sexton 2009, 2017) and the interracial fantasies of liberal filmmaking through which such figurations of anti-Black masculinity come to shape the visual culture of this genre.[7] This performative recitation of an

[6] Following Audra Simpson's (2014) work on ethnographic refusal and John L. Jackson, Jr.'s (2013) call for a politics of "thin description" within anthropological research and writing praxis, I will practice my own "staking of limits" (Simpson 2014, 102) when it comes to the use of language spoken by interlocutors throughout this dissertation. While I do not intervene in these scenes of specific language use in the field, I feel strongly that it is my responsibility to account for how these words may travel and shape spaces of interaction beyond these pages, and so I will periodically refuse to spell out particular words and phrases when I determine it is appropriate.

[7] Robyn Wiegman's analysis of "white multiracial desire" (2002, 861) as a central logic to transformations in liberal subjectivities is useful here for thinking through the kinds of affective attachments that the American buddy-cop film genre offers viewing publics. This is an even more critical line of inquiry when the stakes of this project include examining the visual culture of *Training Day* through police recruits' viewing practices. For

African American character's dialogue by a Mexican-American police recruit emerges in the field as an ordinary speech act that, on its face, appears as cross-racial coalition while bordering on Blackface minstrelsy, yet these are the ties that bind in American buddy cop films like *Lethal Weapon* (1987), *Rush Hour* (1998), and *End of Watch* (2012), David Ayer's other well-received police film after writing the screenplay for *Training Day*.[8] Beyond this film genre, such utterances ripple across the wider cinematic field through which seemingly diverse representations of a multiracial police vision come to shape both the everyday practices of recruits and officers in San Diego, and the consequences of encountering this vision for Black and Brown San Diegans.

In later conversations with a different group of academy recruits, I learned that scenes from Antoine Fuqua's 2001 *Training Day* had been screened at San Diego's regional police

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more on the intersection of buddy film narratives and interracial and multiracial casting in Hollywood cinema, see Ed Guerrero (1993) and Mary C. Beltrán (2005).

[8] Ayer's *End of Watch* (2012) may seem like the odd one out of this trio, considering that it is firmly a drama film in the style of cinema verité associated with the television program COPS (including the use of in-vehicle cameras facing the officers on patrol and hand-held camera techniques), yet this film demonstrates how the buddy cop formula unfolds across the racial intimacies shared by LAPD partners Mike Zavala (played by Mexican-American actor Michael Peña) and Brian Taylor (played by white American actor Jake Gyllenhaal). In one notable scene, Peña and Gyllenhaal's characters are patrolling in their police cruiser and begin to mock each other's perceived cultural differences. When Officer Zavala teases that Officer Taylor should consider dating a Mexican girl for some of that "sweet brown sugar," Taylor's repartee is a stereotypical gendered performance of a "Latina bimbo" replete with a nasally high-pitched accent: "If they're anything like you I won't be able to stand a fucking hour with them. Waking up in the morning and they'll be like, 'Hey, can I tell you a story? Here's a story about this and a story about that… You want to come to my cousin's quinceañera? My daughter's quinceañera? My brother's quinceañera?'" Zavala's response to Taylor's cavalier critique of an important cultural tradition is to respond in kind while defending his community in peak "white girl" Southern Californian vocal fry: "Yeah, there's always something happening, though, bro. It's better than, like, 'Hey do you know the new kind of flavored coffee I have? Do you like this kind of coffee? The baristas are excellent!'" This scene illustrates how the sociality of policing in cinema, as in moments like the role-play scene between Vasquez and MacKenzie, depends upon the fantasies and expressions of what Jared Sexton (2017) identifies as "cross-racial fraternity" (21). The *End of Watch* scene can be viewed here: https://youtu.be/X3NhUAX7Yi4. For more on cross-racial identifications in the cinema of policing, see Banerjee (2006) and Nishime (2004).

academy during an in-class lecture on officer safety. The public's knowledge of this phenomenon is seemingly limited there is no mention of this film in the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) handbook provided to all academy recruits, nor had this practice been discussed beyond the academy. Yet this anecdote has been shared and re-performed – as in the scene above – by both recruits and patrol officers with whom I have spent time in the performance of this research over the past eight years. Indeed, its quasi-secret inclusion as an "off the books" – or, rather, "off the manual" – part of academy classroom pedagogy illustrates a gap between the mandated training dictated in the academy's policies and procedures, and the many provisional, off-the-cuff methods by which training officers make these lessons cohere for recruits under their instruction.

Officer Kurt Leitzig, a new officer in his late 20s assigned to the working-class suburb of El Cajon, explained to me that *Training Day* had been screened as part of a learning module on officer safety during in-class instruction for his academy cohort of recruits a year earlier. When asked how the film was contextualized for recruits by the training officer leading the class, Leitzig replied, "We discussed the types of neighborhoods we will have to police in the field, places where we may not be welcome." Seemingly innocuous, the phrase "we will" not only illustrates the important symbolic and imaginative work that *Training Day* cinematically represents for police recruits, but also summons the conditions of sociality within the academy classroom that shape how this cinematic intervention is collectively read and discussed. Leitzig's comment suggests the fictional world of *Training Day* and its characters work to bring recruits closer toward a perceived reality about patrol work and, as evidenced by the scene between Vasquez and MacKenzie, constitute an enduring cinematic

lesson that is shared across recruit cohorts. Here, Hollywood cinema did not simply represent a world, but offered more effective *material for staging* and for bringing forth the "correct" kind of performance from one of the more hesitant recruits.

Drawing on Gilles Deleuze's conception of the cinematic, Kara Keeling (2007) argues that such moving-image clichés arrive to viewers as more than representations; they are a "specific perceptual schema" (12) that shapes the social worlds of those who look, and that such looking is historically embedded in racialized systems of domination that mark ongoing struggles for Black liberation. By performing Washington's character Alonzo from *Training Day* and imbuing an improvised performance of blackness with situated knowledges specific to San Diego's local gang activity – Vasquez's mention of *clikas*, or smaller cells, cliques, or groups that are associated with specific geographic and neighborhood affiliations that include Black, Brown, and Asian community members – the recruit illustrated how such racialized clichés travel and materialize in sites of academy training. Recent law enforcement scandals suggest that these cinematic clichés travel widely. Consider the case of Dean Zipes, a former Florida sheriff's deputy filmed on police vehicle dashboard camera re-enacting a scene from *Training Day* in *front of a trainee* on February 16, 2017. The filmed incident shows Zipes reciting lines from Denzel Washington's Alonzo character while stroking himself with both his service pistol and taser gun. He was subsequently fired two months later in April (Ruiter 2017).[9]

[9] According to his public LinkedIn profile, Zipes currently attends the University of Florida's Levin School of Law as a Juris Doctor Candidate while volunteering his time teaching gun safety to children, the latter being of most concern considering the circumstances of his terminated employment.

The revelation that *Training Day* both has a formalized place in San Diego's regional police academy and shape such improvisational stagings in practice sessions lays bare an entanglement between cinema, police training, and patrol work. This is what I call the "mise-en-scène of police academy training." From behind their desks, police academy recruits learn to interpret cinematic representations of policing mediated by the space of the academy classroom. From behind the dashboard of police vehicles, police officers practice interpretive strategies for making sense of an unfolding visual world mediated by their relationship to the patrol car, and to each other. This chapter proceeds by taking this pedagogical mirroring as a point of departure to examine how lived encounters of policing (the "ethnographic") and encounters on screen (the "cinematic") are simultaneously structured by and structure the practices of police officers in the field.

Through participant observation and unstructured interviews, I would come to experience this cinematic juxtaposition for myself while engaged in ethnographic research at the Institute, San Diego's regional police academy, and while on citizen ride-alongs with police officers from the El Cajon and San Diego Police Departments. While one of my core concerns in this chapter is how cinematic scripts like *Training Day* are engaged and interpreted by recruits and officers as a paradigmatic police training film, I extend my analysis beyond the world of the film to consider how the cinematic form calls us to closely examine the kinds of visual arguments about police power and idealized models of police vision that coalesce at the site of the police vehicle. The historical shift from foot patrols to a mobilized patrol instantiated by the on-duty patrol automobile transformed twentieth-century U.S. policing and subsequently necessitated training pedagogies for teaching recruits how to police

with the police vehicle (Seo 2019). The first section of this chapter turns toward the genre of training and testing known as the "Vehicle Stop" or the "Traffic Stop," the simulated encounter between a Responding Officer on patrol and a Motorist on a public road. I describe my experience as a participant-observer of these staged stops while conducting ethnographic observations of interactions between recruits and training officers during a formal scenario test day at the Institute's Scenario Test Week. The second section returns to the informal practice sessions facilitated by police recruits that open this chapter to closely examine how recruits prepare for the Vehicle Stop testing scenario by improvising and role-playing cinematic clichés. In this sense I am particularly concerned with how cinema shapes recruits' understandings of the sociality of patrol work and how that sociality is mediated through the police vehicle. Even beyond the fictional worlds of *Training Day*, however, the cinematic resonances between the training academy and Hollywood cinema are compelling. Indeed, the built environment in which training and testing assemble evoke and embody the very architectural elements of Hollywood studio backlots and its many stages.

1.2 Cinematic Backdrops

In 2015 I had been granted permission to observe the final 40 hours of state-mandated testing that local police recruits are required to complete before graduating from San Diego's regional police academy. The primary site where all police recruits from the region must undergo final role-play testing before working as patrol officers, this complex, known as the San Diego Fire-Rescue Training Institute but doubling also as the Regional Public Safety Training Institute, is operated by the City of San Diego's Training and Safety Division. It

ensures that the training facilities are maintained and functional for both police and fire department training programs. It is here that police recruits are required to participate in the scenario-based simulation event known as "Scenario Test Week," a period during which police recruits, training officers, and volunteer actors role-play different scenarios modeled on "real world" situations that patrol officers may face in the performance of their work.

Turning my car onto the public road leading into the facility's training grounds, I watch the jet skis and skippers bob in San Diego's North Bay as they recede in my rearview mirror, as do the children playing hide-and-seek in the shadow of Spanish Landing Park's stone memorial erected to mark Spain's colonization of "Alta California," the first permanent European settlement on the Pacific Coast in 1769. A blue sign announcing "San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Training Facility" is the only signage visible from Harbor Drive, the nearest public road to the training complex. Through the viewing bay of my windshield, the campus appears more like a Hollywood backlot than a staged and simulated environment: assorted metal storage containers, weathered folding chairs abandoned in place by previous trainings, and a collection of seemingly innocuous beige and white buildings only three to four stories high sans external signage beyond white placards designating "Building A" from "Building C" illustrate an aesthetics of pragmatism over mimesis. Tall chain-link fencing adorned in perverse halos of barbed wire enclose the main parking lot where another sign indicates, in all caps, "P/LOT 2 No Public Parking." These signs, read alongside the ubiquitous design of the campus that constitute its built environment, communicate an "affective atmosphere" (Young 2021; Anderson 2009) of surveillance and heightened

visibility meant to perform a division authorizing and distinctly separating this enclosure of police training from an adjudicating and public *outside*.

Further into the Institute complex, ladders are propped here and there against the street-facing stairwells that line the road. They stand in both as practical remnants from prior scenarios and as well-worn cinematic props imbued with the possibilities for staging scenes of escape and rescue. One look at these stairwells and their steel doors leading into unseen back stages and I am transmogrified into my 10-year-old self, straining against the safety railing of the shuttered Universal Studios Hollywood attraction *Backdraft*, based on the 1991 blockbuster film of the same name. At any moment, I imagine an axe-wielding Kurt Russel – replete in his *Backdraft* character's firefighting costume – might kick one of these doors open with a well-timed explosion at his back, his smoking boots leaving an acrid contrail behind him. As I would come to find out, this unassuming complex of buildings serves as a collection of makeshift soundstages in the style of Hollywood backlots sans million-dollar equipment rentals, personal assistants, or air-conditioned trailers, yet filled with interior and exterior spaces where police recruits rehearse improvised performances of normatively violent masculinity under the directorial ministrations of training officers no less cruel or exacting than Hitchcock, Kubrick, or von Trier. Indeed, the campus' seemingly ascetic and regimented veneer belies the improvisational performances – what I conceive across the dissertation chapters as structurally *episodic, smash cut performances* – that constitute police training *in situ*, and which take place throughout the Institute's many spaces, from brick-and-mortar classrooms to the blacktop pavement connecting the campus to the public roads beyond. In the scenes that follow, I stylize portions of ethnographic interactions in a film script format as

an opportunity to highlight particularly salient aspects of dialogue that require further analysis and to demonstrate the performative enactment of meaning in scenes through training script's improvisational stagings. I do this to make otherwise fleeting moments of improvisation hang together in a cinematic form that both invites us closer to the interaction, and perhaps invites other ways of staging as well.

1.3 EXT. TRAINING ACADEMY – MORNING

After circling the facility several times and erring to successfully locate the appropriate lot while searching for some overlooked detail in the instructional Scenario Test Week e-mail on my phone, I nearly clip the front end of another car driving in the opposite direction. Braking hard, I maneuver around the sedan and see a Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor vehicle (colloquially referred to by law enforcement and those in automotive enthusiast circles as the "Crown Vic") behind it, its light bar reflectors spinning silently under the San Diego sun. An equally turned-around ride share driver no doubt en route to pick up a passenger from the International Airport two blocks over slows to a crawl in front of our near collision, neck craning to make sense of the scene and his own car now blocked by mine as I attempt a three quarter turn on this narrow street. All knowledge of how to drive has abandoned me, despite my 12 years of experience up to that point, and I begin to sweat at the sight of the police cruiser, the rideshare driver successfully pulling away from this ethnographic comedy of errors and exiting out of the training campus onto Harbor Boulevard. A uniformed officer exits the Crown Vic, seemingly hailing me in mid U-turn.

"Hey, turn off the car."

Predictably interpellated, I switch off the ignition, and the driver of the sedan looks at me puzzled. I mouth a "Sorry" to the sedan driver and, to my surprise, he exits his own vehicle, a gun tucked into the waistband of his jeans and only partially covered by his long-sleeved flannel shirt. He gestures to the soon-to-be officer behind him – a recruit in full uniform playing the role of officer in this scene – and orders him back to the patrol car. In this moment I realize that the direction to turn my car off was not meant for me, but for the sedan driver in this simulated vehicle stop I managed to interrupt, like an amateur production assistant lost on set. Louis Althusser is somewhere chuckling in his grave.

"Hey," the man says in that brusque tone that has become a telltale hallmark for distinguishing veteran patrol officers from the novices in my fieldwork, one hand on the roof of the sedan and the other on his hip, "If you're here to role-play, just park over in that lot."

Flushed with embarrassment, I assure him I am here to observe Scenario Test Week with approval through official channels, despite the fact that the vehicle stop scenario is unfolding in plain view on a public street and is, therefore, visible to all those who might drive through this campus and its connecting side streets; indeed, the officer dressed in plainclothes flannel and playing the part of a citizen motorist did not seem bothered at all by the rideshare driver peering into the scene. I relay this encounter here not simply because all ethnographic retellings must begin somewhere, but to demonstrate how my own accidental interruption by driving *into* the aforementioned scene behooves the formulation of critical inquiries that are always shifting and responding to the ethnographic field which is never as stable as the sentences that attempt to make these interactions cohere and stabilize after the fact.

While I was caught up in my own errors at the time, it later struck me as a looming concern that must be addressed by police academy training or practically dealt with by training officers responsible for overseeing each role-play scenario: how did the police recruit in the vehicle stop make sense of my interruption, and how might similar unpredictable happenings affect or threaten recruit role-play performances that were evaluated as evidencing a recruit's ability to become, in the words of one training officer, "patrol worthy"? The unfolding scenes that emerge in this and other chapters attempt to answer these questions while laying bare the racial and gendered dynamics that are paradoxically considered "out of play" yet constitute the very material stuff – the bodies of role-play actors read as more suspicious or deemed reasonable targets for escalated uses of police force – that recruits must attend to in real time within the "in play" worlds of Scenario Test Week that seeks to constrain their vision. The mise-en-scène of police academy training demands we attend to how vision is not only constructed and framed by the built architectures in which training assembles, but how normatively modeled police vision – a way of learning how to interpret the visual field of patrol – is directed and practiced through staged enactments that include as one of its primary and most recognizable props the police vehicle.

1.4 "When You See It, You Know": Un/seen Violence in Vehicle Stops

I arrive two hours late to the Institute campus and scenario testing has been well underway as evidenced by the seemingly chaotic scenes playing out throughout the various classrooms and outdoor areas that comprise the main facility labeled "Building C." To my right, police recruits dressed in bold yellow tee shirts wait in a neat line in front of a spartan

obstacle course, each silently watching one male Latino recruit drag an orange sandbag mannequin – meant to simulate the weight of an average adult male – through a sandpit. Their navy dickies are dusted with sand, as though they have previously run this obstacle course for practice multiple times; I would later be told that these recruits had previously failed their physical fitness exams in the earlier stages of academy training. This was their final opportunity during Scenario Test Week to successfully complete the obstacle course consisting of three wooden walls of staggering heights that they must climb over. This feat is followed by a simulated victim rescue, also referred to by training officers and recruits as a "dummy drag," with a nearly 180-pound mannequin. Three stories above the open sandpit obstacle course, the sounds of role-play scenarios drift out of open windows: screams, physical body strikes, and a panoply of curses. Further to my left away from the obstacle course is the same sedan I had almost clipped earlier, now fully stopped and pulled over to the side of the curb.

I stop a male training officer walking across the course with a stack of folders under his arm and ask if he knows where I can "check in" with any appropriate parties regarding my presence at the academy; I explain that I was scheduled to participate as a role-play actor during Scenario Test Week in a few days but that I had been granted permission to observe scenarios as a researcher. "Just let a training officer know you're here and he'll get you sorted out, it's fine," he says, pointing to a first-floor section of classrooms behind us and continuing on his way. I locate the empty classroom – rows of long grey desks that could accommodate three or four seated students, now covered in various personal items like backpacks, sweatshirts, and water bottles – save for a female training officer slaking her thirst with a

black thermos and on her way out of the room. Her caution-yellow safety vest designates her an "Evaluator," and the lining of the thin garment grips the tumescent curves of her biceps and shoulders. "Sorry to bother you," I begin, bringing my phone up to show her the e-mail exchange between Officer Cayden Maxwell and myself from a week earlier, "I'm here to observe scenario training. I have permission from the Sergeant Maxwell."

She barely looks at my phone, giving me a polite albeit distracted smile and gesturing for me to follow her outside. "Great. Just don't disrupt the scenarios or the training officers doing their jobs. There are a few going on right now, like that one over there. Feel free to watch."

I do not have the heart to tell her that I had already disrupted the Vehicle Stop scenario once, so I thank her and head over to a large tree under which two metal folding chairs stand empty near the cobalt blue sedan. I take a seat on one and open my notebook to take notes. A few recruits jogging in full uniform hail me with a deferential, "Ma'am," before disappearing around a corner, and their greeting seems to mark my visibility as an out-of-place witness; the Vehicle Stop training officer wearing an Evaluator vest and currently midsentence – pointing to his clipboard while shouting two inches from a police recruit's face – glances over at me, but I cannot discern an accenting or disapproving gaze regarding my presence from behind his black sunglasses. He points to the building behind me in an instructional gesture and the recruit nods, barks a quick, "Yes, sir!" before running past me to the discordant tune of his heavy utility belt jangling around his small waist.

After a few minutes, the training officer walks a couple of feet closer in my direction and asks if I am a law enforcement officer. This question used to catch me off-guard when I

first started riding along with officers, as many assumed I was either related to an officer or interested in beginning a career in law enforcement. "No, no," I say, "I'm just a researcher," and he nods slowly, perhaps unsure of how my presence may or may not be meaningful for the evaluation work he is carrying out. "Huh," comes his lukewarm reply followed by a beat. He then offers an unsolicited introduction to the improvised performances that would soon unfold before me, seemingly unbothered by the arrival of an ethnographer on the scene, "Okay, what you're going to see here is a typical scenario we train recruits for. We want to see how they handle the unpredictability of a traffic stop, so the role-play actor is in that car over there and the recruit is going to pretend like he's pulling this dude over for running a stop sign."

Leaving the space of anonymity intact between us, he avoids formally introducing himself and walks back over to the black asphalt road where the Crown Victoria is sitting idle behind the sedan. A white recruit in his early 20s walks up in uniform and nods to the training officer – who I identify from this point forward as TO Malcom – before Malcom asks the recruit to imagine the conditions of the scenario that he is about to be evaluated on.[10] TO Malcom silently scans the sheet of paper in his hands, and this is the first moment I am able to witness how these printed materials – the role-play script for the Vehicle Stop – constitute both the backbone for improvisation *and* the concrete, identifiable criteria and benchmarks that training officers must use to evaluate recruits during Scenario Test Week. Malcom

[10] "TO" is the common acronym for a training officer. This is typically how recruits will refer to specific training officers in lieu of calling them by their first or full names, opting for the prefix "TO" followed by officer's last name.

finishes flipping through the few sheets of paper and looks up at the recruit again before addressing him.

"Recruit, you're about to pull a driver over for running that stop sign back there. You see it with your own eyes and you signal for the driver to pull over. I'm going to be dispatch, understand?"

The recruit nods and climbs into the vehicle, flicking on the roof-mounted lightbar console. The scene begins when he says aloud in Malcom's direction, "Dispatch, I'm 10-97 north of Harbor Boulevard. Traffic Stop of blue Chevy sedan."

He cites the dispatch code for "arrived on scene" and exits the vehicle. Malcom makes a quick notation on his clipboard and would later tell me that it was a strange choice for the recruit to use the "10-97" code for a traffic stop since the code is commonly used to inform dispatch when a Responding Officer has arrived to a specific call for service or a scene in progress where officers are already present, but situates the recruit's error as evidence of normal anxiety related to the scenario test. For now, Malcom does not comment on the recruit's error and only communicates that he has received the recruit's message clearly with a quick "10-4."

Walking up to the driver's side door, the recruit puts on a familiar customer service smile, both of his thumbs hooked into the sides near his armpits where his bullet proof vest stretches the fabric of his uniform shirt across his chest; this is what recruits often describe as one of the "ready" or "tactical" stances in the academy – hands near the center of the body so that the posture of the officer is not outwardly aggressive while still being able to reach for tools and weapons on their utility belts in the event that they need to go "hands on" with an

individual in the field. The role-play actor behind the wheel performing as Motorist, who had offered directions for me to park earlier, is a white man in his 40s with short brown hair and 5 o'clock shadow. He appears relaxed and conversational as the scene unfolds:

RESPONDING OFFICER
Morning, sir. How's it going today?

MOTORIST
I'm good, I'm okay. How are you doing officer?

RESPONDING OFFICER
Good, thanks. Do you mind turning your car off for me?

MOTORIST
I don't understand. What's wrong?

RESPONDING OFFICER
Well, I'm just going to need you to turn off your car and, uh, did you see that stop sign back there?

MOTORIST
Oh, sorry. I'm really late for an appointment, so can I just get a warning? I'll be more careful next time.

In a later coffee-break conversation with the man playing the Motorist – who I would come to find out is a San Diego patrol officer – he explained that he had been instructed by TO Malcom to not comply with the recruit's directives but to do so in a calm manner; in this iteration of the scene, no distinctly aggressive moves or explicit challenges to the recruit's authority are made by the Motorist. Any momentum that the recruit had at the beginning of the scenario has slowed to a crawl, and he seems unsure of how to proceed if the Motorist will not comply with a straightforward request to simply turn the car off. The recruit looks up at TO Malcom who is watching him – eagle-eyed and unmoving – and, feeling the heat of the training officer's stare, dials up the level of verbal aggression while snapping open the gun holster on his belt:

RESPONDING OFFICER
I'm not going to ask you again, sir. Turn your car off now.

MOTORIST
Woah. Jeez. Alright.

RESPONDING OFFICER
License and registration. Don't make my job any harder than it has to be.

Seeing the recruit move to the next level of the Force Matrix – opening the holster of his duty weapon and intimating a threat of gun violence – the Motorist puts his hands up in a gesture of surrender before reaching into the glovebox and handing over his documents. The recruit walks back to the police cruiser and provides Dispatch/TO Malcom with the driver's name, license plate number, address, and a general description of his physical appearance: white male, 40s, approximately 6-feet tall, brown hair, green eyes. Dispatch replies that there is an open warrant for the Motorist's arrest, and the recruit, realizing he must now act on this knowledge, seems to gather himself before replying, "10-4. Requesting backup to corner of Spruance Road and Kincaid Road."

Dispatch is quick to shut down the call for help: "Nearest officers are 15 minutes away," TO Malcom replies with a matter-of-fact tone before slipping back into his role as training officer to underscore the material consequences for failing to take control in this scenario test by saying, "You've got to deal with this on your own, recruit. You live or die by your own actions." His words both constrain the world of the scenario as well as the available courses of action that the recruit can now choose to move the scenario forward. There is no bowing out of the scene now. The recruit walks back to the Motorist's vehicle and says, "Well, sir, um. Looks like you've got a warrant, so I'm going to need you to step out of the car right now. Do you understand?" The Motorist verbally protests, growing angrier at being

accused of a prior crime with repeated cries of, “Are you kidding me, man? I don’t know anything about that!” He does not move to unbuckle his seat belt, but instead turns the car back on. The recruit takes a few steps back from the driver’s open window, draws his firearm and aims it at the Motorist while shouting, “Let me see your fucking hands! If you move that car I *will* shoot, do you understand? Turn the car off now!”

As the scene unfolds, the Motorist cuts the ignition and steps out of the car. The recruit orders the man to put his hands behind his back and he complies as he is cuffed without further escalation of the scenario. Once the Motorist is in hand cuffs, TO Malcom stops the scenario, and his own notations, to address the recruit and offer him a summary of how the scene unfolded in terms of where the recruit made several key errors:

“You went in there like a Starbucks barista. It’s good to be professional and polite, but you’re not making lattes, recruit. If you had run his plate before engaging him and after he *visibly* ran a stop sign, then you’d have been able to say to yourself, ‘Alright, I’m probably going to need to go hands-on with this guy if he’s got a warrant and get him out of his vehicle.’ You did recover with some command presence, but you let him control the beginning of that situation by humoring his non-compliance. At any point he could have driven away or swerved his vehicle into you, and before you know it, *that thing* is a weapon.”

While, on the surface, TO Malcom’s primary critique concerns a failure of “order of operations,” such that the recruit did not approach the scene in the correct order by running the license plate *after* initiating the stop, his explanation also marks and highlights the fatal possibility embedded in his insistence that “that thing” – the Motorist’s vehicle – “is a weapon.” The figuration of danger that pervades the traffic stop is a key theme across all

training scenarios I observed during my fieldwork and is a broad thematic in law enforcement pedagogical narratives (Sierra-Arévalo 2021). As this and following scenes suggests, the naturalization of this imagined violence emerges through both the possible weaponization of the vehicle by a citizen motorist and becomes a colorblind defense in response to racial-profiling.

In the following scene, the ability to anticipate violence becomes a clear distinction from the previous recruit's performance. After the prior recruit has been dismissed and ordered to run to the next scenario test, a different white recruit arrives – in her mid-to-late 20s, blonde hair fixed into a tight bun, and a military-style gait – and is given the green light to start the scene. Unlike the prior recruit, however, she first asks Dispatch to run the license plate and discovers the open warrant. She exits the patrol car, runs her hands across the various tools in her braided leather utility belt to ensure they are all in place, and approaches the driver's side of the sedan. Her gaze is unflappable, giving nothing away, as she orders the Motorist to roll his window down:

RESPONDING OFFICER
Morning, sir. Looks like you ran that stop sign back there, so if you could just show me some ID, I'll make this quick.

MOTORIST
Uh, sure. One second. Here you go.

RESPONDING OFFICER
Thank you, sir. I'll be right back.

The recruit walks back toward the patrol car and pretends to open her shoulder-mounted mic, speaking to Dispatch, "I've got a positive ID on the driver with a felony warrant. Driver is registered owner of vehicle. Can I get a 10-29 to confirm? Requesting 10-88 on Spruance." TO Malcom nods slowly to himself, marking the evaluation paperwork on his clipboard

before responding, “10-4. Unit 732 is en route, finishing up a prisoner transport. About 10 minutes out.” Having communicated a second request to confirm the felony warrant (“10-29”) and calling for a cover unit (“10-88”), the recruit puts the ID in her front shirt pocket next to her notepad and pen, and prepares to move to the next phase of the scenario: the arrest. She approaches the Motorist’s vehicle again with her right hand resting comfortably near the gun holster:

RESPONDING OFFICER
Alright, sir. Turn that car off for me, just so we’re both safe.

MOTORIST
Is everything okay? I usually follow all traffic signs but I’m just trying to get to a doctor’s appointment and I’m really late.

RESPONDING OFFICER
Sir, I completely understand what you want to do. Just turn off the engine and step out of the car so we can have a quick chat, alright?

The Motorist complies and, when he’s out of the vehicle, the recruit asks him to turn around to put his hands on the hood of the car. She begins to pat him down, asking if there is anything that might poke her if she reaches into his pockets. He doesn’t give her a direct answer and instead acts confused, continually pressing the Responding Officer about what she is doing. “I just need to hand cuff you for my safety, sir, while I make sure you don’t have anything on you that might make the situation worse,” she begins, and while she’s talking she expertly retrieves her handcuffs from their leather pouch without ever moving her gaze away from the man’s hands. She takes one of his wrists gently in her hand and brings it back behind him, ordering him firmly to bring his other hand behind him as well. He begins to argue with her, but by then it is too late: she locks the steel cuffs around his wrists while he demands to know what is going on. About 10 minutes into the scenario, she finally explains that the

Motorist is under arrest for a felony warrant. Satisfied by her performance, TO Malcom intervenes to end the scenario and tells her to run to the next scenario.

When she leaves, TO Malcom and the Motorist – a San Diego patrol officer – comment together on her performance. The officer playing the role of Motorist says, "See? She gets it. That's proper application of command presence. She didn't give me a chance to freak out by telling me I was under arrest or an opportunity to argue with her. She kept me distracted by keeping *the communication open*."

"Yeah, that's verbal judo right there," TO Malcom replies.

"Exactly. I had a guy just like this the other day. 'Oh, oh, I've gotta pick up my mama,'" the officer begins a mock performance of this man he has pulled over during a traffic stop, hands outstretched in front of him, "'She don't have a car, man, I'm late. I didn't do shit!' He gets agitated, *then I see it*. I see why he's arguing with me, why he won't show me his ID: the bottles rollin' on the floor by a bunch of clothes and trash. I'm like, 'You better get your ass out of this car right now before you get any ideas and try to drive away.'"

"When you see it, *you know*," TO Malcom quips, and the other officer laughs before climbing back into the sedan to start the next role-play scene.

For these officers, "keeping the communication open" is a tool for distraction that allows the recruit to make her arrest without escalating the situation further, but it is also a perversion of a phrase that, on its face, suggests that maintaining the generosity of dialogue with someone during the tensions of a police-citizen encounter is possible. In police training, however, this becomes a strategy for allowing officers to maintain control of a situation as it unfolds without actually addressing what motorists are saying as relevant information that

might move the situation toward a non-violent conclusion. For example, when the officer playing Motorist tells the recruit he's late and trying to get somewhere in a hurry, her supple response – "*I completely understand what you want to do*" – appears to acknowledge his words without conceding control by allowing him to continue to argue or explain his situation. Moreover, her insistence that the Motorist comply with her orders builds upon the familiar narrative that the expression of her authority will, in the end, create a safer situation for all those involved in the encounter. However, as Jordan Blair Woods (2019) argues in his research study of traffic stop data from over 200 Florida law enforcement agencies, "greater invocation of police power during routine traffic stops—especially for only traffic violations—creates avoidable and unnecessary conflicts that undermine both officer and civilian safety" (693). As the following role-play scenes demonstrate, training officers and role-play officers/actors work to consistently reinforce that conflict – even conflicts perceived as racial profiling – as part of the expected landscape that new officers must learn to navigate.

After a short lunch break the Vehicle Stop scenario assembles once again, though a different actor has joined the ensemble: a Latino officer in his mid-30s with more than ten years of experience on patrol with one of San Diego PD's divisions. We chat briefly before the next recruit arrives to be tested, both watching TO Malcom organize the papers in his clipboard, and he asks if I'm a new hire in the department. I tell him I'm not an officer, which seems to amuse him.

"*Bueno*," he muses cautiously, perhaps reading my own racial signifiers, "*¿Qué haces aqui, niña?"*

"*Soy una*…," I begin, and the laughter of my Colombian ancestors is a shockwave through space-time, rippling across my shaky español, "Re…researcher? Uh, *una estudiante de PhD*?"

"*Jajaja*," he laughs, checking something on his phone, "*Soy oaxaqueño, entonces* let's stick to English. *Colombiana*, huh? Hm."

Something small but familiar hangs in this "hm" that colored many of my fieldwork experiences, both in the police academy and during ride-alongs, as a first-generation American immigrant researcher with parents from vastly different cultural contexts and home countries on opposite sides of the globe; later chapters of this dissertation will address these moments and their relevance for my own analysis that I undertake of ethnographic moments in the field in more detail. For now, the officer leaves me under the tree to meet TO Malcom and converse briefly about the scenario. The training officer explains how he'd like the officer to play the Motorist role, including an explicit directive to, "Act non-compliant and antagonize them, especially with your movements in the car. We want them to be confronted with someone who isn't an upstanding citizen, you know? They need to be prepared to deal with people like that. They have to be prepared for the constant conflict and be able to practice officer safety while not getting pushed around."

The officer assents, climbing into the sedan as TO Malcom walks out of sight to retrieve the next recruit. In his wake, the phrase – "*someone who isn't an upstanding citizen*" – is apparently colorblind, a broad and sweeping category that becomes the text the role-play actor is tasked with interpreting and upon which repertoires of racial violence are drawn together between the scripted training materials and the actors/patrol officers' past

experiences on patrol. When TO Malcom returns, a tall recruit walking beside him, he informs the recruit that he had just pulled someone over for speeding through a stop sign and invites him to begin the scenario when he is ready. The recruit takes a too-quick seat in the patrol car, knocking his head against the chassis frame of the Crown Victoria. He makes a quick recovery, unclipping the radio from his shoulder, alerting Dispatch that he has made a traffic stop and provides the license plate number, requesting an "11-50," an "Eleven Code" used to prompt Dispatch for a license check during a Vehicle Stop. Dispatch responds in TO Malcom's voice, "10-4, copy," then provides the registration information for the vehicle. With minimal information provided by Dispatch (implying that the vehicle is not wanted in connection with an outstanding warrant or in connection with any crime), the recruit continues with the stop and exits the patrol car, walking over to the sedan. As the recruit approaches the driver's side door, the Motorist spits out of the window, nearly missing the recruit's shoes:

MOTORIST
¿Qué pasa, pendejo? Nothing better to do, eh?

RESPONDING OFFICER
Sir, I need to see your ID. You ran that stop sign back there and I'm hoping for your cooperation.

MOTORIST
Ah, I see. Discrimination. Discrimination! Mexican guy behind the wheel, probably a gang member.

RESPONDING OFFICER
Sir, I'm not… This isn't about race. I just need to see your ID. I-

MOTORIST
You think you know me, pinche puta pig?

The recruit tries to compose himself though he is visibly frustrated, and even at a relative distance of observation I can see the sweat dripping over his thick eyebrows and down the

bridge of his nose. The Motorist slams his palms against the steering wheel during his tirade while insulting the recruit's appearance and demeanor, prompting the recruit to draw his firearm and aiming it at asphalt. Now that the recruit has chosen the next level of force, the Motorist relents, all but throwing his ID at him. In the role of Responding Officer, the recruit tells the man to not move while he steps a few feet back to call Dispatch, resulting in a positive match for a bench warrant, indicating the Motorist has failed to appear at a scheduled court date. The scenario concludes when the recruit, firearm drawn, convinces the man to step out of the car so he can be cuffed. Scene over, the Motorist transforms back into Officer Joaquín Contreras and leans against the sedan with his hands in his pockets while TO Malcom addresses the recruit:

"You tried to keep your composure, I can see that, recruit. However, using the next level of force in that situation, especially with someone who has a warrant, might aggravate them further and then you're not practicing officer safety."

Officer Contreras affirms TO Malcom's comment, stepping in with his own assessment of the scenario, "Listen, recruit. You can't let a guy like that get you heated. Do you know how many times guys are calling me a fucking pig on the job? A lot. White guys. Black guys. Mexican guys. It doesn't matter. *You can't take the bait*. Out there you have to let it go or else you're going to get angry and make a mistake and then you're catching an IA [Internal Affairs] case."

While scenario scripts are effectively racially unmarked and colorblind, making no mention of race or sociocultural identity as part of the text scenario itself, it is in their staging – such as with the scene above – that racial narratives are brought to bear upon training. They

become the material that infuses encounters in order to prompt and instigate recruits for a reaction (usually an aggressive one rather than a positive association of affiliation or solidarity). What becomes clear in this scenario is how Officer Contreras embodies stereotypical characterizations and ways of speaking (particularly anti-cop language) that, while they may emerge from specific encounters on patrol, are themselves fraught and flattened racialized stereotypes inviting recruits to experience themselves in opposition to. In a later conversation Officer Contreras would tell me that he frequently came across "gang types" like the character he performed while on patrol, and that their critiques of him were especially fierce when they noticed they were being pulled over, frisked for contraband, or arrested by an officer that, in his words, "looked like them."

Elana Zilberg (2011) reminds us that such tropes and imagined figurations of a criminal type "are culturally constructed political categories under which multiply determined debates about migration, race, the economy…are linked to a larger system of representation of boundary transgression and *transgressive mobility*" (15, emphasis added). Indeed, another way to read the purported danger of the scenario in question is as evidence of a Motorist's "transgressive mobility," especially for Black and Brown motorists. One need only reference the multiple encounters between motorists and law enforcement that consistently result in fatal, high-speed chases through San Diego's borderlands and demonstrate the cooperation and enduring deadly use of force shared by both local San Diego law enforcement and border

patrol agents.[11] For the police, these categories and types of Motorists become pedagogical characters that can be leveraged and manipulated in training situations by ventriloquizing the complex and nuanced experiences of those who are most vulnerable to violent forms of policing such as immigrants, refugees, and undocumented people.

Another significant aspect of this encounter is how Officer Contreras brings in the language of discrimination in order to demonstrate how recruits should not "take the bait" when accusations of racial profiling are hurled at them in the field. His insistence that the recruit should both learn to "let it go" and not react to someone calling him a "pig," for example, communicates another lesson of role-play training: that not reacting to this inflammatory language can protect recruits from investigations should a motorist file a case against them after an encounter or else, in Contreras' words, "you're catching an IA case." Using inflammatory language as a role-play actor is also a fascinating role-reversal of the San Diego Police Department's own policies regarding courtesy and language. In section 9.20 of the San Diego Police Department *Policy Manual* (2020, 32), entitled, "Courtesy Policy," the language makes it clear that police officers are expressly forbidden from participating in or using violent language with a few exceptions: "Except when necessary to establish control during a violent or dangerous situation, no member shall use coarse, profane or violent language. Members shall not use insolent language or gestures in the performance of his or

[11] Silvestre Vargas Estrada, 26, a resident of San Diego, was suspected of smuggling migrants into the United States and, after attempting to flee in his car, was chased by San Diego Sheriff's Deputies and shot to death by Border Patrol agents after a "confrontation" at a gas station in Campo, east of San Diego (NBC 7 Staff 2021).

her duties. Members shall not make derogatory comments about or express any prejudice concerning race, religion, politics, national origin, gender (to include gender identity and gender expression), sexual orientation, or similar personal characteristics."

The policy language, broad and *seemingly inclusive* as it may be, takes on different performative dimensions in police training where "violent language" and "prejudice concerning race, religion, politics, national origin, gender" are a part of the banal logics of whiteness that work to mold recruits into a unified collective despite their own racial differences (Beliso-De Jesús 2020). In another scene with a young white female recruit later in the day, Officer Contreras' revised his earlier performance to teach the comment on prejudice in patrol work:

RESPONDING OFFICER
Hi, sir. Officer Reynolds. You ran that stop sign back there and I ran your plates. I noticed your vehicle is, uh, registered to one Jessica Williams? Do you know her, or… is this your car?

MOTORIST
I'm confused. A Mexican guy with a nice car and it can't possibly be his? Jessica es mi esposa. Are you fucking discriminating against me right now?

RESPONDING OFFICER
No, no, that isn't what I'm saying. I just need to make sure this car is registered to you and I need to see your ID. It's standard procedure, I promise you.

MOTORIST
I want to talk to someone. Call your boss. I don't have to show you shit. Blanca maldita…

Her eyebrows knit together at his reply, and she looks over at TO Malcom, to which Officer Contreras comments, seemingly stepping outside of his Motorist role: "Why are you looking over at him? There isn't anybody else here, recruit." Seeing the recruit's visible frustration and crumbling command presence, TO Malcom stops the scenario and allows her to try it

again from the beginning with agreement from Officer Contreras. When she tries the scenario again, Officer Contreras backs off a bit and becomes more compliant; he would later tell me in passing that he wasn't sure if he was being too hard on the female recruit during the encounter and that, in the end, the San Diego Police Department had an interest in recruiting as many female police officers as possible so it would behoove the training officers across the scenarios to give the female recruits as many reasonable chances to pass the scenario tests. After the scenario concludes and the Responding Officer discovers that the Motorist has a warrant for his arrest, Officer Contreras, upon the heels of his own performance, seizes the opportunity to reinforce bias as a normative and expected part of policing.

"Recruit, you cannot get dragged into a conversation like that defending yourself in the moment," Contreras begins, "*Everybody has biases*. It's human nature and you don't have time to argue with someone in the middle of a stop where *anything* could go wrong. Your shield is your *what*?"

"Reasonable suspicion," she replies in a deferential voice, and this seems to invoke a more passionate exposition from Contreras.

"Exactly, reasonable suspicion," he continues, putting his hand on the recruit's shoulder in a gentle gesture of master softening to properly scolded student, "You have to rely on your instincts and on what you *see*. We don't have the luxury out there to get caught up in debates about race or bias because someone thinks a stop or an arrest is unfair. People will scream 'Discrimination!' while they are trying to kick you, spit in your face, or threatening to kill your family when you're just doing your job."

While Contreras' debrief with the recruit attempts to locate race and its effects on vehicle stops (and policing more generally) as irrelevant to the schemes that she can control as a patrol officer in the field, his own performance and analysis of the takeaways from their encounter illustrate how bias is not an aberration that must be apprehended in the performance of patrol duties; it is part and parcel of patrol work. This is what anthropologist Aisha Beliso-De Jesús (2020) describes as the "naturalization of bias" in police academy training, such that "Recruits are told to accept the idea that everyone is always prejudiced—that bias is simply a part of the American way of life" (145). Through the staging of these scenarios, which are themselves part of the larger pedagogical training structure which includes mandated "cultural diversity" lessons, recruits are trained to embrace racial bias not as evidence of policing's historical anti-Black foundations, but as a broad yet distinct quality of being an American law enforcement officer; bias that necessarily infuses the mundane work of policing like any other institutional setting or profession and which cannot be avoided.

While officers are not permitted to practice this so-called "bias-based policing,"[12] such policy descriptions and abstract language removed from what happens *in lived interaction* paradoxically reinforce racial-profiling in albeit different, seemingly objective terms: reasonable suspicion and probable cause. In their research on how traffic stops shape racial encounters with Black and Brown motorists, Epp, Maynard-Moody, and Haider-Markel

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[12] The "Non-Bias Based Policing Policy," Section 9.31, of the San Diego Police Department *Policy Manual* (2020, 35) states:

> Bias-based policing occurs when law enforcement inappropriately considers factors such as race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, disability, gender (to include gender identity and gender expression), lifestyle, sexual orientation, or similar personal characteristics in deciding with whom and how to intervene in an enforcement capacity.

(2014) argue that the difficulty in accounting for how racial disparities play out during stops is that data of officers' rationales for whether someone leaves with a warning, a ticket, or is subject to an increased use of force is seldom identified by officers' written reports after the fact. While running a stop sign, for example, circumscribes the official "pretext" of the resulting traffic stop, what happens *after the fact* and how these encounters *become recorded "facts"* reveal the stark racial disparities between Black motorists and overwhelmingly white patrol officers.

Meehan and Ponder (2002) extend these considerations of how race is subsumed under colorblind categories like "suspicion" in their assessment of arrest reports produced during traffic stops, noting that, after these documents travel beyond departments' internal activities for external "contractual use proposed by legislation…the police can fashion their logs to make *racial differences invisible*. That is, they may continue to stop African Americans, but will not record the stops unless formal actions (i.e., tickets or arrests) are taken. The 'harassment' will continue, but no record of it will exist" (426, emphasis added). Despite the fact that officers are required to communicate with dispatch before taking actions in the field, the provisionality of unfolding situations on the street means that officers may not always or consistently communicate in advance, leaving a gap open where whatever transpired can be reported back in an altered or abbreviated form. The paradox could not be more clear: even as departments are forbidden from initiating vehicle stops based on observable race, it is the visual work of learning how to see motorists during vehicle stops – how, in the words of TO Malcom, "when you see it, you know" – that produces and maintains racial violence as an normative expectation of modern policing.

Since 2015, a staggering 1,019 motorists have been killed by police officers while attempting to "flee by car," a category used by law enforcement to describe an action of noncompliance by suspects evading capture, arrest, or generally refusing to comply with officers' verbal commands (Woods 2019).[13] While law enforcement agencies may be quick to denounce shooting at motorists when they attempt to drive away from a scene, the San Diego Police Department's own updated Use of Force Procedures note that, "Firearms may be fired at the driver or other occupant of a vehicle only when the officer has *a reasonable belief* that the subject poses an immediate threat of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or others" (20). Sarah Seo (2019) argues that constructing reasonable threats in vehicle stops has been transformed by the automobility of police-citizen encounters. She notes that 27 percent of police killings of unarmed citizens in the United States were initiated by a traffic stop, a legacy of this transformation in policing instantiated by the growing enforcement of the citizen automobile in public space with the proliferation of private vehicles on open roads.[14] As the role-play scenes above illustrate alongside viral scenes of recorded interactions between citizens and police – from officer body-worn camera footage to citizen-recorded sousveillance images – the narrativizing of the motorist's car as an origin point of imminent bodily threat to the officer becomes the justification for deadly use of force.

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[13] According to the *Washington Post* online database "Fatal Force," only 103 of these incidents were recorded by police body-worn cameras (Tate el al. 2020).

[14] This automobility, argues Seo (2019, 136), collapses distinctions between private and public arenas that law enforcement are tasked with apprehending:

> …unsettling the public/private structure of classic legal thought, the automobile disrupted the law of searches and seizures' years before *Terry v. Ohio* (1968) provided the constitutional basis for legally stopping and frisking pedestrians based on "reasonable suspicion" that a crime had occurred or was about to occur. Further, it was the increased discretion given to police officers to search vehicles that contributed to a new reliance on proactive policing based on an officer's "beliefs."

1.5 Archives of Anti-Black Traffic Stops

Only days earlier before I arrived to watch these Vehicle Stop role-play scenario tests, 43-year-old Black motorist Samuel Vincent DuBose was shot point-blank in the head and killed by University of Cincinnati police officer Raymond Tensing during a routine traffic stop. A one-time state trooper dropout, Officer Tensing had previously been an officer with the Greenhills Police Department in Ohio before working as a campus police officer where he "had the most arrests and traffic stops of any UC officer – and that black motorists accounted for 82.5 percent of his stops" (Noble 2016). Officer Tensing was on patrol on the outskirts of campus when, on July 19, 2015, he pulled DuBose over for a missing front license plate, a minor traffic violation. The interaction, which was recorded on his body-worn camera, captures Tensing's approach to the vehicle and the grisly conclusion of the vehicle stop from beginning to end. When Officer Tensing approaches the vehicle and asks DuBose for his license, who, unable to produce it on his person, continually responds, "I have a license, you can run my name."[15]

Unsatisfied with DuBose's answer and unwilling to back down from further questioning – including the irrelevant inquiry "*Where do you stay? Down here*?" – following DuBose's apology for not having his license on him, Tensing, without warning, tries to forcibly open DuBose's door while asking him to take his seatbelt off. In response, DuBose

[15] Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office, Body-camera footage of Samuel DuBose shooting - video, *The Guardian* (July 29, 2015, 5:50 PM), https://www.theguardian.com/usnews/video/2015/jul/29/samuel-dubose-shooting-body-camera-footage-video

tries to hold his door shut by grabbing the *top* of the door, both hands clearly visible at nearly all times during the stop, and, meeting this resistance, Tensing escalates the situation again by reaching into DuBose's car. DuBose reaches for the ignition. Tensing draws his firearm and shoots DuBose in the head at point-blank range, falling back to the ground as the car rolls down the road before hitting an electricity pole and coming to a stop. Tensing's defense during the subsequent murder trial would rest entirely on the perception that his life was in danger because his arm was still in the car when DuBose attempted to start the car, as evidenced by his courtroom explanation that he shot DuBose in self-defense: "I remember thinking 'Oh my God, that he is going to run me over and kill me'" (McCabe 2016).

Expert testimonies provided by use-of-force experts from police departments around the country during the trial illustrated, in no uncertain terms, that DuBose had been compliant and courteous for most of the stop and that Tensing clearly "escalated the encounter by drawing his service weapon within one to two seconds of the moment DuBose started the car" (Abanonu 2018, 263). Despite these expert testimonies and the available body-camera footage, segmented and analyzed frame-by-frame, disproving Tensing's claims that DuBose was about to run him over, the Tensing case was dropped following the inability of two juries to reach consensus on murder and involuntary manslaughter charges. It is a disheartening but familiar story in the long arc of recorded anti-Black police violence that brings little to no justice on behalf of those extralegally murdered by the state. Also distressing was Tensing's own description of what transpired during his encounter with DuBose, offered in the court room months later, "'I meant to stop the threat…I didn't shoot to kill him. I didn't shoot to wound him. I shot to stop his actions'" (Sewell 2017).

Tensing's choice of words atomizes and renders the complex series of events in a vehicle stop into a smaller, seemingly stable list of moves and countermoves – like a game of chess – that illustrate the power of police epistemologies both in the court room and on the ground of patrol work for eschewing responsibility and accountability. In a later recap after a role-play scenario between TO Malcom and another recruit, he brought this language to the fore: "You need to be proactive and take aggressive action to stop the driver's actions, including warning them to not move quickly, open their door, or reach for anything. You need to *anticipate their actions*."

While DuBose is stopped due to a minor equipment violation, it seems Tensing's perception of the Black motorist as being out of place near a university campus is revealed in the course of the interaction ("*Where do you stay? Down here*?"). In their research on traffic stop data collected from a suburban police department in a large, racially segregated suburban community, Meehan and Ponder (2002) found that African American motorists were often perceived to be "out of place" when traveling through predominately white neighborhoods, prompting officers to initiate vehicle stops for minor infractions and equipment violations. Such pretext stops that emerge from observed equipment violations are responsible for alarming traffic stop figures and statistics associated with the San Diego Police Department. According to data recently made available by the San Diego Police Department under the Racial and Identity Profiling Act of 2015 (RIPA), Black, LGBTQ, and disabled people are

more likely to be searched after a routine traffic stop has been initiated for equipment violations.[16]

Andrea Boyles' (2015) ethnographic study of African Americans' perceptions of their own experiences being pulled over by officers in suburban neighborhoods offers critical insight for how ahistorical epistemes like "officer suspicion" or "officer's perceptions" which are central to law enforcement praxis produce racial profiling in interaction. She notes that "[t]here is a precedent for comparing and analyzing officers as they are moved to suspicion, particularly with…driving that integrates typically racially segregated places" (37). Boyles highlights this point with an interview with Travis, a 45-year-old Black man frequently subject to traffic stops while commuting through white neighborhoods, who, in response to Boyles asking if he has been stopped for traffic violations, responds in no uncertain terms: "'No, driving while black'" (37). Travis' experience is not unique as demonstrated by the available RIPA data nationwide, though Samuel Sinyangwe, Campaign Zero co-founder and researcher, offers a calculated percentage that attempts to approach the rampant profiling practices of officers within San Diego where this dissertation research is concerned, noting that the "San Diego Police Department stopped black people at 219% higher rate per population than white people. Once stopped, black people were more likely to be searched, arrested, and to have forced used against them" (2020, 1). Based on 158,757 police stops between July 2018 and June 2019, the ACLU-funded research demonstrates that within San

[16] These figures are based on Campaign Zero's "Police Scorecard" evaluation of San Diego's Police Department.

Diego's own patrol practices, including routine vehicle stops, the deadly calculus of anti-Black policing is systemic (Sinyangwe 2020).

Systemic empirical manifestations of such racial discrimination have been established by independent agencies like Campaign Zero, ride-along research (Alpert et. al 2005; Chambliss 1994) and database studies (Gelman et. al 2007; Meehan and Ponder 2002). Yet this data is consistently met with *individualizing* narratives and solutions proposed by academic researchers and policy makers alike.[17] These responses typically follow in the form and interest of eliminating "bad apples" policing – the notion that a few "rotten" officers can spoil an entire department – by calling upon more efficient policy measures and strategies to combat the problem, such as "reassigning lenient officers to minority neighborhoods" (Goncalves and Mello 2021, 1438) or arguing that, even if such tactics are projected to cost millions of taxpayer dollars and may be ineffective in reducing the structural harm of enforcement (Chalfin and Kaplan 2021), the removal of "bad apple" officers constitutes a "normative good" for "ensuring public safety and well-being" (Sierra-Arévalo and Papachristos 2021, 377).

As I write these words, it is the six-year anniversary of DuBose's death, and many more instances of deadly traffic stops have followed in DuBose's wake. On April 11, 2021, Black motorist Daunte Wright – only 20 years old – was fatally shot in the chest by Officer Kimberly Potter from the Brooklyn Center Police Department after he had been pulled over

[17] Database studies typically compile information from police mobile data terminals (MDTs) officers use to input and classify stop data according to the formal actions taken (i.e. stops that result in an arrest, issuing tickets, verbal warnings) following what was observed.

while driving through a Minneapolis suburb with his girlfriend. First joining the force in 1995, the former Brooklyn Center officer was a 26-year-veteran of the department when she allegedly mistook her firearm for her Taser. According to Brooklyn Police Chief Tim Gannon, Wright was pulled over due to an expired registration tag, yet conflicting reports suggest that an air freshener dangling from the car's rearview mirror may have also prompted the stop, a minor infraction preceding the discovery of an outstanding warrant of which Wright claimed to have no prior knowledge (Siemaszko 2021). Wright was in the process of being handcuffed by another officer on scene when he tried to sit back down in his vehicle, prompting Potter to intervene and fire at him.

Body-camera footage shows Potter shouting "Taser!" several times before and while shooting Wright at point-blank range, causing his car to roll forward and slam into a concrete barrier in a fatal citation of DuBose's murder nearly six years earlier. The episode likewise joins the ranks of other Black motorists like Philando Castile who was killed by officers following a traffic stop initiated by a broken taillight. The anti-Black chain of police violence is nested in concentric circles of viral violence: Wright was not only killed 15 miles from where George Floyd was murdered a year earlier, but only 10 miles away from where the Derek Chauvin trial was taking place *in real time*.

This anti-Black citational chain also connects these national cases to San Diego's own local history: the March 31, 1985 deadly traffic stop of Sagon Penn, then a 23-year-old Black San Diego resident, by two white San Diego Police Department officers –Thomas Riggs and Donovan Jacobs – catalyzed the formation of the Citizen's Advisory Task Force, what would become in 1989 San Diego's Community Review Board (Frammolino 1985). After Officer

Jacobs initiated the vehicle stop on suspicion that Penn belonged to a gang and called for backup, Officer Riggs and his civilian ride-along passenger Sarah Pena-Ruiz arrived to witness Jacobs already in contact with Penn in his pick-up truck; by his own admission, Jacobs' testimony describes how he illegally maintained an "unauthorized" portfolio of suspected gang members with several other officers based on contacts with youth in their patrol beats. Penn, a brown belt in karate, complied with Jacobs' request to see identification, but the officer continued to question him about Penn's possible gang affiliations. Witnesses report observing the two white male officers beating the motorist with clubs and verbally abusing him by saying, "'You think you're bad, n*****? I'm gonna beat your black ass'" (Bunting 1986). In a 911 recording played during Penn's trial, Angela McKibben-Lovett, who witnessed the interaction unfolding between Penn and the two officers in front of her home in Encanto, can be heard informing the dispatcher in no uncertain terms of what she was seeing in real time: "'I'd like to report police brutality happening in front of my house!'" (L.A. Times Archives 1987).

When Penn tried to walk away from the encounter, Jacobs and Riggs both used batons, fists, and bodily take downs to subdue Penn. In the midst of the violence initiated by the officers – during which Penn was repeatedly punched in the head, shoulders, and back – the motorist reached for Jacobs' firearm and shot the officers and ride-along passenger in self-defense, according to his own testimony (Serrano 1988). Prosecutors during Penn's trial used language to describe Penn's defensive response to the beating as "a martial arts expert" who "fought a violent battle with San Diego Police Agents" (Bunting 1986), and the San Diego Police Museum website notes that Penn was "an accomplished martial artist"

(SDPoliceMuseum.com), yet eyewitnesses from the Encanto neighborhood who gathered to watch the scene unfold reported that "Penn really didn't use any moves against them, 'he mostly blocked the blows'" (The People's Voice 1985).

Despite overwhelming descriptions from bystanders and those who knew him well that Penn was self-disciplined and shy, his resistance to arrest by simply walking away fits within the Vehicle Stop pedagogical paradigm in which any act of resistance – whether by walking or driving away – justifiably warrants officers' increased aggression in response. While Penn did not lose his life during the encounter, the vehicle stop initiated by Jacobs in the absence of an *observable violation* beyond Penn's own blackness and willingness to defend himself constituted the beginning of the next seventeen years of violent harassment he would face until his death by suicide in 2002 at the age of 40-years-old.[18] In his first public interview with the *Los Angeles Times* following his acquittal for the death of Officer Riggs, Penn not only marked that fatal traffic stop as the beginning of so many possible endings – the dreams of becoming a police officer himself, a life he could live with his own last name rather than an alias, peace-filled days and nights without psychological trauma – but offered a prophetic reframing of the events as the very death of himself: "'Sagon Penn was killed that night, too…He no longer exists'" (Serrano 1988).

Such high-profile cases of deadly vehicle stops demonstrate how extralegal murders are carried out by officers in situations where an arrest is not actively taking place. Routine

[18] Adriane Lentz-Smith's forthcoming book project, entitled, "The Slow Death of Sagon Penn: State Violence, and the Twilight of Civil Rights," examines Sagon Penn's traffic stop and his death in the frame of Reagan-Era California as a site for developing state violence and white supremacist ideology and praxis in the twilight of the civil rights era (Hartman 2020).

traffic stops not only reinforce the normative racial violence inherent in such encounters, but demonstrate the tacit routinization of tactics deployed in a stop that not only result in the deaths of unarmed Black and Brown motorists, but, as with the Penn case, in the preventable deaths of officers as well. The citations of racialized police violence that bind together the names of Samuel DuBose, Daunte Wright, Philando Castille, George Floyd, Sagon Penn, and others are also present in the cinematic worlds that invite recruits to see themselves reflected in the characters on screen. These performances, as the official Vehicle Stop role-play tests that began this section suggest, are crucial models through which recruits learn how to model ways of seeing that are structurally and cinematically anti-Black.

1.6 Recruit Street Theater

The mise-en-scène of police training may begin in the classroom where scenes from *Training Day* are shown, yet it is in role-play practice sessions beyond these rooms that these cinematic forms are provisionally assembled, performed, and revised by recruits. As an ethnographic analysis of the relationship between policing and cinema, I return to the opening scene of this chapter where recruits take on roles from *Training Day* (2001) and follow these unfolding cinematic lessons through multiple iterations. These improvisational training situations on public streets in San Diego evidence recruits' collective interpretations of cinematic images, what Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright have described as practices of looking that shape spectatorship and meaning making (Sturken and Cartwright 2001).

"This ain't a training day, baby."

The recruit theater assembles once again on a residential street in Mira Mesa, and the scene between Vasquez and MacKenzie concludes, though this phrase lilts above our heads long after these two recruits resume their chatter leaning against their cars and waiting for the next pair of performers to take their place. The irony of this expression, a rephrasing of Alonzo Harris' instructive warning to Jake Hoyt's character in *Training Day* – "*Today's a training day, Officer Hoyt*" – spoken by Vasquez offers a seemingly innocuous cinematic framing around their performance. They are buzzing and laughing, and one recruit says to the group: "I wouldn't want to follow that performance, but someone has to." Recruit Davis and Recruit Alvaro, both in their early 20s, offer to go next, and Recruit Zhào, still playing the role of Training Officer, assigns Alvaro as the Responding Officer. Davis, a white recruit sporting a fresh military crew cut, takes his place as Motorist in the sedan. The stop begins after Alvaro and Davis return from driving out onto the connecting road, passing the stop sign that signifies the beginning mark of the scene. Alvaro opts to skip the dispatch phase of the call, and casually walks up to the sedan driver's side door:

RESPONDING OFFICER
Afternoon, sir. Can I see your license and proof of registration?

MOTORIST
Sure, what's the problem, officer?

RESPONDING OFFICER
I know that stop sign is slightly, uh, hidden by that tree branch back there, but you definitely sped right through it.

MOTORIST
I'm sorry, I'll try to be more careful next time.

Recruit Davis hands Alvaro his license and she walks back toward her car, reading the information loudly in Zhào's direction as he plays the part of a listening dispatcher. He tells

her that the Motorist matches the description of a robbery suspect, summoning the high-risk conditions of the call into the scene. She announces that she would like to call for back-up before approaching the sedan again – this time near the passenger's side door – and asks the Motorist to keep his hands on the wheel. He complies, and she whispers over her shoulder: "How far away is back-up? Should I just keep him talking before they get here?" Zhào sighs and puts his hands up in a referee's gesture of "time out." Alvaro protests, but Zhào is persistent and turns to address the recruits behind him, "Okay, what was the problem with that?"

"First of all, that entire scenario was not convincing," answers one recruit. Another affirms this first critique and suggests that Davis' performance was far too docile.

"Come on, man," Recruit Nolan says while sweeping his hand in Davis' direction before continuing, "She's going already going to have it hard out there. Your face is too friendly. She should feel like she's about to get jumped on the call."

In their discussion, the recruits call on the gendered norms of hypermasculinity that they are expected to perform, both as Motorists that can quickly become assailants, and as Responding Officers who should be unflinching in response. In this scenario, this kind of required stage presence poses higher stakes for women and people of color in the police academy who do not fit the "heteronormative cis-male whiteness…entrenched as the standard police body that recruits must ascribe to" (Beliso-De Jesús 2020, 147). Though the group surrounding me is comprised of a few Latinx, Chinese, and South Asian recruits, the majority of them are white and cis male; despite this uneven racial distribution, however, nearly all recruits during this informal training session participate in using language that reifies the

normative gendered boundaries marking more aggressive performances as effective while interrupting scenes that are absent this aggressive stance.

Another recruit offers an incisive and sarcastic summation of Davis' and Alvaro's scene, demonstrating how recruits not only learn how to discern what kinds of officer performances are idealized models for gaining control during a vehicle stop, but how staging can summon the necessary fear to prepare them for work on patrol: "Basically she should feel like Jake in the Jungle."[19]

This comment suggests that Alvaro, like Ethan Hawke's character Jake Hoyt in *Training* Day, should take on the position of the cautious outsider when on patrol rather than the relaxed choreography of someone familiar with their patrol beat. In another assembled scene, recruits encounter similar comments and critiques that compare Alonzo and Jake's interactions in the film they had watched in the academy to the vehicle stop being performed on a public street. Recruit Nolan (Responding Officer) and Recruit Marino (Motorist), in the interaction below, offer the watching recruits a charged performance where gaining compliance from the Motorist difficult:

RESPONDING OFFICER
Sir, I need you to turn your car off please. Did you see that sign back there?

MOTORIST
What kind of question is that? Clearly I didn't see it. Can I just get a warning this time? What the fuck do you want from me, dude?

RESPONDING OFFICER
Oh? That's quite a way to talk to an officer. I need to see your license, and I suggest you hand it to me slowly and nicely.

[19] Chapter 2 will unpack the stakes of this phrase further in its analysis of Fuqua's film *Training Day*.

MOTORIST
Do you enjoy talking down to people?

RESPONDING OFFICER
You're full of questions. Afraid I'm going to be "taxin' that ass" today. Get out of the car slowly and keep your hands where I can see them.

The recruits laugh at Nolan's recitation of Denzel Washington's line spoken by his character Alonzo Harris in *Training Day* – "They know if they cross the line, I'm taxin' that ass" – yet this quoted material importantly marks the moment when the Responding Officer decides to increase the level of force allotted him.[20] No longer willing to use Verbal Judo to placate or distract the Motorist, the Responding Officer orders the driver out of the car and adds insult to injury with a verbal swipe of Alonzo's cinematic line. The recruits often encourage these kinds of one-liners, actors incorporating them as actors in the provisional world of the role-play scenario.

On another day in the fall of 2015, I accompany a few recruits I met up with outside of the Miramar police academy after instruction ends for the day and follow them to a nearby cul-de-sac not far from where the police academy is located. When we arrive, I watch these recruits perform a few versions of the Vehicle Stop scenario that they decided to prepare for in advance of Scenario Test Week. Recruit Andrews, a white San Diego local in his early 30s, volunteers to stage the first scene opposite Recruit Morales, an East Angeleno native in her

[20] Officers and recruits I observed and interviewed during this research often talked about "the asshole tax," a kind of internalized and shared understanding amongst police that people who make officers' lives "difficult" in the course of a stop, such as refusing to show ID or using derogatory language, were more likely to receive tickets or increased uses of force against them. Thus, these people were forced to pay "the asshole tax." John Van Maanen's oft-cited 1978 piece on police socialization on patrol, entitled, "The Asshole," is a staple in the canon of the sociological study of police. He describes how the interactional origins of the category of "asshole" epistemologically organizes officers' understandings of motorists or citizens they encounter during stops that are likely to be non-compliant with officers and difficult to communicate with.

early 20s. Morales has the affective presence of a 1980s sci-fi film heroine and chews bubble gum like a wad of smokeless tobacco, and Andrews effortlessly towers over her as he finishes assuring his wife over speakerphone that he will be home in time for dinner. In this iteration, they decide that Morales will be playing the role of Responding Officer and Andrews will be the Motorist.

Morales takes her place behind the makeshift police vehicle – a shiny compact Volkswagen Jetta – forearms flexing as she grips and releases her hold of the steering wheel a few times, and Andrews at the helm of the sedan hailed to pull over by Morales' vehicle. When she exits the Jetta, she puts on a pair of sunglasses, points a pair of finger guns at the assembled recruits to hail their collective vision, and sidles up next to Andrews' car. This time, there is no designated Training Officer; the gathered ensemble direct the scene as it slowly unravels with the interruption of new voices:

RESPONDING OFFICER
Evening. License and registration. You in a hurry? Turn your car off, please.

MOTORIST
Oh, the stop sign. Yeah, uh, I was… going…

RECRUIT 1
Your kids. Play it like real life: you're a busy husband and father trying to get home on time to eat dinner with your family.

RECRUIT 2
No, no. Single dad late to pick up kids from softball practice.

MOTORIST
Sorry, I was just distracted. Here's my license.

RESPONDING OFFICER
Sit tight. Don't go anywhere.

Morales walks back to her vehicle and mimes a call to dispatch, and she is answered by one of the recruits off stage who says, “He’s got a felony warrant. Closest cover units are more than 15 minutes away.” Morales reengages, firearm holster unsnapped:

RESPONDING OFFICER
Sir, can I ask you to step out of the car, please?

MOTORIST
What’s the problem?

RECRUIT 2
Turn your car back on. Make it look innocent.

MOTORIST
Ma’am, I’m just really late. You saw my license. I’ll take the ticket but I’ll lose custody if I’m late again.

RECRUIT 3
Come on, Morales. His car is back on and you’re standing next to it. You don’t know he won’t run you over.

RESPONDING OFFICER
Hands on the fucking wheel. If you drive your car even an inch close to me I will be forced to subdue you.

The Responding Officer and Motorist stare at each other in silence, neither moving. Without the cinematic material or the Training Officer’s directions laying out the more clearly defined aspects of the scenario, the recruits improvise their way through a scene that responds to the real-time directorial voices around them. It is a collective staging that reveals how recruits recognize useful material for training, like the real-life circumstances shared between them. Interrupted scenes like the one above call attention to the marked boundaries delineating the space of the performance that the recruits take for granted and that they are implicitly trained to understand as part of how to do role-play scenarios without officers present. As recruits role-play, such interruptions become part of the world they must deal with in some way or another, but which they consistently ignore for the sake of staging scenes.

About twenty minutes into the practice session, the recruits decide to organize their activity under the direction of a recruit that volunteers to play the role of Training Officer. Recruit Pérez, late 20s, currently in the role of Responding Officer, twists the Motorola radio fixed to his shirt closer to his face and pretends to contact dispatch while standing a few feet behind a pulled-over SUV that another recruit volunteered for the scene. The sun is beginning to dip behind distant shopping mall buildings. The recruits have set up a scene a few blocks from a large Asian grocery chain and drivers, seemingly on their way to run early evening errands or returning from work, are starting to back up on this narrow residential street as the staged scene unfolds. Recruit Williams, mid-20s, is playing the role of Training Officer watching the scene unfold. Arms akimbo, his command presence is a familiar mimicry of other training officers I had met during my research: stoic despite his baby-face features, and deeply serious.

"License plate: Seven. Adam. Ida. Sam," Pérez begins, reading the alphanumerics of the motorist's license plate to an imagined dispatcher in an adopted notation of the 1956 ICAO phonetic alphabet used by NATO-affiliated military organizations, now commonly referred to as the Law Enforcement Phonetic Alphabet.[21] He pauses his recitation as a pair of elderly Korean women walk by, one pushing a steel cart filled with produce-laden grocery bags and another, visibly curious, now stopped and watching the scene unfold next to us, her hands clasped behind her back. A few recruits acknowledge this new audience member with a

[21] The ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization), a collaboration between United Nations members, created one of the earliest phonetic systems to standardize air navigation communication. For more on the history of the police alphabet, see Schennum 2001.

disciplined “ma’am,” and she silently waves before continuing down the sidewalk with her companion, our motley crew parting to make way.

When they are out of earshot, Williams scoffs in playful admonishment, walking over to Pérez and yelling inches from his face, “Really, recruit? You’re going to leave dispatch hanging because two little grandmas walk by? Are you trying to fuck with me, recruit?! You better *read* that fucking license plate like your life depends on it!”

Pérez tries to stifle laughter in the face of Williams’s over-enthusiastic performance, and another recruit shouts from behind us, “Make him drop and give you 50 like it’s Hell Week all over again!” A few recruits laugh while others groan at the mention of the name typically given to the first week of police academy training during which training officers are explicitly tasked with, in the words of one veteran training officer, “weeding out the people who can’t hack it. If they can’t deal with me making them do push-ups and run laps they aren’t going to handle someone they pull over on a traffic stop calling them all kinds of derogatory names.” Such hazing rituals are commonplace in police training, including run-of-the-mill verbal abuse. While David Sausdal (2020) argues that such “brutish police language – serious and extreme as it may appear – is largely ordinary and inconsequential” in the professional world of policing (96), its materialization here in the staging of a traffic stop scenario suggests that these violent utterances not only demonstrate how instruction is typically performed by training officers, but become familiar, pedagogically relevant *reperformances* that structure recruits’ training activities outside of the police academy when training officers are not present.

Absent the company of training officers or other police academy staff, such role-play performances as the one above seem to be sourced from recruits' material experiences during academy instruction. Far from novel, the observation that recruits' training extends beyond the academy is reflected by Peter Moskos (2008) in his own experience as a graduate student who enrolled in the police academy before working as a Baltimore patrol officer for 14 months: "Despite the formal aspirations of the police academy, the best lessons were often learned in more informal settings outside the building" (33). These "best lessons" may include, for example, watching each other be disciplined and making sense of their training officers' gestures and behaviors that frequently include acts of hazing in the form of verbal abuse. Williams later contextualizes his own verbal onslaught levied at Pérez as a mock performance of one of their training officers in the police academy, a kind of "loving tribute to the guy that almost blew out one of my eardrums in my second week [of the police academy]." If a possible permanent injury is one self-identified souvenir gifted him by this unnamed training officer, then so, too, is his ability to summon this officer into his body as a practiced choreography instead of a mere archetype of aggressive hypermasculinity common in media representations of policing (Pautz 2016).

Without being constrained by the direct and explicit power dynamics between instructors and recruits – what Michael Aiello (2014) describes as "the structure of the occupation and training process" responsible for "producing and defending a particular hierarchy of masculinities" endemic to the police profession (61) – such extra-academy interactions demonstrate how, in the absence of their training officers, recruits learn to *police each other's performances*. Williams' impersonation marks the social process by which

trainees learn to take on and reflect the attitudes and behaviors of superior officers in charge, what John Van Maanen (1975) describes as a "breaking-in" period during academy socialization. It also pedagogically reinforces the implicit mandate of scenario-based training exercises: they must be performed and fully inhabited *as if* they are real, and a failure to do so, even in the act of being interrupted by the outside world and its "little grandmas," can lead to life-threatening consequences in the field of patrol work.

Recruits' reperformances of scenes from both the academy and *Training Day* reveal how they interpret academy lessons on officer safety and survival *through* the cinema of policing by performing discrete gestures, dialogue, and improvisational stagings guided by the cinematic images in Fuqua's film. Supported by the laughter of fellow trainees, these reperformances of hazing reassert the rigorous activity of role-playing an improvisational vehicle stop and its mundane procedures by invoking the language of officer survival ("*read* that fucking license plate like your life depends on it!"). Moreover, recruits' willingness to draw upon dialogue and affective resonances from the cinematic worlds that are a part of their training worlds enables them to experiment with performing aggression and leveraging deadly use of force as they try on these cinematic models. These acts of improvisation demonstrate how models of police vision in cinema provide enduring lessons both in informal training situations with recruits and, as Chapter 2 will demonstrate, for new officers once they graduate from the academy and enter the field of patrol work. Even when recruits are out of their academy uniforms, out on public streets, and exposed to the foot traffic of curious pedestrians, a familiar theater adage takes on new meaning. "The show must go on"

foreshadows material conditions and performative consequences for how recruits may bring these cinematic lessons with them into the field in the afterlife of the police academy.

Chapter 2

Ride-Along Cinema and the Automotive Visuality of Police Vision

"[P]hotographs alter and enlarge our notions of what is worth looking at and what we have a right to observe. They are a grammar and, even more importantly, an ethics of seeing."
– Susan Sontag 1977, 3

2.1 Introduction: "This is the heart of it, right here."

Scene One

"This is the heart of it, right here." Coolly inflected, the detective's metaphor is a disaffected indictment performed for the trainee, a junior officer warily observing the street activity through the car's windows from the passenger seat. This dark manifesto lingers in the chassis of the unmarked police vehicle as it rolls down the street, trailing sun-scorched asphalt in its wake. It is "here"—flanked by two rows of cracked sidewalk pavement and iron-barred apartment windows—that the "heart" manifests: hooded figures and hooded eyes gaze into the car's windshield and open windows. Despite efforts to comport himself in the senior officer's presence, the rookie's nervous blinking betrays his uncertainty and fear. Tension builds as the officers and watchful neighborhood members exchange guarded looks that border on the unpredictable, but this dramatic reading belies the practiced social choreographies of both the police officers and the policed community members who defiantly meet the officers' eyes. For the rookie, this ride-along is unlike anything he has seen before. For the senior officer and the residents under his "watch," this ride is darkly familiar. What unfolds "here" is not only cinematic; it is ethnographic.

Scene Two

"This is the heart of it, right here." One sunbaked arm rests against the driver's side door of the police vehicle as the officer lifts his index finger. A micro-gesture manifests the object of his gaze. This hand meets this "heart": a park presently inhabited with houseless parkgoers rifling through personal belongings, passing tobacco rolling papers, and sidled against public trash receptacles, slumbering. Keen, discerning, the officer flits his gaze out of the window and tracks it across these individuals—identified as "vagrants" by the officer— seeking respite from the afternoon sun beneath a canopy of poorly-pruned trees. He locks eyes with a man draped in a nylon sleeping bag as passersby on bikes and on foot peer through the parked car's windshield from the sidewalk, squinting mirages that wane and shimmer in the East County San Diego heat. Aware of these peering eyes, a dark decorum settles into the car's interior as the officer fixes a pair of black aviator sunglasses to his face: a panoptic screen through which figures beyond the windshield remain visible while maintaining the integrity of the officer's illegible stare. It is "here," in the mobile cinema of the police cruiser, that the officer observes the daily performances of the park's inhabitants, screening bodies for choreographies of criminality. Scenes of daily life, framed by the viewing bay of the police vehicle windshield, unfold as visual dramas for interpretation by both this one-man audience, and the wary ethnographer along for the ride. What unfolds "here" is not only ethnographic; it is cinematic.

As seemingly ambiguous scenes of encounter between police officers and fragmented others, the scenes that open this chapter render the complex visual worlds police move

through that are brought into being in and *through* the police vehicle. The work of seeing and the conditions for *being seen* from both the parked and mobile police vehicle is shaped by the mobility and material organization of the patrol car itself, literally framing the vision of officers as they move through their patrol beats and attempt to visually profile unknown others in real-time. Like the proscenium frame surrounding the theater and the cinematic screen that renders lived, embodied experiences into virtual moving images, the police vehicle renders the world outside of the car, giving it shape and form.

They are scenes at once ethnographic and cinematic, playing upon the boundaries of each category. The first vignette is a description of a scene from Antoine Fuqua's 2001 Hollywood film *Training Day* discussed in the previous chapter, in which dilettante Los Angeles Police Department Officer Jake Hoyt (played by Ethan Hawke) struggles to adapt to the pressures of a 24-hour ride-along with veteran narcotics detective Alonzo Harris (played by Denzel Washington). The second scene is a cinematic snapshot from my fieldwork while participating in my first ride-along with a novice patrol officer from the El Cajon Police Department in San Diego, California. Side by side, these two scenes not only suggest that the space of the police vehicle mediates vision, but also offers up the central focus of this chapter: the police ride-along, a historical formation that has worked to align the vision of the non-police officer – from police recruit to private citizen – with the institutional visuality of law enforcement. Fabled in a popular American cultural imaginary of policing, the ride-along has been the subject of Hollywood cinema and the fascination of documentary photographers (Rodríguez 2020), as well as both a pedagogical model for turning novice, probationary officers into senior officers, critics into sympathetic audiences, college students into academic

researchers (Brandewie et al. 2018; Waters 2008), and, speaking for myself, graduate students into mobile audiences of a cinematic police vision.

On a hot summer day in 2015, Officer Kurt Leitzig invited me on a citizen ride-along through his patrol beat in the city of El Cajon, California; he had been an officer for a little over a year, recently passing the first 12-month phase of his patrol duties as a probationary officer at the rank of Police Officer I.[1] The novice officer[2] asked me to meet him at the police station, a three-story campus newly constructed in 2011 adjacent to the courthouse, the tallest building in El Cajon. An hour later after arriving to calls as a back-up support, he decided to drive us near a park adjacent to the city's public library. "This is the heart of it, right here," he intoned, referring to the park nearby that was the alleged "hotbed" of drug-related activity for

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[1] During this probationary period, newly sworn officers are paired with Field Training Officers from their department over a course of six months. According to California POST-Certified Training document entitled, "FTP: Field Training Program Guide" (2021), this supervised transitional period following a recruit's graduation from a regional police academy can differ in terms of length depending on an individual agency, though the program guide dictates: "POST-Approved Field Training Programs must minimally be 10 weeks long." (2021, 3). Interestingly, in 2014, the El Cajon Police Department *modified* its Field Training Program, reducing it from 26 weeks to 16 weeks of supervised training between veteran officers and probationary officers. According to the El Cajon Police Department's Fiscal Budget (2014, 11), these changes mean officers will spend less time in the field under supervision:

> ITP personnel worked with the Patrol Division to modify our Police Officer Field Training Program (FTP). Our existing FTP for new Police Officers was 26 weeks (over 6 months) long. The program was scaled down to 16 weeks. This new length is still at the upper end of "best practices" for other California police agencies. The program was made more efficient without sacrificing the quality or scope of training. This new program effectively gets new officers in the field more than 2 months earlier than before.

[2] In an effort to more fully anonymize and minimize any chance of identifying the officers that participated in this research, I am describing their work experience as "novice" (zero to five years), "midcareer" (five to fifteen years), and "senior" (more than fifteen years). I am making these categorical divisions based on Joan Barker's (1999) precedent ethnography with the Los Angeles Police Department in which she describes the different phases of law enforcement development as "Phase One: Hitting the Streets" (the first three years on patrol), "Phase Two: Hitting Their Stride" (three years to eight years on patrol), and "Phase Three: Hitting the Wall" (rough ten years on patrol and beyond when, by her estimation, officers begin to feel "disillusioned" with their patrol duties). Given my focus on police training, most of the officers I spent time with on patrol were in Phase One.

his assigned patrol sector. Gesturing through the frame of the open driver's side window, he drew imaginary lines in the air between seated figures in the park, miming and narrating what he perceived within the scope of his visual field.

"I've been watching him for a few weeks," he said, drawing a circle in midair over the figure of a man with shorn salt-and-pepper hair, his face partially obscured by a thick woven moving blanket. "We're pretty sure he's either dealing or an affiliate of a gang. Look at how he's fidgeting with something in his pocket. You see? Watch his hands."

From the patrol car's passenger seat where I sit, the reclined figure's hands are barely visible, as are his seemingly unremarkable movements. A woman sitting cross-legged taps the side of his leg to rouse him, and he brings both hands up out of his pockets to rub his face in a long stroke upward, gripping tufts of hair in his fists before rolling onto his side away from us. I ask the officer what he is looking for exactly, and his response illustrates the mandate of patrol to flexibly gain visual evidence of criminal activity: "We are just being patient. There's no rush to search him yet, and this place [the park] has a reputation for being a hangout for *people like him*: it's out in the open and technically public space. Public space means…" he pauses, and we stare at each other until I realize that this performative ellipses is a pedagogical device, a familiar invitation for me to fill in the blank with an *a priori* correct answer.

"You don't need a warrant to search him," I reply, and he nods, satisfied.

"I just need him to slip up one time, maybe drop something recognizably, uh, *illegal* out of one of his pockets. Besides, this isn't the *place* for homeless people to hang around. Do you really want to see someone drunk and passed out on your way into a library?"

I do not answer, only raising my eyebrows and trying to release the tension from my clenched jaw. I want to make a joke about the undergraduate students I had seen drunkenly wandering around the entrance of Geisel Library on UC San Diego's campus, relieving themselves on the one-way glass structure as a group of girls screamed and giggled on the other side. The seeming harmlessness of this group of White and Korean boys peeing together in a drunken stupor in my mind's eye, as opposed to the implicit danger of the housing-precarious people lying together in front of the patrol car in El Cajon invoked by Officer Leitzig, is constructed along axes of race, class and gender (Ivanich and Warner 2018; Stuart 2016). This is precisely what Steve Herbert describes in his own observations of LAPD officers as they attempt to maintain order by performing spatial control techniques in the city by navigating distinctions between public and private space, a practice that "builds an implicit class bias into police patrol; because lower-class, often minority, people spend more time in public space, they receive more police attention" (1996, 50). Alerted to the appearance of the black-and-white patrol vehicle, the sleeping figures – a racially mixed group of largely Black and Brown people in their 30s and 40s – begin to assemble slowly, sitting upright and passing clear plastic water bottles to each other. Backpacks are zipped up. Sweaters are tied around waists. Cigarettes are hastily rolled. Sensing the officer's gaze mediated by the patrol car's presence, they stare back into the car's windshield before dispersing. Without ever leaving the vehicle, Officer Leitzig's vision, embodied and materialized by the on-duty patrol vehicle, enforces the movement of interpellated bodies, physically and visually *moving* them across the windshield's screen and out of sight.

For officers like Leitzig, the imperative of daily police work requires not only making sense of objects that seem "out of place" in their patrol sectors – patterns of behavior, unrecognizable paraphernalia, and, of course, people – but *willing* them into visual categories of coherence. This is a social enterprise upon which the organizational ideology of policing functions: officers must collaborate to make sense of an unfolding visual world that, according to the training narratives of danger that I discussed in Chapter, 1 can threaten an officer's safety, if not threaten the entire social order upon which the institution of policing depends (Freiberg 2001; Manning 1997, 2003). Our ride-along interaction illustrated how everyday policing is enacted in a field of precarious vision, of which officers like Leitzig remain self-consciously aware. This precarity is not only marked by what police officers cannot see, but by the reversibility of police vision that enables the policed and the surveilled to look back and watch the watchers. The screening techniques deployed by officers like Leitzig—practices oriented toward keeping officers "safe" by profiling subjects at a distance—expose them to the distorted, illegible glances, gazes, and stares of those surveyed and surveilled by this mobile vision, and to which they respond by remaining, in Leitzig's words, "frosty and vigilant."[3] In our interaction, his attempts to mark the subjects framed by

[3] From my time in the field, it is not uncommon for officers to incorporate one-liners from Hollywood cinema in their common parlance when speaking to each other and to their ride-along participant (the researcher). The expression "stay frosty" is an imperative to "keep cool" or stay calm under high-pressure situations. As a cinematic cliché and trope, this phrase is usually expressed from a commanding officer or leader to subordinates as seen in popular media like Ronald D. Moore's *Battlestar Galactica* (2004-2009) and James Cameron's 1986 film *Aliens*. It is this latter piece of science fiction that Officer Leitzig cites as the originary material from which he learned this common expression. However, this oft-quoted line has deeper roots in the quasi-autobiographical fiction written by former LAPD officer Joseph Wambaugh. Inspired by his experiences policing, Wambaugh's acclaimed novel *The New Centurions* (1971) follows three new officers as they learn the realities of a career in law enforcement after graduating from the academy and includes conversations between these rookies and more veteran officers that they meet. For example, in a conversation between LAPD veteran officer Andy Kilvinsky

the patrol car's windshield threw into stark relief how our collective vision was not only brought into being by the performative utterances ("This is the heart of it, right here"), but how vision materializes in and *through* the police vehicle.

The irony of his seemingly unconscious quotation of Denzel Washington's line from Fuqua's film was not lost on me: much like Alonzo's description that introduces Jake to the Jungle and its inhabitants, Officer Leitzig was making intelligible the bodies outside of the vehicle through a careful directing of my vision inside the patrol car. It was then that I first considered (and would come to co-witness[4] on many ride-alongs thereafter) that the work of identifying potentially criminal activity is not solely bound up in an individual officer's optic faculties, but in the capacity for officers to share—through a nuanced repertoire of visual description, interpretation, and embodied action—modes of seeing *materially framed* by the patrol vehicle. In other words, police vision and the visuality of patrol work emerge from the sociality of policing. It is from this experience that I offer a performative gesture that emerges from Officer Leitzig's own reperformance of a scripted cinematic line: *policing is cinematic*.

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and novice Gus Plebesly, the more senior officer summarizes the mandate of patrol work to Plebesly: "Stay frosty. Relax. That's the way to do this job" (80). These kinds of one-liners in Wambaugh's novel, what my interlocutors frequently cited as "cop talk," suggest that such terminology has emerged from and *looped back* into the field of patrol work. For more on "cop talk" terminology, see Lewis J. Poteet and Aaron C. Poteet's *Cop Talk: A dictionary of police slang* (2000).

[4] The ethical and political dimensions of witnessing as a research method has been shaped by concerns across the work of feminist anthropologists (Visweswaran 1997; Abu-Lughod 1990), black feminist ethnographers (Craft el al. 2007; Shange 2019) expanding insights on precedent standpoint epistemologies (Collins 1989; Hartsock 1983; Smith 1990), performance ethnographers (Conquergood 2002; Johnson 2003, 2008; Madison 2006) and feminist historians of technoscience for whom the myth of "disembodied objectivity" (Haraway 1997, 267) in research is aligned with the violences of imperialism, colonialism, and racism. Bearing witness to shared events of co-present interaction in the *doing* of research is an acknowledgment of "collaboration among interviewees, interviewers, artists, scholars, research and activist collectives, students, community participants" (Pollock 2005, ix), and holds us accountable to the knowledge projects that circulate in our field sites.

2.2 Chapter Overview

In Chapter 1, I discussed how examining the mise-en-scène of police academy training allows for rich ethnographic insight into how recruits' interpretations of cinematic material reveals the improvisational dynamics of their racialized and gendered performances of police authority during simulated traffic stops. For recruits preparing to test out of the police academy, *Training Day* offers cinematic clichés and moving images that can *move* these recruits toward the desired performances the academy requires. This chapter extends these considerations beyond the social space of the police academy — where recruits watch and analyze films together, and then collectively rehearse this cinematic material outside of the academy — to the on-duty police vehicle. I examine how cinematic history structures and organizes scenes of policing, as well as how the cinematic prefigures the police ride-along as a visualizing technology. Turning to cinema also enables this discussion to not take the ride-along for granted as a ubiquitous vehicle in knowledge projects of and on policing. As the two side-by-side scenes of this chapter suggest, thinking with cinema can extend policing's relationship to the cinematic beyond the training academy and into the ethnographic field of police patrol mediated by the ride-along. Reconstructing a scene from *Training Day* (2001) alongside an ethnographic encounter in an active-duty patrol car is an attempt to trouble the symbolic work of cinema and the "reality" of policing by approaching the interactions between them, and also theorizes the cinematic as a structural and material configuration that shapes the sociality of police vision, or how officers learn to categorize actions, bodies, and events while on patrol in concert with other officers and for other ride-along participants.

After riding along with patrol officers in El Cajon and witnessing their training activities in the police academy, I offer the claim that policing is cinematic, drawing together what Afro-Pessimist scholar Jared Sexton calls the "cinema of policing" (2009, 2017) with the "real police work" described by anthropologists and sociologists in the 1970s (Van Maanen 1973, 1978). This proposal is not merely an invocation of dramaturgical theory leveraged in sociological studies of policing (Manning 1997, 2003; O'Neill 2015; Rafaeli and Pratt 1993) nor a spectacular metaphor evocative of the spectacular modes of violence scholarly and activist debates have historically situated as a precondition for modern policing (James 1996; Rodríguez 2006; Vargas and Alves 2010).

Eschewing metaphorical distinctions between the "fake" and the "real," the "staged" of cinematic performance and what is relegated to the "backstage" of "serious" police research (Perlmutter 2000), this claim is a methodological imperative to examine the cinematic worlds of officers that practically and materially shape the tacit conventions of their work. It is an insistence to reflect on how cinematic representations of policing offer performative models that do not simply reflect imaginaries of policing, but shape the material enactment of policing on the ground. Therefore, I position the cinematic as the organizing architecture that shapes the argumentative structure of this chapter across four sections: 1) a historical overview of developments in early cinema in the nineteenth century that prefigure the twentieth century mobile visuality of the police vehicle, 2) a feminist film reading of ethnographic moments on patrol with officers in El Cajon and scenes from Antoine Fuqua's 2001 film *Training Day*, 3) a discussion of mobile filming techniques in the 1970s that enabled visual productions of mobile policing, and 4) a close reading of film stills from Stan

Brakhage's experimental police film *eyes* (1971). Together these sections offer historical scaffolding from which to examine the cinematic views that configure the contemporary police vehicle, and also sustain the foundation for my analysis of the ride-along formation in Chapter 3. Inciting the cinematic across these chapter sections is an explicit turn toward a theoretical and methodological engagement with everyday policing through histories of image-making and spectatorship associated with developments in cinema and increasingly mobile screening practices adopted by United States police departments at the turn of the century when automobile patrol became the dominant mode of policing.

By placing the moving police vehicle at the center of my analysis, I trace how the mobile visuality of policing became the foundation for the ride-along, and how the ride-along made possible by the on-duty patrol car must be examined through cinematic histories offered by feminist film historians and science and technology scholars like Anne Friedberg and Lisa Cartwright. These histories, I argue, enable this dissertation to account for how methods of collective seeing *with* the patrol car are mobilized as an "architecture of spectatorship" (Friedberg 2006, 171) in the first section of this chapter. This is the theoretical framework from which Chapter 3 examines how officers and their ride-along participants – whether new officers or academic researchers – are spectators whose mobile vision can be theorized in later chapters through the instrumental transformation of twentieth century architectures like proscenium theaters and the virtual mobilities of cameras that materialized moving images for a viewing public.

The second section considers how the cinematic histories examined by Friedberg and others are carried forward in the practices of 1960s and 1970s experimental filmmaking,

looking specifically to the proliferation of handheld camera technology that would enable the film camera to enter the space of moving automobile. Exploring the history of mobile filming techniques may enable researchers concerned with the visual culture of policing to better understand the politics of police visuality and how its staging also depends on the visual practices that produce it. Here I argue that in order to understand the proliferation of the "first person" view from inside the patrol car, a view sustained by later television shows like *COPS* (to be discussed in Chapter 3), we must explore policing's relationship with precedent mobile filming techniques in the 1970s.

The third section of this chapter brings feminist film theories to bear upon moments in my fieldwork while seated next to police officers on ride-alongs in East County San Diego alongside scenes from Fuqua's 2001 film *Training Day*. I rely specifically on Friedberg's discussion of "automotive visuality," extending her analysis of drive-in theaters to the moving police vehicle on patrol. I bring scenes from Hollywood cinema and the ethnographic field together through a series of cinematic smash cuts to perform the methodological entanglements of my fieldwork both riding with officers and witnessing their cinematic (re)performances of film material in Chapter 1.[5] I argue that Fuqua's story of a fictional 24-hour ride along between Alonzo and Jake, and the characterizations of policing brought to life

[5] Smash cuts are an editing technique that involves "one scene abruptly cutting to another for aesthetic, narrative, or emotional purpose" (Miyamoto 2018). This kind of editing diverges from the continuity editing praxis of Hollywood narrative cinema and its "persistence of classical continuity editing" (Bordwell 2005, 246). They are distinct from jump cuts, which do not necessarily feel as abrupt or brusque but still rely on maintaining the constancy of continuity in time, place, or narrative for a viewing audience. In contradistinction, smash cuts may present the feeling of *smashing* two seemingly disjointed shots together; I attempt to employ a similar writerly method here by not offering overly smooth transitions between my ethnographic field material, film analyses, and theoretical discussions.

by its ensemble cast, not only offer recruits scripted material for role-playing gendered performances of violence, but presents a vision of the ride-along as the critical site for learning what it means to police. This cinematic representation of the ride-along interpellates both the vision of recruits who watch the film in a pedagogical training context *and* the vision of other audiences consuming these Hollywood images of policing.

The fourth and final section of this chapter examines the prescient experimental documentary work of American filmmaker Stan Brakhage, offering up his film *eyes* (1971) as one of the first cinematic representations of the police ride-along. Based on archival research performed at the Stan Brakhage Collection at the University of Colorado at Boulder and the Academy Film Archive in Los Angeles, California, film stills from *eyes* (1971) are visually read to both historicize the arresting cinema of policing that would come 30 years later in Antoine Fuqua's *Training Day*, and to consider how the experimental documentation of policing in the 1970s *sustains*, rather than *escapes*, the epistemological limits of the ride-along.

2.3 Architectures of Spectatorship: Prosceniums, Stages and Cinematic Visuality

"You need to be able to see clearly, no distractions," Officer Jeremy Phelan tells me as we walk together through the El Cajon police station, passing hallways of administrative offices and unlabeled meeting rooms. We exit through a glass-paned external door to the sounds of 45-pound metal plates slamming onto a rubberized weight-lifting mat emanating from the department's communal workout room next door. An unseen deadlifting officer grunts, and Officer Phelan calls out, "Get those hips lower!" Anonymous laughter, and then a

completely unambiguous, single-fingered gesture protrudes from the gym door before disappearing. We make our way down a ramp to the first floor where the department's fleet of patrol vehicles are kept fueled and ready for the next patrol shift: a collection of black-and-white sedans and sports utility vehicles (SUVs) produced by the Ford Motor Company are lined together in several neat rows. Officer Phelan selects a Crown Victoria Police Interceptor (colloquially shortened to "Crown Vic" by officers I rode along with) sedan for our ride-along, an iconic V8-powered, two-tone vehicular beast most often associated with American law enforcement (Simpson 2019).

He opens the dented passenger's side door for me before walking around to the driver's side, adjusting his utility belt before climbing into the vehicle. The worn bucket seat is layered in a fine grit of indeterminable origins, and I wonder as to the sheer number of passengers – civilian ride-along participants, recruits fresh out of the police academy, beat partners, and otherwise miscellaneous co-pilots – who had sat where I was now sitting, each a part of this concomitant petri dish of comingling DNA accumulated in the seat cover's synthetic fibers over decades. Embedded here was not only the sweat of retired officers or the uncertainty of novice trainees, but an archive of ride-alongs *materialized* by these animacies (Chen 2012) literally carved out by the bodies of those whose experiences were mediated by the patrol car.

"I know you're planning to take notes, or whatever," Phelan begins in an impromptu introductory lesson for our first ride-along together, "but it's also important for you to be vigilant. You're my other pair of eyes in here, you know what I'm saying?"

Phelan, a novice officer with two years of patrol under his tactical duty belt, runs his fingertips along the driver's side mirror and suggests I do the same, modeling a honed attention to the architectural design of the car as we take a moment to survey its surfaces and window screens. He tells me that every time he enters the patrol car, he performs his "safety checks" – adjusting every mirror – to ensure his sightlines are unobstructed by poor angles or smudges of dirt.

"It's like what every driver should do," he notes before continuing, "But it's more critical for officers. You hear stories all the time of people flashing their head lights at us in the dark to confuse us. That kind of stuff can be hazardous and deadly. So I need to make sure I can see, and you need to make sure you can see, too."

This is not the first time an officer has invoked my vision as a necessary part of our ride-along encounter together. I tell him driving is one of my passions and cheekily suggest that I have mastered the art of multitasking while mobile at a "respectable speed limit." He laughs before turning the car on, and the cruiser's central CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) display lights up. He unsheathes a pen from his uniform and taps the screen of the organizing terminal that lists both new and resolved calls for service in the field, pointing my attention to a call for service by a reporting party claiming a domestic custody dispute between two parents. As leave the station and drive en route to the call without going Code 3 – lights and sirens blaring from the cruiser's roof-mounted lightbar and speaker system – and stop at each traffic light, members of the public walking on foot or biking across the sidewalk pavement momentarily crane their necks to look into our vehicle. Some stare for longer, and others steal a quick look before hurrying on their way.

"Those are gang colors," Phelan says, breaking the temporary silence in between the car's idling engine and pointing to a blue-and-black bandana hanging out of a teenager's jeans that hang loosely around his hips. The teen, leaning back against the frame of his bicycle while texting on his phone, looks up, seemingly interpellated by the presence of the police vehicle. A flash of his shining brown eyes pierces through the car's windshield screen and past the streaks of layered rubberized film from the car's worn wiper blades.

"Roll your window down," he quickly instructs me, "I want him to know I see him."

As the light turns green, Phelan accelerates hard, sending me an inch back into the car's bucket seat before I have time to roll the window down all of the way. He leans across the center console of the car toward the passenger's side partially-open window, and I try to push my body as far back into the seat's fibers as possible, willing myself to fall into some version of Narnia on the seat's other side. The kid is already peddling out of sight down an alleyway, peeking over his shoulder as Phelan mutters a list of visual characteristics to himself: "Male. Somewhere between fourteen and eighteen. Hm, five-foot-four, maybe? Black hair. Black bike. Mexican, maybe. What do you think?"

I ask for clarification about what he is asking, but I already know the answer: he is conscripting me into the visual work of screening and categorizing identifying characteristics of potential suspects while on patrol, including racial, cultural, or ethnic affiliations that can be captured in a visual description. Here, the vehicle – and the shared space of the ride-along – becomes an epistemological machine. Phelan continues, "He looked Mexican to me, but I could be wrong. There's a lot of people from different backgrounds around here."

In bringing the screening practices of police officers under the critical optics of such visual epistemologies, my argument suggests that the power to see as a patrol officer is not only co-constituted by larger architectures of surveillance, but is shaped by the very co-presence of being with other bodies who share the space of seeing together in the field of patrol work. The social comes into view as a taken-for-granted aspect of police work, but a critical one that emerges through an understanding of the mobile patrol car as an architecture of spectatorship and a distinctly *cinematic apparatus*. As a mobile theater, the patrol car *in motion* invites viewers to look differently at moving objects and people. The cinematic apparatus has much to offer contemporary examinations of everyday police work beyond its power as a representational medium: formal conventions of filmmaking (i.e. elements such as composition, depth of field, point of view, focus, angle, and how these are cut together to organize an experience of time and space) stage and *direct vision* both inside and beyond the frame, just as the police vehicle is structured to *choreograph* and direct the gaze of both officer and ride-along participant. If Chapter 1 explored how a "recruit theater" unfolds in the police academy, then this section lays the foundation for thinking through the "ride-along theater" of patrol and illustrates how police vision and patrol work are prefigured by the proscenium design of both the theatrical stage and the cinematic lens.

Following scholars of feminist technoscience and their work examining and historicizing vision and visualizing technologies (Cartwright 1995, 2008, 2011; Haraway 1988, 1997; Rose 2010), I foreground the cinematic in relationship to police training alongside the work of screening and vision that are socially and historically situated in both the police academy and in everyday patrol work. An attention to screening is also an

opportunity to reconceptualize how scopic regimes and "ways of seeing" (Berger 1972) are theatrically organized, arranged, and enacted in the everyday practices of patrol officers. Moreover, it is an imperative to examine the ways in which norms are established in the performance of policing, and how these norms are shaped by policing's reliance on vision as a practice for creating "objective" knowledge about phenomena on patrol. However, as feminist historians on technology and technoscience have argued, this "vision work" is never unmediated, apolitical, or impartial.

Technologies of vision have long been at the nexus of Enlightenment forms of Western, "objective" knowledge production (Cartwright 1995; Harding 1991; Latour 1987, 1991). In her research on law enforcement use of biometrics, Kelly Gates attends to the social forces that shape how faces are screened for signs of criminality with facial recognition software built on claims of objectivity, exploring this specific practice alongside "important questions about . . . the amount and form of police power that video technology has enabled, and about struggles over the legitimacy of that power" (2011, 64). Attending to the mythos of objectivity is a turn toward taking seriously the embodied, situated conditions of all ways of seeing, whether we are talking about sophisticated video surveillance systems integrated with automated facial recognition technology or considering the situated vision of officers – and their ride-along participant – on patrol.

Weeks later, following my ride-along with Officer Phelan, I had another opportunity to ride-along with Officer Roberts on an evening shift through the city that ended up being a relatively quiet night as far as the types of calls we received. During a lull in the activity, I asked Roberts if he wouldn't mind sharing some of the things on patrol that felt were difficult

to get used to as a new officer. His reply invoked the subject of objectivity and revealed that officers' attachments to this concept, at least in Roberts' case, are a principal organizing factor in how they not only understand what they *do*, but how they *interpret* policed neighborhood members' interpretations of what cops do:

> Sometimes I stop people and they are convinced I'm out to get them. They think it's some kind of personal vendetta, when, really, it's objective. I'm being *objective* and I'm arriving on a scene trying to take in everybody's perspective: what he said, what she said, what that guy across the street heard them say or saw them do. We are trained to be as objective as possible and neutral. I'm here to enforce the law's we've all decided on, and nothing more.

For Roberts, an objective truth is the final layer of an onion beneath encounters with members of the public yet, and one that can be achieved by honing, through practice and discipline, one's ability to make sense of the organization of activities in a scene. Later that night, Roberts would illustrate how a seemingly objective vision becomes practiced in real time during an encounter on the street.

"You gotta try not to let people distract you out there," Roberts says as we quickly drift into another lane while patrolling the rural outskirts of El Cajon, coming upon a scene of two people in their mid-50s arguing in the street. Their bikes lay in a mangled heap a few feet away, and their complexions suggest a consistent overexposure to the East County sun from spending too many hours unhoused. A woman with bleached hair is about to throw a backpack at the man she is arguing with, and Roberts says more to himself than to me, "Ah, meth heads. It's going to get weird."

"Let's make sure they feel nice and seen," he says, turning the car into a tight circle that blocks their forward path down the street and switching on the vehicle's powerful high-lumen LED spotlights before telling me to wait in the car. The figures are flooded in

illumination as Roberts exits the vehicle. With the passenger's side window rolled down, I watch the exchange unfold as the officer approaches the pair with his hand placed on his holstered firearm. This was the familiar pose I had later seen watching police recruits perform Vehicle Stop scenarios in the academy. Seeing his advance, the man puts his hands up in a gesture of frustration and confusion, and the woman covers her face with both hands perhaps in a gesture of embarrassment and in a sincere effort to block the light from her eyes. During the exchange, the man and woman argue that they aren't doing anything wrong, sometimes reaching into their pockets and showing their absent contents as proof, but this behavior results in the officer yelling at them to keep their hands visible at all times. Roberts spends the next several minutes questioning them – "Where do you stay?", "What are you doing around here?", "Are you dealing?", "Are you sure?" – before deciding to let them go without further incident. When Roberts returns to the car, he asks me if I had been paying attention to the way that "vagrants" were trying to distract him.

"You mean by talking over each other, or did I miss something?"

"That guy kept trying to show me stuff in his pockets, and then he was going to show me stuff in his backpack. Sometimes people like that know they are about to be caught with illicit drugs and are trying to distract us from doing a more thorough search by trying to pretend like they are being transparent. At no point did I take my eyes away from his hands or her hands. Whatever their faces were doing, whatever they were saying, it's irrelevant. It's about not letting them *distract your vision away* from concealed weapons or contraband."

Reading this ethnographic scene through Donna Haraway's (1988) critique of the technoscientific *visual* production of "objectivity" in the masculinist traditions of science and

empiricism allows us to see how officers orient themselves to the task of shaping their own vision. Her work illuminates the political stakes for considering the dangers of policing's attachment to "objective vision," and how this myth functions to maintain officers' suspicions even when there might be nothing overtly dangerous about an encounter with people on the street. Haraway's insistence that we break apart this mythos in favor of attending to the way that unfolding phenomena are visually arranged and interpreted in the situated life worlds of working officers is key to this discussion. It can help us see how suspicion is experienced by officers, as well as how objects are brought into the foreground of an officer's attention or how visual images beyond the patrol car are framed for the ride-along viewer. In Haraway's critique, the metaphor of vision and the figuration of eyes must necessarily be brought to bear upon the militaristic and colonial legacies underpinning the racial capitalism of modern policing (581, emphasis added):

> The eyes have been used to signify a perverse capacity – honed to perfection in the history of science *tied to militarism, capitalism, colonialism, and male supremacy* – to distance the knowing subject from everybody and everything in the interests of unfettered power…Vision in this technological feast becomes unregulated gluttony; all seems not just mythically about the god trick of seeing everything from nowhere, but to have put the myth into *ordinary practice*. And like the god trick, this eye fucks the world to make techno-monsters.

Haraway's attention to "ordinary practice" is critical for seeing how the myth of objectivity emerges in ride-along encounters with patrol officers as they participate in all manner of activities, from routine traffic stops to unfolding uses of force and deadly crises. While the institutional language of law enforcement – it's publicly performed transparency, legitimately, and objectivity – is shared by patrol officers in the field, such as with the scene above, I argue that engaging the heuristic framework of screens and frames summons a way of

understanding the apparatus of the police vehicle and its windshield screen that is historically grounded in the architectural space of the cinema and its theatrical prosceniums. What I am after here is the architecture of spectatorship built into the material and social conventions of interacting with the car's windshield screen that enable officers to do the *screening work* of mobile patrol.

Screening operates on two levels in this analysis: screening as a practice of showing film in a social context of collective viewing (as examined in Chapter 1), and screening as a praxis of interrogating and testing bodies, rendering them into articulable forms vis-à-vis an imaging apparatus. It is their interplay and the mobilities that they inspire in the field of policing that reveal the entangled relationship between film and media production and policing as a *regime of mobility*. As a practice of making objects visible, identifiable, and knowable, the term "screening" is inextricably linked to the history of screening the body in medical scientific practice. Lisa Cartwright (1995, 3) traces the origins of modern medical screening technology to precedent techniques and experiments associated with the cinematic apparatus during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, suggesting that "the long history of bodily analysis and surveillance in medicine and science is critically tied to the history of the development of the cinema as a popular cultural institution and a technological apparatus." The interplay between scientific studies and cinema offers important insights into how police vision is co-constituted with these visualizing technologies, such as with the invention of the first ride-along vehicle (discussed in Chapter 3) introduced during the same time period as English photographer Eadweard Muybridge and French physiologist Etienne-Jules Marey were in the midst of their "motion studies," using photographic techniques to

analyze and represent human and non-human locomotion frame by frame (Friedberg 2006, 90). These nineteenth century developments transformed the mobility of the gaze, and this gaze has a history.

Building a historiographic analyses of these emergences in cinema and spectatorship, feminist film scholar Anne Friedberg (1994) explores how the development of a mobile vision and a mobilized gaze has been mediated through practices of cinematic spectatorship and the history of architectural design embedded in the construction of both proscenium theaters and automobiles in the twentieth century. Weaving together an expansive history linking proscenium theater designs at the turn of the century to the post-war drive-in screens of Los Angeles in her analysis, Friedberg examines "the intersection between urban mobility and automotive visuality (i.e. its materiality and mobility) by examining the screen—its format, its architectural context, its implied spectator" (2002, 186). This mobile vision, she argues, is mediated through practices of cinematic spectatorship that materialize alongside the architectural design of both proscenium theaters and automobiles in the twentieth century: two interrelated developments that presuppose the social conditions of watching performances with others in a shared space of looking and seeing together.

As Friedberg argues, proscenium theaters emerged, in different places, well before the twentieth century. In mid-17th century Venice, the first public operas were performed in horseshoe-shaped theaters that both framed the stage and enabled the audience to see each other; By the mid-19th century, European colonizers built similar theaters beyond Europe. In the 1920s, deluxe movie houses resembled contemporary concerts halls as we know them; the films "on stage," framed by the proscenium, hidden behind the curtain. Orchestras were

sometimes hidden in the pit, and sometimes fully visible. While, in smaller cities, films would have been seen in smaller rooms or as part of travelling shows with live music, the dominance of the proscenium design has endured as a legacy of the modernity. It is no coincidence that during a time in which prosceniums proliferate as an architectural formation for viewing in public spaces, Jeremy Bentham's (1791) panopticon design is conjured as an architectural arrangement to visually police the imprisoned; the vision of the prisoner can not only be shaped or mediated by the prison's design, but *reformed*. Learning how to see in these architectural enclosures, however, is a historical practice; here, Friedberg's genealogical analysis of Renaissance perspectival painting and the conventions of spectatorship that emerged from the production of two-dimensional art works form the foundational basis upon which contemporary spectatorship is constituted.

Friedberg's historicized reading of windows and frames as they appear in the artistic tradition of Renaissance painting offers this analysis rich material for thinking through the framing device of the police car on patrol. For example, in her taking up of the work of 15th-century Renaissance art theorist Leon Battista Alberti, Friedberg follows his argument for a reimagining of painting as a form that presupposes a convergence of viewpoints, *and* viewing bodies: "Hence, the artist and the viewer of the painting were in a fixed position in relation to the picture plane – a position that implied the artist's and the viewer's upright posture facing a picture plane also in an upright position" (2006, 28). Even in static paintings, a mobilized gaze of the viewer was beginning to take shape. The construction of panorama designs in exhibitions at the turn of the century played upon these developments as well, such as the Paris Exhibition held in the summer of 1900, which invited viewers *inside* of a structure to

experience cinematic mobility: “The moving camera encompassed a 180-degree to 360-degree circumference, expanding the confines of a theatrical proscenium. But at the same time this increased scope was reduced to the confines of a framed image” (1994, 86). It is the space of enclosure – orienting the gaze of the viewer along the proscenium theater’s perspectival sight lines – that works to immerse the viewer while calling attention to the boundaries of the frame.

Citing the work of film historian David Bordwell (1985), Friedberg illustrates how the legacy of perspective and sight lines in painting structured the space of cinema and the practice of filmmaking, becoming a point of contention not only on the subject of how to actually shoot scenes for an implied viewer, but how to then display these films in particular architectural arrangements “on stage,” in the *physical space of a proscenium theater*. Friedberg (2006) summarizes Bordwell’s assessment of the connection between concerns in perspectival painting with concerns regarding the position of the viewer in relation to the cinematic apparatus: “In tracing a history of the *theatron*, the seeing space and sightlines of the theater, Bordwell provides an excellent account of the positioned relation of the viewer to the framed delimitations of the proscenium stage. Here he suggests that the framed story space of the stage was organized according to Albertian principles of perspective” (82).

Friedberg expands upon this tension regarding how cinema should be framed for audiences. Debates between individual architects and organizations like the Society of Motion Picture Engineers in the 1920s and 1930s demonstrate a concern over how these proscenium theaters should be designed, and how their construction would enable the cinema-goer to become immersed in the space of the theater. Likewise, concerns about shaping attention by

limiting its scope are also reflected in the design of the police automobile and its interior, and how new officers come to experience the way that these cars constrain their vision in practice. When I spoke with a new officer about his experience driving his department's police cruisers while on patrol, he noted that the older cars – the classic black-and-white Ford Crown Victoria Interceptor sedans – had "clunkier" technology, such as bigger CAD displays that felt like "having a laptop from 1994 mounted in the center of your work space at all times." However, he noted that, after a few weeks in the car for hours on end at a time, he felt himself "becoming immersed and comfortable in it." A field training officer echoed the concerns of this novice officer, but explained how getting used to the car's interior was an essential part of the job on patrol:

> When I get new guys, some of them are clearly uncomfortable in the car because there's a lot to pay attention to: ceiling-mounted dash cams, tons of different buttons on the consoles, a CAD in the center that they need to read while in motion and simultaneously keep their eyes on the road. Their eyes need to be everywhere. You learn to *see in a completely new way* because you have no choice. You're being assaulted by screens, but you need to learn how to use them to your advantage on patrol instead of being overwhelmed by them.

Friedberg's call to attend to the architectural history of screens is significant for an analysis of the police ride-along, which operates by inviting the ride-along participant to see from the police officer's perspective *through* the windshield screen of the on-duty police vehicle. These officers' explanations also reflect the methodological force of Friedberg's claim: "The automobile *is* a viewing machine" (2002, 184).

The viewing machine of the automobile prefigured by early twentieth century cinematic architectures ushers in a new kind of mobile vision. Friedberg develops an analysis of *automotive visuality*, a theory of vision accounting for the relationship between a cinematic

gaze and the materiality of the automobile, including its architectural interior design and its windshield screen through which passing objects, people, and landscapes are framed for the mobile driver and accompanying passengers. Through a discussion of the automobile in relation to drive-in cinemas, and the social experience of seeing together that drive-ins made possible, Friedberg suggests that a new "mobile cinema" is born. As a combination between automotive mobility and cinematic visuality, automotive visuality is useful here because it illustrates the way in which police vision is shaped by both the architecture of the police vehicle, and the driving experience itself that is mediated by the windshield screen. By invoking Jean Baudrillard (1988) and Paul Virilio (1988), both contemporary scholars of their time involved in automotive discourse and whose interests in how human vision is framed was deeply tied to developments in cinema and modes of spectatorship, she offers a revisioning of "the relationship between American urban space and the cinema screen," such that "the cinema – its spectatorial mobilities, its simulated visualities – are not restricted to the screen but extend outward into our urban reflexes" (2002, 186).

These reflexes became more evident while on a ride-along with Officer Kim on a weekend afternoon in 2015. After finishing lunch at an Arabic restaurant, we enter the patrol vehicle again and I hear Kim's shoulder-mounted radio chirp a stream of codes and an intersection offered by dispatch. "We're back-up," he says, reversing the car out of the parking lot and zooming down an alleyway behind the restaurant with the LED lightbar flashing red and blue against the stucco exteriors of adjacent apartment complexes. When we arrive on scene, there are several police vehicles surrounding a Black man seated on a curb handcuffed. An officer outside of the vehicle gestures with his fingers, a kind of spiral motion

that directs Kim to keep moving his vehicle until it lines up with another officer's car. Kim later tells me this is a form of staging, an intentional organization of vehicles that tactically enforces a boundary around an incident, giving an impression of closure for both officer safety and to ensure suspects are suitably surrounded by a metal wall of automobile chassis and bulletproof windshield glass. By insisting on a precise arrangement of vehicle staging, these officers illustrate how their automobiles are a part of a grander architecture of spectatorship that becomes a collective effort in maintaining their tactical vision over an unfolding situation where someone is under arrest. The police car (as with *all* automobiles) is a framing device, but in the world of policing, the patrol car's automotive visuality elicits ways of seeing that officers learn to share.

A few weeks later, I am once again riding along with Officer Leitzig on a call to take a witness statement when he flicks a button on the center console and jerks the cruiser hard, pulling us into a tight U-turn. My field notebook flies off my lap with the centripetal forces as Leitzig repeats back his 10-4 "heard" reply to dispatch. As far as departmental colloquialisms go, we are Code 4, "lights and sirens," barreling across black tar in pursuit of a sedan whose driver matches the description of a burglary suspect. A few minutes later, our car is sidled up against a curb and the rear of the sedan-in-question sits center-frame in our car's windshield screen. After Leitzig announces to dispatch that he has pulled the suspect's car over and begins reading the license plate over the radio to check for possible outstanding warrants, he turns his attention toward me: "Stay in the car, but pay attention to any movement he makes, just in case."

Officer Leitzig exits the vehicle and shines his flashlight into the car's back windshield, tracing a line of illumination along the backseats and behind the driver's seat. Another police vehicle arrives at the scene and an officer exits the patrol car. The two converse while I watch from the passenger seat. Through the sliver of the open passenger's side window, I listen to them discuss the physical condition of the pulled-over car. Rather than approach the vehicle, these two officers spend more than five minutes collectively describing and interpreting what they see, sometimes arguing and contradicting each other. Leitzig is beginning to note that the car's registration is expired, but Lorne interrupts him, "Ignore that for right now. Do you see the way he's shifting in his seat? Look at him moving around in there. What would we need for probable cause to search him?" From behind the glass of the passenger window, this scene unfolds as precarious cinema: this buddy-cop duo struggles to see the same thing—pointing at the car, pointing at each other—searching for categories of criminality based on visual information, seemingly oblivious to the pair of eyes gazing back at them – and at me – in the sedan's rearview mirror.

Friedberg writes, in reference to the cinematic screen, "The darkness that surrounds the luminous screen both minimizes its border and calls us to play upon its boundaries" (2006, 165). For these officers, vehicles become framing devices that at once can direct vision and simultaneously recede into the backgrounds of their attentions. In the scenes above, the ride-along ethnographer is asked, often explicitly, to attend to how objects and people *act* or *distract* as they are rendered into moving images on the car's windshield screen. It is in this sense that the "everyday frames through which we see things – the 'material' frames of movie screens, television sets, computer screens, *car windshields* – provide compelling evidence of

the *dominance of the frame*," (2006, 14) and specifically its dominance in the field of patrol work.

This includes, as seen in the vignette that opened this chapter, learning how to position the police vehicle so that the windshield forms a boundary around the locus of attention that officers attempt to make visible for the ride-along. It is a seemingly small, perhaps even silly, ethnographic detail to bring forward, yet these material gestures with the car – how they are positioned in space, how officers decide to roll up to a scene to tactically use the car's position to flank another officer's car for safety, or to obscure the vision of public passersby attempting to glimpse into the police vehicle, are all tacitly formed practices shaped by officers' experiences learning how to ride-along with others.

While the proscenium frame helps to historicize how to account for the relationship of policing to the car itself in motion, we must address how such automotive visualities become possible to represent and *visualize* through the cinematic camera. Friedberg's historical consideration of how the material and architectural arrangements of sites of spectatorship produced the social conventions of looking that are the very foundation of the police ride-along provides important context for the development of mobile filmmaking techniques in the 1960s and 1970s that would enable the ride-along to be filmed and represented on screen. In the following section, I discuss New American Cinema filmmaking to illustrate how its techniques forever shaped moving images of policing, from Hollywood cinema to experimental film. These practices, I argue, are responsible for how the ride-along becomes a recognizable cinematic form across historical contemporary representations of policing.

2.4 New American Cinema and Mobile Filmmaking

> *"Our story takes place in the Forty-fourth Precinct, South Bronx, New York. This one square mile area has the highest crime rate in New York City. For three months in 1976, while riding with the officers of the Forty-Four, we witnessed first-hand their daily confrontation with crime. What you are about to see is a candid report. Events such as these happen every day in every city wherever there is high crime."*
>
> — *Susan Raymond*, The Police Tapes (1977)

In the opening shots of Alan and Susan Raymond's 1977 documentary film *The Police Tapes*, the camera tracks across scenes of daily life in the South Bronx borough of New York: piles of sedimented rubble from a long-ago building demolition, graffitied brick walls, and the interior scaffolding of abandoned architectures become the cinematic backdrop for the veritable anonymous extras that move across these surfaces, from Black youth playing street basketball to a lone Black child playing amongst the debris. These scenes visually unfold as Susan's voice provides the narrative framework that invites the viewer to see these images, and the ones that follow, as evidence that this ghetto is neither frozen in time nor confined to the South Bronx, but a possibility that could happen to other cities and, in her words, "every city wherever there is high crime." Based on over forty hours of video tape recordings, these images arrive as a coherent documentary about policing in the South Bronx, what media historian Deirdre Boyle (1992) calls "a disturbing video *vérité* view of ghetto crime" (1992, 71). From the backseat of the mobile patrol car, Susan and Alan shoot footage of officers as they interact with neighborhood members across the South Bronx, including violent scenes of search and seizure, and arrest.

Moving at the speed of the automobile, the camera passes over these nameless Black citizens. In between these scenes that illustrate the automotive visuality of patrol, the camera

enters private homes, recording moments of despair and crisis before returning to the car where officers candidly express their frustrations about their jobs into the view finder of the camera. It does not stop to talk to these residents, privileging instead the words, insights, and philosophies of patrol work shared by the officers who *direct* the mobile gaze of the documentary camera with the mobility of the patrol car. Moments of confession build an implicit and explicit camaraderie between the officers and the documentarians, but it is the mobility of the camera itself that allows the viewer to move with these officers from the car, to the street, and into the homes of Black residents living with the consequences of, in the words of Susan Raymond, "the highest crime rate in New York City." With the use of newly developed portable videotape equipment in the late 1960s and 1970s, the filmmakers' "story" about policing comes to symbolize a significant transformation in mobile filmmaking techniques that would have lasting effects on the making of police images in the twenty-first century.

Thus far, I have focused largely on social techniques of seeing and vision embedded in the history of early cinema and the architectural staging that mobilized ways of seeing, from the proscenium theater to the automobile. Here, I want to turn to the mobility that prefigures representations of policing in programs like *COPS* (1989-) and films like *Training Day* (2001), such as the Raymonds' documentary work in *The Police Tapes* (1977), by attending to histories of mobile camerawork, and how the camera's increased mobility in the 1960s and 1970s defined new genres of filmmaking on policing. This mobile filmmaking history is best understood as being shaped by developments in cinematic technology that would enable the

film camera to move into spaces it could not previously, including crowded spaces like music festivals, and later, the interior of the moving on-duty police vehicle.

Once shoulder mounted cameras and easy-to-synch handheld tape machines become cheap enough, the film camera could go *into* the space of the spectator, transforming the once-fixed position of the audience into the film's protagonist right as 1960s festival culture takes off (Hubbert 2003). This is evidenced by concert documentaries such as D. A. Pennebaker's *Monterrey Pop*, filmed at the Monterey International Pop Festival in 1967. In this film, the affective expression of the documentary is "hands-off": there's no disembodied voice-over that had become the standard for orienting a viewing audience to the visual action unfolding on screen in classical documentaries like *The Battle of Midway* (1942), what film historian Charles Wolfe describes as, "the voice of God" (1997, 149). Here, as in other music documentaries of the 1960s and 1970s, song lyrics "narrate," people speak for themselves, and participant commentary is reciprocated in song lyrics as well. Prior to this time period, films documenting live music performances (such as scenes of the Beatles performing on a proscenium stage in Richard Lester's 1964 film *A Hard Days Night*) had to be shot and cut with traditional editing techniques to demonstrate a visual and narrative intimacy between the audience and the band primarily because the camera was too big to rove through the audience in real time. However, with achievements in lightweight cameras and synch sound recording equipment, these technical changes enabled a surge in independent film techniques that challenged the conventions of cinematic realism found in both narrative films in Hollywood and in New American Cinema film pieces.

Most notably, these shifts self-reflexively accounted for the camera's presence in the scene of a film. Under the leadership of film diarist and *Village Voice* columnist Jonas Mekas, The New American Cinema Group became associated with techniques of filmmaking that were expressive, uncensored, cheaply-produced, and independently distributed. This would soon come to be known as an "underground cinema" where so-called "verité-ists" (Hubbert 2003, 188) abandoned the formal conventions of narrative cinema. During this time, an ontological shift in filmmaking emerges, and filmmakers begin to experiment with what it means to film and confront conceptions of the "real" on the reel. For example, the collaboration between anthropologist and filmmaker Jean Rouch and sociologist Edgar Morin in their 1961 film *Chronique d'un été* (Chronicle of a Summer) marks a critical shift from Hollywood narrative cinema's reliance on scripts and staging, building on a practice of cinéma verité first introduced by Russian filmmaker Dziga Vertov's "kino-pravda" ("film-truth") at the turn of the century. Julie Hubbert summarizes these shifts of the "new documentary" as an attempt to think about what constituted reality in filmmaking: "The visual appearance of the new documentary was also affected by the complete or partial rejection of several traditional pre- and postproduction practices, the use of scripts, direction, and editing…Formal scripts and the kind of overt direction required to execute them were for the most part rejected outright as intrusive and manipulative. Both were thought to construct or create reality instead of observing it" (2003, 188).

In meditating on these conventions, New American Cinema produces many personal, diaristic films during this time in which the techniques of experimental filmmaking are being expanded upon, such as Mekas' *Walden* (1968) and the critically important *Meshes of the*

Afternoon (1943) by Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid. During this time, experimental filmmaker Stan Brakhage begins querying film's affinities with painting by literally painting and scratching directly onto film stock in order to create the effects of cinema without actually using a camera, and also filming, sans sound or narration, observational documents of his personal life at home, including his *Window Water Baby Moving* (1959). By the early 1970s, a new generation of Hollywood filmmakers – dubbed the "New Hollywood" – absorbed elements related to the New American Cinema. The end of the production code enabled New Hollywood films to feature anti-establishment political themes, including drugged-out sex scenes that could have been culled from Andy Warhol's *Factory* (Milliken 2014). These films downplayed narrative linearity and distilled hand-held documentary aesthetics developed by experimental cinema into a hard-boiled realism ripe for all kinds of rogue masculinities that have come to be associated with policing.

It is here that a perversion of cinema verité comes to have lasting influence on film genres involving police, prefiguring the aesthetic of televisual phenomena like *COPS*. For example, the aesthetics of many 1970s cop films – *Serpico*, *Dog Day Afternoon*, *The French Connection*, *Dirty Harry* – set the tone for what police action can look and sound like in "New" Hollywood, and continue to shape representations of policing in more contemporary films like *Training Day*, *The Departed*, and *End of Watch*. New Hollywood underscores that the proscenium has always been haunting experimental film and documentary cinema, illustrating that police visuality coheres when the proscenium returns via the car window (as described by Friedberg) but can be *made to move* as modeled by 1970s documentary and experimental precedents in filmmaking.

Enter Alan and Susan Raymond's critically acclaimed documentary work *The Police Tapes* (1977). Commissioned by the TV Lab at WNET in New York, a program supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and the New York State Council on the Arts, this film offered a first-person view of everyday policing that would come to inspire the production of popular serial police procedural programs like *Hill Street Blues* (1981-1987). Through its artist-in-residence program, TV Lab supported a new generation of video artists and makers of what would come to be known as "guerilla television" (Shamberg and Raindance Corporation 1971), a movement for democratizing video production by encouraging "a new generation of video activists" to utilize "the video camcorder as a tool, a weapon, and a witness…to challenge the information infrastructure in America" (Boyle 1992, 67). Alongside artists like Korean-born Nam June Paik and American dancer and filmmaker Shirley Clarke, the Raymonds received funding and technical support to produce their film, including newly developed portable videotape equipment. The mobility of this equipment, specifically Sony's model DV-2400 "Portapak," the first portable video system two-piece unit that featured a black-and-white video camera that recorded onto reel-to-reel half-inch tape and a video tape recorder (VTR), enabled users to film and record audio in real-time and *while moving* (Buckingham and Willett 2009). Introduced in 1967, Sony's portable video gear made it possible to travel and film on the go, extending the mobilized gaze discussed by Friedberg into 1960s and 1970s counterculture video practices.

In an interview with *Vice* reporter Greg Eggebeen, the husband-and-wife documentary duo describe how the mobility of Sony Portapak camera itself inspired their decision to make a film about patrol work: "I believe Nam June Paik brought over the original deck from Japan

that we used for the film. It was held together with gaffer tape. When we started testing it, we realized it didn't even work in the daytime. We got this really weird image where the green foliage of the trees turned white. So, we had to figure out something we could do at night. Something like a film noir, nighttime show" (2012).

Through the technical limitations of the camera to shoot in daylight hours, the filmmakers opted for a familiar genre that would lend itself to the Portapak's mobility to capture scenes of "gritty realism" with officers. Through a former high school friend that decided to become a policeman, they were introduced to Anthony (Tony) Bouza, the South Bronx Borough Police Chief who approved their documentary pitch and allowed them to ride along with officers from his precinct. Over the course of three months, they filmed the everyday interactions between police and the policed from the backseat of on-duty patrol cars, and it was the material conditions of patrol that would present them with a trial-by-fire opportunity to prove themselves as worthy ride-along participants: "There was an officer who was trying out a one-man car. It was something nobody in the precinct would do because it was way too dangerous. We knew there would be room for us, so the sergeant asked if he'd take us out and he did" (Eggebeen 2012).

The reciprocal dynamics between officers and filmmakers here both emboldened this patrol officer to attempt riding solo on patrol and allowed the Raymonds seemingly unprecedented access to the front-row seat of policing in the South Bronx. While described as an enduring example of "video *vérité*" (Boyle 1992, 71) in the style of contemporaneous filmmakers like Rouch and Mekas, *The Police Tapes* (1977) is a carefully curated presentation of policing blackness in 1970s New York; Susan's voice-over narration that

opens both the film and this section of my chapter establishes a clear attempt to link blackness with high crime, provoking viewers to imagine how their own cities might become similarly transformed by overlapping systems of inequality. These implicit threats arrive as images of Black men and women in crisis as they meet the state-sanctioned violence of the state.

In one scene, a 69-year-old Black woman is brought into the police station for allegedly beating her adult daughter with, in the words of one officer, "some kind of an object," though the officers debate whether it is an iron rod or an ax. After receiving treatment and informing officers that she wanted her mother released followed the altercation, the officers tell the filmmakers that they needed to bring the mother in to press charges. Flanked by two officers, her tiny body stands at the station's intake desk before she is walked to another table for further questioning. The Portapak camera shoots their conversation from behind, and the woman can be heard sobbing while shaking her head and explaining, "She came in and woke me up…and I asked her to leave, and, Lord have mercy, please…why she do that for that I have to fear for my own life?" Her litany of pain and frustration continues, and the officer who is actively questioning her, seemingly frustrated, stands up and walks away from the table. The next scene begins with an external shot of the same officer standing in front of a patrol vehicle, arms folded over his chest, as Susan Raymond's voice asks from behind the camera: "What happened to that old woman?" He proceeds to inform the Raymonds that she had prior arrests for "a couple of assaults, some petty larceny, and a few other odds and ends," and when Susan asks if the elderly woman would have to spend the night in jail, he replies with a smile: "Oh, yeah. She did real well. She had been arrested quite a few times before...She had quite a record. She told the matron in the cell, she says, 'I've

been arrested before. You don't scare me. I know what I have to do.' She was just mad because they wouldn't let her keep her cane in the cell." The officer delivers this last line with the understated flourish of a practiced comedian, turning away from the camera and looking off-screen in a knowing gesture of a well-delivered punchline. A heartbeat afterward, Susan can be heard quietly laughing in response. These moments reveal how the mobile camera sustains the antiblack narratives of officers by privileging their own descriptions of events, and how a filmmaker's laughter that occurs out of the camera frame implicitly aligns itself with the racialized violence of patrol.

Indeed, with the filmmakers as their quasi-confidants, the officers express their frustrations at policing "animals," inciting metaphors of urban neighborhoods as unruly, albeit *exciting*, jungles where the tacit mandate of patrol requires daily excursions of heroic masculinity into unfriendly and dangerous places. It is no coincidence that the end of the documentary is bookended by an interview with South Bronx Borough Police Chief Tony Bouza, who connects the work of patrol to the language of theater: "The policeman fundamentally has a ringside seat on the greatest show on earth. One of the beautiful things about being a policeman is that you are at the center of action all the time" (*The Police Tapes*, 1977).

As an architecture of spectatorship, the filmed ride-along in the Raymonds' documentary invites the viewer an inside look into a constructed storyline where officers police South Bronx "jungles" like military forces in occupied territories abroad, a critique made by the precinct's own police chief Bouza who admits on camera: "And I am very well paid almost to be the commander of an army of occupation in the ghetto, and that is a great

tragedy, I think. And I don't know that anyone's useful life ought to be employed in that kind of pursuit, however well paid one is. So that's where my sense of defeat and frustration comes from."

Narratives of occupation and jungle excursions in *The Police Tapes*, visualized by the apparatus of the mobile camera and historicized through nineteenth century proscenium designs, endure in contemporary films like Antoine Fuqua's *Training Day*. The virtual mobilities in Fuqua's film offer instructive images of policing, and this is especially true in my research context where sequences from this "buddy cop" film are screened for recruits in San Diego's police academy and, following these instructional classroom screenings, explicitly referenced and reperformed by police recruits in role-play training exercises as discussed in Chapter 1. For example, this brief yet edifying exchange between *Training Day's* two fictional officers at the beginning of Fuqua's film orients the film's audience—and rookie cop Jake—toward a critical lesson about where the "real work" of screening for criminal activity is performed: behind the windshield screen of the on-duty police vehicle.

JAKE HOYT
So, where's the office? Back at division?

ALONZO HARRIS
You're in the office, baby.

In the field of their patrol sector, Jake and Alonzo share interpretive modes while seated together in what sociologist Peter Manning (2003, 130) analogizes as the "mobile office" of the squad car. As a mobile structure that supports coffee and lunch breaks, writing reports between calls, and plenty of "water cooler talk" amongst coworkers, the on-duty patrol car is not unlike many corporate or academic office environments. While cop films like *Training Day* reproduce the kinds of social arrangements and visual practices that are part and

parcel of policing praxis (e.g. officers riding together on patrol, learning how to actively police while seated inside the mobile patrol car), a closer *ethnographic* reading of cinematic images offers critical insight into the anti-Black representations upon which this film draws from to tell its story, and the consequences for how these cinematic lessons become a part of a genre of enforceable repertoires of anti-Black police vision in sites of training that the remaining chapters of this dissertation describe in more detail.

In his rich analysis of the racialized and racist tropes of Black masculinity in *Training Day*, Afropessimist scholar Jared Sexton locates antiblackness as the mechanism through which cross-racial sociality is navigated by the film's two main characters and the choices they must make to stay or move on either side of the law: "*Antiblackness* is best described here as a series of forced choices—we all know the imperative, 'your money or your life'—but choices which brook no answer" (Sexton 2017, 17). I "read" a few cinematic shots from *Training Day* to demonstrate how the mise-en-scène of Alonzo and Jake's drive through "the Jungle" reinforces the sociality of police vision as mediated through the on-duty patrol vehicle and reinscribes an anti-Black visuality by interpellating the vision of the audience through a virtual, cinematic ride-along.

In the next section I turn toward one of the primary locations in which the film is set—the unmarked police car, the mobile classroom in which senior police Detective Alonzo Harris (Denzel Washington) trains rookie Officer Jake Hoyt (Ethan Hawke) to adopt a new way of seeing and seeking criminality while on patrol. Alonzo and Jake's ride-along, I argue acts as a kind of "screening machine" and highlights the material stakes of policing's *racialized* screening practices when examined in relation to the mobile patrol car and methods

of anti-Blackness and anti-immigrant violence that an increasingly mobile patrol force performed as tacit conventions of policing (Schrader 2019). My analysis centers on one scene in particular that has been screened in San Diego's police academy: the "Jungle sequence" in which Alonzo introduces Jake to the Baldwin Village block called "the Jungle" where he both lives *and* polices.[6] This scene is a critical and enduring example of "ride-along theater;" it not only shapes how recruits learn how to imagine themselves in the field before becoming officers, but also interpellates us as viewers into a racialized mobile police vision.

[6] The on-set location of the "Jungle" is a composite of various streets and cul-de-sacs across Baldwin Village in South Central Los Angeles, including Palmwood Drive and the area south of Coliseum Street between South La Brea Avenue and Crenshaw Boulevard. According to *Training Day*'s official production notes archived by Warner Bros. Studios (2001), Fuqua's willingness to shoot on location in these neighborhoods not only reinforced his position as a director committed to the "reality" of portraying violence, but his own Blackness rendered him an expert capable of moving between such locations "on the ground" and in the imagined upper echelons of the racialized political economy of a historically-white Hollywood (emphasis added):

> For Fuqua, capturing the *visceral nature* of life on the streets was paramount. "I only wanted to shoot in real locations with real people in the background," he says. "I want to make it clear that these are everyday experiences in some people's lives. The reality of life for cops and criminals in the inner-city isn't something we should hide from – it's something we should be talking about and thinking about." Fuqua came to the project with a *street credibility* that uniquely prepared him for what was to come. "Antoine Fuqua might be the only director around who can move through Hollywood and the *gritty streets* of Watts or Rampart or Crenshaw with *equal agility*," says Bobby Newmyer. "And that's what this movie required."

For an excellent discussion situating Fuqua in relation to the broader dynamics of Black cultural production in Hollywood within an anti-Black world that naturalizes Blackness with visceral criminality and inherent violence, see Jared Sexton (2009). It is also worth noting that Fuqua grew up in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, yet his ability to, in the words of white American film producer Robert (Bobby) Newmyer, traverse the diverse neighborhoods of Watts, Rampart, and Crenshaw with "equal agility" both flattens these places into universalized "ghettos" and universalizes Fuqua's prior experiences growing up in Pittsburgh as evidence that he is uniquely situated to direct a film about Black life in Los Angeles.

2.5 *Training Day* as Training Film: Immersion and the Question of the Reel[7]

> *"Unlearn that bullshit they teach you at the Academy. Don't bring none of that shit in here. That shit'll get you killed out here."*
>
> —*Alonzo Harris,* Training Day

With these words, Detective Sergeant Alonzo Harris, Denzel Washington's unscrupulous L.A.P.D. narcotics detective in Antoine Fuqua's *Training Day*, summons the ironic into full force for his rookie trainee Jake Hoyt (Ethan Hawke). Eager to transition from patrol officer to detective, Jake accompanies Alonzo on a 24-hour ride-along replete with violence, corruption, and police brutality unencumbered by an ahistorical moral impetus to do things "by the book." Alonzo makes no attempt to hide his unbidden contempt for officers who participate in the bureaucracy of policing from behind a "pussy desk job," and suggests Jake ought to waive his dream of making detective if he cannot embrace the hands-on tactics that narcotics work demands. Alonzo's rapid-fire instruction to abandon the trappings of the academy is Jake's—and the film's audiences'—introduction to Alonzo's police pedagogy that privileges the "real world" experiences of patrol work on the streets. "Roll your window down," Alonzo instructs Jake upon inviting him to step into the mobile office of his pristine, black-lacquered 1979 Chevy Monte Carlo. Eager to impress, Jake complies and Alonzo opines further, "See? You gotta hear the street. You gotta smell it, you know? You gotta taste that shit, *feel* it."

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[7] This section title is a play on words from Lucy Suchman's own subsection title – "*Full Immersion* and the Question of the Real" from her 2016 article, "Configuring the Other: Sensing War Through Immersive Simulation," in which she describes the Infantry Immersion Trainer (ITT), a pre-deployment facility constructed in an abandoned tomato factory at Camp Pendleton offering virtual simulations of Iraqi villages for US Marine Corps personnel.

In his insistence that Jake abandon his academy training to phenomenologically embrace the full sensorium of policing on the ground, Alonzo—and Fuqua—bring a familiar narrative to bear upon the figuration of the police academy: impractical, useless, "bullshit." The irony of Alonzo's appraisal is unknown to the film's characters: More than two decades since its release, *Training Day* is part of a world of interpretation where training officers teach and academy recruits learn strategies—and the stakes—for *seeing* like police officers (Chapter 1). Alonzo's words are also instructive for the film's audience, an anonymous collective of virtual ride-along participants interpellated by the cinematic frame to sit alongside Jake in the unmarked police car.

Beyond its deployment in the police academy as an idealized model for teaching novice recruits how to position themselves in relationship to patrol work, Alonzo and Jake's fraught ride-along through the Jungle is also of historical value, a link in a chain connecting both the academic canon of police research and explicit anti-Black histories of police brutality in neighborhoods like Watts, Los Angeles.[8] In the opening shot of this sequence, we are provided an affective sense of place in the Watts neighborhood as Alonzo pulls his unmarked 1979 Chevy Monte Carlo around a corner, crossing an imperceptible boundary into the Jungle neighborhood. A passerby dressed in black steps from the sidewalk into the street. Jake is seen in the passenger seat, looking out into the street beyond his passenger's side open window. For a moment, Jake—a heteronormative white man—and this unnamed Black man

[8] The majority of filming took place in and near Imperial Courts, a postwar public housing project that began in 1944 and has been the epicenter of both anti-Black police violence and equally anti-Black media coverage, from the Watts Rebellion of 1965 to the 1992 Los Angeles Riots following the acquittal of four white LAPD officers filmed brutalizing Black motorist Rodney King.

meet each other's gaze, and what appears coincidental is a part of a larger argument about the power to see and surveil that is fundamental to policing praxis: the officer's vision moves at the speed of the car, and this mobility enables policing to keep its distance from those subjects and objects that may threaten an officer if one were to approach on foot.

It is no accident that this passing glance is captured by the cinematic lens from behind blurred, black bars: these officers are entering a space of enclosure. Jake shifts uncomfortably in the passenger seat as he asks, "What are we doing going in here, man? We'll get killed coming in here." While Alonzo's car bears little resemblance to a standard black-and-white police vehicle, it nonetheless marks their precarious visibility.

Jake's fear is palpable, and Alonzo's reply is marked by a barefaced pride, "Ah, you know about this place, huh?" Buckling under the pressure of what this place signifies, Jake's response is tentative, but not naïve: "It's the Jungle, right? They say don't come in here with anything less than a platoon." Within the first few moments of this sequence, the Jungle neighborhood is narrativized as a war zone. Alonzo's reply is absent any jest, "Don't ever come up here without me. I'm serious. For your safety." This narrow trajectory through the streets of the Jungle is reminiscent of antecedent work in film, and the following comparison illustrates the visual continuum of the depiction of urban streets as foreign warzones. This comparison is most striking when considering Francis Ford Coppola's film *Apocalypse Now* (1979), which Fuqua cites as an inspiration for his own filmmaking practices (Truitt 2013). These are cinematic tropes reflected in Beliso-De Jesús' (2020) descriptions of training officers' words and teaching styles that work to shape what she calls the "Jungle Academy." In the world of Fuqua's film, Alonzo's command is instructive for shaping this racial,

antiblack narrative for rookie Jake. For police trainees beyond the world of the film, the jungle metaphor is mobilized and frequently reinforced by the police academy's curriculum that teaches recruits how to envision themselves as threatened outsiders in the "urban jungle" of the patrol field (Aushana 2019).

Anthropologist Aisha Beliso-De Jesús (2020) argues these rhetorical and practiced lessons reinforce the anti-Black "jungle logics" of police training, illustrating how the seductive metaphor of the jungle shapes the racial imaginary of recruits; just as Alonzo Harris introduces Jake Hoyt to the "Jungle" of Baldwin Village in *Training Day*, so too can recruits expect to find themselves in comparable jungles of San Diego's many neighborhoods where racial others await them, from Somali youth activists in City Heights (Abumaye 2017) to resettled Chaldean and Assyrian refugees in El Cajon still coping with the effects of America's ongoing imperial violence across the Middle East (Ludwig 2016). Mobilized by the academy's "lure of excursions into racial otherness and criminality" (Beliso-De Jesús 2020, 145) – a world of unknown Others and uncertain outcomes "out there" – recruits enter the patrol field fully directed toward the primacy of officer safety and its imagined assailants through cinematic images of the ride-along. These violent rehearsals that arrive as Hollywood images implicitly mark the *certainty* that threats to patrol officers are not a mere possibility, but an inescapable film *and* lived police script playing itself out.

It was during one ride-along with Officer Medina, a novice El Cajon police officer, that the Jungle metaphor's mobility surfaced while on patrol. We had arrived at an apartment complex in response to a general call about a "disturbance" between two neighbors. As we ascended the stairs of this two-story building, its inhabitants peeked their heads out of their

apartment doors, hazarding a glance at a growing number of officers at the end of a hallway. The rich smell of cumin, saffron, and stewing lamb – unmistakable scents from my childhood learning how to cook Assyrian food with my aunt and her neighbors living in Riverside County's diaspora communities – filled the corridor. I stood a few feet away from the officers as they interacted with three middle-aged women wearing hijabs who were crying and trying to communicate in English. During this encounter, a trio of rambunctious Black African kids no older than eight or nine ran down the hallway giggling, and a seemingly familiar pair of hands reached out roughly to drag one of them back into an apartment to the sounds of youthful protest in a language I could not understand. An officer standing next to me turned his head, watching the kids watching the officers, refusing to return a wave from one of the children.

While I had seen officers participate in genuine displays of welcoming generosity to members of South West Asian and North African refugee communities that lived as new arrivals in El Cajon, these performances were usually constrained to the community policing events hosted in collaboration with El Cajon's public schools or with El Cajon's largely white-owned business districts like school reading or "night out" events inviting refugees to experience multicultural displays of El Cajon's "melting pot." Now, in the semi-enclosed space of this apartment complex, the officers around me appear more reserved and physically uncomfortable. Later, when Medina and I are standing back by the patrol cars, the officers conclude this call with a quick assessment of apartment complexes largely inhabited by refugee families. Medina remarks that it must be difficult to "shove all those family members in one apartment. The smell of sweating bodies in there was overwhelming." Another officer

replies in kind, noting, “It’s literally a jungle in there,” and I ask him what he means, to which he rolls his eyes and responds, “*You* know what I mean.” For these officers, the precarious visibility of policing in spaces of enclosure is marked by the certainty that they will encounter similar concrete “jungles” where refugee families live.

Returning to Fuqua’s film, the movement and positioning of the camera in this sequence communicates an important sense of precarious visibility that academy recruits are taught to feel while both viewing the film, and which was reflected in my ride-along experiences with officers such as the scene above. Like the officer who strains to keep his vision on unknown Black children in an apartment corridor, Jake’s furtive glances out of Alonzo’s unmarked car betray his discomfort at being visible to the unfamiliar figures that gaze back at him. Jake hazards a look over his shoulder as he takes in the scenes of daily life in this predominately African-American and multi-generationally poor neighborhood: a woman combing another woman’s hair, young men talking together, and a group of children playing. Throughout this sequence, the cinematic lens stands in for Jake’s point-of-view, imitating his gaze as it tracks across different bodies, struggling to keep them in view before these figures move beyond the mobile frame of the car’s passenger window. Throughout this sequence, Jake’s expression is guarded, a seemingly unremarkable feat of careful, “distanced” observation that is an essential skill recruits are taught to practice in the police academy, and which I witnessed while on ride-alongs. What is significant in this sequence is not only that Jake is a veritable avatar for officers-in-training, but that the model of policing represented is necessarily collaborative: Jake and Alonzo share modes of interpretation and description that are built into the structure of the police as an organizational culture (Fry and Berkes 1983). If

"effective" policing requires dialogical interaction, then sociality itself is central to an officer's arsenal of strategies for policing in a visual world. By reading both how the characters interact together and how the cinematic camera moves the vision of the audience across these shots, this sociality revises the cross-racial fantasies of buddy cop films, illustrating that "if *Training Day* adheres to aspects of Hollywood's interracial buddy formula, it does so only by suggesting the mortal dangers of cross-racial fraternity, not its typically reconciliatory or recuperative attributes" (Sexton 2017, 21).

As an avatar for the audience's subjectivity, Jake is interpellated (Fanon 2008) by the vision of the residents who gaze back at him and Alonzo. As a visualizing machine, Alonzo's car in *Training Day* frames the vision of both officers as they move through the Jungle: bodies and gestures of the policed are momentarily captured by the viewing bays of the car's windshield and windows. Police recruits and non-law enforcement viewers watching this sequence are offered a simulated vision of policing that must adapt to a fleeting visual world. Fuqua's directorial vision here offers the viewer a pointed representation of the speed of police vision: it is fast, discerning, and cursory. It does not flinch. It does not slow down to ask questions. It attempts to make knowledge about a visual field based on rote observation, but one must wonder how it is possible at all for Jake to identify anything about the Jungle's neighborhood residents, let alone their intentions, desires, or whether they are participating in criminal activity and are therefore deserving of his prying gaze. While interviewing another police officer from the San Diego Police Department, it became clear that training officers' descriptions in the academy shape recruits' interpretations of these moments on film. In my conversation with Officer Jackson, he said the officer leading the discussion on *Training Day*

during one of the academy's lessons on officer safety gestured with one hand to the projected image of Jake and Alonzo on the screen and to the audience of recruits with the other. "'This is what will happen to you,'" Officer Jackson said with a hint of mockery in his voice, re-performing the words of the training officer in question, "'You are going to be outsiders in some very dangerous places.'"

As Officer Jackson's re-performance illustrates, the precarious cinema of policing crudely divides officers from the world "outside" the on-duty police vehicle, yet this film sequence suggests this orientation to the field is problematic. While the beginning of the Jungle sequence prioritizes shots of Alonzo and Jake's interactions inside of the car, subsequent shots reveal how neighborhood residents maintain their own practices of looking back at the officers. The camerawork demonstrates this shift, shooting from behind the bodies of residents standing on the sidewalk as Alonzo's car passes in front of them. In this way, the film's viewer does not sit comfortably next to these officers on this virtual ride-along. Rather, the camera places a "we"—however fractured and precarious—among the many vigilant eyes watching from beyond the "viewing machine" of the detective's vehicle. *Training Day* offers cinematic frames through which we see a more vexed profile of police vision at odds with its proliferation as a model for police recruits. Given the practices of collective spectatorship that officers practice both in the academy and in the field when policing together as shift partners, I want to suggest that the social conditions of policing praxis and training pedagogy direct officers and officers-in-training toward ways of seeing that are problematically totalizing. To theorize the camera work in this sequence as visualizing the inhabitants of the Jungle as passive, visually arrested objects would be a gross simplification. If police vision is

necessarily social because it emerges in a space of shared interaction, then one must include the participation of the policed in this encounter.

What is so compelling about the camerawork in the Jungle sequence is how the camera's movement visualizes the ways in which a police vision makes possible the reversibility of that vision: the police vehicle allows the officers to see as readily as it allows them to be seen. The police cruiser may enable visual mobility, but it is a mobility that is confined and enclosed within the material chassis of the car. Cynthia Baron and Sharon Marie Carnicke (2008, 191) acknowledge the importance of cinematic framing in creating a sense of enclosure in *Training Day*, arguing that "the film's most searing dramatic conflicts are played out, not in the open or when the characters are on the move, but when Washington and Hawke are confined by the interior of Alonzo's black Monte Carlo automobile." These conditions allow the gaze of the policed to look back into the frames of the car's open windows and windshield, and therefore, back into the frame of the cinematic lens. These curious, cautious, and wary stares meet Jake's –and the audiences' – eyes. Though Fuqua does not meditate on these counter-visual looks, using them only to reinforce Alonzo's powerful position as a Black cop in the hierarchy of blackness in this "jungle," these expressions point this discussion away from such antiblack Hollywood image-making practices and back toward the experimental cinema of the 1970s. I identify Stan Brakhage's 1971 film *eyes* from his trio of documentary works "The Pittsburgh Documents" (widely referred to as "The Pittsburgh Trilogy") as precedent film work that, I argue, is one of the earliest cinematic "stagings" of the police ride-along, and an experimental documentation of policed Black life in Pittsburgh

that invites a viewer to encounter the gaze of the policed differently without the conventions of narrative cinema.

The final section explores these experimental entanglements to consider how the ride along persists as the primary cinematic form through which policing is visualized for a viewing public. I suggest that bringing Brakhage's film *eyes* (1971) into conversation with the dynamics and interactions of patrol work that I witnessed while on ride-alongs with El Cajon Police Officers offers us a critical lens to both view popular cinematic and telematic images in this context while also suggesting that the political commitments of experimental documentary filmmaking – and, more significantly for this dissertation, the explicit commitments of *experimental, performance ethnography as well* – forces academic researchers to confront our own desires to see and to know those subjects, bodies, and people that we strain to keep in our field of vision.

2.6 Looking back, seeing nearby: Stan Brakhage's *eyes* (1971)

Situating Stan Brakhage's 16-millimeter film *eyes* (1971) as part of the cinematic history of the ride along I have attempted to weave together in this chapter is an opportunity to engage debates around transformations in the production and circulation of cinematic images of policing during the 1970s.[9] Shot from the backseat of a Pittsburgh police vehicle on

[9] Differences in the capitalization of Brakhage's film can be found across various websites and online film archives. However, Fred Camper – a key figure along with Marilyn Brakhage (Brakhage's second wife at the time of his death) – in maintaining Brakhage's Estate and making sure researchers requesting rights to Brakhage's images follow a set of formal protocols for spelling his film titles correctly, has assured me that the lowercase spelling of his film is both intentional and correct. In an October 2015 e-mail exchange with Camper, he explains, "Yes, the title is *eyes*. I think some editors don't accept unusual capitalizations for titles, and then once "Eyes" enters the ecosystem, so to speak, it spreads" (Personal correspondence, October 5, 2015).

active duty, Brakhage's documentation of everyday patrol work serves as one of the first moments where the film camera – specifically a Bolex – can enter the interior space of the on-duty patrol car, and offers an experimental visioning of policing six years before the Raymonds shot *The Police Tapes* (1977). As a historical text (or "document," to use Brakhage's words), *eyes* (1971) establishes the "first person" view from inside the patrol car, the enduring model sustained by film's like *Training Day* (2001), *End of Watch* (2012), Fox Network's *COPS* (1989-) and its contemporary progeny *Live PD* (2016-2020), the A&E Network's now-cancelled show that at one time boasted being the most watched television series across streaming media platforms in 2018.[10] Foregrounding these experimental visuals of patrol work in historically overpoliced neighborhoods across Pittsburgh reveals the enduring, hegemonic visual forms that have come to define these more contemporary

[10] The *Live PD* official website describes this televisual phenomenon as a "non-fiction series that brings viewers an unfiltered look at law enforcement officers in action across America" whose purpose is to offer "a transparent look at the daily encounters between police and civilians" (*Live PD* website). As one of the longest-running television programs, the popularity of *COPS* reflected media consumption trends of the 1990s, but in more contemporary formats like *Live PD*, the participation of the viewing audience could be more easily shared on social media websites like Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit. As a show that claimed to broadcast "live" footage of officers in the field across a handful of partnering agencies across the country, social media users would signal their preparation to watch the next episode with hashtags like "#rollcall," a virtual simulation of law enforcement's own practice of beginning a work shift by announcing who is going on patrol for the next several hours. With more high-resolution camera technologies and without a formal production team to edit hours of footage as with the case of *COPS*, *Live PD* extended the imagined liveness of precedent ride-along television and visualized virtual ride-alongs in apparent real-time. It is worth noting that a *Live PD* Auction hosted by the Brookland Baptist Health & Wellness Center in West Columbia, South Carolina on November 10, 2018 invited members from the community to bid for a chance to ride-along with nine sheriff's deputies from the Richland County Sheriff's Department, one of eight law enforcement agencies featured on *Live PD*. A subsequent *Live PD* subreddit thread archives the comments of users who expressed their own interests in being able to win a ride-along with officers from the *Live PD* reality show. A comment from Reddit user "GreenEyeFitBoy" reads, "Haha that's awesome…even as a LEO [law enforcement officer] i'd pay a lot to ride with Danny Brown! I feel like he would be an absolute blast to ride with." This sentiment was echoed by another Reddit user "doitforthepeople," which read, "Dude, I would seriously consider doing this if the flights weren't so expensive (700 a pop) from Denver right now. I bet if I knew 2 months ago they would have been cheaper ☹" (Reddit, "Bid on the chance to ride along with a 'Live PD' deputy"). https://www.reddit.com/r/livepd/comments/9sunb1/bid_on_the_chance_to_ride_along_with_a_live_pd/

televisual models. While I do not perform an exhaustive shot-by-shot description of this film or of a particular sequence as the previous section attempted with *Training Day's* jungle sequence, I do offer a few film stills as points of departure for future, more in-depth analyses of Brakhage's film.

In February 1970, Sally Dixon, then-curator of the Carnegie Museum of Art's Film and Video Department, made a phone call to Brakhage whom she had not met previously but had heard about through a close-knit circle of experimental filmmakers, artists, and writers including the likes of Carolee Schneemann, Maya Deren, and Jonas Mekas. In conversation with Brad Arnold, head archivist of the James Stanley Brakhage Collection (Brakhage Collection) at the Norlin Library on the University of Colorado-Boulder campus where Brakhage taught, I learned that Brakhage was invited by Dixon to lecture and screen some of his films at Carnegie. Through Dixon, Brakhage met Michael Chikiris, a *Pittsburgh Press* photographer who had accompanied Dixon to pick up Brakhage from the airport. During their ride and in subsequent conversations, Brakhage revealed he had always wanted to make a film about police work but that he had previously failed to arrange ride-alongs with officers in Boulder, Colorado.

In a 2002 interview, Brakhage explains his intention was "to photograph the ordinary, everyday activities of the police…to try and see for myself if maybe they were as monstrous as many of my hippie friends told me they were," adding that, following increasingly mediatized anti-Black racial violence against Black liberation movements in the United States in the 1960s, he maintained "a healthy paranoia about police – from use of police by mainstream society to put down protests and rebellions, from the beatings" (MacDonald 2005,

88). With Dixon's connections and with Chikiris already having experience as a photographer of city events, ride-alongs were arranged so that Brakhage and Chikiris could accompany officers from the Hill District of Pittsburgh, now referred to as "Zone 2" of the Pittsburgh police department, on patrol. Taking place over several days at the end of September 1970, these ride-alongs allowed Brakhage to shoot footage while on patrol in the back seat of an active-duty police vehicle with Chikiris seated next to him, photographing Brakhage as he filmed. The subsequent film formed part of a trio of works based on hundreds of hours of observational footage from two other sites in Pittsburgh. Widely referred to as "The Pittsburgh Trilogy" or "The Pittsburgh Documents," each of these films cinematically explores vital institutions in Pittsburgh that, Brakhage imagined, the general public did *not* want to see in all of their complex, grotesque realities: the autopsy room at the Allegheny County Medical Examiner's Office (*The Act of Seeing with one's own eyes*, 1971), the practice of open-heart surgery in Pittsburgh's Mercy Hospital (*Deus Ex*, 1971), and the city's local police force in the Hill District (*eyes*, 1971).

While searching for accessible archival evidence of Brakhage's experience riding along with police, I came across a series of recorded lectures housed at Boulder's Brakhage Collection in which he describes the experience of making this film. With the wheels effectively greased by Chikiris' and Dixon's prior contacts with city officials and law enforcement, Brakhage's film was only able to emerge due to prior agreements between Pittsburgh law enforcement officials and familiar, pre-authorized personnel like Chikiris as a press photographer for the city. However, upon listening to audio recordings of Brakhage's preamble to a college class before screening his film, he revealed officers were instructed by

their sergeants to drive Brakhage and Chikiris around the city while *pretending* to be on patrol and not taking calls for service. This detail not only underscored the theatrical staging I have argued is materially central to the ride-along, but extended it to new *literal* meanings that reflected, once again, how the ride-along has always been a tightly controlled mechanism for constraining the vision of its passengers (to be discussed at length in the next chapter). In a surprising twist, however, Brakhage explained that, during his first ride-along outing with Chikiris, the officers confessed to this staging (CU Boulder Lecture, emphasis added):

> Within a couple hours, we were talking very well together and one of them then leaned over the seat and said, "Look, we're off duty. We've just been told to drive you guys around, and not talk to you too much until you get tired of it and then drop you off, and we're not receiving calls." So, you see, they'd *made a set up so that nothing would happen*. So then by agreement of both of them one of the patrolmen said to us, "But, you guys seem to be alright and I like what you're trying to do, so we'll call in the station and tell them we've dropped you off and then we'll start getting calls, if it's okay by you." And I opened my mouth and didn't know what to say and Mike jumped in and said, "Sure, that's just what we want."

Here, the officers appear eager to perform for Brakhage and Chikiris, framing their decision to take calls as a kind of favor and reward because, in the words of one patrolman, "I like what you're trying to do." While it might be tempting to frame *eyes* (1971) as a documentary about the Pittsburgh police, Brakhage has never situated his film in these terms, and his own assessment of the officers' actions above – that they "made a set up" – offers a poignant reflection on the histories of staging in film. Famously critical of documentary film techniques and highly skeptical of documentary's claims to represent the "real," Brakhage often referred to this trilogy as "The Pittsburgh Documents," underscoring his own complicated attachments to the perception of his filmmaking practice. As film archivist and

historian Marie Nesthus (2001,133), emphasis added) suggests, Brakhage was keenly aware of the proscenium theater histories described in previous sections of this chapter:

> Troubled by what he considers to be the unquestioning identification of film or television imagery with the complex reality existing in front of any camera, he has consistently *foregrounded this skepticism* by reminding his friends and colleagues as well as his students and audiences of the *built-in perspectival conventions* that a camera lens imposes, and by drawing their attention to what he believes are the "19th-century dramatic structures" lurking behind the presentation of television news and many documentary films.

Brakhage's awareness of what I have elsewhere identified as "architectures of spectatorship" is important to keep in mind when viewing his film. Shaped by the apparatus of the 16mm experimental film camera, there are no easy narrative structures to follow across these scenes. This might explain why the other Pittsburgh Documents films have been more widely discussed over the years; the comparably less "popular" film *eyes* (1971) has, over the years, failed to materialize in posthumous screenings of Brakhage's works or in digital collections of his other experimental films.

With the assistance of kind and helpful archivists, I was able to view this film at the Brakhage Collection at the University of Colorado-Boulder campus in 2015 with one of my police interlocutors. He had agreed to accompany me to a veritable private research screening of this 16mm film in the flesh. As we sat together in the proscenium-style theater of the college's impressive film department, with the Head Academic Projectionist from the Film Studies Department above us in the projectionist's booth, Brakhage's 35-minute film flickered before us in the silent dark; as was the filmmaker's practice, *eyes* lacks narration nor sound of any kind. In defiance of classic narrative cinema conventions, *eyes* arrives as a series of flashing images, a feeling of unrelenting jump cuts that bring new images to the screen.

Soon, the viewer is interpellated by a virtual ride-along through 1970s downtown Pittsburgh as Brakhage's Bolex camera enters the interior space of the police vehicle.

Thirty years before *Training Day* and nearly two decades before John Langley would pitch his idea for *COPS* to Fox Network executives, Brakhage's shots are evocative of policing's automotive visuality present across Hollywood cinema and popular televisual images of policing. As the Pittsburgh patrol car rolls down the street, people gaze back into the car's windshield and windows, making their awareness of officers known. At times, the camera exits the car, following officers onto the street as they question a group of laughing teenagers or attend to a dead body lying in the street. The experimental film camera travels across these bodies, faces, and objects, never lingering on a particular shot for longer than a few heartbeats. Eyes and uncertain gazes populate this film, marking police vision itself as the objects of filmic inquiry.

During the viewing, I stole a view glances at my interlocutor, then a novice officer with the El Cajon police department, who began to mime some of the gestures of the officers in the film: if an officer on screen rested his hands near his holstered duty weapon, this officer in the theater would move his hands in a similar reperformance of this filmed material. At one point, he leaned over to whisper, "It's kind of crazy that these guys have their weapons in the same place as where I keep things on my belt. And this was *the 70s*." It was then that I was reminded of Vivian Sobchak's writing about the carnal experience of cinema – the phenomenology of experience moving images – destabilizing the illusion that there is a clear distinction between the embodied world of *seeing* and virtual images *seen* onscreen. Sobchak (2004) writes, "Experiencing a movie, not ever merely 'seeing' it, my lived body…subverts

the very notion of *onscreen* and *offscreen* as mutually exclusive sites or subject positions" (67). This became more clear as I sat watching an experimental film about policing with this patrol officer, his seemingly unconscious embodied movements reflecting the movements of the images onscreen.

While I had more formalized experiences reading films, experimental and otherwise, afforded by my training in communication studies, his body seemed to comprehend these images before I could make sense of the colors and forms taking shape. He ran his hands over the duty belt he wore even while not on patrol (sans firearm), tracing the braided leather as shots of Pittsburgh officers' waists, belts, buckles and handcuffs filled the entire aspect ratio of the proscenium screen. This was precisely Sobchak's experience making sense of the "'almost blindness'" in the opening shots of Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1993). In the film's establishing shot, the unfocused film camera seems to peer through black, bulbous vertical bars not entirely *conceptually* dissimilar from Fuqua's shots of Alonzo's car superimposed by black bars of steel fencing in *Training Day* discussed earlier. Unsure of these forms, Sobchak (2004, 63) describes how these seemingly unintelligible images could be interpreted by her body:

> Despite my "almost blindness," the "unrecognizable blur," and resistance of the image to my eyes, *my fingers knew what I was looking at*—and this *before* the objective reverse shot that followed to put those fingers in their proper place (that is, to put them where they could be seen objectively rather than subjectively "looked through"). What I was seeing was, in fact, from the beginning, *not* an unrecognizable image, however blurred and indeterminate in my vision, however much my eyes could not "make it out." From the first (although I didn't consciously know it until the second shot), my fingers *comprehended* that image, *grasped* it with a nearly imperceptible tingle of attention and anticipation and, offscreen, "felt themselves" as a potentiality in the subjective and fleshy situation figured onscreen.

Likewise, my screening partner's fingers seemed to *know how to see* these images onscreen. Despite these experimental film images, this officer was interpellated by this film in a manner not unlike how recruits have learned to relate to, perform, and *grasp* moving images from *Training Day* for their relevant teachings about patrol, a proposition later confirmed by this officer upon conclusion of the screening. While walking through the Boulder campus together, I asked him what he thought of the film in relation to Fuqua's more familiar Hollywood narrative about policing. His response became instructive for how I would come to interpret and make sense of Brakhage's film in later analyses:

> Well, *Training Day* definitely feels easier to follow. Gives you your heroes, people to root for, and the pacing feels normal. But there's something about this other guy's [Brakhage] film [*eyes*]. Maybe it's because it's experimental, so the shots feel really, I don't know, fast? Just, rapid fire, one after another: *shwoop, bam, this* image, now *this image, another one*, now we are on the street, now we are back in the car, a Black dude with sunglasses, another guy behind a deli counter, clipboards with paperwork. I couldn't believe my eyes. I complain about writing reports but, damn, they had to write that shit *by hand* back then, and while driving around. Loose papers and shitty pencils. I'll never complain to my sergeant ever again.

The officer's comments, in addition to serving as a kind of verbal playback of Brakhage's moving images, offer a first-person view of what it feels like to watch this film as an active patrol officer. For this officer, the pace of Brakhage's editing captures something about the speed of police vision and its connection to the automotive visuality of patrol. Just as the camera in *Training Day* moves quickly across the Black neighborhood members as Jake and Alonzo sail up the blacktop river of the Jungle in their unmarked car, so too does the camera in *eyes* perform a recognizable and "rapid fire" visualization of Pittsburgh's unnamed and seemingly unknowable policed residents. I want to extend my own reading toward three specific film stills from *eyes* (1971) reproduced in this chapter with this officer's comments in

mind to attend to subtle moments where the experimental filmmaker becomes visible to both the camera apparatus and to those largely Black subjects in the film that stare back at Brakhage on his ride-along. Based on a second viewing of the film at the Academy Film Archive in Los Angeles in January 2019, I describe my experience using a horizontal flatbed projector to move through Brakhage's film.

With the help of Edda Manriquez, a former fellow UC San Diego undergraduate visual arts student and Public Access Coordinator at the Academy Film Archive, I learned how to manipulate the projector's images, working with mechanical knobs to slow the playback of Brakhage's film or to attempt to "pause" the film on a particular image before it was replaced by a new frame.[11] This function offered the capacity for me to point out particular film stills that I later requested the Academy Film Archive reproduce as enlargements for this dissertation.

[11] Edda Procel Manriquez (https://www.eddamanriquez.com/) is also an award winning video and performance artist living in Los Angeles. She is founder and director of the Les Femmes Underground International Film Festival, an organization that showcases films from womxn filmmakers hailing from all around the world.

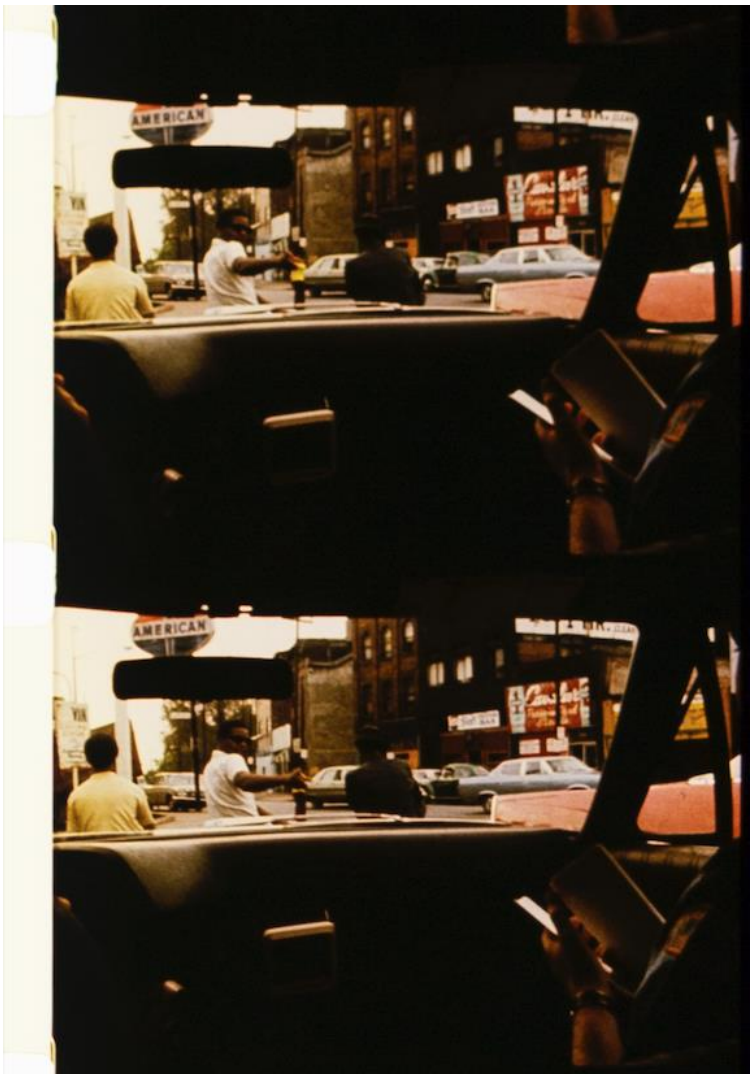

Figure 2.1: A frame enlargement of a film strip showing two frames from Stan Brakhage's *eyes* (1971) shot from inside of a Pittsburgh patrol car (Stan Brakhage, *eyes* (1971, color, silent, 35:12). Image courtesy of Marilyn Brakhage and the Academy Film Archive.

Figure 1 represents one of the first establishing shots in Brakhage's film in which the act of seeing meets the camera lens head on. Here, Brakhage's camera positions the viewer in the back seat of a patrol car, looking between the bodies of two officers seated in the front seats and out through the car's windshield. At first glance, we are looking at two frames rather than a single frame; this is a crucial difference that shapes how I methodologically read these

images, not as single moments in time, but as an *unfolding* that is theoretically connected to the materiality of film itself. In conversation with archivist and filmmaker Fred Camper, one of the key figures in maintaining Brakhage's Estate and organizing his vast archives, insisted that, "Stan thought, and Marilyn and I agree, that strips, even of only two or three frames, give a much better sense of a film as a film" (Personal correspondence, October 12, 2015). Viewing film stills in this way illustrates the subtle differences between these moving images frame-by-frame. In these shots, the dark interior of patrol car seems to conceal the identities of the officers in its front seat; we cannot see their faces, and are only given a view of an officer in the passenger's seat holding field note materials used to write down the contact information for people they encounter while patrolling.

Three Black men are seated on benches in front of the parked patrol car, and one appears to be drinking a soda of some kind. It is unclear if the officer on the right side of the still is taking notes related to the men beyond the windshield or not. Just as the central figure, the Black man in the white tee shirt and black sunglasses, turns to look at the patrol car, it reverses away. He interpellates these officers with a pointing gesture, and we arrive full circle from the El Cajon ethnographic vignette that opened this chapter to Pittsburgh's ethnographic field where the automotive visuality of the patrol car exists in a visual field occupied by overlapping and competing ways of seeing, from the mobilized gaze of the officers that can broaden the distance between being observed and becoming fast-moving observers, to the discerning vision of the Black residents in Figure 1. These shots establish that Brakhage's ride-along has begun, but this is the first moment in the film where the neighborhood's residents look back *through* the car's windshield, and potentially back into the camera's lens.

Figure 2.2: A frame enlargement of a film strip showing two frames from Stan Brakhage's *eyes* (1971) from inside the patrol car. Stan Brakhage, *eyes* (1971, color, silent, 35:12). Courtesy of the Estate of Stan Brakhage and Fred Camper, www.fredcamper.com.

Figure 2.3: A frame enlargement of a film strip showing two frames from Stan Brakhage's *eyes* (1971) shot patrol car (Stan Brakhage, *Eyes* (1971, color, silent, 35:12). Image courtesy of Marilyn Brakhage and the Academy Film Archive.

In Figures 2 and 3, we see one two distinct shots of a Pittsburgh patrol officer's eyes as he drives the patrol car. Captured in the rear-view mirror, only the top portion of his face is visible, and we are drawn to his gaze. In Figure 2, the street stretches ahead of the vehicle into a horizon of buildings and streetlights, the overcast weather filtering the light through the clouds and bathing the dashboard in a milky glow as though a fine film of petroleum jelly was

smudged across the lens. In Figure 3, however, the filmmaker himself comes into view for only a brief moment. This is the only time in the film that any part of Brakhage's body is visible. His arm is reflected by the car's rearview mirror as it holds the Bolex in an upright position. Seated in the backseat of the patrol car, Brakhage's camera interpellates the viewer, positioning a "we" that can meet both the gaze of the officer and experience ourselves as a body along for the ride.

Throughout the film, Brakhage shoots objects and people slightly off-center or too-low, rarely bringing the camera up to look at anyone "dead-on." Instead of painting typical portraits of film characters, he instead offers images of officer's accoutrements: badges shine, utility belts swing heavily around officers' waists as their paunches protrude behind pressed shirts, and stylized mustaches signify the cultural taste of Pittsburgh officers at the time. The majority of the time, Brakhage uses the zoom feature to draw the objects and people in the field closer to the viewer in a way that both abstracts and forces an audience to see uncomfortable moments up close. In some ways, Brakhage's mobile film camera operates similarly to the visuality of shows like *COPS* whose camera operators frequently use zooms and close-ups of suspects or "victims" of crime in the field, leaving little distance for a subject's anonymity. However, as Fred Turner (1999) explains, these operators "seek out not just the point of view of the officers, but points of view suggested by their *weapons*" (178). By interpellating a viewer through the subject position of a weapon, the camera operators participate in weaponizing the televisual ride-along in *COPS*. Turner elaborates on several key shots that construct this weaponization of the "ride along" in television programs (178):

> In police cars on the way to crime scenes, camera operators record the dashboard and radio from the waist-level vantage point of a gun belt. At the

> moment of capture, they point their lenses down at prone subjects like pistols. When those lenses zoom in on key parts of a suspect's body—a pocket, a scarred chest, and, especially often, the buttocks (a place where a weapon or drugs might be hidden and where a suspect might be penetrated sexually)—they draw the viewer toward the suspect along the trajectory of an imaginary bullet.

In these scenes, the officers – the heroes leading the camera operator on a ride-along – retain a "respectable" distance from the camera while suspects are visually penetrated, arrested, and captured by the camera. Brakhage, however, reverses this model, using his camera to treat the officers in *eyes* (1971) as though they were microbes under a microscope, zooming in and moving around the glass plate to bring new constituent elements of a discrete being into view. Rather than shoot from the perspective of officers' weapons, he *zooms in* on their weapons, objectifying the tacitly violent tools of patrol. These shots mark a representational difference as well as a methodological one: without the constraints of narrative storyboards or beholden to a team of producers constructing highly circumscribed narratives to develop episodic or season-based arc, Brakhage's film invites a more distanced affiliation with the figures in the film, whether they are dead bodies in the street or a pair of cinematically excised eyes framed by the windshield's rearview mirror.

Figure 2.4: A frame enlargement of a film strip showing two frames from Stan Brakhage's *eyes* (1971) in which two figures are framed by the passenger's side window of the patrol car (Stan Brakhage, *Eyes* (1971, color, silent, 35:12). Image courtesy of Marilyn Brakhage and the Academy Film Archive.

While within the limits and affordances of the ride-along, Brakhage is able to both deconstruct the totality of police vision by framing its many parts into smaller pieces. He also presents moments where the resilient vision of Black policed citizens gaze back at the officers on patrol. In Figure 4, this penetrating gaze is offered by a Black woman in a sleeveless,

cobalt blue paisley dress adorned with a long necklace made of an assortment of stones or other material. Her circular sunglasses veil her gaze, but the locus of her attention is clear: Brakhage's Bolex camera, perched over the shoulder of another officer in the passenger seat. There is another officer standing outside of the car, but he is cut off from the frame of the camera. The woman's companion looks to his left, offscreen and in the direction that matches that of the standing officer. As viewers along for a virtual ride-along made possible by the experimental camera, Brakhage's film visualizes the consequences of this cinematic vision for Black community members of Pittsburgh and for the filmmaker himself.

At the beginning of a lecture in which he screened *eyes* (1971) for the class, Brakhage noted his feelings of anticipation at being invited to film police, and how this fear interpellated him as they were expressed by his ride-along officers (Brakhage 1970): "I was additionally afraid because it turned out the only precinct that would permit this was the one in the Black ghetto, and I was afraid because, in fact, the police were afraid and because they said things to us like, you know, "Normally it'll be alright, but if we get into a real spot, we just have to let you out onto the street." Which, of course, could mean in the middle of a riot of any kind, or any kind of disorder, it was a terrifying experience" (Brakhage 1970).

However, what began as apprehension about being embedded, however briefly, into daily scenes of policed Black life were also entangled in an emotional commitment to play. This was not the emotional position of distanced observer, but of a participant who *plays*: "I began to really be scared because…I was, too, then confronted with the literal fact and forgetting that I could be there and play. To *play* in the backseat of a police car? Unheard of."

Following this statement, the lecture hall fills with brief laughter from the listening students in the audio recording, as though the notion of play was incommensurable in sites of policing.

In this same recorded lecture at the University of Colorado, Boulder (Brakhage 1970), Brakhage expanded on the mandate of play that emerged after a critical incident in which the officers came upon a dead body in the road during the "unofficial" ride-along; as stated previously, the officers were told by their supervisors to put on a show for Brakhage by pretending like they were on patrol, when in reality they were not actively taking calls for service and instead acting as pistol-carrying docents guiding the filmmaker through a glorified tour of the city in a patrol car. After agreeing to radio dispatch and inform the station that they dropped Brakhage and his accompanying photographer Mike Chikiris off on the side of the road – a total fabrication – the officers began receiving calls. Seemingly stripped of its artifice and no longer constrained by the meddling of top brass officials in the department who seemed, by all accounts, intent on limiting what Brakhage might see and film, the "real" ride-along could begin. In the audio recording of his lecture, Brakhage summarizes what he witnessed officers do in the field as a kind of "play," marking it as a central *method* that shapes how *both police and the experimental filmmaker* react to unfolding crises. He recounts these moments of play after the patrol car pulls up to a scene of a man lying dead in the street (Brakhage 1970, emphasis added):

> And in fact *how* they do it, and this is the real point I want to make, is they play. *They play*. And they don't play in that sense that an artist does, it is a play within a very narrow restriction. They play like military school boys, but it is still child's play, it still has the vestiges of child's play, of let's say, upper-age military school boys. The impulse to survive is in play, their responsibilities are…to *look*, that's their job, one of them then writes, the other *drives*…Watching play and being in the spirit of play is to mean that the eyes play first: *the play of the eyes*. And it happens first usually or most intensively

> or obviously from my experience in raising children when there is a crisis, and for me this moment was altogether a crisis, and I jumped out of the car and I was working with the Bolex with a zoom lens, and other cars were coming up from all directions, other police cars and blocking off traffic and then the homicide squad arrives and then a detective gets out who is obviously in charge, a homicide chief, and suddenly he turns on me with the camera and says, "No! You may not photograph the body! Don't *ever* photograph the body!" And I was shocked and terrified and retreated back into the backseat of the police car and sat there, and then I thought, "I just have to go on with this," so…I began photographing with this 15-inch handheld and…then forgot everything else, including the orders of the detective and got out of the car and began roaming everywhere and shooting everything…If you *play really fully enough, no one can interfere with your play*, and any of us that could play fully all through the interstices of this society can, for the most part, pass unnoticed.

For Brakhage, the kind of play that officers participate in – as one being connected to militarized, enforced repertoires of survival – is what I discussed in Chapter 1 by examining how cinematic scripts as seen with films like *Training Day* (2001) enable police recruits to play with enacting violence, authority, and normative masculinity.

In defiance of the Pittsburgh detective's warning to "not photograph the body…*ever*," Brakhage's decision to climb back out of the patrol vehicle with his 15-inch handheld camera and shoot the dead body with a zoom lens is, by the filmmaker's own estimation, a kind of brazen act of play that resists the power of the police by fully *embracing* the shared repertoire of play across the fields of policing and photography. It is a form of play so utterly committed that it can, in the words of Brakhage, "pass unnoticed." Indeed, Brakhage continued his ride-alongs with Pittsburgh patrol officers and no one interfered with his filming in the days that followed. By embodying his role as filmmaker with his camera so resolutely, Brakhage was able to cloak himself in the very power of policing that emerges through these acts of seeing yet does not remain *answerable* to the images that are produced or the afterlives of events

where officers mediate, categorize, and articulate scenes of violence as part of their daily patrol duties.

The power inherent in "forgetting everything else" and continuing shooting in the field illustrates how the experimental filmmaker evades the core tenets and ideological principles that undergird both policing and image-making practices of photojournalists who are tasked with protecting the identities and anonymity of victims (Leone 1992). As the following chapter illustrates, however, these ideological and ethical positions are flexibly navigated by police and press in practice, despite the detective's clear instruction that Brakhage never film a dead body. This is precisely Susan Sontag's critique levied against the violence of photography by metaphorically comparing the camera's automated machine-seeing to the violent potential embedded within the very automated mechanisms of automobiles and firearms (1977, 14):

> Like a car, a camera is sold as a predatory weapon—one that's as automated as possible, ready to spring...Manufacturers reassure their customers…that the machine is all-knowing, and responds to the slightest pressure of the will. It's as simple as turning the ignition key or pulling the trigger. Like guns and cars, cameras are fantasy-machines whose use is addictive…The camera/gun does not kill, so the ominous metaphor seems to be all bluff…Still, there is something predatory in the act of taking a picture. To photography people is to violate them…it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed. Just as the camera is a sublimation of the gun, to photograph someone is a sublimated murder.

While Brakhage worked outside of traditions of documentary or Hollywood filmmaking that could allow him to turn a profit from the act of turning "people into objects," Sontag's triangulation of a shared violence located between the praxis of driving, shooting a gun, and shooting images with a camera brings my arguments in Chapter 1 and 2 together, though I would suggest that the violent potentiality of the "camera/gun" duo is not metaphorical, nor

"all bluff"; the violence of seeing mediated through the mobility of the patrol vehicle and the structured police ride-along cannot be overstated, and will reveal itself in the tacit enforcement of policing bodies in the ethnographic field in El Cajon in later chapters.

Likewise, Brakhage's embrace of the 16-millimeter mobile camera offers him the ability to be in close proximity to violence exactly because he is embedded on a ride-along with officers, even as he willfully defies their explicit orders to not film certain events or encounters. As an apparatus of play with parallel power to the weapons on the Pittsburgh officers' utility belts, the mobile camera's complicity in the ride-along, even as it films in excess of what the officers or supervisors can control, must be understood in relation to the mobility and authority of the police vehicle itself.

Brakhage's *eyes* (1971) is an opportunity to see how a filmmaker uses the *document* form to reflect on what the ride-along itself offers our vision, and I argue it also offers us an epistemological vehicle for thinking through the limits of the ride-along for seeing how police vision operates. Trinh T. Minh-ha's insistence in her film *Reassemblage* (1982) – "I do not intend to speak for, only nearby" – is an instructive diving rod for meditating on how the mobile visions of policing made possible by the cinematic architectures that prefigure the ride-along in *The Police Tapes* (1977), *Training Day* (2001), and *eyes* (1971) sustain a filmic alignment with the officers' ideological visions about policing poverty, inequality, and blackness in the city. Even Brakhage's experimental *document* of policing in Pittsburgh is, despite its formal film qualities and its moral ethos to document unruly and unfolding realities rather than bind images to a more easily digestible and familiar narrative form, unable to venture far from the material constraints and constrained visuals of the ride-along.

2.7 Conclusion

Concluding this chapter with Brakhage's images is both an attempt to historically locate the first cinematic ride-along, and to imagine how the ride-along, even in experimental cinema, limits what can be seen about policing. I have tried to argue that the windshield as screen locates police in constantly idealized positionalities that are both gendered and racialized arrangements of normative masculinity, an archetypically *assumed* male gaze that beholds the world. By moving through the feminist film scholarship of Friedberg, Cartwright, Sobchack and others, precinematic architectures become significant origin points for reading the material and social conditions of patrol work. Policing is cinematic not simply because cinematic representations of policing emerge in the training worlds of officers and recruits, or as an extension of the proscenium frames that eventually make their way into the windshield screens of automobiles and into the mobile film apparatus, but because the very *formation* and maintenance of the ride-along has routinely depended upon a reciprocal relationship between media and law enforcement in the United States.

The following chapter examines this history of the ride-along alongside my ethnographic experiences riding along with officers from El Cajon as they learn how to police both newcomers from refugee communities that include Assyrian, Chaldean, Arabic, and African neighborhood members and longtime residents. Through this history, the transformations in mobility of both the automobile and the film camera as discussed in this chapter offer further compelling intersections to examine popular representations of the ride-along in televisual images seen in syndicated programs like Fox Network's *COPS* (1989-) in Chapter 3. The enduring language of play that hails the experimental filmmaker as ride-along

participant echoes across this history when looking closely at early media ride-alongs at the turn of the century; by agreeing to "play along" with law enforcement agencies, members of the press invited on police ride-alongs could benefit from an authorized proximity to unfolding, newsworthy crises as they were captured by journalists and their accompanying photographers.

As the origins of the ride-along reveal itself across various historical materials, they offer important new insights into the scenes of daily life in El Cajon where policed communities live with the consequences of officers' tacitly violent mobilities on patrol that will be presented in Chapter 4. These scenes also beg the question: what about other bodies that make new kinds of arrangements and readings upon the world that do not fit the archetypical and architectural spectatorship built into the mobile visuality of the ride along? This inquiry marks the narrative arc of the remaining chapters of this dissertation as we follow the historical development of the ride-along from the nineteenth-century into the contemporary patrol field in El Cajon.

Chapter 2 is a partial reprint of the material as it appears in: Aushana, Christina. 2019. "Seeing Police: Cinematic Training and the Scripting of Police Vision." *Surveillance & Society.* 17 (3/4): 367–381. The dissertation author was the sole author of this material.

Chapter 3

Epistemological Vehicles: Historicizing the Ride-Along and Methodological Entanglements Across Media and Ethnography

3.1 Introduction: "You get to sit up here with me."

Scene One

"So, what are you writing about?" Ten minutes after we have driven away from a traffic stop, the officer's question stops my train of thought and my pen mid-sentence, the felt tip bleeding through several sheets of lined paper. We are coasting down a wide street near one of El Cajon's many strip malls, and the officer turns on the patrol car's lightbar – a visual warning to nearby motorists to give him a wide berth – as he hooks an aggressive right turn that scrapes the tire's sidewall against the curb. My vision bounces as I read my notes, a stream of shorthand notations detailing how Officer Rawlins, the white male officer in his late twenties seated next to me, approached the middle-aged Chaldean man behind the wheel of a sedan minutes earlier and ordered him out of the car during the encounter. In the tense unfolding of events that brought two more patrol cars to the scene, the man struggled to speak in English, emphasizing a few familiar words with raised palms in frustration as the three officers took turns questioning him. One pointed at the expired registration tag, while another made a drinking gesture with his right hand, asking the motorist loudly, "Drinking? You drink? Drink? Why you don't stop when this officer turn on his flashing lights, hm?" Seemingly overwhelmed by the overlapping questions, the man

muttered to himself in what sounded like frustrated Arabic. Officer Rawlins, still holding the man's license and wallet, turned to his colleagues and put his hands palms-down in a gesture suggesting they "ease off." "Listen, the next time a cop comes behind you," Rawlins began, his voice taking on the quality of a disciplinarian as he walked back toward the patrol car where I watched their interaction, and tapped roughly on the car's light fixtures, "When this turns on, you pull over fast. Okay? Understand?" The man nodded at him before squinting his eyes at me as though noticing me seated in the front seat of the patrol car for the first time. The officer let him go with a verbal warning: "You need a new registration sticker. Please make sure you do this very soon."

"Well," I start to say, "I'm just curious about how officers manage everyday interactions with people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. I wrote down a few things about how English didn't seem like that man's first language and it just seemed like there was a miscommunication between him and—"

"It's not easy," Rawlins interrupts, "There's a lot you need to take in when you're on patrol. You need to be alert, writing down notes, you need to listen to what a perp is telling you while you've got constant dispatch traffic blasting in your ear."

He taps the side of his Motorola earpiece for emphasis, and then gestures to the computer-aided dispatch console in the center of our moving vehicle, "Trying to keep track of the pending calls is a part of it, too. And you do that while driving. You get used to the multi-tasking, but it's still a hard job, and when I stop people, all I'm looking for is for them to make my job easier by giving me the information I need so I can be on my way."

"Yes, it does look hard," I reply, trying to sound genuinely sympathetic to the officer's defensive interruption, "I guess it just must also be hard when you're stopped and, I don't know, maybe you haven't had a lot of interactions with police so you're not sure what to do."

"Don't you think that's a little biased?" I am taken aback by this suggestion as he continues, "You're assuming what that guy can and cannot understand. Look, I'd rather question someone for a few minutes, even if it's uncomfortable, in order to get the compliance I need rather than put someone back there. *No one* likes to sit back *there*."

He knocks his knuckles against the surface of the steel lattice barrier separating the front seat of the patrol car from the Crown Victoria's cramped backseat, a mobile cage for transporting subjects between sites of detention from El Cajon's small jail to San Diego's Central Jail facility downtown.

"You're lucky, though," he says with a smile and a hint of sarcasm, "You get to be up here with me."

Scene Two

"*Suraye*?" I hear this question as I am writing field notes while standing off to the side of a group of officers who are questioning a Black man on a public sidewalk, his belongings strewn on the ground around him. A small group of passersby have assembled to watch the encounter: a Mexican woman and her daughter, a few teenagers walking home from a nearby high school, and an older couple. The man is arguing that he hasn't done anything wrong while the officers repeat their refrain, "Calm down, sir. You can't obstruct

the sidewalk like this or camp out here. If you want, we can help move your stuff for you." The irony of their own improvisational blockade – several patrol cars blocking the bike lane and forcing pedestrians to walk around the scene and into the road – seems lost on these officers. I am leaning against the patrol car's passenger door when an elderly Chaldean woman, her arm hooked around her younger male companion, taps me lightly on the forearm, a hint of recognition in her eyes, "*Suraye*?" I realize she is asking me if I am Assyrian, and I smile, nodding, "Yes, my dad is from Baghdad. Are you from Iraq?" She looks at me confused, and then over at the officers, pointing at them. She says something that I cannot understand, and her companion translates, "She asking, 'You are police?'" "Oh, no. No, this is a ride-along," I say, repeating myself unnecessarily, "I am a student researcher on a ride-along. Look."

In an effort to prove that I am *not* a police officer, I take my phone out to show her my student profile page on my graduate department's website. She squeezes my forearm gently with the familiar grip of a grandmother that says, "Don't worry." She is already walking away from the scene assisted by her companion, her cane clicking against the pavement.

When this pair leaves, I try to refocus on my notes and push away the uneasy feeling of how visible I can become on a ride-along, despite my best efforts to render myself inconspicuous in the unfolding mise-en-scène of police contacts in the field.

In surveying my writing, I notice how similar my ethnographic descriptions are to officers' field notes and police reports, including the use of shorthand to visually describe policed subjects in the field according to perceived race, gender, age, and other physical

characteristics. These are a list of seemingly finite and fixed categories – what Mike Arntfield describes as "hegemonic shorthand" (2008, 77) – used by officers to taxonomize, quantify, and organize data about police-citizen encounters. Above my unfolding narrative detailing the officers' attempts to move this houseless Black man from public view, an austere list of descriptors occluding the complexity of the man's own narrative: "BM, 50s, about 5'9", possible PC 647F, no felony warrants."[1]

When I first began riding along with officers in 2015, I did not consider how and why there was already built into the institution of policing a mechanism for me to conveniently observe policing in action. I would come to realize perhaps I was not alone in taking the ride-along for granted as a site for examining the empirical unfolding of police decision-making in real-time. While the ride-along appears in the methodology sections of anthropologists' and sociologists' manuscripts on policing, (Herbert 1996; Fassin 2013), few theoretically examine how its historical foundations might shape the researcher's ethnographic analysis and *interpretive vision* of officers' actions and the situated learning of recruits in the field.[2] As demonstrated in Scene 2, the ride-along can also shape how the ethnographer learns to see and make sense of policing by adopting its written shorthand in praxis, a seemingly inconsequential detail that illustrates how these linguistic architectures can shape the interpretive vision of the ethnographer. These moments of recognition – of the

[1] This shorthand is taught to officers in the academy before entering the patrol field. For example, "BM" is shorthand for "Black male," and "PC 647F" is a California penal code for "Drunk in public."
[2] Later sections of this chapter will directly address some examples from the canon of police research developed in the 1970s.

epistemological entanglements between police and the ride-along researcher – live alongside more frequent encounters like in Scene 1, where officers are eager to explain the obstacles that they face on the job by using the shared space of the vehicle as visible proof of this difficulty: screens and other technologies assail them while on patrol as described in the previous chapter. These moments also importantly ask the ride-along researcher to imagine what it might feel like to move from the front seat of the patrol car to the back seat, a proposal that works to reify the significance and, in the eyes of Officer Rawlins, relative privilege of being allowed to ride-along in the front seat of the vehicle with patrol officers in the field.

For anthropologists and sociologists who study police practices *in situ*, the ride-along remains a significant rhetorical and methodological vehicle for examining how recruits learn to police in the field. After all, it is in the moving patrol car where newly-graduated officers are partnered up with Field Training Officers (FTOs) tasked with guiding these rookies during their work shifts, and where researchers and reporters have historically been invited to witness policing in action. The sociality of these recruit-training officer ride-alongs, formalized durations of time that ensure new officers are not left to their own devices in the field when they begin their probationary duties, necessarily brings these recruits into a mode of collective seeing with their training officers. This is equally true for ride-along researchers writing ethnographies on policing. I argue that tracking the transformation of the ride-along in the United States presents a site of inquiry for examining the methodological entanglements between researchers, officers, and media organizations as each group shares overlapping – and sometimes divergent – practices for learning how to see and represent interactions between police and policed communities. In this chapter, I consider how the ride-along is an

epistemological vehicle, one that operates politically and racially in policing new arrivals in key moments in U.S. history by asserting the hegemonic gaze of the police, and that also positions the ethnographer to confront what connects her to those she views on the other side of the mobile patrol car's windshield pane.

3.2 Chapter Overview

In Chapter 2 I examined how the ride-along as an architecture of spectatorship materially and socially arranges the vision of officers and their ride-along participants on patrol through the moving police vehicle. This chapter offers a closer look at how the police ride-along developed in the United States alongside periods of migration that shaped and justified new tactics of law enforcement for policing newcomers, particularly in response to growing urban populations of Black, Mexican, Arabic, Chaldean, and Assyrian communities. In doing so, it attempts to weave together a history of the ride-along as a *broad* historical formation in the United States rather than an object of study with a singular or stable point of origin. While the ride-along has been a key methodological component for studies of policing in anthropology, sociology, and elsewhere, it has not been an object of study in and of itself. Nor has it been discussed in terms of its historical and political project of asserting the hegemony of police vision and the consequences of this vision for policed community members in El Cajon who migrated as refugees from South West Asian and North African (SWANA) communities abroad. This is a necessary move to reveal how racialized policing not only locates SWANA refugees as visible subjects for policing, but how the ethnographer experiences a transformation of her own subjectivity as she moves from the front seat of the

ride-along where she is invited to witness the policing of SWANA subjects in action, to the backseat where she is rendered a policed subject.

Before examining the specificity of my own participation in ride-alongs with police through El Cajon's refugee communities produced in large by U.S. military interventions that follow in Chapter 4, I turn first to an examination of the history of the police-citizen ride along. I locate these origins in the "media ride-along" and its role in asserting the hegemony of a mobile police point-of-view that emerges in local news reporters' accounts of new mobile police technologies at the turn of the century. The "media ride-along," a practice in which journalists or members from a press outlet would accompany police officers in the patrol field to document their work, began in the late nineteenth century when the first patrol wagons were constructed and utilized by large police departments in urban centers like Chicago. From the privileged vantage point of the patrol car, media ride-along participants became viewers of often violent civilian-police encounters in private spaces. Catalyzed by civilian lawsuits beginning in the 1960s, this viewership became a contested, discursive site where U.S. courts and legal historians examined the pressure points between the First Amendment rights of media outlets and the Fourth Amendment privacy rights of citizens. In addition to establishing a genealogical literature of ride-alongs in United States legal cases, these precedent court rulings from the 1960s to the 1990s evidence a twinned development of the ride along formation alongside televisual media content that relied on ride-alongs to produce broadcast images of policing for a viewing public, including popular programs like *COPS* (1989-). These court cases would transform local police department policies for establishing citizen ride-alongs as formal extensions of community policing strategies developed in the U.S. in the

1980s, leaving an indelible mark on the visual culture of U.S. policing and on scholarly methods through which academic knowledge about policing is normatively produced.

3.3 Ride-Along Histories: Media Ride-Alongs and Legal Precedents for Televisual Policing

As a historical formation, police ride-alongs have developed locally and unevenly nation-wide since the turn of the century when the introduction of horse-drawn police wagons marked a new kind of transformational mobility for everyday patrol beats across nineteenth century American cities. In tandem with key developments in radio communications and radio dispatch systems (Deflem and Chicoine 2014), more aggressive foot patrol tactics in urban areas became responsible for patrolling more racially diverse neighborhoods. These technological intersections facilitated the incipient transformation from the foot patrols of the nineteenth century to mobile policing in the twentieth century. While foot patrols remained the key strategy for policing neighborhoods in the name of keeping "crime and disorder" at bay by placing officers within assigned geographic areas known as "beats" (Kelling 1988), mobile policing – first instantiated in the form of horse-drawn wagons in the late-nineteenth century – only expanded police departments' capacities to patrol more widely and frequently, allowing officers in wagons to cover more ground in a shorter amount of time and further enact disproportional styles of mobile policing in increasingly racially segregated communities. Kept at station houses throughout the city alongside fire engine houses, these horse-drawn wagons enabled officers to remain at a central location and then depart quickly

to a call while allowing them to ferry prisoner transports or those who needed medical attention away from a scene.

It is no accident that these developments in policing coincided with the Great Migration of Black Americans from the South to the North, and took place within population-dense centers of industrialization in northern cities like Chicago, Akron, and Cincinnati that experienced, among more spectacular disasters like the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, pandemic outbreaks and labor accidents associated with factory work. This is a telling development coinciding with the disciplining of a new labor force following the Great Migration: To meet the needs of these growing metropolises and to maintain order in the face of overlapping urbanization crises, some of these cities collaborated on new mobile policing technologies, resulting in the construction of the first patrol wagon (Marks 1983, Hahn 2003). A *Chicago Tribune* article published on October 26, 1881, entitled, "A Model Patrol Wagon," details the introduction of "a new fire and police patrol wagon, built for service in Cincinnati" that was a collaborative development effort between Cincinnati and Chicago, including new practical design elements like "two brass bull's-eye lanterns on the sides in front, which can be taken off and used by police" for increased mobile visibility.[3] The horse-drawn wagon, not yet powered by electricity or gasoline, was all the same noted as a significant marker of progress of a more routinely mobile and efficient police force: "This is the first wagon built, and is a model in its way" (*Chicago Tribune* 1881). At the forefront of police technology before the

[3] These newspaper accounts were found in the online archives of Newspapers.com, a vast collection of digitized United States periodicals dating back to the nineteenth century.

turn of the century, Chicago became the first police department in the United States to be formally equipped with a mobile patrol wagon.

The transition from horse-drawn police wagons to horseless patrol wagons during this time period was routinely documented by reporters, whose writing included scenic, quasi ethnographic-like descriptions of city officials and chiefs of police interacting with these machines as they drove through urban neighborhoods en route to calls for service. This suggests that assigned or selected journalists were not only "on scene" at public displays of these new vehicles, but provided privileged opportunities to ride-along with police officials *inside* these inventions. For example, less than two years later in 1883 after the first patrol wagon was introduced in Chicago, *The Dayton Daily Herald* newspaper would publish a *Chicago Times* reporter's account from an evening spent riding along with Chicago officers in their eponymously named "Red Wagon" after he was assigned to "write up the patrol-wagon system."

This account serves as the first press documentation of what would later come to be called a *media ride-along,* and offers almost shot-by-shot descriptions of the unfolding action in a time when scientific screening technologies, such as developments in X-rays and the photographic motion studies of Muybridge and Marey, depended upon sequential, shot-by-shot images to track new mobilities at the turn of the century (discussed in Chapter 2). After arriving at the station house where officers gathered in the performance of their duties, a disturbance call is received and the *Chicago Times* ride-along participant offers a sensorial narrative of the ride-along as place of dramatic action, describing the reporter's own

enthusiasm in the style of one of Charles Dickens' optimistic characters (*The Dayton Daily Herald* 1883):

> The Times man stationed himself in the patrol barn, Micawber-like, waiting for something to turn up. The wait was not a long one, for in a few moments a reverie was interrupted by the 'b-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r,' of the electric annunciator. 'Hello!' 'Clark and Twelfth streets; big fight reported by Officer Clare.' By an ingenious electric appliance, when the alarm-bell was rung, the doors of the horses' stalls were thrown open, and the intelligent animals were in a second at their places by the wagon-pole…All this was done in about two seconds, the ponderous doors swung open—Down Harrison street goes the big wagon…'Clang, clang, clang!' sounds the huge gong.

When the wagon arrives on scene, the reporter takes note of an "old, drunk, vile and disgusting" woman who had been in a fight with several other women at what he misogynistically maligns in writing as an "iniquitous place" and "den of infamy," or what in practice was a brothel of some kind for sex workers. While the officers attend to the victim's superficial wounds, she dictates some details of her assault, including that the proprietor of the establishment and alleged perpetrator of violence to be "a negress," resulting in the arrest of "several wretches, black and white" who were pulled from the building in an impromptu police raid and placed under arrest.[4] The ride-along reporter, now no longer interested in the technological ephemera or mechanisms that constitute the horse-drawn police wagon, becomes a key participant in both the instrumental enforcement of policing's state-sanctioned moral order and journalism's moral values (Glasser and Ettema 1989). Having observed

[4] While the *Chicago Times* reporter does not continually identify speakers throughout his account – indeed, he does not even designate when *he* is speaking or asking a question – he notes a moment where two speakers address each other regarding the arrest. The speaker, whose incredulous inquiry suggests he may be the ride-along reporter, asks, "Can it be possible that women, even of such a low class, associate with negro women, as co-inmates of such places?" The respondent, presumably an officer due to the confidence of his reply that indicates past experience arresting sex workers, answers, "Indeed they do, lots of them, and there are plenty of white men who visit negro women in such houses" (*The Dayton Daily Herald* 1883).

officers' interactions with "humanity's outcasts" during the course of his all-night ride-along, the reporter offers no concluding thoughts beyond a pastoral and romantic gesture: after joining the wagon team on a half-dozen other calls, the reporter recounts sitting next to patrolman Charley in the wagon as "a panorama was unrolled which was well worth staying up all night to see. The broad expanse of blue Lake Michigan lay unruffled and serene in the early dawn" (*The Dayton Daily Herald* 1883).

This first instantiation of the media ride-along formation demonstrates not only the origins that naturalized an approved observer to witness and write about police work and crime control efforts, but how the politics of the first ride-along itself reveal a racialized and gendered mobile vision. Even the seemingly innocuous conclusion to the *Chicago Times* reporter's account implicitly aligns itself with the vision of the patrolman next to him, and thus also invites newspaper readers nationwide to experience this vision for themselves, whether officers are violently dragging Black and white sex workers into the street or enjoying a placid lake sunrise. The ride-along reporter's vision, far from an impartial or distanced observer, also significantly summons and embodies the founding, originary racialized, racist, and violent vision of officers as they police Black women's bodies in urban cities like Chicago and New York (Carby 1992). It is no insignificant detail that the first documented ride-along also documents what Moya Bailey (2016, 2021) and Trudy aka @thetrudz (Bailey and Trudy 2018) brand "misogynoir," anti-Black misogyny directed toward Black women that was, and remains, as I argue in following chapters, a core performative model for policing in the twenty-first century (Jones 2021).

With the arrival of Black Americans from the South and the continued anti-Black violence enacted against Black migrants and Black northerners by white communities (Balto 2019), police departments in urbanized areas became early breeding grounds for this kind of racial violence as laborers and abolitionists continually organized against police crackdowns of collective activity in a place known to be "the most violent, turbulent city in the country" (Mitrani 2013, 5). These late nineteenth century developments, including nearly universally-white male police forces dominating Black communities and white neighborhoods creating their own ad hoc police forces to inform departments of Black organizers' activities at the request of the city mayor, helped to establish the foundational anti-Blackness and misogynoir that shaped contemporary cities like Chicago where police kill Black people at a rate 22.5 times that of white people (Mapping Police Violence 2021). With growing Black populations to control, police departments in urban contexts became, from the perspective of city officials and police administrators, optimal testing grounds for the deployment of horseless technologies like automobiles.

Parallel developments for policing new waves of migration in the American Southwest and managing the rapid development of "boom town" economies propelled by the California and Klondike gold rushes (Ruddell 2011) during from the 1850s to the 1890s were catalyzed by the arrival of Anglo-American settlers seeking opportunity to profit from the extractive gears of racial capitalism on the nation's Pacific Coast. New arrivals included white Southerners who "successfully transplanted the labor practices that underpinned slavery in the American South to California soil" (Smith 2011, 40). With these new arrivals came changing demographics that necessitated the development of infrastructure to sustain a growing

populace. As Kelly Lytle Hernández notes, the use of chain gangs who widened roads and labored to develop public space under the state's carceral regime served as the ongoing foundation for California's population boom during this period: "With the gold mines receiving tens of thousands of migrants every month, the total state population surged from roughly 92,000 in 1850 to 380,000 in 1860" (2017, 37). This influx of white settlers displaced largely Mexican and Native families who had lived in small towns like Los Angeles for generations, and resulted in rising levels of racialized and *authorized, sanctioned* terror inflicted upon both free and unfree Black people, Native peoples, and Chinese immigrants perpetuated by white miners and U.S. marshals. Hernández describes one massacre in Los Angeles in 1871 in which white residents mobbed and set fire to "Chinese homes and businesses. Among the participants were a local judge, the district attorney, the county sheriff, and a future county supervisor" (2017, 66). Within the concurrent context of the Great Migration of Black Americans from Southern territories to Northern metropolises like Chicago and the rising violences against racialized mining laborers thousands of miles away in California, the expansion of mining economies also reveal tensions between claims to citizenship and illegality used to police immigration. Juan Poblete describes how social constructions of racialized "foreign miners" prefigured the stereotypical image of the dangerous Latino "illegal alien" and contributed to growing fears and tensions for how to police these "impossible subjects" (Ngai 2014) whose visibility and claims to belonging rendered them subject to tacit violences of the state (2016, 279):

> In the context of the early Gold Rush, all miners—American, Chilean, Peruvian, Mexican, Californio, Chinese, Australian—were in the words of Josiah Royce 'trespassers' and 'intruders' because they were all making private claims in what were legally federal lands. However, because land

> claims necessarily involved claims to citizenship, Gold Rush California could be seen as a kind of political, social, and cultural laboratory for the articulation of land rights and citizenship status for minority groups.

During this time in which overlapping waves of migration are sweeping from south to north, and east to west across the United States, the first recorded case of Chaldean immigration to the United States arrives in the form of Zia Attalla, a Chaldean man who left his home in Tel Keppe, Northern Iraq and entered the United States in in 1889 (Sengstock, 1983). Attalla's arrival would prefigure the emergence of a new "low skilled" labor force of Assyrians and Chaldeans, also identified broadly as "Iraqi Christians," that would join other Black, Filipino, Polish, and Maltese immigrants on Ford's assembly line in burgeoning automobile factories in Detroit and elsewhere (Adhya 2017). A year later, the first automobile built for police patrol would mark another milestone in the development of the ride-along that would become another technique for policing newcomers in cities like El Cajon, California.

A news story in *The Akron Ohio Beacon Journal* (1900) entitled, "That Balking Auto," details the exhibition of the first police automobile designed for the Akron Police Department and mentions that "distinguished guests from Cleveland were to be given a ride in the wagon." The reporter describes the reactions of the riders in the automobile – "Everybody was happy" – as they passed a horse-drawn police wagon, a symbolic act of technological superiority soon interrupted by the automobile's failure. After hearing someone shout from the horse-drawn wagon to stop – perhaps in jest, though the reporter does not make the intention of the shouting voice clear – Patrol Driver Wilson threw the gears in reverse, stripping the cogs from the wheels and causing catastrophic damage to the automobile. When asked of his impressions of the automobile, Cleveland's Chief of Police replied, "'I was very much impressed with its beauty. I believe the automobile would be a good thing for the

Cleveland police department if it could be depended on to run at all times.'" Despite the automobile's failure, several large departments had already begun to adopt newly motorized automobiles into their increasingly mobile forces, no longer depending solely on horse-drawn wagons or foot patrols to police (*The Richmond Planet* 1899). Through the media ride-along, the automobile's first moments on the road would lay the foundation for the practice of vehicular patrol dominating contemporary policing praxis in the twenty-first century. With this transformation in law enforcement's mobile patrol capabilities, which increasingly exposed private citizens' homes to the mobile vision of officers and their media ride-alongs, legal issues arose which would impact the formalization of the ride-along in the twentieth century.

Legal scholars have long argued whether American press involvement with law enforcement constitutes the maintenance of a democratic ideal in protecting the public's "right to know" (Markin 2004, 34) about policing's activities or demonstrate consistent violations to citizens' Fourth Amendment rights to privacy (Bond 1997). While the press and the police in the United States share converging histories that are too expansive to address in this chapter[5], it is their intersection in the latter half of the twentieth century between the 1960s and 1990s that illustrates how the ride-along's mobility increasingly made the crises of private everyday citizens at the hands of law enforcement, be they detained by officers, thrown to the ground in front of their terrified families, or whose deaths became mediatized

[5] The relationship between policing and the press span issues of policing's accountability to its public (Skolnick and McCoy 2018), the role of media in shaping attitudes toward law enforcement (Callanan and Rosenberger 2011; Intravia, Wolff, and Piquero 2017), and the representation of police legitimacy (Surette 2007).

spectacles outside of their control, visible to the public through the lens and recording devices of journalists invited by police to not only ride with them on patrol, but to act as informants in the field.[6]

On September 20, 1963, *Life Magazine* reporter Jackie Metcalf and photographer William "Billy" Ray entered the Los Angeles home of Antone Dietemann, a disabled veteran, journeyman plumber, and West Coast herbalist targeted by law enforcement for practicing medical fraud, an accusation that would inspire the magazine's title of its associated November 1963 investigative piece "Crackdown on Quackery" (Sadler 2005, 202). With hidden cameras and audio recording devices, the pair – pretending to be husband and wife – approached the herbalist for an appointment under the guise that Metcalf had a lump in her breast. During the examination, Ray proceeded to surreptitiously photograph Dietemann while *Life* correspondent Joseph Bride listened to the unfolding conversation from outside in his car via a radio transmitter hidden in Metcalf's purse. Unknown to Dietemann, this team of undercover journalists had entered into an agreement with the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office who granted them access to Dietemann's information, effectively deploying them as field agents. In return for their undercover work, the journalists would be given exclusive access to newsworthy content and the officers would have acquired evidence to charge Dietemann.

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[6] I use the term "informant" here as encompassing two interrelated meanings: it both describes the activities of press in gathering incriminating evidence on behalf of the police while also illustrating their intimate entanglements with law enforcement as they work to "inform" the public of the "good work" that police officers do. Later sections of this chapter will elaborate on this informant position with regard to the use of news helicopters and their role as a *de facto* surveillance force in the absence of police helicopters during the first days of the 1992 Los Angeles uprising.

A month later, officers arrived to arrest the herbalist, inviting more local journalists along for what would later come to be known as a "media ride-along," or routine example of "ride-along reporting," a common practice where members of the press accompanied law enforcement by invitation to observe and document aspects of their work, whether answering calls for service on patrol or special assignments like drug raids (Markin 2004, 38).[7] The photographs of Dietemann's arrest and his session with Metcalf and Ray, both taken without his consent, were later published in *Life Magazine*, prompting the veteran to file a lawsuit claiming his right to privacy had been violated by Time, Inc., the owner of *Life Magazine*. The court case – *Dietemann v. Time, Inc*. – and the Ninth Circuit's subsequent ruling determined that the press, acting as police agents, violated Dietemann's right to privacy, but noted that "law enforcement interest was not furthered by the intrusion" (Dietemann v. Time, Inc., 252). In short, this case left intact the media ride-along itself as a dubious, but not unlawful, alliance between law enforcement and the media that established a historical precedent for later ride-along cases from the 1960s onward, and would later be identified by legal scholars as "the earliest identified ride-along case" (Markin 2004, 38).[8]

Another Supreme Court case, *Florida Publishing v. Fletcher* (1976), detailed the "widespread practice of long-standing" invitations to the press to accompany officers on calls for service. In this particular case, however, which Karen Markin (2014) describes as the

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[7] Dietemann v. Time, Inc., 449 F.2d 245 (9th Cir. 1971).

[8] The Ninth Circuit Court, in a written decision by Justice Hufstedler, agreed that the press and police collusion to ensnare Dietemann summary Time, through its publication Life, realizing it could not unilaterally invade Dietemann's house and privacy, sought the protection of cooperation with state officials. The officials, recognizing their duty not to publicly expose the results of police investigations, accepted the services of Life. Each thereby achieved jointly which neither could have achieved separately

"earliest ride-along trespass case" (49), members of local media were invited to the scene of a fatal house fire in Jacksonville, Florida. Officers, firefighters, and reporters arrived to find the corpse of 17-year-old Cindy Fletcher amidst the burnt debris of her family home. Plaintiff Klenna Ann Fletcher, mother of Cindy and two other young children, learned of the news of the house fire and Cindy's death only a day after arriving in New York on September 15 to visit a friend. She discovered the news of her daughter's death after photographs of Cindy's charred silhouette appeared alongside the news story of the house fire in *The Florida Times-Union* on September 16, 1972. Mrs. Fletcher filed her lawsuit claiming lack of consent and trespass on part of the non-emergency personnel who entered her home to take photographs. However, the court ruled that her Fourth Amendment right to privacy was superseded by the media ride-along participants' rights to cover, in the words of the dissenting opinion from the state district court's decision, "'a disaster of great public interest'" (50). In depositions, fire marshals and police sergeants claimed that inviting the media to document was their standard practice, though no formal departmental policy language was cited by Jacksonville officers. From the early 1960s to the 1980s, the ride-along had remained widely unaffected by these legal court decisions in lawsuits filed by citizens, who claimed their rights have been violated by the presence of media ride-along participants. This would change, however, in the wake of a federal law enforcement program in the 1990s named "Operation Gunsmoke."

In 1992, the U.S. Attorney General's Office approved a new national program – what *Los Angeles Times* staff writer Jim Newton (1992) described as a "national roundup of dangerous fugitives" but went by the formal name "Operation Gunsmoke" – for apprehending wanted suspects accused of violent crimes by establishing cooperation between municipal and

state police departments and U.S. Marshals. According to local news outlets like the *Los Angeles Times*, this program was broadly successful in a relatively short amount of time, resulting in the arrest of 211 people in Los Angeles County during a 10-week period alone (Newton 1992). Prior to these operations, the U.S. Marshals Service "adopted a written media 'ride-along' policy which contemplated media presence in homes during the execution of a warrant," language that had been drafted and "prepared by an employee in the public relations office of the Marshals Service" (Chun 2000, 807). This is compelling considering that the U.S. Marshals Service is the origin of the nation's contemporary local, state, and federal police forces, being the first federal law enforcement agency developed in the United States through the passing of the Judiciary Act in 1789 (Turk 2008). Ride-along policies nationwide would come under closer inspection in one of the most cited Supreme Court cases concerning Fourth Amendment rights of citizens, and would come to formally *cement*, rather than limit, the survival of the ride-along in popular media representations of policing: *Wilson v. Layne* (1999).

It was during one of these Operation Gunsmoke missions that a team of Deputy U.S. marshals and Montgomery County (Maryland) Sheriff's Department officers planned to execute a warrant for Dominic Jerome Wilson at the home of his parents Charles and Geraldine Wilson. Wilson had been identified as a worthwhile candidate for Operation Gunsmoke, having violated his probation on previous felony charges. In the early dawn hours of April 16, 1992, while the Wilsons slept and their visiting nine-year-old granddaughter Valencia Snowden waited for the school bus to arrive, a reporter and photographer from the *Washington Post* accompanied officers as they knocked on the door of the Wilsons' home

believing their address to be Dominic's due to a computer error. The *Washington Post* pair had been granted permission to ride along with officers that morning by Harry Layne, the agent in charge of Operation Gunsmoke, following two weeks riding along with one team of officers involved in the operation (Brown 2000). When Mr. Wilson roused and called for Valencia, her lack of response – she was now "safely removed" from the home and in temporary police custody – prompted him to search for her in his living room and, soon followed by his wife, instead found "three gun-wielding, plain clothes law enforcement officers accompanied by the reporter and photographer from the Washington Post" (Chun 2000, 808). Clothed only in undergarments, the Wilsons were questioned while held at gun point, with one officer pinning Mr. Wilson to the ground with his knee. The media ride-along participants witnessed the entire encounter and took photos and recordings of their observations despite no advanced warning or visible signage that identified them as press (Gossett 2000).

Following the lawsuit against state and federal law enforcement officers initiated by the Wilsons, who maintained that the presence of media in their home during the violent search constituted a violation of their Fourth Amendment rights, the case moved through multiple Circuit Courts before arriving before the Supreme Court justices. The Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the officers violated the Fourth Amendment by inviting members of the news media, including photographers and journalists, to witness the execution of search and/or arrest warrants Despite this unanimous ruling, the Supreme Court judges maintained that officers were granted qualified immunity because, in the justices' "Opinion of the Court" delivered by Chief Justice Rehnquist, "the state of the law was not clearly established at the

time the search in this case took place" (1999, 1).[9] Adamant critiques by the press insisting on their "watchdog" role in ensuring public officials like police are held accountable were not justifiable according to the Court; their ruling insisted that the media's participation during ride-alongs were primarily driven by their own professional assignments rather than to pose as safeguards against public servants behaving badly. Moreover, the Court determined that law enforcement could not be held accountable for the media's unlawful participation in ride-alongs that brought the journalist's lens into private homes since they were only following their established ride-along policies.

However, it is within Justice John Paul Stevens' dissenting opinion that the U.S. Marshals Service media ride-along policy is directly critiqued for its clearly established role in purposefully shaping what the media is allowed to see on a ride-along, including planning arrests in advance so that journalists know when they will be given an opportunity to snap a photo or to begin filming. The following section from a booklet distributed to U.S. Marshal deputies, provided in the appendix section of Steven's dissenting opinion, describes how deputies should prepare for media ride-alongs in advance (*Wilson v. Layne* 1999, emphasis added):

> Media "ride-alongs" are one effective method to promote an accurate picture of Deputy Marshals at work. Ride-alongs…are simply opportunities for reporters and camera crews to go along with Deputies on operational missions so they can see, and record, what actually happens…However, successful ride-alongs *don't just "happen"* in a spontaneous fashion. They require *careful planning and attention to detail* to ensure that all goes smoothly and that the

[9] Legal scholar John Cronan describes how the doctrine of qualified immunity protects officers if they violate "rights not 'clearly established' at the time of the search or if an 'objectively reasonable' officer could believe that his acta did not violate those clearly established rights" (1999, 955).

> media receive an accurate picture of how the Marshals Service operates. This booklet describes considerations that are important in nearly every ride-along.

As a how-to guide for deputies, this booklet's language suggests that media ride-alongs, in the eyes of the U.S. Marshals Service, are a useful tool for establishing rapport with press outlets who are vetted and entrusted with creating favorable representations of their law enforcement activities in exchange for a close-up view that may result in newsworthy images. Another section of the booklet encourages deputies to "establish ground rules" with their ride-along participants in order to ensure good safety practices, though these ground rules serve another purpose as well: to keep the control of image-making within the deputy's purview (*Wilson v. Layne* 1999, emphasis added):

> Make the ground rules realistic but balanced, remember, the media will want *good action footage*, not just a mop-up scene. If the arrest is planned to take place inside a house or building, agree ahead of time on when the camera can enter and who will give the signal… You also need to find out when the coverage will air or end up in print. Ask the reporter if he or she can keep you informed on that matter. You might "grease the skids" for this by offering the reporter, camera person, or other media representatives involved a memento of the Marshals Service. Marshals Service caps, mugs, T-shirts, and the like can help *establish a rapport with a reporter* that can benefit you in the future.

Here, deputies are instructed to not only guarantee that media ride-along participants would be given the opportunity to create favorable representations of law enforcement or ensure that the press was treated to a good time; deputies, like television producers or directors of photography, were effectively encouraged to *stage* the shots that suited both the press and the officers. This staging relationship between law enforcement and media producers is reflected

in parallel ride-alongs as seen in the television program *COPS* (1989-).[10] There is an important precedent in the production of such television shows that include police officers and former officers working as consultants involved in the production of crime dramas and reality shows about policing (Oliver 1994). The roles these working officers and ex-detectives play in the construction of "authenticity" in such filmed representations of policing include participating in the editing process of television shows that portray police officers. Writing about the entanglement between Hollywood and policing, Chad Raphael notes, "The greatest irony of the crime-time shows is that, in an industry that argues vehemently against government censorship of sex and violence, every episode of *Cops* is vetted by police before airing to ensure 'accurate portrayals' of police work" (1997, 107). Ride-along policy language also reflects these longstanding practices of giving law enforcement that participate in so-called "reality programs" like *COPS* and *American Detective* the final say in what makes it on screen, and what is, in the words of Debra Seagal, left on "the cutting-room floor" (1992, 50).

Legal scholar Ronald Kowalczyk mused about the potential effects the *Wilson v. Layne* would have on *COPS* following the Supreme Court's decision, writing, "it is too early to tell how great an impact the Court's holding will have on 'reality' television or ride-alongs in general. If nothing more, the Wilson decision will make it more difficult for the media and other third parties to obtain access to a private dwelling and, in turn, continue to uphold the

[10] While *COPS* was originally cancelled and dropped by Paramount Network following the death of George Floyd in 2020, the unscripted series has been effectively resurrected by Fox Nation, Fox Corporation's subscription video streaming service. According to *USA Today*, the show's 33rd season will begin streaming on October 1, 2021 and will, in a familiar public relations move, be "rewarding police…with a free subscription" (Ali 2021).

sanctity of our homes" (1999, 44). While this ruling determined that news media or other third parties invited into a person's home during the execution of a warrant by law enforcement officers constituted a clear violation of citizens' rights to privacy, television producers that utilized ride-alongs to film police activity, including arrests and pursuits, continued to protect themselves from lawsuits by only airing encounters with people that agreed to sign consent waivers. For this reason, *COPS* executive producer John Langley remained confident that his show would be unaffected by the *Wilson* ruling. In a public statement referenced by the *Los Angeles Times*, Langley wrote, "While we do not necessarily agree with that decision, we are obligated to point out that, as a so-called 'ride-along' show, we are unaffected by the decision because we obtain releases from everyone involved in our program" (Braxton 1999). While some agencies, such as the Los Angeles Police Department, amended their ride-along programs while others, like the Washington Metropolitan Police Department, ended their programs altogether following the *Wilson* decision, the majority of ride-along programs nationwide remained largely unaffected by the announcement of a new rule of constitutional law (Brown 2000, 910). These court precedents and the legal implications that they raised for rights to privacy coincided with the growing popularity of the police ride-along as an ever-increasing televisual phenomenon through programs like the syndicated American television program *COPS* (1989-).

These cases in no small part helped to catalyze an entirely new genre of broadcast entertainment called "reality television." By the time *COPS* creator and executive producer John Langley had convinced the Fox Broadcasting Network to air his unscripted reality series, the media ride-along that enabled members of the press to accompany officers on patrol or

special assignments since *at least* the 1971 *Dietemann v. Time, Inc.* case presented Langley with the legal precedents needed to pitch his reality show to law enforcement departments.[11] In a 2009 interview with Karen Herman from the Television Academy Foundation in North Hollywood, Langley emphasized his program's distinction from the news as a core tactic for appealing to police departments to participate in his program on camera: "'We're not the news…We're not here to expose your department or look for dirt, but to show how difficult your job is on an everyday basis'" (Sandomir 2021). Once reserved for members of press organizations like the *Washington Post* or *CNN*, the media ride-along was legally available to television producers like Langley who offered law enforcement more favorable representations of policing in the wake of such public court cases like *Wilson v. Layne* that cast the media ride-along in a consistently dubious light.

At the production center of programs like *COPS* were the camera operators who rode with police from various departments across the nation that agreed to participate in the show, filming hours of material seated next to on-duty officers in their patrol cars. For the show's premiere in 1989, Langley organized five teams of camera and sound operators to ride-along with deputies from the Broward County Sheriff's Department in Florida. In a 2018 interview with journalist Tim Stelloh, Langley recalls explicitly assigning his field operators to ride-along with officers known to be "'good talkers'…in homicide, patrol, and narcotics units. No tripods were allowed. For every one-minute of footage that was aired, they shot 100" (Stelloh

[11] While *COPS* is preceded by reality programs like *Candid Camera* (1948-2014), it remains in a genre of its own as the longest-running reality television program. This legacy continues in the aftermath of Langley's recent death on June 26, 2021.

2018). This insistence that camera operators ride along with "good talkers" is a compelling parallel to the U.S. Marshals Service booklet instructing deputies to help create "good action footage" for media ride-alongs, and illustrates a mutual commitment by both law enforcement and mainstream television producers to construct a particular genre of ride-alongs as action-packed, high octane episodic experiences for the camera, whether they be in the hands of *COPS* camera operators or *Washington Post* reporters.

It is during this moment in the 1990s, as *COPS* audiences continue to grow, when overlapping crises of visualized anti-Black police brutality come to be shaped not only by the moving police vehicle as it patrols post-Rodney King Los Angeles, but by the cameras of network news crews on the ground and from the bird's-eye view of news helicopters in the sky. These aerial media teams served as counterparts to the LAPD Air Support Division's "omnipresent helicopter and its night scope which swoops back and forth along the streets…peering into the windows of the apartment buildings" (Zilberg 2011, 281) of policed neighborhoods, or what community members colloquially named the "ghetto bird."[12] The

[12] The metaphor of the police helicopter as a "ghetto bird" is most associated with African American rapper Ice Cube's eponymous song from his 1993 album *Lethal Injection*. It is a lyrical assault on the visual regimes of policing that are increasingly militarized and visible to policed Black neighborhoods in Los Angeles. A few select versus from Ice Cube's song reveal the tensions of seeking mobility under the aerial gaze of the police helicopter:

> Why, oh why must you swoop thru the hood
> Like everybody from my hood is up to no good?
> …Cause every time that the pigs have got me
> Y'all rub it in with the flying Nazi.
> Military force, but we don't want ya
> Standin' on my roof with the rocket launcher.
> "So fly like an eagle."
> But don't follow us wherever we go.
> The shit that I'm saying, make sure it's heard:
> Motherfuck you and your punk-ass ghetto bird.

visualized events that emerged in response to King's beating by four LAPD officers on March 3, 1991, and their subsequent acquittal captured on George Holliday's amateur video recording evidenced (once again) the intertwining dynamics of race and police power.[13] However, in their foundational piece "Reel Time/Real Justice," Kimberlé Crenshaw and Gary Peller argue for the necessity of a critical race theory to make sense of how policing blackness and race more broadly must be understood as emergent mediatized and *produced* forms: "The Rodney King episode is particularly challenging for our approach because it seems so easily assimilable to more conventional models of the way that power works. Rather than imagine racial power being produced in the soft space of ideological "superstructure," the world saw it exercised at another point of production—at the material "base" where the nightstick met the skull" (1993, 284). Through the symbolic narratives of "irrationality," public discourse concerning the riots following the officers' collective acquittal framed the emotional

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For a closer reading of how American rap music reveals the tensions of living under racialized systems of police control, see Erik Nielson (2012).

[13] The legacy of Holliday's recording, captured on a Sony Video8 Handycam CCD-F77, is an enduring citation, but its material history is also of relevance when read alongside the argument about cinema and policing presented in Chapter 2. Only two months after George Floyd's murder at the hands of Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin, Holliday entered into an agreement with the Nate D. Sanders auction house to auction off the camera he used to record King's beating. On July 29, 2020, as protests against police violence swelled across the nation, Holliday's camera was put up for auction with a starting bid of $225,000, a decision that coincided with and seemed to capitalize on the overlapping mediatized crises of ongoing police brutality in 2020 that did not end with Floyd but continued with the deaths of Dijon Kizzee, Kurt Reinhold, Frederick Cox, Andre Hill, and too many more (Paybarah 2020). In contrast to Holliday's videotape, Darnella Frazier's smartphone recording of Derek Chauvin's murder of George Floyd brings critical questions about *legacy* to the fore that require further interrogation of the stakes of such legacies. This includes not only how viral images of antiblack police violence circulate through shared footage and how to be answerable to the consequences of that circulation for Black spectators (Richardson 2020), but how these acts of witnessing accumulate affective, political, and cultural capital. The Pulitzer Prize committee's bestowing of an award upon Frazier for her work along with a tone-deaf "Congratulations!" underscores the importance of interrogating the stakes of this legacy, including what *it* is that is passed on (*pace* Toni Morrison's 1987 novel *Beloved*) and whether or not we even want to.

responses of rioters as void of reason and in stark contrast to the mythos of objectivity peddled by law enforcement's commitment to keep "the rule of law" (Zilberg 2011).

Following the indictment of the officers on trial for beating King, riots and looting became a televisual spectacle through the visual praxis of the press that relied on these symbolic discourses. As Zilberg notes, "Helicopters making runs for TV news shows also served as reconnaissance for the populace below. TV coverage provided viewers with unprecedented *visual access* and the rioters and looters with the intelligence to conduct further strikes and raids" (2011, 84, emphasis added). While these visuals could be retooled by those on the ground to evade detection by the police or seek out desired commodities to pilfer in the midst of the unfolding crisis, they represent the new camera's powerful aesthetic capacity to assimilate images of spectacular violence (e.g. continued racialized brutality and arrests during riots) into recognizable, consumable forms for a viewing public. Like the patrol car's automotive visuality, the televised press footage captured in the wake of racialized police violence reveals how ideologically inflected these acts of seeing are as they intersect with policing's explicit mandate to see and organize criminal activity as it unfolds on the street, and to make these visuals cohere as classifiable, aesthetic forms. These overlapping mechanisms of oversight shared by press and police – what, borrowing from Nicholas Mirzoeff, we might name a "complex of visuality" (2011, 480) – during the 1992 Los Angeles uprising are nothing less than the culmination of the media ride-along's transformation since the turn of the century, an apex of surveillant forms that were conceptualized as *ideologically separate* yet *twinned in practice*. Its ongoing development and shaping extends beyond its interface with press, and is a significant part of the community policing programs that have

grown from the 1980s onward as a form of crisis management in the wake of events like the Rodney King beating.

3.4 Law Enforcement Ride-Along Policies: Transformations in 1980s and 1990s

In response to these cases, their relevant rulings, and highly mediatized events covering these cases, police departments across the United States have formulated more explicit guidelines and policies for citizen ride-alongs. While ride-along policies differ across the 18,000 agencies[14] that constitute the United States' law enforcement apparatus, and, in some cases *do not formally exist* in written language, its existence as an identifiable cultural form and a legal object of analysis has been influenced by these precedent court cases. Though the ruling in *Wilson v. Layne* encouraged some anxious departments to end their ride-along programs or create more clear guidelines for ride-along hopefuls, this broad formation has yet to be standardized nationally. For example, the *San Diego Police Department's Procedure Manual* (2017, 2) details the department's Ride-Along Program and, in seemingly inclusive language, invites participation from interested individuals who may have less than positive feelings toward law enforcement: "The Ride-Along Program is a powerful tool that enables an officer to work constructively with citizens who live, work, or go to school in the officer's area of responsibility. It is not limited to persons who are supportive of the police. Indeed, some of the best experiences to date have come from ride-alongs in which the citizen has held a negative view towards police officers" (2017, 2). It importantly describes the

[14] See Banks et. al (2016) report.

operational guidelines for how citizens may sign up for a ride-along, what to expect during a ride-along, and what is expressly forbidden. In a clear reference to the Supreme Court's decision in the *Wilson v. Layne* case, the guidelines of the manual state that participants cannot "Enter any residence that an officer enters under exigent circumstances…" or "Enter a home during the execution of a search warrant. This policy protects the homeowner's fourth Amendment rights. Any violation of the policy may result in an officer losing his/her qualified immunity" (6). However, the guidelines indicate that a third party – including the ride-along participant – may enter "only after obtaining permission from the owner," reflecting another response to *Wilson v. Layne* Supreme Court ruling. The six-page document details other guidelines as well, including the procedures to be taken by the ride-along officer before a ride-along may officially commence. By comparison, the University of California, San Diego campus police ride-along program does not currently share a comparable publicly available document detailing the guidelines of the program; its website simply states that students, faculty, and staff are invited to request to ride along with a campus police officer by phone or by submitting an online request form.

As these exigent court cases in the 1980s and 1990s were casting a critical spotlight on the problematic relationship between policing and press in constructing popular images of policing that were damaging to private citizens, police departments ramped up efforts to ameliorate their public image. This is where the expansion and transformation of *media* ride-alongs into *citizen* ride-alongs in the late twentieth century emerged alongside a rise in "community-oriented policing" strategies adopted nationwide by police departments in the 1980s. This development followed the highly criticized violent and "unprofessional" police

responses to civil and social movements, such as the Civil Rights Movements and Black-led liberation movements against white supremacy, in the 1960s, that continually evidenced policing's "reliance on brute force" (Barlow and Barlow 2009, 182). This latter period in the 1980s is notably described by police researchers as the Community Era of policing as identified in George Kelling and Mark Moore's (1988) classic work in which they mark three eras of policing – political, reform, and community – and attribute growing efforts by police departments to address crime and disorder to a shift away from more "traditional" models of policing and toward a "broken windows" model. Part of this community-focused model of policing adopted by police departments in the 1980s involve both the increased policing of urban neighborhoods where broken windows were visibly present, and the creation of more public-facing programs and community task forces that stressed "policing *with* and *for* the community, rather than policing *of* the community" (Tilley 2008, 315).

While James Wilson and George Kelling (1982) theorized that focusing on policing neighborhoods with more broken windows would enable Black and brown communities to have more pride in cleaning up their "disordered" worlds – an equally paternalistic and distinctly anti-Black and Brown mode of managing disorder that failed to increase quality of life for those most overly-policed communities or reduce crime – scholars have consistently criticized the racist foundations and practices of this so-called "community-oriented policing" (Kelley 2016; Vitale 2017). Despite these arguments against models of policing that purportedly claim to center the needs of communities, many of the programs developed during this time period remain, including "*ride-along programs*…fear reduction programs, police academies for citizens, cultural diversity training, police–community athletic programs,

and the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program" (Barlow and Barlow 2009, 182, emphasis added). Citizen's academies, shortened versions of the police academy usually held as a form of night school, invited private citizens to apply and gain behind-the-scenes knowledge about how their local police departments functioned, from radio dispatch labor to detective work. The first U.S. Citizen's Police Academy (CPA), developed by the Orlando Police Department in Florida in 1985 and adopted from the 1977 British model of "Police Night School," gave successful applicants the opportunity to ride-along with officers (Jordan 2000).

As a propaganda and public relations device of the 1980s turn toward community policing, the ride-along became a tool for performing both transparency and legitimacy after decades of being closely scrutinized through legal cases like those detailed in the paragraphs above. Bearing a name and a set of tested practices for inviting citizens to see a close-up view of policing, other departments began developing their own academies and ensuring that ride-alongs with citizen police participants could be controlled and would not run into the same issues of Fourth Amendment violations brought on by media ride-alongs. While these academies continue to enjoy participation from citizens nationwide, other programs in the form of youth-specific Explorer Programs became another formalized mechanism for developing a "community vision" of patrol work through the ride-along.

3.5 Explorer Ride-Along Programs and Shaping Community Vision of Policing

As part of efforts to professionalize police as mediators and collaborators in service of communities' needs rather than as violent arbiters of punishing crime and disorder, formalized

ride-along programs emerged unevenly across departments in the United States as these separate agencies attempted to avail themselves to skeptical communities historically over-policed in Black and brown neighborhoods. These ride-alongs invited members of the public into the space of the on-duty police vehicle and transformed these riders into mobile spectators of policing on the street and complicit co-witnesses (Hornberger 2017) to the tacit conventions of violent policing that is foundational to policing globally and transnationally (Schrader 2019; Zilberg 2011). Many of these ride-alongs experiences were supported and developed *with* law enforcement and national organizations like Boys Scouts of America's Explorer Programs.

The federally funded Explorer Program, a worksite-based career education program affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America's "Learning for Life" program, offers youth the opportunity to gain hands-on experience with careers of their choosing. Within the genre of community policing programs like D.A.R.E., the Explorer Program began partnering with law enforcement agencies like the San Diego County Sheriff's Department (SDSO). Each law enforcement youth program differs in terms of specific programming activities, though nearly all offer ride-alongs to its participants. Additionally, SDSO has created a condensed version of San Diego's police academy for Explorer youth, including an eight-day, live-in camp of the academy's "greatest hits" that serves as a recruitment tool by exposing youth – ages 16 to 20 – to a curated series of physical and simulated combat activities. Upon completion of the

camp, participants are granted the title of "Deputy Explorer" and are required to perform 20 hours of service to the Sheriff's Department.[15]

The El Cajon Police Department where I have performed ethnographic research with officers as a ride-along participant offers no formal ride-along program to the public, yet it is described as an affiliate of the Explorer Program during the 1980s in Kevin Opheim's (2013) *Along for the Ride: Explorer and Civilian Ride-Along Perspectives on a Career in Law Enforcement*. Inspired to share his experiences in his youth riding along with officers from SDSO and collaborating with other officers from adjacent agencies like El Cajon and La Mesa, Opheim's account is a collection of stories, mined from notes he took while riding along with officers over the course of five years as a volunteer for the San Diego County Sheriff's Department. As a lifelong East County San Diego resident, his manuscript reads like an ethnographic fieldnotes as he sees the neighborhoods he spent his youth growing up in through the new framing machine of the ride-along vehicle.[16] His writing unfolds as a stream of descriptions of what he did, saw, and experienced almost moment-to-moment while in the field. During his ride-alongs, he mentions how officers appreciated his experience as an Explorer cadet, noting, "Many of the deputies I rode with remarked how valuable it was to have a well-trained partner in the car with them" (24), and how, despite the unfolding nature of each ride-along, "the routine followed a familiar sequence of events for me and many other

[15] This is a similar to the military recruitment of youth in schools through Junior ROTC (acronym) programs.
[16] Though Kevin Opheim began his early years in San Diego as an Explorer Cadet, a Departmental Aide for the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, and Program Director for the Boys and Girls Club of East County, he is now a registered nurse in Medical-Psychiatric Nursing at Sharp Healthcare and continues to live in El Cajon, California, according to his public LinkedIn profile page.

explorers. The expectations of what the day will bring, and the excitement builds as I leave home and drive to the local patrol station" (60). For their demonstrated capabilities in the field, Explorer cadets were also given written commendations that could translate into professional recommendations should cadets seek a formal career in law enforcement. Opheim describes a written evaluation offered him by an officer he rode along with, in which the officer praises Opheim's performance as follows: "'Explorer Opheim kept the log, handled the radio and was always there when I needed him. His performance today was excellent'" (52). The professional dynamics of the ride-along, in which cadets are tasked with performing the rote duties of patrol officers under the direction of actual patrol officers, both introduce cadets into the social world of policing while keeping the activities they can perform and their ride-along assignments highly structured.

In addition to the sociality that these ride-alongs structurally enforced by assigning Explorer cadets to spend time with officers in the moving patrol vehicle, they also work to inculcate youth into the imagined dangers that await patrolling officers in the field. He describes one moment following a call with someone that had a knife on their person while being contacted by the police and the critique of the ride-along officer after the encounter: "After the call ended, my partner told me that I put my life in danger and *put him into a tight spot* because I didn't *see the knife* that could have ended my life that night" (99, emphasis added). Though Opheim's description of the encounter does not address how exactly the officer's or the cadet's life could have been materially at risk in the mere presence of a knife, the officer's critical assessment of the cadet's failure to *see* or *make visible his seeing* to the officer further establishes how ride-alongs are built on maintaining a collective vision in the

name of officer safety. Opheim goes on to describe how even though Explorers' "guns are filled with blanks," (89), the simulated performance of acting as a "real cop" involved a serious effort to inhabit the embodied mode of an officer: "you play to look professional and be aware of your surroundings. The uniform represents others and the organization you work for" (44).

Absent a written departmental policy describing how to participate in ride alongs or a publicly written history of ride-alongs in the El Cajon Police Department, Opheim's rich account – though not ethnographic *per se* – is no less instructive for demonstrating how the lived experiences of Explorer cadets involved an intimate entanglement with the ride-along. Even San Diego's own Police Museum, maintained by the San Diego Police Historical Association, does not describe a local history of the ride-along in San Diego County; in the absence of formal and "authorized" narratives in these museum spaces, Opheim's writing offers a glimpse into a youth perspective of policing in 1980s East County San Diego. Throughout Opheim's descriptions of accompanying officers on patrol, assisting with arrests, and hounding youth on the streets of East County cities like El Cajon and Santee for assembling in groups, there is a sense in which his reflections – particularly as a white cadet – further reveal how such ride-along programs work to create the kinds of "good action footage" (*Wilson v Layne* 1999) that media ride-along collaborations with law enforcement were structurally designed to assemble.

Though his manuscript mentions no other racial or ethnic descriptions of people he witnessed in the field besides white males in the field, newspaper accounts during the time he participated in this program describe growing numbers of Arabic, Assyrian, and Chaldean

refugee communities in El Cajon (Greeley 1985). Through this program, cadets like Opheim are conscripted into learning both how to attend to the visual experience of policing and how to police in a city with a growing population of refugees. In response to changing racial demographics in cities like El Cajon catalyzed by refugee resettlement efforts, Chapter 4 will illustrate how youth programming like SDSO's Explorer Programs that sought to bring white youth like Opheim into the fold of policing have evolved by widening the scope of "community participation" to explicitly interpellate youth of color.

In sum, while notable court cases and the media ride-alongs' development offers an important historical meditation on the patrol vehicle that has shaped how police are visualized and how they, in turn, participate in the visual work of policing, this trajectory through the miscellaneous ride-along archives is missing one key component: the work that the ride-along performs in academic research. I will briefly turn to the genre of police research known as "ride-along studies" that transformed quantitative and qualitative methodologies for studying U.S. policing in the 1970s and 1980s (Brown 1981; Muir 1977). These precedent scholarly works laid the foundation for my own ethnographic research praxis with police officers from the El Cajon Police Department, and, as Chapter 4 will demonstrate, enables the ethnographer to witness how a local department responds to the changing demographics of cities like El Cajon.

3.6 Academic Entanglements: Ride-Alongs and Observational Studies of Police Vision

Due to the decentralized development of law enforcement departments in the United States, few researchers in the sociological and anthropological canons of police research have

written extensively about the origins of the ride-along, though nearly all relied upon the formal conventions of the ride-along that enabled them to do observational research of police activity in the field (Cain 1973; Reiner 1978; Punch 1979; Herbert 1996). This is a compelling omission, considering that the police vehicle has remained the "front row seat" proximal to the unfolding action of police work and a mobile machine through which anthropologists and ethnographers have produced knowledge about policing (Linnemann 2016; Meehan 1992; Nunn 1993). It is the ride-along form itself, largely taken for granted in both discipline-defining observational studies of policing in the 1970s (Bittner 1967; Manning 1977; Rubinstein 1973; Skolnick 1975; Van Maanen 1974) and throughout more contemporary ethnographies of policing (Fassin 2013; Herbert 1996; Phillips 2015; Stuart 2016), that endures as the focal point for researchers and more senior officers to model and track the situated learning activities of new officers as they become a part of a law enforcement community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991).

The academic canon of police research, usually achieved through observational studies of policing, relies on the ride-along to bring the academic into the space of the police vehicle in order to examine the social construction of police behavior *in situ*. This sociological focus on behavior and attitudes that researchers have historically centered their analyses on to understand how police learn to see themselves in relation to the organizational structures to which they are accountable, however, cannot account for the material histories that, in my ethnographic engagements with officers in the field, undergird how police vision is practiced, as examined in Chapter 2. Concepts like a unitary "police culture" and officers' attitudes towards their *a priori* "roles" as law enforcers are present throughout canonical studies on

policing, appearing as ready-made citational objects of analysis that researchers bring to bear upon their field experiences with police officers even as they attempt to expand these terms, shifting from singular terminology to plural forms of "police cultures" (Chan 1997; Loftus 2009).

These ride-along studies, in addition to providing academics access to the police field, also became opportunities for training researchers in ethnographic research methods. Anita Waters describes the pedagogical structure of an undergraduate course, entitled, "Field Research Methods," in which sociologist and anthropology students rode along with officers from three departments near their small liberal arts college in Ohio. Through this collaboration with these law enforcement agencies and the university, students were able to "make contacts, establish rapport, interview, take notes and write comprehensive field notes, analyze qualitative data, make use of field notes written by other observers, and write analytic reports" (2008, 120). For Waters' students, the ride-along becomes the vehicle – materially and epistemologically – for learning how to practice quantitative and qualitative research skills, including the challenges of "taking notes in a dark speeding car to maintaining a professional demeanor in situations fraught with uncertainty" (2008, 120). Geographer Steve Herbert, whose own ethnography with the Los Angeles Police Department grapples with the spatial practices of police officers made possible by mobile patrol (1996), offers a relatively positive assessment of Waters' research goals for her students. In response to Waters' essay describing her course with undergraduate students, Herbert writes, "To ask students to reckon with the discretionary authority of the police is a terrific vehicle for practicing the arts of analysis we want students to develop" (2008, 130).

Deploying undergraduate students as ride-along observers in research designs outside of their control, however, has been met with criticism from other ethnographic researchers. For example, Antonius C.G.M. Robben writes in response to Waters' course, "The ride-alongs gave the students a one-dimensional view of police officers as well of their interaction with superiors, colleagues, suspects, and bystanders," and he wonders how a "triangulation of methods," such as interviewing people on the receiving end of law enforcement interactions, might have enriched and shaped their understanding of policing (2008, 132). Anthropologists, sociologists, and performance researchers who engage ethnographic praxis have long practiced this orientation to research, developing important insights and knowledge about policing and state violence from the vantage point of policed communities (Conquergood 1988; Stuart 2016; Zilberg 2011).

By seeing how policing unfolds and is experienced by those who are policed "on the ground" of lived experience, such as Elana Zilberg's (2011) research on the Los Angeles Rampart CRASH (Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums) anti-gang unit and how criminalized Latino stereotypes post-Rodney King travel as citational models between law enforcement and court cases, the mimetic practices between the police and the policed become more visible. My own ride-along praxis has brought me into an anthropological research tradition of "studying up" (Nader 1972; Gusterson 1997) with powerful state actors like police officers while being visibly complicit in the patrol field as a ride-along participant to policed community members in El Cajon (these moments of complicity will be addressed in Chapter 4).

For anthropologists of policing who "study up" like Jeffrey T. Martin, the ride-along remains "the canonical site of police action" (2019, 28), a formalized structure of doing research with police that both implicitly and explicitly bounds the vision of the ride-along researcher. Indeed, the researcher can only go where the police officer decides to go, for the researcher is not in control of the moving vehicle, nor in control of the moving images framed by the windshield of the patrol car. He describes this experience as evocative of the symbolic and practical enactment of police power on the ride-along, even when the ride-along seemed to be over (2019, 28, emphasis added):

> Wherever the police were guests, I was a guest of a guest…This meant I was often unable to refuse invitations to leave the patrol car and engage in other activities. I found this frustrating at first. It seemed that my incapacity to control my own movement was keeping me from observing police work. I gradually changed my perspective to focus on *the process of moving and being moved through policed space as the thing-itself to which I should direct my ethnographic attention*. My incapacity to control my own movement through policed space was the police power at work.

This notion that the ride-along, while proximal to unfolding police action, is always already shaping the vision of non-law enforcement participants is a critical perspective for addressing the racialized and gendered politics of the ride-along that feature in subsequent chapters of this dissertation. Martin's ethnographic field experiences of the ride-along as one of "being moved" – a movement that becomes "the thing-itself" to which the ethnographer actively responds to and remains accountable to as an expression of police power *par excellence* – is precisely the historical narrative arc of the ride-along that I have explored in this chapter. The police ride-along is only able to *mobilize* and *iterate* the epistemic anti-Black, anti-immigrant violences of policing through its entanglements with media organizations and other

institutional bodies like universities and non-profit organizations like the Boy Scouts of America.

3.7 Conclusion: Viewers Like You

The ride-along is a historical stage for shaping how police are viewed and visualized by those who are invited to witness from behind the windshield screen of the patrol car. As an ethnographer studying policing and in the language of a theater director, I entered stage-right into the Ford Crown Victoria Interceptor vehicle emblazoned with the weather-worn insignia of the El Cajon Police Department when I first began this research, a stage upon which my readings of the ethnographic field would be shaped by officers' patrol beats, by the routes they drove, and the stories they told. These ride-alongs were themselves a part of broader historical architectures that connected histories of media, film, and television production to the patrol car.

This chapter draws together these histories of media production and police practices in the United States to demonstrate how I entered policing through a door made *precisely for me*, and for a *collective* "we" – however precarious, fractured, and unstable that "we" is – of academics, teenagers imagining themselves into future career trajectories, television producers, and journalists seeking closer views of policing as it unfolds in real-time. The ride-along is about its interpellated viewers as much as it is about training new officers how to interact with the patrol vehicle. This underscores the significance of building out the historical scaffolding that created and sustains the ride-along as a stable, recognizable cultural form.

In the following chapter I examine the ways in which El Cajon's officers and residents – and the ethnographer herself as a racialized and gendered subject – navigate interactions together in a city that has simultaneously resettled an influx of SWANA refugees while increasingly militarizing its police. To make sense of these emergent formations, I explain how the policing of new arrivals in El Cajon is built on foundations of U.S. anti-Blackness and historically anti-immigrant local and federal policies. I foreground the military intimacies between El Cajon and its policed refugee communities as significant historical contexts through which to read ethnographic police-refugee encounters on the ground, and how recent efforts to target refugees through community-policing campaigns constitutes forms of racialized policing that invite newcomers to perform as normalized, complacent subjects when encountering patrol officers.

Chapter 4

Policing "Little Baghdad": Migration Streams and Militarized Backgrounds in El Cajon

"I have witnessed and endured the brutality of the police many more times than once – but, of course, I cannot prove it. I cannot prove it because the Police Department investigates itself, quite as though it were answerable only to itself. But it cannot be allowed to be answerable only to itself."
— James Baldwin, "A Report from Occupied Territory" (1966)

4.1 "'You shoot to kill, you better hit the heart.'"

Scene One

"You draw your duty weapon, you better, you know…" Officer Leitzig's voice trails off as he spots a panhandler near an overturned shopping cart and a small tent underneath the highway bridge. He engages the roof-mounted lights on the patrol car as we exit the freeway, a visual warning for the man with the cardboard sign to "move along," and a few other cars on the road in front of us decelerate quickly, seemingly interpellated by the police vehicle's flashing lightbar. We maneuver around these moving objects and speed away down the main road leading into the heart of El Cajon. "Can't tell you how many times we've had to give tickets to these guys panhandling here. It's a safety hazard since it's so close to the freeway off-ramp, but they just keep coming back…what was I saying before?" I restate my original question about how often he's seen other officers resort to pulling their weapons in the field. He interrupts me, "Ah, right. To kill. We're trained to take that seriously: you draw your weapon, you better be ready to kill someone."

We continue onto Main Street, passing underneath the large ornamental Boulevard sign – "Downtown El Cajon" – erected in 1989 as part of the city's redevelopment efforts. Driving through this main thoroughfare, signs for retro diners and cafés are stylized in peak Americana and Wild West aesthetics, with one striking addition: red and black Arabic script is painted here and there underneath the English spelling of some of these business signs. These intertextual visuals reflect previous and a steadily growing presence of newcomers and refugees from SWANA nations in El Cajon. They provide the intercultural backdrop for annual parades where beauty queens sashay atop hot rods and modern cowboys trot down the promenade. Forget "Spaghetti Westerns": if Arabic or Assyrian Westerns existed, they would be shot here.

We arrive at Ali Baba Family Restaurant for a quick lunch, an Arabic establishment located on the main boulevard across from the tallest building in El Cajon: the superior courthouse adjacent the police department. The restaurant façade looks like another cinematic set piece, adorned with seductive murals of Arabic women pouring oil from clay pots. By the officer's request, we are seated at a table furthest from the front door, a tactic that many officers used while dining on-duty to, in another officer's words, "provide the widest visual cover in case something goes wrong." The server brings us platters of *kobba musilia*, a fried dish of mixed beef and cracked wheat familiar to Assyrian, Chaldean, Lebanese, and Turkish communities. During our meal I strain to listen to the officer's stories over the constant stream of dispatch chatter emerging from his shoulder-mounted

radio; officers are trained to keep their radios on even while not "10-8."[1] The only other dining party present – an Arabic family of four – continues to look over at us, but it is the bright and unbroken eye contact of the family's smallest boy that Officer Leitzig cannot ignore. The father apologizes to us and Leitzig replies, "No problem at all. Does he want to say hi?" The man gestures for the child to approach Leitzig while the mother grips the bottom of her hijab loosely, smoothing it out in repeated strokes. She looks nervous as the boy shakes Leitzig's hand, and soon they are posed in front of the restaurant's windows with the courthouse complex in the background as the father snaps a picture on his cell phone. It is an idyllic photo, a *tableau vivant* of "community policing" in action: the officer on one knee, the pair each holding thumbs-up for the camera. The parents thank Leitzig, and the officer asks the boy, "Are you going to grow up to be big and strong? Fight bad guys? Show me your muscles!" The boy seems too little to understand, and so the officer mimes a gesture, flexing his defined biceps in an iconic Muscle Beach pose. The boy repeats this gesture, little arms and fists in the air. A few minutes later, we finish our meal and Leitzig returns to the patrol car while I grab a drink to-go from the cashier. "Are you Iraqi?" he asks me, and I tell him that I'm Assyrian but that my father is from Iraq. "Ah, our brothers, very good," he says, handing me change before offering me a blessing of goodbye, "Be careful *habibi*, okay? *Ma'a salama*."

[1] This is the radio call sign to inform dispatch when an officer has finished taking a break and is back "in service" in the patrol car.

Scene Two

"'You shoot to kill, you better hit the heart,'" my father says smiling, turning the family car onto Main Street as store signs advertising discount furniture and notary services pass across the windshield, "This thing he say, ah, my *favorite*. Clint Eastwood. In my country we watch growing up, and go like this." He puts his left hand in the air in the finger-gun gesture of familiar child's play. Here, American actor Clint Eastwood's line from Sergio Leone's 1964 classic Spaghetti Western *A Fistful of Dollars* is the cinematic script that begins another Sunday ritual in 2015: Iraqi breakfast with my parents in one of El Cajon's many Arabic and Chaldean-owned grocery stores. Soon we are walking into an Iraqi market like desperados on a soundstage saloon after my mother crushes her lipstick-stained cigarette beneath her sneaker. The people gathered here are a mix of Arabic, Assyrian, and Chaldean families with traditional Iraqi breakfasts laid out before them. One man welcomes us with kisses on our cheeks and an Arabic greeting spoken in an Iraqi dialect: "*Al-salamu alaykum*." Like most Assyrians, my multi-lingual father replies in Arabic, and the man smiles wider, patting my father on the back joyously; later my father tells me that the man could recognize his accent, and that, like him, he was from Baghdad. At the table next to us, older Chaldean men sit in front of servings of hot chai, rhythmically rubbing Catholic prayer beads between their fingers, and bid us a warm "*Shlama lokh*."

Later, we make a pit stop at a larger Arabic market to buy baked Iraqi bread. There we sit and eat these fresh loaves, and soon I am awash in a sea of Neo (Modern)-Aramaic spoken by the Assyrian and Chaldean people around us as they fill their shopping baskets with fresh radishes, dates, and carved lamb. Two men seated at the tables inside the grocery

store next to us strike up a conversation with my father while looking at me intermittently. One of them greets me directly and I smile, apologizing and explaining that I know very little Aramaic, though I manage a respectable hello in my father's tongue: "*Marhaba*." All the men seem pleased, and my mother, beyond bored, has already left us to smoke another cigarette while chatting with two Mexican grocery stock boys outside. When the men leave, I ask my father what they said. He explains that they wanted to know if his wife was also Assyrian. He told them no, she is Colombian, and that one of the men replied, "Ah, that must be why your daughter is so beautiful." I cock my head to the side sarcastically, and tell him to "go on," reveling in the flattery. "Yeah, they say you beautiful, but imagine if you brush your hair!"

It takes me a moment to wipe my jaw off the floor; there are countless blogs dedicated to "things immigrant dads say," and this is definitely, as the expression goes, "one for the books." My internal monologue is interrupted by the presence of two El Cajon police officers as they enter through the doors and walk over to the hot bar where trays of rice and assorted meats glisten under heat lamps. I recognize one of them – Officer Medina – from an earlier ride-along experience, and the pair sidle up to the counter to order plates of food to go. I do not go out of my way to say hello. Instead, I watch him and watch how the Arabic and Chaldean patrons watch the officers as well: some wary and keeping their distance while children stare up at them in wonderment.

"You've never had shawarma? It's delicious. These are good places to grab a bite, rookie, especially when you first start out and you're patrolling alone," Medina says, identifying the unknown uniformed figure as a probationary officer. He continues, "You get

to see the community, and you let them see you. You let them know you appreciate their food and their culture. It can pay off later when you're interacting with these people on calls." The white, blonde-haired rookie with a gelled combover nods, hazarding a few exploratory looks over his shoulders and taking in sights and smells that seem wholly unfamiliar to him. Between the moving bodies of shopping families and employees unloading dollies stacked with crates of produce, I meet Medina's gaze for a fraction of a second, but he does not seem to recognize me. Perhaps it is because, sitting with my parents, I blend into the scene before him. The pair pay for their meal and leave. When I see Medina later in the field a few weeks later while riding along with other police officers, neither of us mention this encounter.

4.2 Chapter Overview

As scripted encounters between police and various riders, the ride-along provides a front row seat to seeing how the scripts of cinema and histories of spectatorship continually reconstitute a mobile vision for policing in real-time. In the mise-en-scène of ride-alongs that I describe across the previous chapters, these scripts reveal themselves through observations of how officers and recruits learn to perform with them both in the academy and while in the patrol field. However, when the ethnographer shifts from the mobile passenger seat to exiting the patrol car, new scripts emerge: the cultural scripts that policed civilians bring *with* them to encounters with officers. By moving from the seat of the mobile ride-along to scenes with community members *outside* of the patrol car, interactions between police officers and SWANA community members illustrate how scripts of policing and scripts of occupation

crash into each other. As I argue in this chapter, these scripts cannot be disentangled from the histories of migration, militarism and imperial violence that cohere at the site of El Cajon.

San Diego's status as both a historical military epicenter for Marine and Naval activities and as a county that receives more refugees than any other county in California (Aguilera 2017) presents a distinct set of seemingly oppositional characteristics; while refugees are offered new homes in cities like El Cajon to escape violent conflicts abroad, they become more visible and vulnerable to tacit forms of violent policing that emerged through foundationally anti-immigrant and anti-Black histories. As these historical and cultural scripts travel, their mobility articulates how legacies of colonialism are spatially and geographically linked through the praxis of law enforcement and migration patterns to El Cajon. These entanglements poignantly illustrate the reflections on racism, colonialism, and occupation that James Baldwin identifies in his 1966 essay, entitled, "A Report form Occupied Territory," in which he writes, "Occupied territory is occupied territory, even though it be found in that New World which the Europeans conquered." Across the ethnographic scenes of this chapter, officers and policed community members share seemingly unlikely prior experiences with military occupations abroad, illustrating how the performativity of military performances of aggression and translation shape daily interactions between law enforcement and policed civilians in El Cajon.

Chapter 3 examined the ride-along's transformation as a political and historical object for shaping the vision of those invited to see inside of its mobile vehicle. This chapter extends these historical considerations by also exploring how the ride-along and other community-policing strategies work to stage idealized visions of community relations between El Cajon

officers and newcomers from SWANA communities. I situate the contemporary experiences of SWANA refugees in El Cajon in historical migration patterns that can be traced to the increasing securitization of San Diego's borderlands from the 1950s onward and growing populations of local Assyrian and Chaldeans in East County during the 1960s and 1970s. I provide an overview of the overlapping political forces that brought these waves of Chaldean, Assyrian, and Arabic refugees to El Cajon, California, beginning as far back as the late 19th century, and increasing exponentially through critical global conflicts like the 1991 First Gulf War in Iraq, and again with the 2003 Iraq War following the broad U.S. offensive known as the War on Terror.

Offering this historical background is important as many SWANA newcomers and long-time residents of East County share prior experiences with the U.S. military and federal police forces; many SWANA El Cajon community members I interacted with, both during ride-alongs and while spending time in the city as part of my weekly routine, spoke to the experiences of traumatic violence their families endured before arriving in San Diego. Some also identified their prior experience working as language interpreters for the U.S. military that allowed them to travel to the U.S. under refugee status and by acquiring special immigrant visas (SIVs). This chapter explores how members of these SWANA communities, including members of the Assyrian and Chaldean diasporas like myself, experience themselves along a continuum of occupation that began with their experiences as a minority ethnocultural group living in Iraq and Syria, and culminating in a yet another experience of being policed in "occupied territory" (Balto 2019) in El Cajon.

Paired alongside my experiences observing patrol officers interact with SWANA newcomers and civilians in the field, this chapter also examines how community policing materials support racialized narratives that Assyrian, Chaldean, and Arabic arrivals are subjects in need of police interventions that can transform them into more legible and familiar El Cajon residents. Through the ethnographic scenes that populate this chapter, I describe moving from the space of the patrol car to the homes and apartment complexes of refugees while on ride-alongs. It is here that ethnographer confronts scenes of domestic violence and officers' responses to victims that interpellates the researcher in unforeseen ways, from her position as an embedded ride-along researcher to her own ethnocultural backgrounds connecting her to state violence in homelands she has never visited, and exposing her to modes of violence in her own home.

4.3 Migration Backgrounds: From the "Gulf" to the El Cajon "Ghetto"

"When the bombs hit Baghdad, San Diego shook."

The first sentence of Chet Barfield's 1991 *San Diego Union Tribune* article, published just a day after United States military forces began their aerial and naval bombardment of Iraqi troops in Kuwait (codenamed "Operation Desert Storm"), is an ironic opening salvo meant to demonstrate San Diego's intimate entanglements with a war on the other side of the world. Throughout the piece, Barfield incorporates sound bites from a collection of San Diego residents who, after hearing news of the bombings on radio programs and television, panic and rush to buy groceries and to top off their gas tanks after work. Here: a military wife en route to her new apartment in Oceanside sobs, wondering if her Naval medic husband

stationed in Saudi Arabia will be harmed in the nearby conflict. There: university students at an Ocean Beach sports bar wax poetic about the excitement of being on the cusp of war as competing television sets broadcast images of an unfolding war alongside a basketball game between the Golden State Warriors and the Boston Celtics. Nowhere in this Barfield's reporting, however, do the voices of Assyrian, Chaldean, or Arabic residents of San Diego feature.

This absence is striking, considering that many SWANA families living in San Diego have generational claims of belonging to the city on par with postwar Anglo-American military families who moved to the region in the 1950s. What of their feelings of praise, dissent, or concern about the U.S. invasion of Iraq, a war that would continue to destabilize their diasporas and spur new waves of emigration away from a nation under siege? Rather they are the interpellated, racialized colonial Others (Said 1978), the suffering figures at the hands of Iraqi authoritarianism and the perpetual signifiers for U.S. imperialist fantasies that center the Middle East's Iraqi Christian/"Arab Christian" populations as victims surrounded by Islamist forces that must be saved (Khashan 2001).

I am three years old in 1991 when images of embattled U.S. military forces and Western media correspondents reporting on the Persian Gulf War babble onscreen to the rhythmic *snap* of sesame seed shells breaking between my father's teeth as we watch the television. The shattered splinters collect in a wet pile in the palm of his hand as he watches the conflict unfold in the country he fled from as a refugee in the late 1970s. He cradles a telephone between his ear and shoulder, speaking into the receiver in familiar sounds that would never quite cohere for me, an only child of two immigrant parents from opposite sides

of the world (Iraq and Colombia), as a second language that my father simply called "Assyrian," or "*Suraya*," IT has but has been widely recognized as Assyrian Neo-Aramaic, one of the oldest surviving Semitic languages in the world.[2]

"*Shlama…la, la. Dakheet*?"

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[2] Assyrian and Chaldean people I spoke to during my research rarely identified their spoken dialect, nor did they describe their language in terms of formalized linguistic categories. Indeed, there were times when it was difficult for me to parse out dialects, using my father's speech as my primary template of understanding for making sense of differences in pronunciation; while I do not speak Assyrian, hearing people speaking around me in different dialects hinted at the historical and genealogical trajectories that these newcomers may have traveled to arrive here in El Cajon. Spoken vernacular dialects of Aramaic – a distinction marking spoken languages by living community members versus ancient Syriac texts – are generally studied under the umbrella category of "Neo-Aramaic" dialects and have been broadly classified by linguistic anthropologists, archaeologists, and Assyriologists as falling into four subcategories: Central Neo-Aramaic (colloquially referred to as "Turoyo," this dialect is spoken near communities in Southeastern Turkey in areas west of the Tigris River), North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA), Neo-Mandaic (spoken by Mandeans in southern parts of Iraq), and the Western Neo-Aramaic dialect spoken in the Lebanon Mountains of Western Syria (Coghill 2020; Khan 2007; Odisho 1988). Most of the Chaldean and Assyrian people I met during my field work in El Cajon spoke the NENA dialect, which originates in a broad geographic area east of the Tigris River and encompasses parts of Northern Iraq (frequently referred to as the "Nineveh Plains"), Southeastern Turkey (in mountainous regions like Hakkari where my ancestors are from), and the West Azerbaijan Province of Iran. It is the largest branch of modern Aramaic, though each dialect claims a relationship to ancient Neo-Aramaic languages. These competing claims to ancient "originary" and Biblical incarnations of Syriac dialects have been historically politicized by different Neo-Aramaic language speakers and British scholars invested in marking distinctions based on ethno-religious affiliations (McClure 2001; Hanish 2008). Debates about national identity and ethnic origins dominate the discourses between Assyrians and Chaldeans, and even within these groups, as their "identity crisis" continues to evolve following genocides and expulsions from their homelands. The discursive and political struggles regarding which people is *more ancient*, or *more indigenous*, are far beyond both the scope of this dissertation and the personal stakes of the researcher. I did not ask my interlocutors to justify or explain their attachments to these discourses; I shall leave that task to a new generation of (hopefully) Assyrian and Chaldean linguistic anthropologists fluent in this beautiful language that I am still struggling to learn. However, the force of their arguments resound ever more loudly as these dialects – as well as the people who speak them both in El Cajon and in their indigenous homelands – are in continual states of endangerment and precarity: with no officially recognized nation-state and due to the crises of occupation by Turkish, British, and American military forces over the past 150 years, the population of Assyrian and Chaldeans communities are dwindling worldwide. This is the indigenous homeland of a group of people that has seen significant transformations in how they are formally recognized as an ethno-religious people by nation-states where diasporic peoples continue to survive in spite of generations of violence. While Neo-Aramaic is the *lingua franca* of the Assyrian and Chaldean diasporas, forced migrations in the wake of armed conflicts and genocides have resulted in many Assyrians and Chaldeans being multilingual as they traveled and awaited the completion of their asylum cases in different refugee camps before arriving at their final destinations. This was the case with many El Cajon refugees from Iraq that I met during fieldwork. Like my father, whose own pending refugee case in the United States resulted in a nearly three-year stay in Greece, the Assyrian and Chaldean newcomers I spoke with were broadly multilingual, speaking a Neo-Aramaic dialect, Arabic, and some English.

Through the poor connection, I hear my aunt's reply as a tinny exclamation of annoyance which visibly antagonizes my father. It's clear that they are having trouble hearing each other due to faulty phone lines in Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan region of Northern Iraq, where she continues to live today. During the month-long Gulf War conflict, an unusually high stack of international calling cards collect on our small kitchen counter and my mother argues with my father over which ones she can use to call her family in Colombia. Their small war of attrition continues for weeks as my father listens to his family members in Erbil and Baghdad describe effects of this war on the ground – Saudi and American aircraft dropping bombs over the Iraqi capital – a chilling foreshadowing of the longer Second Gulf War that would come in 2003. "*Darit shlama*" – blessings of peace – pass between the voices over the phone.

During the Gulf War, the United States – and San Diego specifically – would see an influx of refugees arriving from Iraq and nearby nations fleeing conflict zones. David Reimers' tabulation offers a view of refugees' migration patterns during this time-period: "From 1989 to 1991, a total of 8,405 Iraqi immigrants entered the United States; after the Gulf War…more than 15,000 Iraqis entered the United States, most of whom were accepted as refugees. Overall from 1986 to 2002, out of a total of 49,000 Iraqi immigrants, 32,187 entered as refugees or asylum seekers" (2005, 219).

While San Diego had already served as a key resettlement area for the first wave of Iraqi-Assyrians and Chaldeans in the 1960s following Saddam Hussein's 1968 coup that established his Ba'athist regime, the presence of Assyrian and Chaldean people in San Diego precedes these waves of migration catalyzed by Western wars abroad. Following the first

recorded Chaldean migration case of Zia Attalla mentioned earlier in this chapter, Chaldeans and Assyrians steadily grew communities in Detroit and Chicago (Sengstock 1983) before migrating to Californian cities like Modesto and El Cajon where these Coptic Christians and Catholics founded churches around which Chaldean and Assyrian communities could grow (Lewis 2003; Aprim 2004; Schmidt 2010). This was essential for these communities, as Assyrians and Chaldeans in their homelands across parts of Iraq, southern Turkey, and Iran have experienced genocide and ongoing discrimination for their ethnocultural religious practices. Thus, this first wave historically marks the arrival of Iraqi Christians to the American Southwest and to other parts of Northern California.

The esteemed cultural position of priests in Chaldean and Assyrian communities means that one of their entrusted responsibilities as community patriarchs is to maintain records –largely derived from oral histories – of refugees, a more local practice of keeping track of resettled families that large refugee organizations like the International Rescue Committee in San Diego undertake in their daily operations. In a *Chaldean News* piece by Adhid Miri (2020), Michael Bazzi, a Pastor Emeritus and an Aramaic instructor at Cuyamaca College, outlines key Chaldean migrant figures in El Cajon's history:

> According to Fr. Michael J. Bazzi…the first-known Chaldean immigrant to San Diego was Dr. Joseph Gibran in 1951. Then Ramzi Alex Thomas arrived from Baghdad to study at San Diego State University in 1954 and went on to open a used auto parts store. In 1955, Aziz Habib from Detroit visited San Diego and in 1957, moved to stay and opened the first Chaldean grocery store in the area. Mr.& Mrs. Wadie Deddeh moved from Detroit to San Diego in 1959.

These migrant narratives illustrate how – within a Chaldean patriarch's own narrativizing of these migration streams – middle-class, college-educated Chaldean newcomers in the 1950s established themselves as entrepreneurs and businessmen that helped to grow East County's

economy. Chaldean Wadie Deddeh's journey in 1959 from Detroit to San Diego is briefly described in a 1985 *Los Angeles Times* article along similar narrative lines, and notes that, upon settling in California in the 1950s, he "began excitedly writing friends in Detroit about the agreeable life-style and boundless economic opportunities in San Diego" at a time when he was "one of only four Chaldean families in the area" (Greeley 1985). After establishing his family in East County and beginning a career in local politics, Deddeh's (2018) autobiography notes that many local San Diegans, under the false impression that new Assyrian and Chaldean arrivals were Muslim, were reluctant to vote for him due to this perception; this evidences the nascent foundations of Islamophobia that would come to shape policing praxis in San Diego decades later during the War on Terror, including the formation of anti-terrorist local policing initiatives in San Diego to police Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Arabic people in El Cajon and Somali refugees in the historically over-policed neighborhood of City Heights (Abumaye 2017).

While Deddeh's classic immigrant success story – he was the first Iraqi-American elected official in the United States and was responsible for writing legislation that created California's Department of Transportation (Caltrans) – left a Wikipedia-worthy legacy, many Assyrian and Chaldean people I have interacted within both within and beyond the bounds of this research share less visible stories of migration to California; these are the stories that remain untold. In a conversation with a second-generation Chaldean-American Ramina over chai, traditional Middle Eastern tea, in an El Cajon Arabic grocery store, she told me that her father had worked in automobile factories in Detroit before deciding to move to California in search of a better environment to raise a family: "When *baba* brought us here in the '80s, I

remember us driving east on the freeway, and seeing those mountains in the background and thinking, 'Well, at least it won't snow here.' The city didn't look like much to me, but I looked over at *baba* driving with the windows down and he had tears in his eyes. He said the air smelled like Kirkuk."[3]

Other elderly patrons sitting together and enjoying brick oven-baked, canoe-shaped loaves of *samoon hahadjra* sprinkled with sesame seeds overhear us, and turn toward Ramina speaking quickly in a mix of NENA Assyrian and English. I give her an inquisitive look and she translates, "He said El Cajon looks like Iraq, and that's why so many Chaldeans love it." This sentiment is reflected in the same *Los Angeles Times* article describing Deddeh's success and the growing community of Chaldeans in El Cajon (Greeley 1985):

> There are now about 5,000 Chaldeans in San Diego County, the great majority of whom have chosen to settle in El Cajon and its environs. They were drawn here by the climate, which resembles that of their native country, and the pace of life, which is slower than that in Detroit, where about 60,000 Chaldeans still live. As their numbers grew, they were also attracted by the prospect of living in a tight-knit but rapidly growing community of their own people on the West Coast.

While such reporting highlights the pastoral pleasures of a "slower" paced life that I did not hear in my own conversations with Chaldean and Assyrian residents of El Cajon, it does chronicle these waves of migration of newcomers that transformed how local law enforcement and federal agencies would learn to police these new communities.

4.4 Anti-Blackness and Military Intimacies: Securitizing Borders, Securing "Ourselves"

"Are you Arabic?"

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[3] Kirkuk is a city located in northeastern Iraq along the foothills of the Zagros Mountains.

Officer Rawlins waits for the reply as he is writing field notes while questioning two young men by a convenience store in El Cajon; the owner of the store called the police because someone came in allegedly brandishing a firearm and demanding the cashier give him the available money in the register. Though the man – still unidentified – is no longer here, this duo is smoking outside the store when we arrive, and Officer Rawlins makes a point of asking them if they saw anything suspicious. When the men say no, Rawlins seizes this moment to broadly question these two twenty-somethings; by my estimate, one appears to be Mexican and the other looks Chaldean or Assyrian. After asking for their names and current addresses, Rawlins focuses his attention on the Chaldean man: "Are you Arabic?" The man looks confused for a moment and says, no, he's Chaldean and his parents are from Iraq. "So, you're Iraqi," Rawlins says, his voice trailing off, but the man corrects him, "No, I'm American. I was born here. My parents were born in Iraq." The officer holds his hand up in a gesture of interruption, saying, "There's no need to get upset. I'm just doing my job."

Later, when we are standing together in a Denny's parking lot next to a few other patrol cars for an evening "lunch" break, I inquire why he asked the man if he was Arabic. Rawlins explained that, during his military service abroad, soldiers were instructed to ask people where they were from in order to determine whether they were "friendlies" or not. He continued, "It was about protecting ourselves. It's the same way here. There are a lot of immigrants from all different countries living together in this city, and the more we get to know peoples' stories and backgrounds, the safer this city will be."

In her analysis of Canadian policing of immigrants in Toronto, Parastou Saberi argues that there "is a racialised and territorialised security ideology crystallised around the figure of

'the immigrant' and the conception of 'immigrant neighbourhoods'" (2017, 51). This security ideology – expressed in Rawlins' attempts to bridge the praxis of soldiers to the praxis of local law enforcement – is a historical formation that coincides with law enforcement's developments in policing the bounds of the nation-state; such transformations can be traced to points such as the U.S. Border Patrol's founding in 1924 following the restrictions and forced migrations on minority populations between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As a dual project between the U.S. and Mexico, and enacted on the ground by mostly working-class white Anglo-American border patrol agents, the policing and performative construction of Mexican "illegal aliens" would be continually authorized in mass deportation drives like "Operation Wetback" between 1953 and 1954 and extend into Ronald Reagan's War on Drugs (Hernández 2010) as it combined with his New Cold War in Central America and the War on the Terror (Zilberg 2011).

As a nexus of multiple migration streams of immigrants and refugees from SWANA nations and communities, El Cajon should be read as a *de facto* historical test site for the expansion of this War on Drugs to domestic counter-terrorism measures in San Diego. The "evolution" of Homeland Security evidences the intersection of local enforcement bodies colluding and conspiring to expand police power in the border region in the 1990s and 2000s with large campaigns like Operation Gatekeeper to defeat the "rising tide" of undocumented Mexican migration into San Diego's borderlands (Nevins 2001; Chavez 2008). Following the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001, these federal and local policing campaigns would coalesce behind the so-called "War on Terror," which included the disbanding of the INS with the arrival of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 into three discrete federal agencies under the

newly-formed Department of Homeland Security: Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) (Hernández 2010). These developments worked to rhetorically link and practically enforce the policing of migrant communities based on their assumed connection to larger networks of cartels and terrorist cells, a merging of military language with crime-fighting rhetoric that Zilberg describes as part of the U.S. move to further "securitize" its borders: "These implied interconnections between gangs, immigrants, and terrorists were further bolstered by military strategists who argued that the division between gangs as a law enforcement concern and terrorists as a military concern could no longer be maintained where, in the words of Max Manwaring, 'distinctions between war and crime are becoming increasingly blurred'" (2011, 17). While Zilberg describes these trends as they relate to the policing of transnational waves of migration between Los Angeles and El Salvador, they are particularly relevant for cities like El Cajon that have a high population of refugees from SWANA nations who have historically been seen as the enemy of the United States military.

These militarized responses to spatially control the movement of migrants and undocumented peoples across borders in the 1950s are prefigured by the formation of colonial and federal militias during the Antebellum period in the United States for controlling the movement of the enslaved. The routinization of slave patrols and the enforcement of lantern laws (Browne 2015) in Southern states has been theorized as a form of "transitional policing" (Reichel 1988, 52) prior to the modernization of law enforcement in larger cities spurred by movement of Black Americans during the Great Migration as described in Chapter 3. Intertwined histories of colonial state violence and anti-Blackness undergird the militarized

models of policing that have experienced rapid transformations due to conflicts abroad, shaping new tactics for policing Black communities "at home," from employing counterintelligence strategies against the Black Panthers in the 1960s and 1970s to state-sanctioned uses of surplus military equipment against Black Lives Matter protestors in the latter half of the 2010s (Balto 2019; Vargas 2018). These efforts to police Black liberation movements in the U.S. paralleled the strategies of American troops that constituted occupying forces in military theaters abroad, including the involvement of the U.S. in proclaiming to fight counterinsurgency in South Vietnam (Schrader 2019).

The deployment of specialized paramilitary units in explicitly military conflicts would offer local law enforcement agencies seemingly transportable methods for policing in "urban jungles" like Los Angeles. In 1965, Los Angeles Inspector and later Chief of the Los Angeles Police Department Daryl Gates attributed the failure of officers to quell the so-called "Watts Riots" to a lack of training, necessitating, in his view, more violent strategies for reestablishing "order" in historically impoverished and routinely brutalized communities. According to Radley Balko (2013), despite "years of animosity between black Angelenos and the LAPD" (52) in response to the over-policing of poor Black neighborhoods in Los Angeles, Gates decided it was time for the development of a new paramilitary police force: "…Gates and a small group of LAPD officials began informally consulting with Marines stationed at the Naval Armory in Chavez Ravine. The group included Jeff Rogers, who would later lead the country's first SWAT team, and Sgt. John Nelson. Often credited along with Gates with inventing the SWAT idea, Nelson become a self-taught expert in guerilla warfare…They also brought in military personnel to teach strategies for handling snipers"

(60). The words of abolitionist Mariame Kaba (2014) are a clear summation of these routine and deadly entanglements between law enforcement and military repertoires: “For blacks, the ‘war on terror’ hasn’t come home. It’s always been here.”

These sentiments are also reflected by Chaldean and Assyrian Iraqis now relocated to El Cajon for whom the transition from Iraqi life under Saddam Hussein’s regime to life in East County San Diego has not been easy. One Chaldean man interviewed by a *Progressive Magazine* reporter described the hardships he experienced since leaving Iraq in the late 1990s with his then-pregnant wife, and how shared sentiments of remorse are not uncommon amongst new SWANA arrivals: “‘Many of the older generation want to go back, Ahmad says. ‘This is not their culture. They have friends, families, memories in Iraq. One said, ‘If I am killed by a suicide bomber, I die once. Here in America, *I die every day*. I struggle with rent, I struggle with language, I struggle with work.’” (Gupta 2013, emphasis added)

When I meet another group of Assyrian men in their 50s and 60s while spending the day in El Cajon with my father, I relay Ahmad’s sentiment – “*Here in America, I die every day*” – and ask if they have encountered similar expressions from their own Assyrian families and friends living in El Cajon after resettling here. We are standing together in a parking lot of one of El Cajon’s Chaldean churches after a Sunday service, and the men switch between speaking Assyrian and English. One man with a thick tuft of salt-and-pepper chest hair forming a fuzzy corona around his gold cross necklace responds, “It is hard. By God, it is true. It was hard in Iraq, too. Poverty and the silencing of our people. At least here we are free. We can go to church and not be afraid.”

Invoking the discourse of American freedom, this man repeats a common expression I have heard from Chaldean and Assyrian people living in El Cajon and in Riverside communities where I spent time growing up with my father's sister and nieces in the mid-1990s. It is also a narrative that has been cited as evidence to justify American military interventions in Iraq and elsewhere in the imperial occupied territories of the West's "Middle East" where Iraqi Christians face threats to their "religious heritage" who are being "pushed out by rising extremism and instability" (Thames 2021). In this way, the religious and ethnocultural minority status of Assyrians and Chaldeans in Iraq, often erroneously referred to as Iraq's "Arab Christians" (Shryock and Lin 2009), becomes material to support the ongoing military occupations of other ethnocultural groups in SWANA nations, including Palestinians in Israel and Yazidis in Kurdistan (Fields 2017). When I ask how these men navigate this freedom as immigrants and if they have had any hard times adjusting to life in Southern California, my father, seemingly embarrassed by my question, places one of his hands on my shoulder.

"Baba," he begins, hailing me by my Assyrian nickname, "You do not know what 'hard' is. In our country, we used to wake up to the dead bodies hanging like this."

He mimes an improvisational gesture suggesting a noose before continuing: "When we walk to school in the morning, the bodies of people killed in the night swinging over bridge, or over the light [post] in the street. We had to spit on them so the people, the government, know we loyal."

His description of these draconian rituals – and the nods of implicit agreement around us – reveal only the tip of an iceberg that was life under Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime

in the 1960s and 1970s when my father was growing up in Baghdad. Another man, however, offers an opinion that suggests that perhaps, despite the particular forms of state violence they grew up with in Iraq, there are also familiar echoes of this violence in the United States:

> My cousin[4] has a friend from Syria who came here a few year ago. He used to be a technician in his country in a big company. When he first get here, he say, "Fadi, I am scared. I do not want to let Hassan walk home from school." Hassan is his son, maybe 16-years-old at the time. Before they come to the States the father watch how the American police treat the Black people, even when they just walking like this. He nervous to let his son do this. He still very happy to be here, but he worries a lot about this.

Such retellings demonstrate how stories of anti-Black policing travel and shape the impressions of newcomers to El Cajon, even in contexts abroad where people continue to live under different kinds of military occupation and control. These stories illustrate how the intimate entanglements between U.S. policing and military praxis undergird the resettlement of refugees in El Cajon.

These historical trajectories from American chattel enslavement through the policing of Black life under Jim Crow (Bass 2001) and through Los Angeles Watts Uprising illustrate the anti-Black foundations upon which the structure of contemporary police responses to crises of urban development and population growth are rendered in El Cajon. Indeed, this is what Stuart Hall and his co-authors (1978, 389) describe in their discursive analysis of "mugging" in 1970s London as a political and racialized construction linking these acts to Black criminality: "The criminal acts labelled 'muggings' and the patterns of black crime to which 'muggings' have been assimilated constitute the starting-point…Racism is not simply

[4] From my experience, it is common for Chaldean and Assyrian people to refer to friends or acquaintances as "cousins," a term of affiliation that does not necessarily refer to biological kinship.

the discriminatory attitudes of the personnel with whom blacks come into contact. It is the specific mechanism which 'reproduces' the black labour force, from one generation to another, in places and positions which are race-specific."

For Hall et al., policing blackness through strategies of social control *reproduces* the structural conditions experienced by historically over-policed communities along axes of race, class, and gender. Likewise, the policing of SWANA newcomers in El Cajon has been shaped by emergent, overlapping crises catalyzed by generational traumas experienced by Assyrian and Chaldean refugees who continue to live with the pain of unrecognized genocides and whose ethnocultural existence goes unacknowledged in the nation-states that comprise their ancestral homelands.[5] Following the 2003 Iraq War and a more recent wave of refugees post-2014 spurred by the ongoing Syrian Civil War which has internationally displaced an estimated 6.2 million people (Adalı and Türkyılmaz 2019), San Diego County's Resettlement Agencies reported the arrival of 1,226 Iraqi refugees between October 2014 and September 2015, and 1,120 Iraqi refugees the following year between October 2015 and September 2016 (San Diego Health and Human Services 2021).

This unfolding conflict between U.S.-backed forces, Turkish, Russian, Syrian militaries and ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and ISIS-backed groups has had

[5] These countries include Turkey, Syria, and Iran. Even Iraq's autonomous Kurdish community, often viewed as allies to Western nations in past Iraqi conflicts through Western and Eurocentric perspectives, has participated in the ongoing erasure of Assyrian and Chaldean communities in northern Iraqi Kurdistan. During the 1915 Assyrian genocide known as Sayfo or Shato d'Sayfo in the collective memory of living Assyrians – often translated as "Year of the Sword" (Biner 2020, 46) and a term synonymous with annihilation – Turkish Ottoman forces, alongside Kurdish militarized forces, carried out the expulsion and violent extermination of Assyrians from their homeland across the Hakkari mountains of modern day Turkey (Atto 2016; Özdemir 2012; Yuhanon 2018).

devastating effects for members of the Assyrian diaspora who are indigenous to northeast Syria and live primarily in the Al-Hasakah Governorate along the Al Khabour River; Assyrian villages along this river were violently attacked by contingent ISIS forces at the same time that Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, was targeted by parallel ISIL efforts to bring Iraqi Christians under a unified Islamic Caliphate (Donabed and Tower 2018).

These military conflicts that have devastated these indigenous minority communities have, in some ways, been local law enforcement's gain. During one of my first ride-alongs in El Cajon, Officer Leitzig was quick to point out a beige armored truck in one corner of the department's large garage where it stores its fleet of vehicles. This "BearCat," or Ballistic Engineered Armored Response Counter Attack Truck, had been recently acquired by the department through the U.S. Department of Defense's 1033 program, a federal pipeline for distributing excess military equipment to police departments virtually for free; after the events of 9/11, law enforcement agencies nationwide have benefited widely from this program which has "transferred at least $1.6 billion worth of equipment…compared to at least $27 million before 9/11" (Katzenstein 2020, 8). In addition to the 1033 program, the El Cajon police department also routinely applies for State Homeland Security Grants through the "Urban Area Security Initiative" (UASI) program. According to El Cajon's various public budgeting documents, the department received $43,981 granted by the UASI program for the purchase of special equipment for its SWAT team, including "Avon Gas Masks with Voice Emitters (19), Night Vision Goggles (3), and a Tactical Robot" (El Cajon City Council Agenda 34).

While the overt militarization of policing appears through these programs and the purchasing power of these departments that enables local law enforcement to grow its arsenal

of both military surplus and new surveillance technologies, these military intimacies are also evident in the experiences of newcomers and refugees who have worked as interpreters for the U.S. military. As part of efforts to increase its "cultural knowledge training" (Abbe and Halpin 2009) of inhabitants of places like Iraq, the U.S. military has employed Chaldean, Assyrian, and Arabic translators and interpreters to help carry out various tactical and communication mission. With many former interpreters now living in El Cajon on SIVs due to threats to their safety for cooperating with the U.S. military, these newcomers now face life in a city where many of the officers on patrol do not share the multi-lingual skills of the people they are tasked with policing (Coburn 2018).

In a conversation with Yousef, an Iraqi Assyrian in his early 30s I met while grocery shopping who was born in "the Valley" but visits his uncle and cousins in El Cajon every few weeks, he spoke about being deployed as an improvisational translator during a recent experience in which a group of officers arrived to a noise disturbance call at the scene of a Chaldean party. When the officers arrived, "two big Chaldanis"[6] were on the verge of a fist fight. When the men were escorted outside of the home and questioned by officers, they refused to speak, and Yousef, standing nearby, offered to translate for them. He hands me a cigarette as we stand in an alley by the grocery store's parking lot and laughs through his explanation of how one Chaldean man admonished him for offering to help: "Look, I didn't know these men. I was invited to the party by a cousin of mine, and I'm speaking to them in Assyrian, thinking to myself, "Well, maybe they don't speak English well, so I'll translate for

[6] "Chaldani" has been explained to me by the Assyrian and Chaldean people I met during my research as a colloquial term for "Chaldeans."

them to the officers." Then one of the guys says to me in, like, a fast Assyrian whisper, 'You idiot. I was a translator for these Americans during the war. We don't want to speak with them.' They were basically, like, playing dumb and telling me, 'Get lost, kid.'" In their refusal to speak with officers and, in Yousef's words, "play dumb," the sentiments of suspicion implied by the Chaldean men in Yousef's retelling cut both ways in El Cajon between officers and SWANA community members. During ride-alongs, I have routinely witnessed how suspicion and aggression saturate patrol encounters in situations where officers do not share language or cultural norms with policed citizens.

4.5 Cultivating "Good Neighbors," Performing "Good Strangers"

When responding to calls at an Assyrian, Arabic, or Chaldean home, officers frequently reject proffered acts of hospitality (such as being offered شاي, or "chai"), returning to their patrol cars while commenting to each other (within earshot of the ethnographer) on the "dirty" conditions of immigrant domiciles, or what one officer called "shithole apartments." Though many officers were clearly practiced in the art of polite and professional refusal, others seemed less inclined towards such graces. During one ride-along encounter, we are summoned to an apartment complex where a domestic violence situation has been unfolding for several hours, and due to a backlog of pending calls, have finally made it to the call two hours after the request has been made to dispatchers. With the offending party nowhere to be found on the premises, the officers decide to question the caller's neighbors to see if they have heard or witnessed anything.

Fadia, an Iraqi Arabic refugee, invites the officers into her home after agreeing to speak with them and, noticing how I moved with these officers in a way that suggests I am somehow affiliated with them, beckons me closer: "Come, *habibi*. Come." Another officer tells her in jest, "Don't worry about her, she's our interpreter." I protest, putting my hands up and apologizing that I do not speak Arabic or Assyrian. The woman shakes her hands in the air to quell my fears, and quickly assembles a plate of Makloubeh – a familiar staple of rice, stewed meat, and vegetables in many Arabic and Assyrian households – and hands it to me. Black-and-white photos decorate her walls, and the faces of smartly-dressed women in hijabs circa the 1960s gaze down at me. Fadia has already poured several more servings into bowls and presents them to the officers who patiently wait to begin asking their questions. "Eat, eat. It's good," Fadia insists as all take a bowl except for one white officer in his late 40s with two tours in Afghanistan under his belt, and she smiles earnestly in spite of his firm, "No."

Walking back to his patrol car after interviewing Fadia, he told me the smell of "these apartments" reminded him of his time patrolling the streets of Kabul and how his unit was advised to reject food from residents as a safety protocol. "You never know if some pissed off local wants to poison your ass. It's also kind of gross," he began before quickly closing down the possibility of an actual conversation with a rhetorical question, queuing up his mic bead to inform dispatch he was back at the patrol car and ready to receive more calls, "You know they eat with their *hands*, right?"

While this officer's explicitly racist remarks were troubling, they reflect how militarized scripts of policing travel from the field of American military occupation and land here in El Cajon. These comments also index a long discomfort with SWANA newcomers in

El Cajon that has been reflected in the words of the city's own government leadership. In an interview with a reporter from *Progressive Magazine*, former El Cajon mayor Mark Lewis, who grew up in El Cajon, recounted the frustrations and barely veiled racism he shared with white El Cajon residents – especially military veterans – who felt displaced and overlooked by this new wave of Iraqi migration: "Lewis says some Chaldean schoolchildren who receive free lunches are 'being picked up by Mercedes Benzes.' He adds: 'First time, they come over here, it doesn't take them too long to learn where all the freebies are at.' This, he says, causes 'a lot of resentment in regard to veterans,' who ask, 'Why can't [the federal government] support veterans like they support minorities coming over here?' Lewis says this is creating 'white flight'" (Gupta 2013).

Lewis' racial panic over the presence of new SWANA arrivals is less pronounced amongst the officers I witnessed during ride-alongs, however, many spoke to the concerns they had about refugees learning to assimilate to American cultural norms in El Cajon. For example, one white veteran officer described how his encounters with SWANA newcomers have been largely positive, but that he is worried some refugees and residents are perhaps "too comfortable" in a city where nearly one-third of the population are of SWANA descent: "Diversity is what makes our communities special here in El Cajon. We rely on the cooperation of the Arabic and Chaldean populations to work with us to keep our communities safe, and many of these groups have been warm and friendly with us. However, some of them seem too comfortable living here knowing that there are already people who speak their language so they don't feel incentivized to learn English well." Another white officer who had worked as a training officer in San Diego's regional police academy shared these concerns as

a consequence that might affect how newer officers will learn to police communities they are wholly unfamiliar with:

> El Cajon's reputation as "Little Baghdad" is welcoming for refugees, but it's also challenging for officers who join the department and are not familiar with this area. Suddenly you're throwing a bunch of rookies out into the field and they are surrounded by Arabs and Chaldeans, people they have no prior experience with. They fall back on their training to get compliance, and it's not a good situation. This is where community events can help cultivate more cultural understanding between officers and refugees…A lot of immigrants are suspicious of law enforcement, and I understand. Where they come from police can't be trusted. We want them to be learn how to be *good neighbors,* and we want them to see us as *good strangers*.

For this officer, cultivating "cultural understanding" between SWANA newcomers and police officers, especially new officers, can be achieved through community policing efforts. In response to these newcomers and their perceived cultural differences, El Cajon has employed new tactics of "community policing" in order to teach Arabic, Chaldean, and Assyrian residents how to perform as "good neighbors" for officers, and to invite them to see officers as "good strangers" (Klein et al. 2015). These tactics include paying filmmaking teams to produce sleekly edited videos as public service announcements for residents of El Cajon. One of these videos, entitled, "El Cajon PD PSA" (Ron Cook Media, 2015), has been translated into Arabic and features Arabic script in addition to an Arabic voiceover.

The video features staged scenarios between officers and El Cajon residents – all of them white – and plays through a series of hypothetical scenes that may result in encounters between police and residents, such as a vehicle accident or a woman crying in the midst of a domestic violence scenario. The scenes are relatively short and feature no dialogue except for spoken voice overs by current mayor Bill Wells, former Chief of Police Jim Redman, and reserve officer and former news anchor Marc Bailey that introduce these scenarios. A few

images of Chaldean and Arabic people briefly fade in and out during Bailey's introduction to the city of El Cajon as "an ever-increasing community of Middle Eastern immigrants and refugees." The camera pans over a still image of a group of presumably Chaldean and Assyrian people gathered at an unknown community event, followed by a close-up shot of a young girl in a multicolored hijab writing on paper at school, but these are the only images we see of SWANA community members. They are not shown as actors in scenes. Accompanying text appears on the unfolding video images that highlight, in bullet-point format, the best "to dos" for each situation.

These public relations materials present idealized scripts for interacting with police, and implicitly invite SWANA viewers of these visual images to see themselves in their white counterparts onscreen. As staged performances meant to teach refugee newcomers to the city how to act and behave in front of police officers, these community policing materials unironically conscript these viewers into the normative and imagined unitary whiteness of El Cajon.

The patriarchal narratives of a unitary "community" that emerged from the 1980s community-policing turn continue to circulate within these public relations materials of local departments and administrative documents of organizations like California's POST (Peace Officer Standards and Training) responsible for drafting regulatory language for police procedures in the state. This is a community without history, invoked and interpellated as the multicultural object (Adelman, Erez, and Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2003) of policing's rhetorical address emblazoned across its fleet of patrol cars: "to protect and serve." The symbolic referent of "community" within law enforcement, however, has long been critiqued by

scholars as an ahistorical figuration leveraged to "construct unitary images of social space through a series of exclusions and intrusions" (Zilberg 2002, 33).

In growing and ever-diversifying metropolitan centers like San Diego, the hegemony of liberal multiculturalism at the heart of policing engenders the praxis of officers who are tasked with maintaining the order – a daily enforcement of these "exclusions and intrusions" – in their patrol beats by, in the language of their training materials, "being familiar with…cultural, demographic, and socioeconomic characteristics of the residents (including traditions, habits, and lifestyles)" (POST 2005, 1-10). This is precisely the spatial work of policing that comes to define, categorize, and restrict the patterns of movement of policed community members, whether they are houseless people living precariously in public space or immigrant gang youth *forcibly moved* across nation-state borders due to their perceived social ties and lives (Herbert 1996; Stuart 2016; Zilberg 2011). Despite these longstanding critiques, the language of community participation continues to be weaponized as a technique for counterterrorism policing and security-making by bringing racialized community members *into* the fold of fighting extremism by partnering with local law enforcement.

The U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) own published materials for law enforcement agencies nationwide through its COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) office bring rhetorics of counterterrorism in line with principles of community policing. For example, amongst its five-pronged principles, its "Key Principle 4: Utilize All Partnerships to Counter Violent Extremism," suggests that "law enforcement agencies can empower all of their partners—community members, public stakeholders, and private companies—to create counter-narratives, build resilience, and counter violent extremism" (International Association

of Chiefs of Police 2014, viii). Promoting community policing tactics as a strategy for preventing terrorism highlights the use of community policing narratives in the War on Terror, a move that simultaneously invites newcomers to perform patriotism in the fight against terrorism while themselves becoming visual targets for policing. Federal funding offered through the DOJ's COPS office is routinely available to local law enforcement to implement these kinds of community-oriented programs in their own cities; based on a survey of El Cajon's yearly police budget between 2018 and its projected budget for 2022, the department receives an average of $273,847 per year in state and federal COPS grants (City of El Cajon 2021, E-6).

Cloaked in the "idiom of community" (Zilberg 2002, 48), these federal and state programs demonstrate how local patrol practices are a part of larger theaters of global security and control in San Diego's vast border region that I have outlined thus far. These acts become hyper visible in the ethnographic field of El Cajon while I am patrolling with officers who frequently designate parts of the city "Chaldean ghettos." In a conversation with several El Cajon officers during their 10pm "lunch break" on a night-shift ride-along, they share stories about policing Chaldean and Assyrian residents. One officer notes that Chaldean gangs are an ever-increasing problem tied to Chaldean social clubs that the department faces as newer refugee arrivals become entangled with criminal activities while lured by these more established "bad influences": "I hear from older Chaldean people all of the time, the 'old timers,' you know. They say these kids are running around, not listening to their elders and embarrassing the Chaldeans who've been living here since the '70s. I see these kids with their

damn pants hanging below their waists trying to look like Mexican gangbangers, just chillin' on street corners."

Another officer notes that Chaldean social clubs are seemingly nefarious dens of criminal activity that cannot be easily policed due to, in this one officer's viewing, overwhelming waves of immigrant newcomers to El Cajon:

> Sometimes you'll be driving by – and I'll do this sometimes – just roll by one of the main Chaldean hangouts where these dudes play, what is it, backgammon? Shit like that. I'll drive by and they start to tense up: either they don't make eye contact with me at all, or they're *way too friendly*, waving and smiling. They've been busted for illegal gambling before so they know not to fuck with us, but we can't stay on top of everything all of the time when you've got new refugees coming here, beating their wives, not being able to speak English, and then being confused when they get arrested.

Here, the officer references a joint 2011 venture between federal law enforcement and the El Cajon Police Department known as "Operation Shadowbox." Lead by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and working in tandem with El Cajon police officers, SWAT teams, and federal agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, this multi-agency operation was created to stop the alleged illegal trafficking of firearms and controlled substances to Chaldean crime syndicates in Detroit from the Mexican Sinaloa cartel (Manson 2011). This was not the first time that federal agencies conspired with local police to fight what they perceived to be an increase in dangerous entanglements between international drug cartels in Mexico and Chaldean communities in cities like Detroit and San Diego; according to the Department of Justice, the so-called "Chaldean Mafia" has deep roots in places like northern metropolises like Detroit where, as mentioned previously, Chaldean and Assyrian immigrants came to labor in its factories from the nineteenth-century through the present day (Knox and Rizzo 2003).

On one particular Shadowbox-affiliated raid on August 17, 2011, El Cajon officers and federal agents stormed a social club on Main Street, alleging that the premises fostered illegal drug activity as part of a wider ring of organized Chaldean crime stretching beyond San Diego. The agents found no explicit evidence of the high crimes that Operation Shadowbox claimed to uncover nor proof of drug activity, but demanded that the Chaldean men gathered there that night empty their pockets; when the men produced bundles of assorted bills – a couple of hundred here, a few thousand there – the agents seized this cash as proof of intent to partake in illegal gambling at the Chaldean Social Club. One Chaldean man, Kamal Odeesh, who had gathered enough money through the efforts of friends and relatives to purchase a used Toyota Camry from another Chaldean man had his money seized *in toto* for simply being at the club that night. The Chaldean men were provided official Department of Justice "Receipts for Cash or Other Items," receipts for cash that would never be returned to them. In an interview with *San Diego Reader* reporter Bill Manson (2011), who traveled to the social club following the raid, Chaldeans described the violence of the raid:

> "Look. Look! They took our money! Ten thousand dollars, from some. They came in with their shotguns raised. "Down on the ground!" They cuffed me, hands behind my back, threw me on my face on the ground. Hit me twice on the shoulder. Made me lie there for two hours. I'm an old man. I have diabetes. Where is the respect? They were kicking people. Yelled at me to shut up! Is this the kind of humanitarian freedom the U.S. stands for? It was like Baghdad!"

In his appraisal of the violence and its familiarity as being "like Baghdad," George Kharat, a longtime El Cajon resident, also brings to light how the criminalization of racialized Others in East County is mobilized by cultural misunderstandings. Speaking with Manson he explains why the seemingly suspicious amount of cash that Chaldeans carry is misread by law enforcement: "Chaldean people…We like to carry cash. Not credit cards. When we buy

something, we like to pay cash. Yes, there were people with cash that night. But not for drugs, not for gambling…I tell you…that is *our way*. We carry our money in our front pockets. Cash. There's no hiding. The Chaldean police officers would have understood. But they did not bring them" (2011, emphasis added). I have witnessed this practice amongst Assyrian and Chaldean residents in El Cajon: whether when buying groceries for the week, or while riding-along with officers and stopping for lunch where I have seen Chaldeans and Assyrians pay for their food exclusively in cash. It is so commonplace amongst these communities that it did not strike me to theorize its importance as part of law enforcement's praxis in El Cajon; I can count on one hand the amount of times I have seen my father holding a credit card while growing up. In the words of Kharat and for many of the older generations of Chaldeans and Assyrians like my father, it is simply not "our way."

Another crucial component of Kharat's retelling of the raid is his insistence that, had Chaldean police officers arrived on scene, they would have been sympathetic and understanding, and perhaps able to translate their cash-carrying practices as evidence of cultural differences, rather than evidence of crime, to the federal agents. This rhetoric forms the basis for cultural diversity narratives of policing that insist that more officers of color can create better, more "culturally-sensitive" models of policing (Gibbs 2019; Pettrey 2020). While there are significantly fewer self-identified Chaldean officers than white or Latino officers employed with the El Cajon Police Department – so much so that I have never

participated on a ride-along with one – the department has made recent efforts to make these officers more visible in public relations materials and public-facing videos.[7]

Officers I rode along with who spoke about the challenges of policing diverse neighborhoods where Chaldean and Assyrian refugees live described their department's diversity efforts as both well-meaning but ultimately unsuccessful in reshaping many newcomers' attitudes toward police. When I asked one white officer if he had seen refugees in the field respond positively to seeing an officer who was from similar ethno-religious or cultural backgrounds as them, he replied:

> Sure, yes. It's nice to go around and shake peoples' hands and be able to speak their language, but it can't fix everything. Some of these people are fresh off the boat, you know what I mean? They don't trust law enforcement at all. I get it. They came from really rough places with unstable governments, and other guys in the department who served in Iraq and Afghanistan know that fact better than anyone. But you're in America now. You need to learn to comply and adjust to your new life.

Here, the officer downplays the practical ability for similarly racialized officers to inspire better behavior in refugees that can be sustained. Without prior knowledge of peoples' lived experiences, he locates failures of compliance in newcomers' distrusts of law enforcement. Lisa Cacho describes how these narratives help to shape tacit state-sanctioned acts of racism in Southeast Asian contexts, yet it is certainly applicable to the case of El Cajon's migrant families and newcomers: "Distrust of U.S. state officials is assumed to be part of the…cultural baggage, a survival mechanism left over from government-sanctioned abuse in their respective countries of origin. Being wary of law enforcement is never considered to be

[7] See Louie Michael (2018)

a distrust that might emerge, wholly or partially, from the corruption or brutality of law enforcement" (2012, 88).

In my experiences observing officers on patrol interact with Assyrian, Chaldean and Arabic-speaking people in the field, they appear unable to reflect on how their paramilitary performances of normative masculinity referenced in Chapters 1 and 2 (Balko 2013) – shouting when non-English speaker refugees appear confused and intimating use-of-force threats by resting their hands on their holstered weapons in non-violent situations, to name just a few gestures – might be contributing to a newcomer's fear, distrust, and confusion. These tacit performances illustrate how the "diagnosis of cultural difference as a disabling condition is repeatedly used against refugees by the state to perpetuate a range of violences" (Cacho 2012, 89).

Keeping track of this violence against Chaldean, Arabic, and Assyrian newcomers and residents of El Cajon is an entirely more complex matter: U.S. Census categories mark people from SWANA nations as racially white and "Caucasian," thereby rendering El Cajon's crime statistics and other reporting agency's data on police use-of-force perpetuated against these communities *invisible*; they do not disappear so much as become *camouflaged* beneath the organizing banner of whiteness (Alshammari 2020; Kayyali 2013; Tehranian 2008). For example, the available RIPA data released by the El Cajon Police Department between 2016 and 2020 lists only three racial categories for designating the perceived race of people involved in a police incident where use of force was deployed: White, Hispanic, and Black. It is impossible to know based on this data whether or not individuals marked as "White" were of broad Anglo-American descent or SWANA community members. Without a

transformation in how SWANA people count and are represented through these kinds of data initiatives, it is difficult to get a clear picture of how SWANA residents in El Cajon are being accounted for in scenarios where they are the targets of police use-of-force. I want to reassert the importance of ethnography in being able to see how that which escapes these inflexible categories – the ethnocultural nuances of SWANA peoples – becomes visible during interactions on the ground of ethnographic encounters with people who have intimate experiences with violence.

4.6 Interpellated Visions: Scenes of Domestic Violence

Between 2016 and 2020, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) reported that domestic violence incidents in El Cajon had increased by 52% over this four-year period (SANDAG 2020). Dilkhwaz Ahmed, executive director of the El-Cajon based nonprofit License to Freedom, has been a longtime advocate for SWANA communities, particularly refugee women who live with ongoing domestic violence situations in their homes. In a discussion with a local reporter, Ahmed described how many refugee women who arrive in El Cajon are in particularly precarious situations when they first arrive to San Diego and face overlapping difficulties: "For some refugees and immigrants…the situation is even more fraught. They can be isolated and don't always speak English well. Many don't understand the legal system and local resources. And some fear getting help or leaving an abusive partner could jeopardize their ability to stay in the U.S." (Popescu 2020).
While recent studies suggest that the pandemic has caused a noticeable uptick in reported cases (Mittal and Singh 2020; Dlamini 2021), refugee victims of domestic violence in El

Cajon are often uniquely situated within intersecting historical and intergenerational traumas from living under the psychological stressors of state violence, military occupation, and oppression that can normalize domestic violence situations (Arfken et al. 2018; Hakim-Larson 2007). Officers that I observed handling domestic violence calls had some understanding of how these cultural factors might shape the experiences of SWANA newcomers in El Cajon who live in a state of ongoing precarity within their families, while others expressed disbelief that women would willingly stay in a violent situation.

The tensions that emerge between officers figuring out how to work with domestic violence victims from SWANA cultural backgrounds became visible during a few calls for service requesting officer assistance with domestic violence situations. During one ride-along with officers to an apartment complex in El Cajon, we arrive to find a Chaldean woman in her 40s wailing as her husband is being handcuffed. The reporting party (RP), a neighbor who lived below the couple in the same building, tells officers she heard loud noises like someone being thrown against the wall or heavy objects falling. As I am standing in the hallway outside of the Chaldean woman's home, I overhear one officer say to another: "I guess she doesn't want him arrested. She said nothing happened and that she doesn't know the RP upstairs. He isn't making a good case for himself, though. He was acting aggressive and not listening to us so we took him down." The officers are hauling the man off of the floor where they have pinned him, and the woman pleads with them, "My children are going to be home soon. Please, stop." The officers warn her to stay back, and her husband is escorted to a patrol car outside where he is placed in the backseat for further questioning away from his wife.

While standing next to two back-up officers during the unfolding encounter, they begin to tell me that domestic violence victims like Layah are common in El Cajon, and usually unwilling to pursue pressing charges. One officer says, "Sometimes these women are afraid of the retribution, or are too dependent on their husbands to make it on their own. Their prospects seem difficult so they just put up with the abuse until someone else makes the call for them." The other officer standing next to him offers his own assessment: "There really isn't much we can do if there aren't visible signs of trauma on someone. In this case, yeah, the woman looked shaken up but there aren't any visible marks on her. Her husband is the one that just escalated the situation by getting angry that we are here. He put *himself* in the backseat with cuffs on, not *us*."

In their summary of the domestic violence call, these officers illustrate how their own interventions are framed as reactionary responses to civilians, putting the onus and responsibility of ensuring an encounter will unfold relatively peacefully onto SWANA community members in the midst of a crisis. In a conversation with three Chaldean women at a community event in El Cajon, they relayed their own experiences of domestic violence and their perception of officer involvement in these encounters. One woman in her 50s, Zaynah, had been a resident of El Cajon for almost thirty years when I met her, and she proudly expressed that she never called the police on her husband:

> When we first got here in the late 1980s, things were stressful between my husband and I. He had a hard time getting work even though he had a degree from the University of Baghdad. We used to fight a lot and these white ladies would come knock on our door when he left the house and ask me if I was okay. I didn't speak English well back then and I'm certain they pitied me. They told me to call the police but I couldn't explain to them that, where we come from, this kind of heated argument is normal in our culture.

Another Chaldean woman in her late 40s, Mina, wondered aloud how things might be different if El Cajon had more female officers who were also Chaldean, and another Chaldean friend of the pair – a woman in her 50s – shooed away the suggestion with a flick of her manicured nails: "*La. la.* We do not speak about this. We do not need Chaldean women being police. We need Chaldean women being counselors, being teachers. This is a better way."

I wondered if there could be a "better way" during one of my final ride-alongs with Officer Leitzig. During this encounter, we arrive at the home of a domestic violence situation in progress, and are the second police unit on the premises. Upon entering this single-story home in the southern suburbs of El Cajon, an Assyrian-American woman in her mid-30s is pacing back and forth in her living room while officers usher me inside. During previous ride-alongs, I was careful to maintain some distance from contacts between police and civilians, often standing near the entrances of homes unless explicitly invited inside in order to both make myself less visible in scenes of crisis and to respect the privacy of people in the midst of contacts with police.

Urged on by the officers' insistence that I step into her home rather than wait outside unattended, the woman barely seems to notice me. She holds a crying baby against her hip as the officers try to calm her down, and a few other children are seated on the living room floor quietly watching the scene. She says she is in a custody battle with her ex-husband, and that he tried to force his way inside the home when he visited unannounced earlier in the evening. Officer Leitzig asks the primary contact officer to step outside with him for a moment to discuss how to handle the situation in order to give the woman some space to calm down. For a moment, I do not realize I am alone with this Assyrian woman in her home as I wander back

out into the living room from the kitchen hallway where I am been trying to stay out of the way. She is leaning with her back against a wall, the crying child now in the lap of one of its older siblings.

"I can't do this anymore," she says, turning to me. The mascara once lining her eyes now shines across the tops of her cheeks, emphasizing the deep orbital pockets often associated with the facial features of many SWANA peoples. She does not ask my name, nor does she indicate any curiosity or concern regarding the presence of a non-uniformed, civilian woman in her late twenties – a stranger invited to witness – in her living room. Her voice breaks, and she reaches out for me with her eyes closed. I catch her hands in mine, squeezing them as we sink together to the floor.

"I'm sorry," I tell her, but I want to tell her so much more.

The officers return, and I drop her hands like smoldering ingots of iron.

4.7 Conclusion: From the Backstage of Policing to Policing's Backseat, or Leaving the Ride-Along for Other Stages

A few years ago, when I first started riding along with officers, I had left a personal item in an officer's patrol car. Before arranging to pick up the key, I thought that I might have a spare stashed in a magnetic box fixed to the chassis. After spending half an hour rummaging on my hands and knees for this magnetic box, I call it quits. It was late at night, so I ordered a rideshare service to ferry me all the way from my apartment near UC San Diego's campus to El Cajon. When I arrive, the Arabic rideshare driver is reluctant to leave me alone

in front of the station. I assure him I'll be fine, and take a seat in the poorly-lit parking lot in front of the station's main garage doors where patrol vehicles can enter or exit the facility.

As I wait for the officer, I try to wipe the dust and oil grease covering my hands and forearms on the curb next to me, but it is a useless endeavor; I am covered in layers of grime and grease from my car's undercarriage. A Crown Victoria pulls up to the front of the station's garage door and I wave. It drives a little closer, rolling its windows down, and the face of an officer I have never met glares at me suspiciously. I tell him that I am waiting for another officer and provide him with this officer's name and identifying badge number as proof, but he says nothing. Instead, he opens his door, placing one foot outside. This innocuous gesture is by now a familiar tactic to me, used by patrol officers in the field when encountering possibly armed or dangerous civilians. With one foot bracing against the floor, I am aware that, outside my range of vision, he is swiftly unholstering his firearm, aiming it at me through the patrol car's door. He can at this point decide to escalate the situation by shooting at me through the door or popping his gun up and shooting at me through the open window, a tactical move that I learned by from my field work with officers.

My mouth goes dry. I have been distinctly interpellated as a potentially dangerous subject. I have been hailed by the officer's veiled performance that he does not recognize I recognize. He has the expression of many officers I have witnessed when interacting with people on the street, especially people who make their lives in public spaces without access to stable housing resources. In this officer's eyes, I must appear as a transient SWANA woman who has, at 1:00 a.m. in the morning decided to camp out in front of the police station

"Who did you say you are waiting for again?"

I answer, and he radios dispatch. The reply of a familiar voice cracks over his shoulder-mounted radio. Seemingly satisfied but clearly unamused, he closes his door and says, "Okay, he'll be here in a moment."

A short while later, a police SUV drives up to the gate, flashing its headlights at me. Stunned from the previous encounter, I go to open the passenger's side door but realize there is another officer sitting in it. The passenger's side window rolls down and the officers seated inside finishing laughing; the driver – Officer Leitzig – apologizes for being late, then hits a button to unlock the SUV's doors.

"Get in the back," he suggests. I look at him confused, and he continues, "It's just for a second. Come on, I can't kick Mendez out. You should've seen his ass trying to chase this guy just now. His legs are tired."

They share another laugh, and I climb into the patrol car's cramped backseat. The cold plastic seat is shallow, and I twist myself into a side-saddle position in order to sit comfortably for the short ride up to the second floor of the station's garage where officers park their personal vehicles. I watch these officers from behind the steel lattice barrier separating the front seat of the vehicle from the backseat as I am transported in the mobile cell of the patrol car, experiencing a new kind of patrol vision that was always *behind* me on the ride-along. While riding along with officers, this point of view – of the arrested subject – remained out of sight as a structural condition of the ride along itself; officers told me they were instructed to not permit me to ride-along in a vehicle while it was transporting an arrested or detained individual. Now transformed as a jail cell, the patrol car forces the ethnographer, looking back at this earlier memory, to confront how witnessing the enactment

and interactions of scripts "on the ground" reveals new interpretive views of the ride-along. When Officer Leitzig and I are alone, I explain my recent encounter with the officer that arrived earlier. He gestures at the dirt across my hands, forearms, and face where I have absent-mindedly smeared this residue in the course of the night's events, confirming my earlier suspicion that I was the intended target of the unknown officer's gun: "Yeah, sounds like he definitely pulled his gun on you. But, I mean, *look* at you."

***

The imperial violences and historical waves of migration outlined in this section illustrate how strategies of local policing have emerged through and been constitutive of broader state securitization and border-patrol policies. The tacit conventions of enforcement that I observed in the patrol field are steeped in histories of racist traditions that continually support the maintenance and legitimacy of contemporary policing. Though unrecognizable to officers, these imperial and colonial histories suffuse daily encounters between police and civilians, and also shape the interpretive field in which the researcher is invited to ride-along to witness policing in action. As I began to explore in Chapter 3, the ride-along is one vehicle for ushering invited participants into ways of seeing these migration streams from the constrained viewing machine of the moving patrol vehicle. As the opening scene of this section demonstrates, however, the ride-along is a space of privilege that can temporarily conceal and distort those acts and gestures that interpellate the researcher as a subject upon which tacit threats of violence – even just aiming a loaded firearm at someone – cohere and are *always* present. The journey across the preceding chapters is one of experiencing how the ride-along is not an apolitical materialization of policing's professional or organizational

culture; it is a political vision machine that invites all kinds of participants to not only see racialized others as normalized subjects that actively *invite* and *evoke* "rational" police responses, but to see *ourselves* as allies, partners, and collaborators with the police.

The arc of this journey positions the ethnographer to confront how the ride-along consistently works to interpellate her in the field, and then ask how, in spite of the histories of colonial and military violence that undergird everyday policing, she can possibly disentangle herself from the front row seat of the ride-along. What forms of engagement are available through other sites of policing that can push against the constraints that I have described are historically embedded in the ride-along? To invoke the language of experimental filmmaker Stan Brakhage once more, what would it mean, rather than to participate only as an ethnographic observer of ride-alongs, for me to play more fully with the training worlds of officers that bring new officers to the vision machine of the ride-along, a kind of play that, in the words of Brakhage (1970), no one could "interfere with"?

The final chapter of this dissertation attempts to answer these questions and marks a forward trajectory toward explicit modes of play at the site of police role-play training, establishing my return to San Diego's police academy that I first visited in 2015 and which is discussed in Chapter 1. Though Brakhage (1970) makes an argument that playing fully can help one disappear into a scene in order to witness its unfolding, I would like to propose that the kinds of play available in methods of performance and performance ethnography are an expressly political positioning that resists and refuses disappearance. The ride-along might be a stage upon which recruits and other riders learn how to see the field of patrol, but it is one in which the ride-along participant must comply with implicit mandates to make herself only as

visible as officers allow to ensure her presence does not interrupt the scene. For Brakhage, his position as a filmmaker on a ride-along allowed him the opportunity to effectively hide amidst the chaos of an unfolding scene and film situations that would have otherwise been unavailable to him. Likewise, the ride-along researcher and others invited to ride-along are offered rare opportunities to see daily encounters between officers and civilians. This kind of seeing, however, does not hold space for being accountable to the ways in which our seeing can shape a scene.

While I share in the critiques that the ride-along is limiting and constrains the vision of *all* riders, I argue that it endures as a significant epistemological vehicle. When paired with other research methods like performance ethnography, it can reveal the mimetic and ethnographic "feedback loops" that connect sites of police training to the patrol field. Unlike the normative police vision enforced by the patrol vehicle, performance – and the performativity of police vision that emerges in sites of police training as seen in Chapters 1 and 2 – is aware of itself as *material for action*. Performance calls the researcher to be accountable to her making, including her ethnographic interpretations shaped by her experiences riding along with police officers. These considerations points us to other theaters and stages beyond the ride-along upon which repertoires of policing are performed, recited, and rehearsed.

The final chapter will examine how scripted police training materials are enacted and staged between recruits and officers-turned-actors by describing my own participation at a Scenario Test Week event as a volunteer role-play actor. I situate my explicit participation as a *participant-performer* rather than only an observer to demonstrate how the researcher

attempts to revise these scripts by bringing her own ethnographic ride-along experiences in El Cajon *into* the space of the police academy as material to perform with.

Conclusion:

Role-playing and Feminist (Re)Visions at Scenario Test Week

You can taste the dishonesty / it's all over your breath
As you pass it off so cavalier / but even that's a test
Constantly aware of it all / my lonely ear
pressed against the walls of your world
– Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, *Pray You Catch Me* (2016)

"One needs only to press one's ear against the walls
to hear the weak voice of one's own desires, fears…
the voice of one's own meanings and predestinations…
You only need to press the ear against the wall."
– Andrzej Wełmiński, *Maniacs, or Their Master's Voice* (1993)

5.1 Introduction: Confession

"Where are you going to go?"

The man grabs me by the arm as I turn to walk away, swinging me around to face him. It is a violent duet, but he is stronger and faster. Choking on tears, I beg him to stop. His compliance is a sudden, unexpected response. But then he slams me against the wall, and I feel the concussive force of his violence travel through my limbs and the particle board where my cheek meets the surface. He is on me again, pressing his pelvis against my lower back and hissing in my ear, *"Who wants you? No one. No one wants you, you pathetic bitch."*

With my ear pressed against the wall of the police academy classroom, I hear the violent play-acting of another role-play scenario in the room next door, echoing into my body like a child's game of telephone. I breathe in steadily, letting the sounds of young men screaming *"Get on the ground! Get on the ground right now! Hands up!"* seep into and over my skin like a thin layer of conductive electrical grease through which to charge my own unfolding performance. I turn to face my provisional lover, tears running over the smeared plum lipstick – applied like theatre make-up – under my swollen eyes. He sweeps his hand

dramatically near my face, pretending to back-hand me and I throw myself against a stack of metal classroom chairs to both exaggerate and render the act of being slapped dramatically visible for the audience member waiting in the hallway, the proverbial backstage of this performance.

Officer Marconi, a San Diego officer in his early 30s playing the role of abusive boyfriend in this Domestic Violence scenario, grips me gently by the back of my neck and I stand up, leading him in this perverse dance with a small nod toward the floor that says, *"Throw me there."* This is the ninth time we have performed this iteration of the scenario together, and in between "takes" we negotiate how to stage the next scene when a new recruit arrives "on scene" to be tested on their response to an observable domestic violence situation in action. From outside the half-open door, the Scenario Evaluator drops his own role of radio dispatcher and tells the recruit waiting in the hallway, "You've been standing here for a minute, recruit. The reporting party is a woman in her 20s who says her boyfriend is threatening to kill her. What are you going to do?"

A muted reply, and then Scenario Evaluator Jarvis, a Black training officer in his late 40s, puts his hand through the open sliver of doorway, raising his fingers in the air like a chorus conductor with an invisible baton. The gesture is clear: *more*. I scream, "Help me! Please help me! Let me go!" The knock answers, followed by a wary voice: "This is the police! Do you need help in there?" Officer Marconi and I are locked in a desperate grapple waiting for the recruit to step inside the classroom-turned-imaginary living room, a tableau vivant of sweat and fury. I am a bullet loaded in a chamber. Hold it. Not yet. The recruit

opens the door wider, stepping inside and is followed by Officer Jarvis who takes his seat in the corner of the classroom, settling his clipboard across his lap. Now.

Officer Marconi pushes me slightly and I propel myself forward, crashing to the ground at the recruit's feet. The force of the act shifts something inside of me. Something has been knocking on the other side of the wall, the one I convince myself I have carefully built between my research field work and my home life. I cannot stop it. Behind me I hear Marconi repeating the same line he's performed several times in previous iterations of the scene, usually with both hands in the air in a gesture of explicit compliance: "Officer, she started it. She was hitting me and I'm just defending myself. She's crazy, man." I reach up for the recruit, sobbing and clawing at his pant leg. He is stunned, taking several steps back from me until he is standing in the door frame. Officer Jarvis shifts uncomfortably in his seat as the too-small neon evaluator vest digs into his bulky physique and he leans back, resting both booted feet on a nearby chair. He audibly sighs, flipping the evaluation paperwork over in a distinctly passive aggressive move that could only be more clear if he had tapped his watch like a cartoon character. The recruit looks over at him, sweat trickling over his nose and upper lip. He seems to be making a concerted effort to prove he can perform "command presence" and take control of this domestic violence situation by "cutting to the chase." He clears his throat, imbuing his next words with tempered irritation bordering on hostility: "Ma'am, I need you to calm down. You need to talk to me, or I can't understand what is going on. I'm here to help you. What's your name?"

A long pause. I can't find my words. I heave for breath, and Officer Jarvis' voice says quietly "off-stage" to Officer Marconi: "Now *that's* good acting." Their voices sound like

they are behind a thick pane of acrylic and polycarbonate, the kind of sound-dampening barrier evocative of the partition between the police vehicle's front row seat and its rear mobile cage, but every person in this room might as well be on another planet. I crawl toward the recruit, feeling myself lose control of the carefully articulated repertoire of gestures I brought with me into this room to anchor me in the text of the scenario, grounding gestures learned in performance art seminars to prevent me from freefalling through my own internal walls like an anvil. I desperately reach for the recruit's steel-toed boots, curling into a ball. The characters of previous scenes evaporate as I grope for them in the suddenly dark room of my imagination. The sting of Officer Marconi's improvisational insults – *pathetic bitch* – pin me against the floor like a biology class specimen. I say the only true thing I can say, a performative utterance that bridges the world of the scenario and private worlds of abuse seemingly hidden away: "I can't do this anymore."

He pulls his foot away from me with such force that it leaves a black skid mark on the linoleum floor. When I look up into his confused and fearful eyes, his training pistol is aimed down at me.

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Some journeys take you back to where you started.

Some stories cannot be told in chronological order.

Here, we seem to arrive at the dissertation's beginning: an unfolding role-play scene during Scenario Test Week organized by San Diego's police academy. Unlike the introduction to the dissertation, however, the scene above occurred in the summer of 2015 when I was in the thick of field work riding along with officers on patrol in East County. A

patrol officer forwarded me a group e-mail asking for volunteers to perform as role-play actors at the academy's upcoming Scenario Test Week, and I eagerly jumped at the opportunity. In an interview with one of the academy's training officers that I conducted in 2019, he confirmed that the academy depended on patrol officers, reserve officers, and family and friends of officers to volunteer their time in order to make Scenario Test Week a successful and rigorous testing event as outlined by POST's state guidelines. While anyone can write to or otherwise reach out to the academy's staff to inquire about volunteering as an actor, this invitation, in practice, broadly extends to those "trusted" insiders broadly associated with policing in San Diego. As an ethnographer performing research with police in El Cajon, I had one foot in the door.

As the significant other of a newly-graduated officer, I had my other foot firmly placed across policing's "thin blue line" (Wester and Lyubelsky 2005), a pseudo-insider studying police interactions in the same department where my now-ex romantic partner continues to work as a patrol officer. When I began the doctoral program at UC San Diego, I had arrived in a long-term relationship with my boyfriend of 15 years who had recently transitioned away from a law school program and toward the world of law enforcement. This unanticipated detour coincided with the beginning of my journey in graduate school, a parallel route of disciplinary training that seemed, on the surface, to mimic his own intense training in the police academy. As he became more entrenched in the training models and scripts of the academy and openly enthusiastic about what he was learning, I was an intimate witness to his transformation from my childhood sweetheart into a police officer. With my ex's support and due to my long-term interests in performance, I took this as an opportunity to shift my

ethnographic research focus to police training and its pedagogical materials that include an examination of the performance scripts and visual logics that are the central focus of this dissertation.

Between my graduate seminars and study groups I spent time getting to know my ex's fellow recruits before and after academy sessions and on weekends. My evening rituals consisted of ironing his academy uniform, tracing seams to match the exact geometric, militarized specifications that would prevent training officers from punishing a sloppy appearance, grounds for a collective punishment of all recruits to further inculcate them into the shared social norms and expectations of policing. After picking him up at the end of the day and chauffeuring him and his academy buddies to dinners and informal training sessions at other recruits' homes, I was invited to participate in these spaces, sharing my research questions and interests with recruits from different walks of life. Without hesitation, I volunteered to be a "test dummy," a docile body upon which recruits could practice their standardized chokeholds, control holds, and performances of command presence. Every moment on the verge of losing consciousness while nestled in the crook of a recruit's elbow, their forearm and bicep flexing and pressing against my carotid artery, was a moment to reflect on my performance training and one of its core mandates to commit to the risks of embodied performance. Here, in these many arms were the scripts that invited me to experience myself as an object of their violent address, a view from "inside" police vision as recruits learned to try this vision on for themselves.

As this dissertation argues, however, scripts travel, often with tacitly violent consequences. When my ex was eventually hired as an officer with the El Cajon Police

Department, he became my primary contact who vouched for my IRB-approved research and mediated by initial correspondences with the former chief of police. I shook hands with the chief, officers and police administrators, all of whom encouraged my research and offered unmitigated access to the department's facilities. My presence was implicitly rendered a non-issue; I was, for all intents and purposes in their eyes, a new "police wife," someone to be embraced and brought into the fold of policing. Wives and girlfriends of officers invited me to their homes for dinner. Officers eagerly volunteered to "show me the ropes" of patrol. When my ex began his first patrol duties on the night shift after a probationary period of riding along with several training officers, I anxiously laid awake listening to the police scanner to hear his call sign over the radio, and these women assured me that I would get used to this new way of living. One of them gave me a book, entitled, "Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement: A Guide for Officers and Their Families" (Gilmartin, 2002), a guide written by a former officer for an intended audience of new officers. I read it, along with course-assigned texts by Fanon, Hartman, Patterson, Foucault, Deleuze, and Butler, but it remained untouched on my ex's nightstand.

Scripts circulate, but they can also consume. After patrolling for a few months, my ex's transformation, a process that had already begun in the academy, into an unrecognizable version of himself became painfully visible. While riding along with other officers or over beers with my ex's department colleagues, a shared refrain – expressed to me as a word of wisdom – emerged across these interactions: "There are two kinds of cops. The ones that can leave the work they do at the station after a shift ends, and the ones that bring the work home with them." I would come to intimately understand the reality that this appraisal indexes, one

in which I became the target for threats and acts of intimate partner violence that policing's scripts engendered as tacitly normative acts required by patrol officers in the performance of their duties. What I had witnessed on ride-alongs with officers – the violence of physical arrests and verbal assaults on policed members of SWANA communities in El Cajon – were brought to bear upon our domestic interactions. Our ending was abrupt. The transformational power built into policing's scripts had rendered our relationship untenable, shifting both the ideological and methodological grounds upon which I had initially positioned myself to do this research.

Scripts are transformative. Looking back on this experience, I see how, even as I grappled with the scripts that revealed themselves on ride-alongs and in the training academy, I became, like the many abused and murdered women before me, another citation in the long iterative history of violent patriarchal masculinity, as it was in my case, sutured to foundational racialized and gendered violences (Blumenstein, Fridell and Jones 2012). The insertion of my female body in scenarios would appear to introduce gender as an additive aspect, but my body – even while in the field on patrol – has always been gendered. While gender has not been the primary lens through which I have examined interactions in the field in previous chapters, I argue that performing in scenarios with my gendered female and femme body illustrates how race and gender are inextricably linked as bell hooks (1996) reminds us in her analysis of such filmed representations of black female sexuality on screen.

The epigraphs that open this chapter are both a confession and an invitation to convene around what it means to carry on with this research on scripted police violence in the absence of the familiar interlocutors and stages that provided me rare access to the *iterative*

process of shaping police vision on patrol. In the years following his absence, I have felt at times like Beyoncé, her ear pressed against the metaphorical wall of her lover's deviant acts, praying to be caught and to be seen by the lover who hurts her. "*Why can't you see me. Everyone else can*," I wondered. Beyoncé's spoken words from her 2016 album *Lemonade* became the silent litany replaying in my mind as I pressed my ears against the literal walls between me and my ex, who would lock himself in our bedroom after a patrol shift or against which I would find myself pinned, cycles of retribution that I naïvely imagined I was uniquely suited to break, to drag him back across policing's thin blue line.

While it may be unconventional to save a full-frontal explanation of how I came to do this fieldwork for the conclusion, my initial approach was an attempt to, in the act of writing up this ethnographic text, "tidy things up as much as possible by wiping away the tears and ignoring the tantrums" (Rosaldo 1984, 86). Now that we have traveled together through the ride-along, the training academy and the streets of El Cajon, I disclose these details here as an enactment of my main argument: Rather than discrete behavioral qualities of individual officers or aspects of a unitary police culture, scripts are racialized and gendered repertoires and material for action, shaping how police see and learn to screen as tacitly shaped gestures over time, mobilized through officers' ethnographic feedback loops connecting sites of training to sites of patrol work. The transformational power of policing's many scripts embedded both in police training and within its cinematic and material history is how they travel and are taken up in the field.

5.2 From Participant-Observer to Participant-Performer

This is not the story of one officer, nor is it the story of one ethnographer or how she navigates fieldwork's "cultural force of emotions" (Rosaldo 1984, 78). It is about police scripts larger than any individual, scripts that we can ethnographically examine when we methodologically stage, in the *doing* of research, Donna Haraway's call for situated knowledge making: "The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular" (1988, 590).[1] By embedding myself alongside patrol officers, the visual registers and racial logics of policing's performance and visual culture scripts reveal themselves through iterations. These scripts interpellate both officers and non-law enforcement, whether we are press photographers invited to ride-along with officers, viewers interpellated by the police vision of Hollywood's cinematic scripts, or academic researchers seeking access to an unfolding police vision in action. These scripts not only circulate through and as officers' lived experiences; they also arrive via the ethnographer's experiences as well.

Like Polish theatre artist Andrzej Welmiński, I turn now to the explicit language and transformational methods of performance to ask what possibilities exist to broadly "read against the grain" of these police scripts. How might we perform in excess of them in sites like the police academy where recruits are trained to rehearse an idealized racialized and gendered model of vision before entering the patrol field? Through the previous chapters, I have illustrated how officers' experiences "feed back" across these sites. Here, I argue that the ethnographer's own "feedback loops," my shorthand for the paths through which field

[1] Kathleen Stewart's "contaminated research" (1991) and George Marcus' interrogation of a Geertzian "complicity" (1997) figure powerfully here.

experiences witnessing and interacting with policed community members travel with the researcher as well, positions her to draw on past encounters for reading and staging training scripts at the academy. Paired with a performative analysis of how scripts iterate and become citable in the field, performance ethnography is a powerful and generative method that insists on thinking through performance as *material for action*. Moving from the ride-along back to the police academy, this conclusion examines these training scripts by entangling myself with them as an explicitly feminist praxis, providing my own racialized and gendered body as material to be read by police recruits and officers. Further, I perform "against the grain" of these materials by drawing on my encounters with policed community members to perform *against* the academy's racialized scripts.

I write this conclusion a little over a year after the murder of George Floyd, a moment in the long history of police violence when the debate between police reform and abolition is at a critical juncture. I argue that the urgency of this moment calls on performance ethnographers – those committed to the always-political work of being on the ground of lived experience – to expose scripted forms of racial and gendered violence that are continuously staged and reconstituted by routine police-citizen interactions. Welmiński's words juxtaposed alongside Beyoncé's lyrics offer a point of departure here for the ethnographer who turns her listening ear inward to hear her own "desires, fears…meanings and predestinations" in order to move from participant-observer to what I term "participant-performer."

In 1993, Welmiński spoke these words to address the gathered audience before a show staged in honor of then-recently passed prolific theater director Tadeusz Kantor. Staged by his actors, *Maniacs, or Their Master's Voice* (1993) illustrated the difficult work of *going on* as

an actor in the absence of Kantor's distinct directorial presence, a figure of the theater who, in the words of Jan Kott, "'ferried' his actors across the river Styx like Charon to the land of forgetfulness, so that they could come back as memory" (1991, 28). If, to use a theatrical metaphor, the space between Kantor's audience and what happened on stage was nothing short of a transformational crossing for both the actors and their counterparts across the river Styx, seated in their proscenium chairs, then my final act in this dissertation is an attempt at a transformation of training scripts through feminist revision.

In the following pages, I bring my experiences both in the ethnographic field and in my personal history to bear upon training scripts during a Scenario Test Week at the academy in 2019. My performances of these scripts embody a collage of people I met during my fieldwork as well as earlier versions of my researching self from 2015 when I first began riding along with police. Witnessing the ordinary racist practices that affected policed communities in East County San Diego from the perspective of the ride-along demanded that I return to the site of Scenario Test Week where racialized models for seeing civilians are rehearsed by recruits. The performed characters that emerge in the following scenarios may, like Kantor, shepherd us into possible revisions of police vision, allowing us to conjure different possibilities in the academy that we might bring back with us as more than ethnographic memory. They might be citations to unmask the violence of police vision and to expose the racialized logics of scrips to officers and recruits by performing them *with* them in real time.

While *predictable* repetition is the implicit ideal of police training paradigms (Wolfe et al. 2020), the long arc of Performance Studies scholarship consistently marks the ephemeral

temporality of performance as a condition where something "otherwise" – improvised, unscripted, excessive – might happen, perhaps never to happen again (Phelan 1993).[2] This final chapter suggests, however, that the following performances resist disappearance by emerging as citational possibilities in the afterlife of the police academy. As one-to-one performances between one role-play actor and one police recruit (or, in some cases, one recruit and two volunteer actors),[3] staging scenarios in the academy requires emotional and physical endurance for these citations to emerge through actors' stagings. Actors must perform with continued vigor from one iteration of a scene to the next; as the opening vignette demonstrates. While role-play actors are not explicitly directed by Scenario Evaluators to "play out" rote performances with identical dialogue or gestures, there is an expectation that each staged scene should be similar to the one that came before so that no recruit is disadvantaged by wildly different improvisations. One training officer I spoke with described this condition as an egalitarian principle of academy training, where "evaluators need to make sure as many recruits have a similar experience of the scenario as possible." It is risky work, from willingly being thrown to the ground and cuffed during a mock arrest to the emotionally

[2] While Phelan's canonical, "syllabus-haunting staple" (Switzky 2018) remains an incisive contribution to the field of Performance Studies, her thesis must be carefully considered in the *longue durée* of anti-Black mortality and resistance. See recent works by *Women & Performance* contributors Henry Washington, Jr. (2021), Jesse A. Goldberg (2021), Joshua Chambers-Letson (2016), and my own piece on the "inescapable scripts" of police training (Aushana 2021).

[3] One-to-one performances are, following Adam Alston's writing on immersive theater and audience participation, constituted precisely by the audience's and performer's relationship to risk and confrontation, writing that, "There is a sense of responsibility in any performance, particularly participatory performance, to play by the rules of an often unspoken contract between artist and audience…which will impinge on what is experienced as risky or compromised" (2012, 351). The conditions of this kind of performance, in fact, negate the division between observers and performers, and all pretense of passive participation slides from view. For an example of the tension marked by these kinds of performances, see Yelena Gluzman's writing on her 2010 experimental performance piece *The Emancipated Spectator* (Gluzman 2011).

concussive force of reliving one's own domestic violence, or to faking one's death over and over again thereby constituting the researching self as a citation of mortality. Herbert Blau's (1982, 156) haunting maxim reminds us, however, that despite theater's imagined artifice the "elemental fact" of the actor's mortality on stage remains: "Someone is dying in front of your eyes."

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In the following pages I offer three short acts from the theater of Scenario Test Week that correspond to specific scenario scripts provided to all state police academies by California's POST. Each act contains multiple enactments and iterations of a script, and the dialogue is stylized in the aesthetic structure of film script text as in Chapter 1. Scenario Test Week is a collective theater directed by individual training officers who must decide how to stage each scene in collaboration with role-play volunteers. Each Scenario Test Day (running Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm) begins with a presentation from the Scenario Manager who describes the scenarios that will be tested and circulates the scripts to the training officers in charge of evaluating their assigned scenario. It is during this time that role-players are paired up with the evaluators, and each troupe disperses to different academy classrooms and other outdoor areas to look over the POST scripts together. Evaluators review the criteria for each scenario while role-players, under the direction of the evaluator, provisionally devise a scene to stage. Negotiating where to "stage" scenarios so they do not overlap with each other is challenging as constant screams, the firing of blank ammunition rounds, and a cacophony of simulated baton strikes bleed across the boundaries of each scenario, composing the diegetic soundscape of the police academy. As the following scenes demonstrate, training

officers can be imagined as individual directors with their own relative independence who, sans administrative oversight, make their own decisions about where and how to stage a scenario scene, including the use of provisionally-rendered props and materials. Together, this ensemble cast of training officers and role-players interpret the POST-scripted scenarios provided them by the Scenario Manager, offering their bodies, lived experiences, and interpretations of the text as materials to be manipulated and performed.

While recruits are funneled through scenarios one after another, there is a small break between the end of one scenario and the start of another. During these intermissions, I would move "off-stage," rapidly writing field notes to capture the interactions and conversations that emerged between the recruit, training officer, and myself as role-play actor. These embodied shifts – moving from the seemingly-bounded stage of the scenario to the seat of ethnographic field writing – played on my own sense of entanglement in this site as both a performance ethnographer critically reading the interactions and interpretations of my interlocutors, and a performer necessarily rendered a racialized and gendered object of control. I lean into these tensions, tracing the possibilities and limitations for performing a feminist revision against inscriptions of ordinary violence within scripts. I close with a brief discussion of future directions for scripting and revising work on police vision. My goal is to outline a future experimental collaborative project that approaches questions of racial justice through performance and revision.

5.3 Act I: Translation Failures in the Pretextual World of Pedestrian Stops

Pedestrian Approach Scenario:
You are a person who has been homeless for a while, and things have been hard. A friend invites you to stay with him in Arizona. You decide you're sick of this place anyway and are trying to hitch a ride out of this town!

Officer Thomas Roberts is a white, forty-something Sergeant from a local police department in San Diego County. Initially mistaking me for a patrol officer, he sidles up next to me as we leave the 7am briefing session with our role-play training packet, leaning closer to inquire, "Not a bad gig, eh? Easiest overtime pay." I correct him, letting him know I previously observed another iteration of Scenario Test Week in 2015 and role-played in a Domestic Violence scenario by invitation after a few days watching different scenario performances. This is the first time, however, that I will be volunteering for the entire duration of Scenario Test Week. In between sips of coffee, Officer Roberts mentions we will run this scenario about 50 times over the course of the day to get through as many recruits as possible. Sensing my trepidation, he sloshes the contents of his thermos toward me, "Don't worry. If you need a break to get properly caffeinated, we can do that."

We arrive at a stretch of asphalt near a spartan obstacle course – a sand pit embedded with three wooden walls of varying heights – Officer Roberts haphazardly selects to stage our scene, planting his thermos on the ground like an Artic expedition flag (see Figure 2). Opposite this obstacle course is a bleacher where recruits, who had previously failed the academy's physical fitness test, sit huddled together. They watch their fellow students throw their sweaty bodies against these walls, limbs scrabbling for purchase attempting to make it

over each barrier under the requisite time limit. The *thud* of sneakered heels hitting plywood is a soundtrack, the stuff of a John Cage experimental score. Moments after staking symbolic claim to this section of asphalt parking lot connecting the adjacent public road to the parking lot filled with patrol cars that sits at the center of the training academy, another evaluator walks by with two role-play actors in tow, slapping his clipboard against Officer Roberts' shoulder with a playful *whack* and lamenting that he "took" his spot. He shoots off a friendly "Sorry, bud!" before unclipping the sheet of paper detailing our scenario and holding it in front of me to read.

Figure 5.1: Exterior shot of Building C, one of the many structures that house classrooms at the San Diego Regional Public Safety Training Institute. A sign on the concrete façade reads "The City of San Diego Police Obstacle Course Training Facility," San Diego, California, November 4, 2019 (photo credit: Christina Aushana)

Figure 5.2: Exterior shot of obstacle course from the bleachers with parking lot in the distance. San Diego Regional Public Safety Training Institute. November 4, 2019 (photo credit: Christina Aushana)

"Alright. Looks like you're…" Officer Roberts' voice trails off as he scans the script, eyes narrowing before expelling a cavalier chuckle and handing me the paper. "Homeless!"

This scenario calls for one role-play actor ("Pedestrian") and one police recruit ("Responding Officer") to encounter each other. I turn the sheet over in my hands, reading the list of evaluative criteria he will use to score recruits' performances underneath a sub-headed section titled "FOR EVALUATORS ONLY": 1) Does the responding recruit inform the pedestrian that hitchhiking is illegal within city limits? 2) Does the recruit perform an

identification (ID) check? 3) Does the recruit call in to dispatch to check for outstanding warrants?[4]

While the scenario script is billed as a "Pedestrian Stop" meant to inform the pedestrian that hitchhiking is illegal, it is clear from the grading criteria that performing a pedestrian stop of someone hitchhiking – a minor violation – becomes an opportunity for the recruit to practice a common police tactic known as a "pretextual stop." Pretextual or pretext stops grant carte blanche to officers who are trained to cite minor violations as a way to conduct more intrusive and extensive searches of motorists and pedestrians in the hopes of finding more egregious offenses, such as outstanding felony warrants. For example, Elana Zilberg describes how even acts marked as "community organizing" in public can be criminalized as "jaywalking" by officers in order to police the movement and sociality of groups like Homies Unidos in Los Angeles, a grassroots organization that assists immigrants, youth, and those living precariously alongside the urban violence co-constituted by gangs and police officers, or how unpaid "jaywalking" tickets serve to build a record against neighborhood youth as a pretext for "funneling them into the system" by way of these innocuous acts (2011, 112). Widely criticized as a strategy for racial profiling (Epp et al. 2014), the pretext stop emerges in this script as the unspoken text that implicitly trains recruits to use every encounter as an opportunity to perform intrusive searches.

[4] Performing an "ID check" requires an officer in the field to collect personal information about a stopped individual, including legal name and legal status. All police contacts begin, ideally, with an officer first maintaining personal information about an individual so that the officer can confirm their identity, which then enables them to search for outstanding warrants for their arrest.

"Well, if you've got it down…" Officer Roberts begins carefully, retrieving the sheet of paper from my hands as though I have lingered on the other side of the script for too long, "I'll go grab the first recruit. Is there any way you could 'rough up' a bit? Maybe do something with your hair?" Absent a formal props department and seeing an opportunity to bring my field experiences to bear in El Cajon upon the script, I retrieve a blue sarong a friend left in my car along with my backpack.

When Officer Roberts returns with the first recruit, I am walking down the stretch of asphalt, thumb erect and extended in a beckoning gesture to passing imaginary drivers. With a makeshift scarf loosely tousled around my head, prominent Assyrian nose protruding from my cowl, I am multiply transmogrified: a folkloric figure in the vein of Baba Yaga, a dead ringer for my Assyrian great-grandmothers, survivors of the Assyrian Genocide we call Sayfo (ܣܝܦܐ), and the elderly woman I have seen routinely walking down Main Street in El Cajon, her silky cream hijab and pendulous grocery bags illuminated by our passing patrol car's LED lightbar.

A white male recruit in his twenties dressed in full uniform – duty belt, steel-toed black boots, shoulder-mounted radio – approaches me cautiously, looking at Officer Roberts for recognition that the scenario has begun. This glance is the first indication that the world of the scenario does not begin with the embodied role-player, but comes into performative being under the evaluator's directorial gaze. He dramatically sweeps his clipboard midair in mock performance of film director, laughing to himself before exclaiming, "Action!"

RESPONDING OFFICER
Excuse me, ma'am? I got a call about someone walking in the middle of the road. I'm going to need to ask you to come over here.

PEDESTRIAN
الرجاء المساعدة[5]

RESPONDING OFFICER
Uh… I'm sorry, do you speak English?

Out of the corner of my eye, I see Officer Roberts' eyebrows arch in surprise, peeking over the polycarbonate rim of his sunglasses. This is clearly not what he, nor the recruit, had in mind. Bewildered, the recruit takes a step back from me, turns his body at a 45-degree angle and grabs the handle of his plastic training gun. This "classical interview stance" is a flexible posture that allows officers to stay grounded while in a non-fighting position and easily transition between "field interviewing, fighting, and shooting," hence its moniker as a "three-in-one stance" (Murgado 2012). Our scene continues:

PEDESTRIAN
ساعدني

RESPONDING OFFICER
Can you understand me? What are you doing out here? What's your name?

PEDESTRIAN
Miriam. I need to leave. My family in Arizona. Please, I am leaving.

RESPONDING OFFICER
Do you have identification? What's in your bag? Take a seat right there, and don't move.

As this scene unfolds, so too does the thread of visual and racial (il)logics woven throughout the academy's tapestries of unspoken norms, including the problematic notion that officers should expect everyone they interact with in the patrol field to speak English.

[5] Here and elsewhere, I resist translation both as an enactment of Tina Campt's (2019) call towards a politics of refusal, and to rhetorically perform the uncertainty of meaning and intention that recruits navigate during Scenario Test Week.

Incoherent subjects need not be accommodated, only dominated by an officer's hypermasculine choreography and commands. With his hand poised on his gun, I open my hands to show I am not concealing weapons. The recruit instructs me to sit on the curb and reveal the contents of my bag. While trying to explain myself in both English and Arabic, the recruit grips the side of his shoulder-mounted radio, miming a call to radio dispatch (and is answered by Officer Roberts standing three feet away, performing both roles of "evaluator" and "dispatch"), then says he is going to search my bag before warning me, "If there is anything sharp in here, I need you to tell me right now, do you understand me? I don't want to have to escalate things with you, so it's better for *you* and for *me* if you're honest with me *now*."

I am about to answer when a sidebar is requested by the recruit, pausing our enactment.

"Sorry," he says quietly to the training officer, seemingly off-stage, "Is it, like, *okay* for me to say that?"

"Sure," Officer Roberts answers, "Do or say what you need to in order to get that compliance, because that's what we're always looking for, *right*? Within reason, of course."

The training officer physically frames "reason" around two exaggerated, fingered air quotes, and the pair share a knowing smile that seems to reinforce the recruit's confidence. When the scenario continues, the recruit finds a library card with Miriam's name on it, effectively performing an ID check, and asks dispatch to see if there are any outstanding warrants for her arrest. After threatening Miriam with a promise of escalated violence,

followed by the training officer's affirmation of this speech act as reasonable, the recruit passes the scenario and is sent off to the next test.

In another iteration of the "Pedestrian Stop Scenario," a white recruit with a sharp crew cut approaches me ("Ramina"), immediately incensed that I am hitchhiking. When I explain I am living in housing precarity, he advances on me – right palm finding that familiar place on his gun holster – while stating, "Ma'am, that really isn't my problem, but I promise you're going to have an even *bigger* problem if you don't cooperate with me right now and move your *entire* body over here so that I can talk to you." Defiant, I curse him. The recruit gives a frustrated look to Officer Roberts, seemingly unsure of how to continue.

"Okay, okay," the training officer gently interrupts, "Let's say she finally comes over here…you know, you manage to convince her. Then you look through her bag, and find an ID. When you call in to dispatch, you find out she has an outstanding warrant for her arrest. *Now* what do you do?"

I concede to this fast-forwarding and sit on the curb as directed. In circumventing moments of impasse or ambiguity where multiple interpretations of an event might be possible, the training officer's generous and improvisational direction accomplishes two things: that the recruit will likely pass this scenario by being lead to the "correct" course of action (i.e. stop pedestrian, perform search, identify pedestrian, and check for outstanding warrants for her arrest), and it instantiates a citational model for future interactions that structures how this recruit may learn to see racialized and gendered others in the field of patrol work as targets for pretext stops. In situations where recruits might encounter women like Ramina and Miriam, the stakes of a performative analysis could not be more clear: the

institution of policing, enacted on the stages of Scenario Test Week, reproduces the objects of its own inquiry by curating scenarios that continually lead to violent ends, even in scripts that do not specifically test recruits on their ability to use force. The stakes of my revision attempts for how recruits read my racialized and gendered body become clear in the next scenario, forcing recruits to confront their assumptions about the kinds of people they may encounter in the field.

5.4 Act II: The Militarized Mise-en-scène of Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence Scenario
You and your buddy have been out drinking at a bar, and he is becoming increasingly more intoxicated. The two of you decide to make the short walk back to your apartment, where your friend accuses you of sleeping with his wife. When you proclaim your innocence, he reveals a knife and stabs you in the stomach. He tosses the knife aside in haste before fleeing the scene in his car. Your wounds are not fatal, but if you do not receive medical attention, you will be in bad shape. A passerby witnesses the altercation and dials 911.

On the beginning of my second day role-playing, I am handed a small piece of paper shaded with red marker and a thick, black line drawn on top of the red blotch. Superimposed over the patch are two arrows – one pointing to the black line, and the other pointing to the red area – designating the black line as a "wound" and the red area as "blood." My stab wound is rendered on the back of surplus academy training printout paper. This is the only prop available for our staging of today's Domestic Violence scenario. I am accompanied by Caroline, an 18-year-old white community college student who tells me her father works for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the sister agency of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and that he encouraged her to volunteer at the academy. "I'm really

excited," she says, showing me pictures on her Instagram account of her and her father on horseback near the U.S.-Mexico border, "I'm probably going to be bad at acting but my dad thinks a career in law enforcement could be a good match for me!" We follow Training Officer Julián Chavez across the parking lot of the Institute, passing the bleachers where I had previously staged a Pedestrian Stop scenario the day before.

We arrive at a semi-indoor structure, a staging area so perfectly evocative of both a theater stage, including set walls that demarcate its interior spaces and an assortment of well-worn furniture, and a maze, a roofless series of hallways and doors leading into unknown rooms beyond (Figure 5.3). As I step "inside," I slip on a small object, catching myself on the arm of a dusty brown couch. "Cuidate, niña," comes Officer Chavez's cautionary words two seconds too late, and I see the offending object amongst a sea of silver: a spent bullet casing, one of seemingly hundreds. Everywhere across the asphalt floor, these casings, fired as "blank" ammunition rounds fired from pressurized training guns, glint like strange silver teeth. These objects are the citational residue of past trainings, including S.W.A.T. and more specialized units from the military who arrive at the Institute to practice, among other things, building entries with the expectation that imagined assailants will not surrender easily. As seen in Figure 5.4, the internal doors around the room are fixed with "Out of Play" signs signifying the bounds of the spaces that are "in play" for recruits in Building Search scenarios, and these signs, along with broken furniture and boot marks on doors, construct the mise-en-scène of domestic violence in the visual logics of warfare.

Figure 5.3: Interior shot of Institute's weapons training area showing a constructed window and couch. San Diego, California, November 5, 2019 (photo credit: Christina Aushana)

Figure 5.4: Interior shot of Institute's weapons training area showing a door with an "Out Play" sign fixed to its surface. The bottom of the door shows signs of physical force where someone has kicked it, leaving an identifiable section of caved in wood. San Diego, California, November 5, 2019 (photo credit: Christina Aushana)

Officer Chavez hands me the scenario script. Realizing that he is absent any male role-players, he regards me with a resigned look, saying, "I don't know. You guys can figure it out. It shouldn't be a problem. You gotta roll with it, you know? Maybe one of you can tie your hair back *como ella*?"

He gestures toward one of the female recruits who comes running by our small congregation while being yelled at by another training officer. Her hair, like those of her fellow female cohort, is neatly twisted into a bun. What "shouldn't be a problem" is the fact that the scenario script is written with the assumption that the gender of the stabbing victim is a man, while the gender of the witness who reports the stabbing is apparently not integral to the narrative. Before Officer Chavez leaves us to parse out our roles, Caroline and I discuss the implications of me playing the scene as a queer woman who is accused of sleeping with her male best friend's wife. She agrees it would be a departure from "the norm," and suggests I take on the role of the victim. In the spirit of the dialogic performative, we invite Officer Chavez to consider how such a revision might transform the recruits' assumptions about the kinds of situations they will encounter in the field. He bites his lower lip in amusement, and concedes that it would be, at the very least, "interesting." In the following scene, the struggle to revise the assumed heteronormativity of everyday patrol encounters emerges here between the recruits, role-players, and the scenario evaluator. As in the first act, I decide to test the limits of scripted scenarios. The first recruit enters, a young man who looks not much older than Caroline:

RESPONDING OFFICER
San Diego PD! Ma'am, are you alright? What happened here?

WITNESS
I saw the whole thing! A man stabbed her, and he jumped in a car and drove away. I ran over when I heard screaming.

VICTIM
I don't know how deep it is. He just ran off. Please help me.

RESPONDING OFFICER
Who ran off? I'm going to call for back up and apply pressure right here, okay? Who did this to you?

VICTIM
My friend, Aaron. He just lost it. He thinks I'm sleeping with his wife. She's my best friend, and… you need to call her, please. Please-

RESPONDING OFFICER
Just calm down, it's going to be okay-

VICTIM
You aren't listening to me! He drove away, okay? Where do you think he's going to fucking go right now? He's going to his house to find her and hurt her. Look at what he did to me.

While the recruit calls for backup on his shoulder-mounted radio and presses his palms into my stomach where I am clutching the paper wound, I watch Officer Chavez watching the recruit: his eyes narrow, following the sequence of actions the recruit takes and jotting down notes on his clipboard. The recruit, understandably nervous, does not ask me my name, or if I know the address where my buddy, "Aaron," might be headed. He does not see the perp's weapon – a knife – lying a few feet away; one of the primary objectives recruits must complete in this scenario is securing the weapon before a forensics team arrives. After dispatch informs the recruit that an officer is en route to his location, we sit together in silence before he asks me, "So… so he stabbed you because?" I tell him flatly, wincing, that Aaron has accused me of sleeping with his wife, and when the recruit freezes up, I ask him what he expected when he received the domestic violence call, "What? Is it so unlikely that a queer

woman could be a victim like this? What is so confusing about toxic masculinity?" The recruit seems unable to incorporate or figure out how to respond to this narrative, though it indexes a world of systemic police violences routinely committed against queer and trans people (Ritchie 2017). There are a few moments when Officer Chavez, seemingly overcome by confused laughter at what this script has become, hides his face behind his clipboard. However, when the recruit looks over to him for guidance, his face becomes stern and stone once again, "Well?" he prompts them, "Don't look at me, recruit. I'm not in the room. *She's* in the room. Are you going to freeze up when a lesbian is bleeding out in front of you? What are you going to do if this happens for real?"

What Training Officer Chavez takes for granted, however, is the simple fact that *he is very much in the room*, and that his presence as an authorizing figure in the space of the police academy actively shapes and directs the vision of police recruits: pointing their attention to missed clues, stopping a scenario in the middle of the scenario and forcing a recruit to "run it again" if they experience stage fright, or otherwise generally degrading and mocking their performances in an effort to, as one training officer put it, "Toughen them up." The interpretive work of learning how to see and act is also at work for the training officers whose sole interpretations of recruits' performances dictate whether they pass or fail. However, it is also the militarized staging of the performance space that bleeds into the boundaries of the script itself, shaping how recruits may learn to see and respond to victims of domestic violence in the field.

In another iteration of this scenario, I take on a new persona, an Assyrian woman whose partner has turned to violence in a heated argument. When Officer Chavez walks back

to this staging area with the next recruit, I am writhing on the floor and screaming. Caroline sticks to her performance, telling him that she witnessed a man stab me. The recruit looks around the mock living room, and I reach up for him with one arm as he walks toward me:

VICTIM
He…he didn't mean it. He didn't mean it. Please-

RESPONDING OFFICER
Dispatch, I've got a stabbing victim. Requesting another officer and medical transport.

DISPATCH
10-4. What is your location?

The recruit steps over me, his firearm drawn as he walks around the room, barely glancing down at me. He leans his back against one of the set walls, and shoves the toe of his boot into the small open crack of an "Out of Play" door. He disappears into another hallway and I drag myself backward against a couch, tears running down my cheeks as I plead for him to help me. I hear him say into his radio, "Apartment secure. No perp in sight." Officer Chavez looks annoyed before replying, "Not sure why you're ignoring the victim and walking away from what's in play, recruit." The recruit seems distracted by the silver casings under his feet, and a few times he sweeps the weapon across my body, evidence of poor gun safety protocols. After wandering around the room seemingly convinced someone else is hiding behind a door, I pretend to vomit, trying to convince him to attend to my wounds, and he leans down to ask me what happened. I explain the drunken fight that resulted in my wounds, trying to stay close enough to the script while exceeding its parameters. I lift up my shirt to show him the makeshift prop wound on my stomach, and I ask him to help me apply pressure. He hesitates, still holding the gun, but finally places one hand over mine as we press down on my body together.

These moments of hesitation are small and seemingly inconsequential. They nonetheless lay bare the difficulties for some recruits in staging the lessons they have learned in the academy while interacting with real bodies, especially those that are unfamiliar. It is a similar hesitation that I have seen some officers in the field exhibit when in close proximity to SWANA community members, particularly older men, some of whom are more likely to insist on touching or embracing officers as a sign of warmth and respect which can be read as aggressive or strange from the perspectives of some officers.

Like a few other recruits after him, this recruit's locus of attention is fixated on the physical environment in which we are staging a domestic violence scene; recruits take a moment to let these objects – bullet casings and doors with bullet holes – form a sensible backdrop against which they read my body, which is often of secondary concern once recruits are sure that there is no one else in the fake apartment space. A few recruits notice the weapon on the floor eventually, others are quick to render emergency aid to the victim upon seeing her in pain, but all exhibit responses to the implicit script of this scenario, and *all* scenarios, beyond helping a domestic violence victim: learning how to prioritize officer safety while responding to calls, even if victims are in mortal danger and presumably bleeding out in front of recruits. It is the directorial choice of training officers like Chavez that significantly shape how recruits will be interpellated by the material configuration and set dressings of spaces meant to train officers in repertoires of weapons tactics. As with the second recruit, performing a domestic violence scenario in a space littered with spent bullet casings may induce and inspire the use of deadly weapons. In the final act below, I return to this

dissertation's opening scene to take a deeper dive into the routine performances of violent policing enacted in the academy's "Deadly Use of Force" scenario.

5.5 Act III: Deadly Force and Dead Ends

Deadly Use-of-Force Scenario
You feel that you have been unjustly fired from your job, and return to work the next day demanding to have your job back. You refuse to leave and decide to take matters into your own hands.

"Did you use deadly force because you feared for your life?"

"Yes, ma'am!"

Beneath the instructive gaze of the training officer, the recruit struggles to cup both of my wrists together at my lower back as I "play dead" on the floor of the academy classroom. He fumbles with the steel fastener on the nylon handcuff case fixed to his duty belt, struggling to get a good grip. After what feels like a few minutes (and long after my arms have fallen asleep), the recruit manages to secure the handcuffs around my wrists. Sighing with exertion, he sits back on his haunches. With the clipboard cradled against her hip, Training Officer Ripley idly fingers a stray hair from her curled eyelashes and addresses the recruit with barely disguised impatience, "She's dead, recruit. *Now* what do you do? Are you going to sit on her handcuffed corpse all day?"

I stare sideways through Officer Ripley's casual, shearling footwear. I want to ask the recruit – who, seemingly frozen by nerves and stuttering, is as motionless atop me as I am beneath him – about the moments before he drew his replica training gun and simulated shooting me with a verbal "*bang!*" What did he *see* when he entered the classroom and saw

me sobbing with a handgun pointed muzzle-down at the floor? How did his vision, fortified by ideologies of officer safety, objectivity, and transparency embedded in academy training and practiced in the field of patrol, *read* the choreography of my body?

The query that crosses my lips, however, escapes before I can choose my words with more care:

"Could you just...give me a second?" I ask, interrupting the scene, "Can't…breathe."

"Now, now," the evaluator's voice lilts in playful chastisement, pointing her pen down toward my face. "No talking. You're dead."

Only moments earlier, I had been pacing the length of this academy classroom with a firearm tucked into my waistband after being handed this weapon by Officer Reyes, my scene partner in this Deadly Force scenario. After watching him perform the role of a "disturbed individual" who is fired from his job, it is my turn to role-play. Meant to test recruits' capacity to not only use deadly force but importantly *justify* their use of force, this scenario trains recruits to participate in a form of police vision that is devastatingly narrow and reductive based on a script that implicitly produces "tunnel vision": deadly force is justified and reasonable no matter the complexity of the situation. When I ask Officer Ripley if I should perform in such a way that recruits are provoked to shoot me, she responds: "We want them to know, without hesitation, that they can use deadly force once a weapon is produced. However, if you feel like they *truly* compel you to drop your weapon, then, sure, drop it. Otherwise, shoot them if they take too long to draw their firearm. We're making sure they recognize when they need to pull their duty weapon to protect themselves. That's all I'm trying to assess here. It's basic stuff."

If a weapon is exposed or produced, recruits are expected to shoot to kill; no aiming for limbs to impair or injure, only center of mass. Though officers are equipped with other weapons, such as tasers or batons, none of the recruits I observed or performed with had any of these so-called "less-than-lethal" force options available on their belts (Bailey 1996).

Figure 5.5: A third-generation Smith & Wesson Model 9mm semi-automatic pistol with an aluminum frame and steel slide provided to role-players to use in the Deadly Force scenario. San Diego, California, November 6, 2019 (photo credit: Christina Aushana)

In most iterations of this scenario, I did my best to draw out the length of time between when I produced my concealed weapon to prompt recruits to fire at me, stalling in an effort to see if another outcome, or something otherwise, might happen. In one iteration, I took on the persona of a new Arabic arrival to the United States who, after leaving her country as a refugee through unofficial channels, was an undocumented migrant living and working in San Diego. When the young male recruit walks into the room, I am sitting with my back against a wall, head buried in my hands. When he approaches, I stand up startled, backing away from him with open palms.

FIRED EMPLOYEE
He just fire me. It is not right. I came so far from home. I don't have anything.

RESPONDING OFFICER
Ma'am, what's going on? Can you come over here?

FIRED EMPLOYEE
My boss. He fire me, and now I have nothing. I have nothing. I left everything behind in my country.

I tell the recruit that I left Syria during the war as I move across the classroom, him tracking my movements with hands out in front of him, palms down, in a calming gesture. He tells me he is here to help me, but I tell him that, in my country, police cannot be trusted. I explain that a friend gave me a weapon to keep and to protect myself. I lift up my shirt to show him. As I do, he screams for me to keep my hands in the air, and as I let go of my shirt to comply, he fires at me with a series of simulated *bangs!* I drop to the floor, the gun still neatly tucked into the front of my pants. Training Officer Ripley walks closer to us, nodding and asking him, "Okay, great. So what are you doing to do now?" The recruit seems to step out of his performance of an officer who has just killed someone, clearing his throat and taking a deep breath to calm his nerves, speaking calmly to the scenario evaluator as though she were asking him for driving directions. He recites a procedural list that includes the appropriate ten-codes and police academy lingo to prove his fluency, and soon he is sent off to the next scenario. We reset the scene, and Officer Reyes walks toward me to take his turn, offering me a high five with an added comment: "Nice improv."

In another iteration following Reyes' performance of an aggressive and violent perp, a performance that none of the recruits could question deserved a deadly force response, I take on the persona of a single mother fired from her job and enact her fear and loss by yelling, crying, and gesturing erratically before drawing her concealed weapon. Upon revealing this

weapon, all recruits are quick to draw their firearms in response yet not always keen to shoot. In the following scene, the male recruit does not shoot me right away, which becomes a problem for the evaluator:

RESPONDING OFFICER
Ma'am, put the gun down! Put it down right now!

FIRED EMPLOYEE
How could they just fire me like that? Don't they realize I have a family? They just use you and throw you away when they are fucking done with you.

When the recruit advances, I draw my weapon and aim it at the floor while warning him to stay away. Convinced he can scream me into compliance, he fills the five feet between us with his bellowing refrain of "Put the gun down." We are at an impasse, and the evaluator intercedes:

"Are you kidding me right now, recruit? Are you serious? You're just going to *let* her draw down on you like that? Run it again. This is embarrassing. *Where* is the command presence? It only takes a split *fucking* second for her to end you right here."

In Officer Ripley's insistence that the recruit reperform the scenario and alter his vision of the fired employee as a more *immediate* threat, she underscores "split decision-making" as one of the police academy's organizing principles that demands recruits learn to either kill quickly, or be killed. Moreover, though I explicitly avoided aiming at the recruit's body, the scenario evaluator's critique that the recruit "*let*" me "draw down" on him (police jargon for pointing a loaded gun at someone) reveals the expansive scope of his error: if he hesitates to use force in the patrol field, he risks not only failing to prevent a gun-wielding individual from harming themselves or someone else; he jeopardizes *losing control* of the unfolding situation. Here, a failure to *act* on the use of deadly force is not only

"embarrassing," but constructs the loss located in Officer Ripley's inquiry ("*Where* is the command presence?") that stops the scenario dead in its tracks. The recruit is asked to perform again, and we reset the scene twice until he manages to shoot me when I refuse to comply with his orders. In another iteration of this scenario, I perform the role of a migrant worker fired from her job at a circuit board manufacturing plant:

FIRED EMPLOYEE
I need this job. Can you talk to my boss, please? I can't lose my kids. If I lose this job my ex will file for full custody. Please.

RESPONDING OFFICER
I can help you, just walk over here. Come talk to me.

I pace back and forth, speaking a mix of English and Spanish as I explain how I survived being beaten by my ex-husband for years before breaking away and finding a job that could support my two daughters. The recruit nods, listening intently but clearly trying to figure out a way to ensure I do not have weapons so that he can secure the scene. When he comes toward me, I back away, keeping my distance. Sensing I have stalled for as long as possible, I act more aggressive, telling him to leave me alone, finally revealing my concealed firearm and aiming it at the floor. He pulls his gun without realizing his magazine is not securely locked and secured to the firearm; it dramatically flies through the air, tracing a black arc before landing a few feet away. Seemingly unaware, he maintains his aim at me while screaming at me to drop my weapon. I am stunned that he does not realize how his weapon has come undone, but his severe expression tells me that he is both hyper-focused on my movements and also frozen by fear. He does not fire, nor do I. I look over at Officer Ripley, and she waves her clipboard at me in a gesture of, *"Teach him a lesson."* If the performance

ethnographer wants to keep playing, she must also comply within the boundaries of Scenario Test Week. I sigh, compressing the trigger several times to fell the recruit.

Like the recruit before him, he is verbally abused by both the scenario evaluator and Officer Reyes, each of whom demand he pull his firearm like a "a goddamn soldier" and ensure it is functional. Officer Ripley also mocks him for being distracted by my story, a kind of distraction that, in her words, "could get you fucking killed out there because you're being mister nice guy. Don't be a fool, recruit. There are going to people who will prey on you or think you will go easier on them because of your race. Don't let them fool you."

Even in the allegedly "colorblind" world of police training, performing command presence becomes a racialized performance of whiteness that recruits, especially when they are people of color, must adhere to in order to be legible as appropriately aggressive. Such performances iteratively become *de facto* racist, anti-SWANA and anti-Black citations for future patrol work, emerging in scenario tests on use of force with predictably devastating consequences. When we run the scenario again, the recruit reenters the room and, before I can wipe our previous scene's tears from my eyes, shoots me immediately.

In the 15 iterations of the "Deadly Use-of-Force Scenario" I performed, there was only one time I survived:

RESPONDING OFFICER
Put the gun down! Ma'am, put it down, please.

FIRED EMPLOYEE
I… I don't want to die. I want to see my sons. I'm doing this for my kids. I do it all for them. I don't want to die.

RESPONDING OFFICER
I care about your kids, ma'am. Please, you can go home to your family. I can help you get home to your kids. Just put the gun down. Trust me. You will hold your children tonight. I promise you. No one has to get hurt today, no one has to die.

Compelled, I drop my gun and the recruit directs me to step away from it, turn away from him, and drop to my knees. He comes up behind me and says, "I'm just going to pull your arms back so I can reach my cuffs, okay? You're doing great. It's going to be okay." He cuffs me, and the scenario is over.

Officer Ripley looks through her notations seemingly satisfied, then proceeds to ask him for a quick run-down of his decision making process.

"You did well to seek cover behind that concrete pillar, very nice. You seemed relatively calm," she pauses for a moment before chuckling, "You also didn't run out of the room like a little bitch once you saw she had a gun like *some* of your fellow recruits."[6]

The recruit offers a conciliatory laugh before continuing, "Well, I just…she didn't seem like she was going to shoot me, you know? I felt like I had control of the situation."

When their conversation concludes, Officer Ripley instructs the recruit to uncuff me, and, having both dropped our performances, I relax into his grip as he lifts the steel from my skin. I take his proffered hand and he helps me off the floor before asking, "Are you alright, ma'am?"[7]

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[6] This is a direct reference to the opening scene of this dissertation's introduction in which Recruit Calderón faces off against Officer Reyes.

[7] This small moment demonstrates how post-performance acts of care exceed the seemingly-bounded limits of the training scenario, and stand in stark contrast to the televisual images of routine and spectacular enactments of police violence that animate the institution of American policing. In the wake of George Floyd's murder, Darnella Frazier's recorded video of Minneapolis officer Derek Chauvin kneeling on Floyd's neck capture the disciplinary force of legitimated state violence in Chauvin's posture: with hands in his pockets, Chauvin appears untouchable as he casually ends George Floyd's life. Surrounded by fellow officers who stand in resigned witness to Floyd's murder, this scene becomes a familiar citation in the long history of extralegal police killings in the United States.

I dust off my knees and answer in the affirmative, finally seeing him up-close for the first time: a Filipino man in his 30s with closely cropped black hair, flushed cheeks, and sweat beads collecting in the folds of his neck, soaking the starched edges of his uniform collar. I let the creeping thought in, giving it just a bit of space – *too much* – to overcome me. It is the same thought that haunts my experiences after riding along with the same patrol officers I have later seen photographed at protests in full riot gear formation, batons at the ready and faces obscured behind polycarbonate visors: *maybe he is one of the good ones*.

When the recruit jogs out of the classroom on his way to the next scenario, this thought evaporates in the wake of his exit. Like his fellow recruits before him, he will leave the academy with a repertoire of embodied citations practiced and staged during Scenario Test Week, forming what Butler (1993, 22) identifies as a "citational chain" of preceding practices that may transform into a naturalized thin, blurred blue line (Stoughton 2017). Like the police recruit or the officers-turned-actors, the performance ethnographer is never outside of this citational praxis, carrying with her past iterations, stories, and revisions from the ethnographic field into the provisional theater of the police academy.

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Throughout these scenario experiences, I eagerly (and sometimes recklessly) submitted to the constraints of embodied performance-making, stumbling my way through multiple stagings across a variety of scenarios. With each iteration initiated by a new recruit cautiously rapping on a simulated front door, I summoned the ethnographic field into the room, morphing into multiple variations of "domestic violence victim", "pedestrian", and "disturbed individual" based on my lived experiences in the field and in my own life history.

In doing so, I performed a long citational chain of women I had both met on police ride-alongs, and elsewhere through my own ethnographic feedback loops, momentary characters rising to the surface to bring these scripts to life and to revise them through performance: here was a middle-aged manager on her knees sobbing into the crisp fibers of a recruit's freshly laundered uniform; here was a stoic Chicana and mother of four, battered but not broken; here was a newly-married Assyrian immigrant unfamiliar with spoken English, whose attempts to communicate outside of her indigenous language seemed to repel the recruit in front of her; here was a Mexican-American salon owner invoking a silent litany offered by her grandmother, "*Líbrame señor de las aguas mansas que de las fuertes corrientes me libro yo*,"[8] turning these words over in her mind as the emotionless recruit wrote down her information; here was an Iraqi refugee's body rocked by waves of grief, her erratic screams resulting in the wide-eyed, confused recruit pulling his duty weapon from his holster and aiming it at her, shocking her to stillness; and here was a twenty-something graduate student performing against the intimacy of violence in her own life by staging it.

Sitting alone in the corner of the classroom in the emotional aftermath of the use-of-force scenario after the final recruit has been tested and the evaluators have left for the day, I must contend with my own feedback loops that connect me to the experiences of policed community members in San Diego even as I try to perform these relations and positions. I

[8] These word of wisdom have traveled in and out of my life from different people, but first came to me from my mi Tía Amparo. They are a prayer that, translated into English, invokes the idea that the people one should be wary of are those who appear calm: "Deliver me, Lord, from the calm waters, that I may free myself from the strong currents."

wipe the sweat and tears from my face, tracing my own Assyrian and Colombian features in a meditative gesture echoing the powerful maxim of D. Soyini Madison's (2006, 323, emphasis added) description of critical performance ethnography as "body-to-body fieldwork," a process in which "over time, you will shed parts of yourself – others press upon your bone and skin and heart, and it is not just you anymore (*it never was*)."

5.6 Gathering Citational Threads

The "body-to-body fieldwork" that Madison articulates as a core principle of critical performance ethnography is one paradigm in which to think through how ethnographic feedback loops – cycles of lived experience that travel across field sites – include the stories and lives of others who cross our paths as researchers. As I performed police training scripts across different scenarios during Scenario Test Week after riding along with officers and observing their interactions with SWANA communities on patrol, these former interactions emerged as more than material to perform; they became living ethnographic texts that I had necessarily become entangled with the process of doing research. I have shed parts of myself in the field, too, perhaps leaving impressions of my own upon both police and policed community members, affective moments that might become citations in their own right in futures yet unseen. Likewise, everyday encounters between police officers in El Cajon and policed community members constitute a kind of body-to-body fieldwork relationship in the field of patrol. In Chapter 4, the consequences of these feedback loops are manifested most sharply in moments where officers routinely experience orient themselves to SWANA neighbors – many of whom escaped decades-long conflicts abroad – through lenses of tacit

suspicion and aggression. These loops become even more tangibly felt when officers with former military experience outwardly describe their hesitation in accepting acts of hospitality from SWANA people in the field due to their prior military training, small moments that further support histories of foreign military occupation and U.S.-specific anti-Blackness undergirding histories of the mobile patrol discussed in Chapter 3.

Preceding officers' performances during ride-alongs are scenes of preparation as well, such as in Chapter 1 where, in drawing on cinematic scripts from *Training Day*, recruits learn to collectively rehearse a militaristic staging of alpha-male aesthetics and masculinity (Kraska and Cubellis 1997), and a vision of policing firmly rooted in cultural practices of militarization "whereby civilian police increasingly draw from, and pattern themselves around, the tenets of militarism and the military model," which includes, "martial language, style (appearance), beliefs, values" (Kraska 2007, 3). These small, seemingly inconsequential performances became routine events during my fieldwork observations, popping up between such informal practice sessions lead by recruits and during "hands on" demonstrations while spending time with recruits in their homes and in the police academy parking lot after instruction ended for the day; such scenes populated the pages of my earliest fieldnotes.[9] Militarized choreographies become tacit expressions of police vision as they travel through the field, including scenes where recruits learn to enact this violent, militarized masculinity

[9] For example, when two recruits practiced chokeholds on each other in the parking lot with a small audience of fellow recruits in attendance, bets were placed on who could lose consciousness first. Such moments of "horsing around" constitute what Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991) identify as legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice whereby "learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community" (29). This encounter illustrated how socially-mediated activities of learning extended beyond official academy instruction hours even when training officers were not present (Vygotsky 1978).

through cinematic material, embodying what Kara Keeling (2007) describes as a theory of cinematic clichés that script and stylize "cinematic perception" (19), or the way in which histories of film spectatorship become embodied and taken up by viewers as affective performances even outside of interacting with cinema.

Bringing our journey full circle from the training academy to the ride-along and back again is an opportunity to identify some of the core citational threads that connect scenes from my fieldwork throughout the dissertation chapters to Scenario Test Week rehearsals for police vision. For example, policing's mandate to identify subjects in the field that seem suspicious or out of place require recruits and officers to learn how to see ideological abstractions – "suspicious," "dangerous," or "non-compliance" – as principally *visual* phenomena. In order for training officers-turned-scenario evaluators to ensure recruits pass scenario tests in the final staged rehearsals of academy training, the onus is on the evaluators-*cum*-directors to render acts of non-compliance or illegal activity *visible*, thereby making sure recruits can identify and then categorize these actions in the field. For example, in the first Pedestrian Stop scenario, Officer Roberts' seemingly innocent suggestion that I "rough up" my appearance while roleplaying a hitchhiking pedestrian performatively marks the movement of pedestrians in public space as an act of transience requiring visual and aesthetic coherence so as to be *identifiable* to officers. By taking on this suggestion, I participated in maintaining the visual logics that support the stereotypical aesthetic of a transient hitchhiker, though with one improvisational shift in my insistence to render a hijab out of a blue sarong paired with a dust-covered backpack. These improvisational moves, endorsed by many training officers' comments of "nice touch" throughout my time volunteering as a role-play actor, present

visible interpretations of training texts, including how to stage characterizations of a hitchhiking pedestrian and thus inviting recruits to learn to *see* these visualized improvisations as models for policing pedestrians in public space.

Officer Roberts' performative invocation of the loaded signifier "rough" in a Pedestrian Stop scenario incites similar images in the visual culture of our ongoing neoliberal crisis where the everyday suffering of those living in precarity cannot be meaningfully addressed, especially for a city like El Cajon that boasts the second-highest number of homeless people in San Diego County (Pearlman 2021). This mode of *becoming* a hitchhiking or transient pedestrian is what Lauren Berlant describes as a "crisis-shaped subjectivity amid the ongoingness of adjudication, adaptation, and improvisation" (2011, 54). It is this processual condition of precarity that police officers cannot structurally address beyond ticketing pedestrians, destroying homeless encampments within city limits, or arresting subjects for minor infractions in the hopes that it will deter people from returning to public spaces in the future. To prepare recruits for this work, scenario evaluators like Roberts rely on directorial choices that emerge from "visual logics" – what I term a repetitive set of semiotic conventions – for imbuing visual cues into the figure of the pedestrian in public, creating the conditions where pedestrians are more likely to be subject to acts of racial profiling and ordinary police violence in the patrol field. In this way, these staged scenes support the broad institutional infrastructure of police work that seeks to identify, label, and codify those unruly bodies that must be made *sensible* in any patrol encounter through routine performances of "reasonable" enactments and threat of police violence.

For many of the recruits I performed in opposition to in the Pedestrian Stop scenario, "reasonable" acts of violence become *visible* and *ordinary* through our collective staging where a recruit's threats meet the pedestrian's failure to quickly comply with the recruit's orders or commands. This rehearsal for stopping a civilian in public space actively shapes and constitutes the world recruits and officers are tasked with apprehending, recording, and arresting. Butler's (2004) examination of gender performance and its production through reiteration is continually useful for understanding how particular bodies and people become naturalized targets for uses of "reasonable force," a citation in and of itself that becomes racialized both in the staging of scripts and in the patrol field. For example, scenes where recruits and officers stage Vehicle Stop scenarios in Chapter 1 by citing cinematic scripts and prior experiences on patrol illustrate how the *citationality* of performance "allows for certain kinds of practices and action to become *recognizable* as such" (42, emphasis mine). As a process through which seemingly fixed, embodied experiences are produced through citational acts, the performativity of police vision across the chapters of this dissertation reveals the dialogical processes between officers, recruits, and policed community members that enable citations to travel.

However, what remains "out of play" in this scenario is that, in putting the text on its feet, the structure of the scene mobilizes a pretext stop, an opportunity to teach recruits that compliance is not primarily about protecting a civilian from the dangers of hitchhiking, but to check if a stopped pedestrian person has any felony warrants for their arrest. Upon further research, I discover that Officer Roberts is a part of SDPD's Field Training Officer (FTO) Administration Unit, colloquially referred to as FTO Admin. According to *The Informant*, an

official publication of the San Diego Police Officers Association, FTO Admin is "responsible for ensuring that each new recruit partakes in the steps of integration and preparation that will lay the foundation of putting their learned knowledge from the Academy towards their career as a San Diego police officer" (Vroom 12). The primary responsibility of FTO Administrators is coordinating the ongoing training of recently graduated recruits from the Regional Academy. During the six-month probationary period following the academy, trainees are assigned to Field Training Officers in their home departments by FTO Admin. FTO Admin not only supervises how FTOs train new officers, but also shapes and mediates trainees' first experiences of patrol work by deciding which FTO they are assigned to, and for how long. Even more pressing is this same training officer is part of San Diego's Homeless Outreach team responsible for policing houseless and housing-precarious residents across San Diego. Based on these findings, it would seem that training officers themselves bring their own experiences to the staging of scenarios; the stakes of these ethnographic feedback loops have consequences for both the patrol field where this training officer polices housing-precarious civilians in San Diego and for the recruits who are taught to see and police pedestrian activity through "reasonably" violent means. This is a troubling scenario when reflecting back on the fieldwork experiences I described in Chapter 4, where SWANA community members in El Cajon – like the heavily pedestrian oriented immigrant communities in Zilberg's study of Pico Union in Los Angeles – frequently spend time together in public space as is the social practice of older men and often a consequence of being a new arrival without access to a personal vehicle.

In the dialogic performativity of Scenario Test Week, the formation of what appears "reasonable" to recruits is made legible through an iterative process where recruits rehearse restricted styles and roles which become enforceable, editable, and revisable through the practiced vision of training officers. Scripts become seemingly flexible propositions where recruit vision is shaped in dialogical interaction with training officers and role-players. They are dialogical in both a Bakhtinian sense, emerging through dialogue in the shared world and vocabulary of police training, and in the performative stance offered by Conquergood (1985), for whom dialogic performance is "a kind of performance that resists conclusions, it is intensely committed to keeping the dialogue between performer and text open and ongoing" (9). Despite the improvisational, inherent "openness" of staging scenarios, it is clear Officer Roberts' directing in the first Pedestrian Stop scenario guides recruits toward a narrow goal of achieving compliance rather than expanding the locus of their attention toward the fact that they do not share a common language with the pedestrian, which behooves the recruit to, for example, seek translation assistance.

Translation failures characterize many of the police encounters I witnessed as described Chapter 4, moments that I draw from in my own performances of academy training scripts. For example, I have memorized only a few Arabic and Assyrian phrases taught to me by my Iraqi-Assyrian father, yet these improvised revisions emerge from my experience riding along with officers in El Cajon, home to some of San Diego's fastest growing refugee populations. During ride-alongs, I observed officers negotiate daily interactions with newcomers from SWANA nations, many both unfamiliar with American law enforcement interactions or with prior experiences interacting with American military personnel during

previous occupations and conflicts in their home countries. Even in these most banal situations, such as pulling drivers over for expired registration tags, officers predictably take on a more aggressive stance and tone with people they perceive to be, in their words, "fresh off the boat." As evidenced in previous scenario acts, racialized subjects like myself elicit more suspicious methods and styles of everyday policing, such as the use of a "tactical interview stance" in the field. Described in the academy as a tactical position for maximizing officer safety by interviewing *all* witnesses or suspects at a 45-degree angle, thereby minimizing the officer's body as a possible target, I have witnessed this stance used more often with Black and Brown motorists, including SWANA civilians, in the field than with their white counterparts.

As a core tenet of police training, officer safety is the ideological specter summoned *into* every scenario test by both the scenario scripts and the training evaluator, whose stone gaze and sinister clipboard scribbling drives home the tacit lesson of Scenario Test Week: never stop being aware of the self-evident threats to your very survival lurking behind earnest pleas or kind words, stashed in the bottom of someone's bag, or hidden in a waistband. This training paradigm, where recruits are enculturated and primed to imagine themselves as targets for threats and acts of bodily violence, cultivates a "warrior mentality" marked by a "hypervigilant focus on preserving officer safety at all costs" (Stoughton 2015, 228). In previous chapters, this warrior mentality is consistently brought to bear upon foreign language interactions with policed community members. It is scenes like these that informed my role-play staging, including speaking in another language that pushes against the Anglocentric assumptions of all written training scripts. Similar moments from my fieldwork, such as being

hailed in Aramaic or watching officers struggle to understand SWANA civilians during contact stops, illustrate how language barriers and assumed cultural differences can lead to racialized and racist practices performed by officers that emerge as tacit repertoires for racial violence.

Officers' and recruits' performances of suspicion and aggression when faced with unfamiliar languages illustrate the casual and practicable enactment of the logics of white supremacy that reinforce the heteronormative cis-male whiteness of policing (Beliso-De Jesús 2019). In trying to role-play outside of these normative, racialized logics of whiteness, my language improvisations are met by a violent police vision – recruits drawing their weapons and aiming them at me – that not only fail to accommodate these differences, but render them as possible precursors to non-compliance or more violent ends. These reactions are mobilized by the White supremacist and colonial logics identified by sociocultural and linguistic anthropologist Jonathan Rosa (2019, 5) that render the "co-naturalization of language and race" through histories and practices of anti-Blackness and Indigenous erasure, and against which raciolinguistic performances – even improvised, off-the-cuff articulations such as mine – are forced to cohere. To foreclose the possibility that such moments will come to pass, recruits are trained to perform a consistently aggressive command presence that leaves little room for civilians or role-play actors to perform in excess of recruits' verbal commands.

Without a convincing display of command presence, scenarios often meet dead ends in the unfolding action. In previous scenes where I do not comply with a recruit's commands, recruits are faced with two options: increase the use of force to gain compliance or turn their attention to the scenario evaluator for guidance. For example, in one iteration of the Deadly

Force scenario, Officer Ripley insists that a recruit restart a scenario when he fails to gain compliance from me in my role as "Fired Employee" or to shoot me when I reveal my firearm. For the training officer, without a convincing performance of command presence, there is simply no possibility to continue, despite the fact that the Responding Officer and Fired Employee are only at a temporary standstill, interrupted and unable to see where an absence of deadly force might take them.

As I discussed in Chapter 1, like its theatrical corollary "stage presence," command presence is the *sine qua non* of any effective and *affecting* police performance. As the *modus operandi* of patrol work and primary tool recruits must cultivate over the course of academy training, command presence becomes a key competency (as described in POST manual materials) evaluators search for across the 14 scenarios recruits perform in; there is no scenario where command presence is not, in the words of a senior training officer during a morning briefing session at Scenario Test Week, "absolutely essential." Animated by idealized *gendered* and racialized performances of confidence, authority and an implicit *whiteness* – what some police scholars, citing the vague language used by officers themselves, have broadly described as "*some* quality essential to being a police officer" (Newman 2006, 487, emphasis mine) – command presence is the tacit, embodied method by which police recruits learn to perform heteronormative choreographies of white masculinity as demonstrated across multiple scenes in the chapters of this dissertation, even when recruits are people of color or female-presenting.

Writing on the embedded white supremacy of police training, Beliso-De Jesús (2020) argues "molding" recruits into idealized subjects that can effectively "command respect" in

police-citizen encounters involve Black and Brown recruits learning how to "suppress their identification as people of color" as they "consume and absorb the ideological conditioning and internalization of white supremacy, perform deference and malleability, and attain physical athleticism with macho comradery" (147). Thus, command presence naturalizes the whiteness and toxic heteromasculinity of policing as recruits are trained to identify stereotyped neighborhoods and its residents as "ghettos" (Fassin 2013) that must learn respect through violent policing tactics. This racialized police vision becomes another core citational thread that recruits are tested on performing during Scenario Test Week and which can be picked up in the field, as evident in one of the few scenarios where I performed opposite a Black recruit. For the academy, it is the implicit whiteness of command presence through which citations of authority, masculinity, and power travel into the field with recruits and officers, thus constructing police vision as a racist technique building on the anti-Black foundations of policing as discussed in Chapter 3.

Anti-Blackness emerges here as more than an enduring organizing principle of Anglo-American law enforcement and U.S. state formation (Wilderson III 2018; Sexton 2017); it is itself a performative citation that surfaces in scenes of academy training. Marquis Bey (2016) traces this anti-Blackness through histories of criminalization of Black bodies made legible and punishable by the interpretive White gaze, noting that, "…the continuance of anti-Black violence is neither discreet nor isolated but constant and in possession of numerous precedents" (276). While scenario scripts are nominally, "officially" colorblind – making no discrete mention of racial identifiers – it is their staging that constitutes an ongoing anti-Black canon of "numerous precedents" of ordinary racial violence. The White gaze that orients

police vision in the academy maintains this constancy of normalized violence by not turning on itself. It hides and reanimates its citations under the guise of transparency and objectivity projected into the bodies and life histories of its victims. Amidst learning how to perform pedestrian or vehicle stops, learning how to use deadly force becomes a citational model that does not simply teach novice recruits – many visibly unsure and uncertain for how to proceed – how to *see* and respond to policing's danger imperative (Sierra-Arévalo 2021), but how to perform the no-less-lethal mandate of command presence that creates and sustains the very volatile conditions it claims to avoid.

5.7 Opposing Authorized Revisions

Each of these (re)performances illustrate the potentialities of performance ethnography to mobilize and inhabit these citational chains. These scripts are both performance texts, waiting to be *enacted, inhabited* and *role-played* by police recruits and role-players, and evidence of a citational process where recruits must learn to take on the propositions of each scenario as simulations that idealize how recruits must act in the field of everyday patrol work. In performing them, they not only became "alive," but became *livable* possibilities. If they were livable, then how might they be inhabitable otherwise such that a revision might emerge within the conventions of scenario training?

If policing creates the very conditions through which people, objects, and other "ghostly matters" (Gordon 2011) are read, organized, and interpreted, can the performance ethnographer work to inhabit the subject positions – multiple and many – interpellated by police vision as a way of rendering *visible* policing's performativity to the recruits and

training officers involved in this very process? In antagonizing the presumed epistemic authority of incredibly simplistic scripts, my performances further revealed how invisibly and tacitly their provisional staging directed by evaluators informs recruits' vision before they become officers. The recruit's subjectivity is continuously constituted through repetitive stagings – accompanied by training officer critiques – that reinforce normatively violent performances of command presence and idealized authority. In trying to read against the grain of training texts in front of training officers, it is *their authorized revisioning* that also performatively marks how an ordinary violent police vision is taken up in the academy by recruits: stopping a scenario to redirect a recruit's attention, forcing recruits to run a scenario again if they experience stage fright, or otherwise mocking their performances as a hazing ritual that trains them to "conform to aggressive masculinity" (Beliso-De Jesús 2020, 152). It is their staging in front of scenario evaluators that constitutes an ongoing racialized and racist canon of numerous performed precedents of ordinary violent police vision.

It is the improvisational moments that emerge around and *through* these scripts, rather than the "bounded" worlds of any given script, that mobilize training officers' revisions and responses. Through acts of coperformance with recruits, these "off stage" dynamics become hyper visible to the ethnographer studying racial violence in and through training scripts, yet still seemingly ungraspable to the recruits and training officers who are focused on their tasks in performing and evaluating scenarios in the "heat" of these performances. In this way, the situated, partial vision of recruits is consistently supplanted by the state-sponsored, "professional vision" (Goodwin 1994) of training officers, one that stresses aggressive command presence and enforcing compliance above all – even if compliance is achieved

through killing the alleged perp. Therefore, while the premises of scripts described here *are* embedded with racialized, misogynist visions, I argue that it is the citationality enforced by the training officers evaluating these scenarios that *exceeds* the script, carrying recruits forward into the field as they become further entrenched in citational models beyond the police academy, and into *repetitive acts* of forcing compliance at all costs, seemingly without concern for jurisprudence or justice.

Citing Butler's (1988, 1990) writing on repetition, Madison (2006) expands on the role of performativity and suggests that the dialogic performative offers ways of revising and imagining otherwise when we are in committed co-presence with others in the ethnographic field. She writes, "Although the performative falls under the rubric of performance…it is a distinctive kind of performance. It is an element within performance that slides past performativity as 'stylized repetitions of acts' and escapes performativity's pull to conform" (322). In this sense, Madison opens up the category of performativity to a more radical, dialogic potentiality within performance research. While critical of elisions between theater's intentional acts of role-play and performativity as the constitution of subjectivities through acts that precede it, Butler herself (2015) concedes that, within a paradigm of performativity, "this very domain of susceptibility, this condition of being affected, is also where something queer can happen, where the norm is refused or revised" (64). However, attempts to "queer" these narratives and potentially reform policing's heteronormative assumptions through revision are always framed within the authorial vision of training officers who can – at *any* time – change, alter, or transform the staged world of the scenario and, at the same time, transform recruits' lived vision.

In foregrounding performativity as an analytical mode for reading how scripts iteratively congeal in recruit's interpretive performances, one must acknowledge that the stakes of such an analysis include its possible alignment and complicity with the language of police reform; those convinced that more and better training of recruits and officers could reduce police violence may read these situations as evidence that the citational chain of training scripts can be retrofitted with new citations, or otherwise revised. The risks of this kind of work – of being not only committed to studying officers' everyday practices of state violence, but *complicit* in it – pose both ethical and methodological problems for ethnographers of policing. Beatrice Jauregui (2013) identifies the binds of complicity in her "dirty anthropology" with officers in Uttar Pradesh, India's largest state, arguing that, despite one's feelings or political commitments, "When by virtue of their social position(s) your interlocutors are *de facto* transgressing boundaries…then you must transgress with them…even if you are not enacting violence yourself" (147). Drawing on the work of Gayatri Spivak (1988), Jauregui suggests ethnographers reframe participation as "strategic complicity" to call attention to violence in the field while "allowing said Other to exist and contribute to the building of knowledge with its own voice" (147). In some ways, the research I have undertaken is a radical revisioning of what it means to be engaged in "strategic complicity" with policing; by performing these scripts alongside officers, we have collectively devised scenes of racial and gendered violence together in the training of new recruits despite my interventions to stage otherwise.

These citational links must be broken, and one performance ethnographer in a room may make a difference, but her revisions are embedded within the structure of police training

itself and also become citations that may travel beyond her performed intentions. Her playful and defiant acts are seemingly at odds with the feedback loops of officers' who perform as role-players and whose own improvisational stagings *support* the directorial vision of scenario evaluators in the room. If one were to read my intervention as an effort in reforming police vision through staging in opposition to official academy scripts, then perhaps I failed. These revision efforts were often a race against the clock, striving to push the boundaries of a scene before either a recruit killed me or a scenario evaluator reset the scene, forcing the recruit to take a new set of narrow actions that could lead them toward the fastest route to gaining compliance from me, often through the increased uses of physical force or deadly force. While "playing dead" across the floors of many academy classrooms during Scenario Test Week, I wondered how I might stage something else, something differently – my own survival – in the next scene.

Dead women tell no tales. This is the shared legacy of Black and Brown lives dispatched by the *longue durée* of America's anti-Black history and its enduring police violence (Muhammad 2019, Rodríguez 2006, Vargas 2018). If revising within the current structure of police training renders these re-scripting attempts less than effective for stopping these citational chains, then what kinds of interventions might both reveal and eradicate the tacit inscriptions of police violence that are attached to authorized models of police vision? What possibilities exist on the road to abolishing the carceral systems of state violence – from caging migrants in detention facilities to vast surveillance programs targeting Black and Brown neighborhoods – that may protect people from this violent vision that has already stolen away the lives of Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks, George Floyd, Andres Guardado,

Atatiana Jefferson, Sean Monterrosa and those many others whose names will arrive in future headlines and Twitter timelines? In the final section of this dissertation I offer a short proposal for shifting toward new interventions into police training and racial justice that suggest abolishing the current standards of police academy training.

5.8 Scripting Otherwise: Future Directions for Staging Community Vision Against Racialized Police Violence

"Give us the hammer and the nails, we will rebuild the city."
— Crips' and Bloods' Plan for the Reconstruction of Los Angeles (1992)

In 1992, the Crips and the Bloods – two gangs whose rivalry extended more than three decades – came together in the wake of the Los Angeles Uprising to propose a plan for rebuilding the city after the Rodney King verdict left much of the city in ruins. The ten-page document included recommendations for how the city could relocate funds to support low-income neighborhoods, including historically over-policed areas like Watts, the location of another uprising in the 1960s. Amongst their calls to action, including injecting $3.728 billion directly into neighborhoods that needed new community centers and recreation areas, was a request to consider a revisioning of policing in Los Angeles. Their "Blood/Crips Law Enforcement Programme" proposed a new kind of "buddy patrol" system wherein police officers would be accompanied by their counterparts in the field: former gang members who, armed only with a camera, would follow officers into every police-civilian encounter, recording interactions as an accountability measure while offering a more knowledgeable, community-specific view and perspective on unfolding events (Hinton 2021).

While this measure was not adopted by the city of Los Angeles, it offers a radical revisioning of what it means to do "community policing": rather than proposing to increase diversity of the LAPD force or to host more community events between officers and community members, the Blood/Crips co-authored plan articulates a key maxim that law enforcement must grapple with. The police are not the altruistic stand-in for "community," and so they must be accountable to another kind of situated, lived vision of community members whose experiences offer more insight into encounters between police and civilians where these same community members live. The truce erected between these rival gangs catalyzed their collective demand for what historically over-policed neighborhoods members from across Los Angeles have always known: that police vision cannot meaningfully address or acknowledge the alternative visions and perspectives – the alternative *scripts* – that non-officers bring with them into encounters with officers.

I offer this proposal here as an attempt to historicize my own. Rather than continue with scenario training programs, or all kinds of police training more broadly, that are only facilitated by officers, I argue abolishing this paradigm in favor of a structurally twinned training paradigm where recruits are answerable to the vision of both police *and* community members would enact a transformational shift toward a world without the police as we know them. From the moment recruits step foot into the academy, they would be met with a new kind of "buddy system" in the vein of the Blood/Crips proposal, and constantly subject to the structural participation of community members who would not only offer their situated perspective on recruits' performances but also design new training based on their experiences of policing. This would be a radical shift from how law enforcement departments currently

meet their state-mandated requirement to include community policing efforts in their training, such as one-off implicit bias training lectures about the importance of diversity and inclusion. For example, if recruits were accountable to two or three perspectives while performing in scenario tests and in their preparatory rehearsal activities in the months leading up to Scenario Test Week, new citations may emerge as recruits learn to see themselves in relation to vehicle stops or pedestrian stops differently when performing in front of people who have been subject to the racial violence of these routine encounters in the past. This community vision would stand on its own, literally alongside and in productive opposition to police vision rather than be subsumed under it.

Such a proposal would also invite a kind of "scripting from below" model in which state-mandated training texts would no longer be sourced from the lived experience of patrol officers, but emerge from community members' experiences of policing instead. If one were to develop an alternative training police program written from community members' everyday experiences with the police, how might officers make sense of their experiences within them differently? How would encountering scenarios shaped by the everyday experiences of the policed, as opposed to being written from the perspective of law enforcement, inflect officers' understandings of their own behaviors and attitudes towards racialized others? Furthermore, would scenario training scripts written by overly policed community members (e.g. Black, Indigenous, SWANA, queer, refugees, people with disabilities) enable officers to *see* and *experience* the anti-Black and racist foundations of their own training paradigms?

Creating such a training paradigm *rooted in community experience* and in situated *community visions* could challenge the tacit, violent conventions of everyday policing that

this dissertation has examined across policing's visual and performance scripts. The research methods I have relied on throughout this dissertation, such as performance ethnography and participant-observation, are well suited to such an intervention. Community members, in developing new training scripts, would effectively be able to script *alternative* police training scenarios that push back against the racial and racist stereotypes that current police training depends upon to train new officers. For example, scripting scenarios where use of force is critically *questioned* rather than *assumed* would provide police an opportunity to encounter a different visual language that reframes racial police violence as a structural problem of law enforcement itself rather than an individual problem of officer bias.

The stakes for this kind of intervention are increasingly dire, especially as law enforcement departments continue to turn to private technology companies to produce virtual reality training simulators that offer departments a photorealistic virtual reality environment in which to train recruits. Companies such as VirTra and AXON claim their simulators are aimed at de-escalating violence between police and civilians and can dramatically improve decision-making in police officers. However, many of the most popular and sought-after simulation programs focus on active shooter scenarios and do not provide other material tools for recruits and officers to use while navigating simulated environments with simulated others. Thus, they paradoxically limit the available actions trainees can make in these simulated scenarios and presently serve as *de facto* firearms simulators. Armed only with a software-responsive gun, police recruits in virtual reality are trained to participate in a narrow reality: everyday encounters are just one heartbeat away from requiring deadly use of force. These simulations do not account for the many routine, complex, and nuanced interactions

police investigate in the performance of their daily duties while on patrol, and for which the use of force is not only illogical, but results in the deaths of unarmed community members. Scripting and staging an intervention *into* the situated training worlds of officers may be a critical step toward unmaking the citational chains that bind recruits to a singular, state-sponsored violent police vision without merely reproducing "the relationship between antiblackness and late liberal statecraft" (Shange 2017, 7). This is a proposal for a method-in-formation that necessitates thinking through how anti-Blackness itself is a citational chain – perhaps one of the most recognizable and enduring models – running through the cinematic and training scripts of policing explored in the previous chapters.

Understanding how acts of staging and rehearsing vision structure recruits' practices in the academy is key to moving away from individual-centered narratives ensconced in police reform campaigns. Instead, it moves us toward acknowledging how racist and racialized iterations of POST-scripted scenarios are made sensible and carried forward relationally in a long citational chain of scripts, training officers, field officers, department policies, and so on. Scripts are powerful propositions that enforce the chain of command by mobilizing citational chains of idealized authority, normatively-masculine command presence and control inexecutable in practice and thus must be performed again and again – from training academy to patrol and, in so many cases of racial police violence, unto death. Whether we are scholars committed to the ongoing project of abolition, or police officers deeply embedded in these training worlds, examining how policing is performed and visually rendered enables furtive glimpses into the pervasive citational chains that inform these

performances. We are reminded, furthermore, of how deeply we are embedded in these chains even as we revise them to survive them.

The conclusion is a partial reprint of the material as it appears in: Aushana, Christina. 2021. “Inescapable scripts: role-playing feminist (re)visions and rehearsing racialized state violence in police training scenarios.” *Women & Performance*. 30 (3): 284–306. The dissertation author was the sole author of this material.

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