



# Why Law Enforcement Organizations Fail: Mapping the Organizational Fault Lines in Policing, Second Edition

By Patrick O'Hara

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**Why Law Enforcement Organizations Fail: Mapping the Organizational Fault Lines in Policing, Second Edition** By Patrick O'Hara

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*Why Law Enforcement Organizations Fail* dissects headline cases to examine how things go wrong in criminal justice agencies. New second edition cases include the deadly police assault on New Orleans' Danziger Bridge after Hurricane Katrina; the deaths of Amadou Diallo and Trayvon Martin; and Bernard Kerik's fall from 9/11 hero to federal prisoner. Highlight cases that remain from the first edition include the Jon Benet Ramsey murder investigation and the conflagrations that ended the sieges in Waco and at the MOVE house in Philadelphia. These human tragedies and organizational debacles serve as starting points for exploring how common structural and cultural fault lines in police organizations set the stage for major failures.

The author provides a framework for sorting through these cases to help readers recognize the distinct roles of operational mechanics, organizational structures, rank and file culture and executive hubris in making criminal justice agencies vulnerable to failure. The book examines how dysfunctions such as institutional racism, sexual harassment, systems abuse and renegade enforcement become established and then readily blossom into major scandals.

*Why Law Enforcement Organizations Fail* also shows how managers and oversight officials can spot malignant individuals, identify perverse incentives, neutralize deviant cultures and recognize when reigning managerial philosophies or governing policies are producing diminishing or negative returns.

This book is jargon-free and communicates plainly with students and criminal justice professionals. This is a highly-teachable book that also provides pragmatic long-term guidance for how to deal with crises, prevent their recurrence and restore organizational legitimacy. This book is an excellent centerpiece for any class on police organization and management, criminal justice policy, or police-community relations.

**Author-maintained blog offers regular postings related to the book's topic: [www.patohara.org](http://www.patohara.org)**

**Praise for the first edition:**

*“Why Law Enforcement Organizations Fail is a must read for any law enforcement executive trying to understand the dynamics of organizational structures and systems. As any experienced police official will attest, when organizational structures collapse or systems fail the results can be devastating. Not only does the enforcement agency suffer, but the reputation of the city is damaged, often for years. This text examines some of the most egregious system failures within American law enforcement. From the Philadelphia Police Department’s assault on MOVE, to the New York Police Department’s Michael Dowd corruption scandal, to the failures of the FBI Lab, the book highlights how things go wrong. Aspiring law enforcement executives would do well to read this book and learn from the mistakes of others.” — John F. Timoney, Chief of Police, City of Miami Police Department*

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#### **About the Author**

Patrick O'Hara is a Professor in the Master of Public Administration Program at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

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