



# POLICING AMERICA

*Methods, Issues, Challenges*

Fourth Edition

Kenneth J. Peak

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**Fourth Edition**

# ***Policing America***

***Methods, Issues,  
Challenges***

**KENNETH J. PEAK**

*University of Nevada, Reno*

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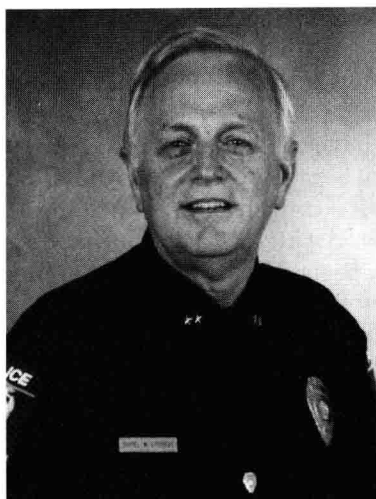
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*To **Jack Spencer Sr.**, with whom I studied the finer points of policing at several colleges and universities; we served together in both civilian and military police organizations and literally chased bad guys together—even while serving as police executives in different agencies. Jack lost his life in the line of duty in 1998 as an officer of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). No more dedicated, innovative protector of the people ever wore the uniform.*

*And to **Creighton Spencer**, Jack's son, one of my former students and also an officer with the BIA; Creighton lost his life while on duty in March 2001.*

*May God grant their surviving family members—wife and mother Kay, and son and brother Jack Jr.—eternal blessings and solace.*

# Foreword



(Courtesy Kris Solow)

Policing in America has seen enormous change over the past 30 years. During that time, more police officers entered the profession with a college background than ever before. Most police executives possess advanced degrees and apply sound management principles to their work. Prior to 1970, research on the impact of police methods was virtually nonexistent. Today, police methods and philosophy have been heavily influenced by the research of the past 30 years. Technology has brought advances in policing that could hardly be imagined in 1970. We have seen the development of automated fingerprint identification systems with which a single latent print can be searched against large criminal history databases. DNA has advanced the science of identifying criminal offenders to new levels and has set those free who were innocent of the crime they were accused of committing. Patrol vehicles have computers that give officers access to information to help them clear crimes and solve neighborhood problems. Tremendous strides have been made in radio and telephone communications that have contributed to improved service to the community and greater safety for officers. Relationships with the community have changed as well.

The police have enhanced their relationships with the public as they have reached out through community policing and problem solving to develop partnerships to prevent crime and improve safety. Thirty years ago there were high levels of tension between the police and minority communities. The police

struggled with maintaining the peace as large numbers of Americans—particularly students—protested the war in Vietnam. The police were (and continue to be) on the cutting edge of dramatic changes in the American way of life and find it difficult to understand why citizens lash out at them when they were just doing their job. The police have learned the value of problem-solving partnerships. They have formed strong bonds with neighborhood leaders intent on creating and maintaining safe communities. Relationship problems continue to exist to be sure—but most close observers would acknowledge that things are much better today than they have ever been.

As the police have improved their knowledge and the practice of their craft and have developed stronger relationships and seen sharp declines in reported crime over the past eight to ten years, they have come to understand how complex policing has become. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, in New York City and Washington, D.C., have had a massive impact on America and policing. Because of those events and the new bioterrorist attacks using anthrax, Americans now cope with new types of fear on a daily basis. They are looking to the police to provide them with some sense of security from these mysterious enemies and events. The already multifaceted tasks of the police have been increased tenfold as they try to sort out how to respond to these new policing challenges.

Ken Peak's fourth edition of *Policing America* helps practitioners, students, and those with an interest in policing bring some clarity to the complex job of policing. He provides a solid foundation by tracking the historical development of policing in America from its English roots to the first organized municipal police departments in the 1830s. He helps us understand how policing evolved by the 1930s into a corrupt politically directed institution when the first reforms were launched with a view toward creating professional police. He then turns his attention to describing the various federal law enforcement organizations and how they relate to state and local police. This is followed by an insightful examination of the police subculture. The foundation is complete with an explanation of the manner in which police agencies are organized and managed.

Throughout the rest of the text, one finds the complexities of policing addressed in a way that helps build knowledge and understanding of the challenges of policing along with some approaches to meeting those challenges. The most significant and primary service delivery system—patrol—is addressed in a straightforward manner that allows the reader to gain helpful insight into the primary police function. Community policing and problem solving is appropriately sandwiched between patrol and criminal investigations. Dr. Peak explains these new approaches to policing and the important links between the patrol and investigative functions of policing.

These essential chapters are followed by a number of chapters addressing particular aspects of policing. One chapter deals with the many special problems the police are expected to address—gang, organized crime, terrorism, and the unique demands of rural areas. The importance of the rule of law, accountability, and civil liability are addressed as well. An understanding of these areas is vital to effective policing. The police cannot successfully make a full contribution to

creating a safe community without the trust of the people they serve. More than a positive relationship with the public is necessary to engender trust in the police; the law must also be applied in a manner that is believed to be fair. At times, police must take stands that are not popular with some members of the community. The rule of law provides a basis for making these difficult decisions.

To help the reader understand American law enforcement, a chapter is devoted to policing in other countries. These comparisons offer insight into the significant differences in police responsibility in a democracy. This insight into other approaches to policing helps one see the strengths and limitations of the justice system in America.

Given the tremendous impact that technology has on the police, and on America as a whole, an entire chapter is devoted to this subject. The application of wireless technology is discussed along with the advances in the forensic sciences. The application of “less-than-lethal” police weapons is addressed as well. For much of the history of policing, the primary tools available for controlling a person who resisted arrest or wanted to harm a citizen or officer was the use of hands, a baton, or a firearm. There are other options available today that have made a difference—mace was largely ineffective, but many departments have adopted pepper spray, and it has proved a useful tool in controlling suspects without injuring them. Electronic shocking tools have evolved over the years to the stage where they have been effectively deployed to help control violent subjects. Beanbag rounds and rubber bullets have also been used to control individuals and crowds. These weapons have helped decrease the tension and difficulty the police face when they have to use “deadly” force in fulfilling their responsibilities. Other important uses of technology are described as well—including uses for traffic control and training simulations.

This excellent text is rounded out in the final chapter with a discussion of the future. As America continues to change and face new challenges, so must the police. If the recent history of the police is any indication, the police will continue to progress toward building true problem-solving partnerships with the community. These partnerships are critical to controlling crime, violence, disorder, and drug abuse.

The fourth edition of *Policing America* is a continuation and update of a volume that captures the important issues in policing. Ken Peak has done a marvelous job of explaining an extremely complex profession that operates in an ever-changing world. Those who read it will be well informed on the issues and challenges of policing in America.

*Darrel W. Stephens, Chief of Police,  
Charlotte, North Carolina*



# Preface

Author Ken Peak believes that this, the fourth edition of *Policing America*, is by far “bigger and better” than its three predecessors, providing a comprehensive view of the largely misunderstood, often obscure world of policing. A new chapter has been added concerning community oriented policing and problem solving. New materials have been added to other chapters as well, including discussions of terrorism, less-than-lethal weapons, hate crimes, stalking, and updated court decisions. Meanwhile, this edition continues to provide in-depth coverage of such topics as patrol, the police subculture, accountability, civil liability, extraordinary problems and practices, the rule of law, investigations, policing in selected foreign venues, and policing in the future.

The author brings more than 30 years of both scholarly and policing backgrounds to this effort; as a result, the chapters contain a “real world” flavor not found in most policing textbooks. Disseminated throughout the book are several “Practitioner’s Perspectives”—short essays written by selected individuals who have expertise in particular areas of policing.

From its introduction, written by Darrel W. Stephens, police chief of Charlotte, North Carolina, through the final chapter, the reader is provided with a penetrating view of what is certainly one of the most difficult and challenging occupations in America.

## ***Pedagogical Attributes***

To make this textbook more reader-friendly, each chapter in this fourth edition begins with a listing of its key terms and concepts and an overview of the chapter. The textbook also includes “Items for Review” sections at the end of each chapter;



it is recommended that the reader examine these items prior to reading the chapter to get a feel for the chapter's contents and to obtain some insight as to its more substantive aspects.

Other instructional aids include the "Practitioner's Perspectives," tables and figures, boxes with recent news items, and photographs to aid readers in understanding the work of policing. A listing of relevant Web sites is provided in Appendix A for readers who wish to independently obtain more information about various aspects of policing. Finally, a detailed index at the end of the book facilitates the reader's ability to locate specific topics more quickly.

## CHAPTER ORGANIZATION AND OVERVIEW

Chapter 1 discusses the history of policing, and Chapter 2 examines the contemporary status of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and their roles and functions. Chapter 3 examines the police subculture and how ordinary citizens are socialized to the role. The next chapter considers how police organizations are organized and administered and how administrators, middle managers, and supervisors perform their functions. Chapter 5 explores the very important function of patrolling and includes a discussion of the concepts of community policing and community problem solving.

Chapter 6, a new chapter, focuses on a rapidly spreading form of policing that is being embraced by thousands of police agencies across the United States and around the world: community oriented policing and problem solving—COPPS. Chapter 7 focuses on criminal investigation, including the highly progressive fields of forensic science and criminalistics, and Chapter 8 looks at several extraordinary police problems and methods: policing terrorism, hate crimes, and militias; the mafia; gangs; small jurisdictions; the homeless; and the nation's borders. The "rule of law" is discussed in Chapter 9, which delineates the constitutional guidelines that direct and constrain police actions. Chapter 10 looks at police accountability to the public, including the issues of police ethics, use of force, and corruption.

Police civil liability is examined in Chapter 11. Chapter 12 describes a number of trends and issues, including rights of police officers, women and minorities in policing, the private police, unionization, contract and consolidated policing, civilianization and accreditation of police agencies, higher education for police, and police stress. Then, to better understand policing in this country, Chapter 13 analyzes policing in four international venues: China, Mexico, Northern Ireland, and Saudi Arabia. Interpol, the international crime-fighting organization, is also discussed.

Chapter 14 examines police technology, including the myriad uses of computers, electronics, and imaging and communications systems. Developments with firearms and other tools are also discussed. Finally, Chapter 15 looks at the police of the future and how predictions are made.

The entire text provides the reader with a comprehensive and penetrating view of what is certainly one of the most difficult, challenging, and obscure occupations in America.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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# About the Author



Ken Peak is a full professor and former chairman of the Department of Criminal Justice, University of Nevada, Reno, where he was named Teacher of the Year by the university's Honor Society. He entered municipal policing in Kansas in 1970 and subsequently held positions as a nine-county criminal justice planner in Kansas; director of a four-state Technical Assistance Institute for the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration; director of university of police at Pittsburg State University (Kansas); acting director of public safety, University of Nevada, Reno; and assistant professor of criminal justice at Wichita State University. His textbooks include *Community Policing and Problem Solving: Strategies and Practices* (3d ed., with Ronald W. Glensor); *Justice Administration: Police, Courts, and Corrections Management* (3d ed.); *Police Supervision* (with Ronald W. Glensor and Larry K. Gaines); and *Policing Communities: Understanding Crime and Solving Problems* (an anthology, with R. Glensor and M. Correia). He has published two historical books: *Kansas Temperance: Much Ado About Booze, 1870–1920* (with P. Peak), and *Kansas Bootleggers* (with Patrick G. O'Brien). He also has published more than 50 journal articles and book chapters. He served as chairman of the Police Section of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences from 1997–1999 and recently served as president of the Western and Pacific Association of Criminal Justice Educators. His teaching interests include policing, administration, victimology, and comparative justice systems. He received two gubernatorial appointments to statewide criminal justice committees while residing in Kansas and holds a doctorate from the University of Kansas.

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