

OIR Sixth Annual Report

Media Availability

December 20, 2007

Features of Report

OIR is the independent oversight group responsible for ensuring that internal investigations by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department are thorough, fair and effective in addressing allegations of misconduct and other critical events. OIR access to the process and its ability to report to the public are critical features of its model, which has been in place for more than six years.

The Board of Supervisors recently renewed its contract with OIR's six attorneys for another three-year term. We are enthusiastic about the prospect of continuing our efforts on behalf of the Department, the Board, and the public. The Sixth Annual OIR Report, which we release today, discusses the specific cases and the larger systemic issues that have occupied our attention in 2007.

The Report provides updated information about internal investigations surrounding the arrest of Mel Gibson and the jailing of Paris Hilton. Both celebrity cases raised a number of issues relating to preferential treatment and "equal justice."

As detailed in the Report, the investigation into LASD actions surrounding the Gibson arrest revealed policy violations by three employees of the Department. The violations resulted from the decision about when and how to release Mr. Gibson from custody. The Report also discusses the controversy as to whether Department officials attempted to censor the original arrest report in order to deflect attention from alleged inflammatory statements that he made. With that incident in mind, the Report also calls on LASD to develop more uniform guidelines on the release of arrest information, so that its procedures do not revolve around the notoriety or fame of the arrestee.

The Report indicates that the investigations surrounding the Hilton jailing have, to date, not resulted in any founded violations of policy. At the same time, the case did raise a number of potentially instructive issues revolving around allegations of special treatment, beginning with the furor over Ms. Hilton's short-lived release into an electronic monitoring program. Broader problems of jail overcrowding and "truth in sentencing" also came to the forefront of the public's attention, as the Report discusses.

The Report also comments on the following issues:

\$ The Department's response to a misguided effort to challenge deputies to make arrests.

- \$ The result of the Department's internal investigation into allegations that resulted in a multi-million dollar payout in litigation costs.
- \$ Reporting on inmate deaths that have occurred over the past year.
- \$ LASD's inquiry into high volume shootings and recommendations intended to reduce their occurrence.
- \$ Modifications to the inmate search policy.
- \$ Improvements to the Department's vehicle pursuit policy.
- \$ The continued efforts to effectively address the recurring episodes of deputies arrested off duty for driving while intoxicated.
- \$ Ongoing efforts to ensure transparency in discipline, including in Civil Service Commission proceedings at which deputies exercise their appellate rights.



