

May 22, 2007

Dear Mr. Carless:

I have reviewed your letter in which you identify various quotes and accompanying statistics that I have used in one setting or another over the past three years and those instances where you believe that I was inaccurate. While I do feel it a bit unfair to ask someone to identify the source of the information used in an interview years after the fact, I will do my best to try to explain how I operate. As I'm sure you are aware, crime statistics are like a living, breathing, animal that constantly changes month-to-month and differs greatly depending on how you apply and interpret it. I use a variety of sources for the statistics I use, including but not limited to, our own Crime Analysis Unit, the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) put out by the FBI, as well as informal discussions with Chiefs of Police from other cities both large and small.

In some of your examples, there are simple explanations for the apparent discrepancies and in others you have in fact identified some errors. As I told you last week when you did this same story, as Chief of Police, I speak with literally hundreds of different groups of various types every year. I always try to be as accurate as possible, but am certainly human and make mistakes. When I make a mistake I am always happy to correct the record. However, in your last article, you implied that there were some intentional misstatements on my part rather than simple human error. I do take extreme exception to that implication. I care deeply about this City and this Police Department and to suggest that I have any malicious intent when I error in reporting on crimes statistics and other related public safety information is reckless reporting. In addition, I do not intend to respond to each and every inconsistency in your letter that you have found in the past three years, although I will address some of your major contentions.

You point to a television interview held almost three years ago, where I suggested that we were able to respond to emergency calls within "our six-minute window". When you compare my intentionally broad statement of a "six-minute window", which I consider to mean between 6-7 minutes, with the actual year-end statistics from 2003 for such calls, which is 7 minutes, there is no real discrepancy. When I do television interviews, I do not know the questions before hand and do my best to answer the questions asked. Because I do not necessarily have the actual statistics at my finger tips when the questions are asked, I try to be general, as well as broad in my responses. Response times for emergency calls have hovered around 7 minutes since 2001 and no one has ever tried to hide this fact. In fact, in another interview you cite from 2006, I state that response times for emergency calls are within 7 minutes, however, I inadvertently refer to them as priority one calls.

Later in the same interview, I state that about 70% of all homicides in our city are solved by arrest or capture. You take exception to this statement and point to a 2003 and partial 2004 SDPD management report to suggest the 70% number is high. However, as you point out in your letter, the Uniform Crime Report put out by the FBI is the definitive source for clearance rates when comparing cities nationally. At the time of the interview, the most recent UCR was from 2002, in which San Diego's clearance rate was 78.7%. Although it is difficult to know for sure what statistical source I was relying on in an interview given three years prior, this would certainly be a source that I would have consulted. In addition, cumulative homicide clearance rates vary considerably from month-to-month as the clearance number is dependent on how many new homicides occur each month. For example, the cumulative homicide

clearance rate for January 2004 was 40%, in March 2004 it was up to 107%, and by June 2004 was down to 60%.

At a Public Safety and Neighborhood Services (PS&NS) meeting in 2006, you claim that my statement that the crime rate in San Diego had its largest drop in ten years was inaccurate. I readily admit that the statement could have been more artfully crafted, but in actuality the crime rate in 2005 was in fact significantly lower than it was 10 years earlier in 1995. The crime rate for 1995 was 53.64 and the crime rate for 2005 was 40.45, considerable lower than it was 10 years earlier.

Finally, you take exception to the information I gave you during our brief interview at the grand opening of Northwestern concerning staffing. I apparently told you that the officers who were currently assigned there were those that already worked in the area. Although I don't generally get involved in the day-to-day staffing decisions, my intent was to convey to you that overall patrol staffing in the City of San Diego was not impacted by the creation and staffing of this new division, and that in fact is true.

Northwestern Division consists of 7 communities (Del Mar Heights, Torrey Pines, Torrey Highlands, Sorrento Valley, Carmel Valley, North City and Black Mountain Ranch). Prior to the opening of Northwestern Division, Northern Division covered 4 of the communities and Northeastern Division covered the other 3.

Northern Division had a number of officers dedicated to the area that is now Northwestern Division. That number (12) was derived from 2 officers per shift per squad that covered the area (2 squads per shift for 3 shifts). Northeastern Division gave one officer to the new sub-station in compensation for giving up the responsibility for the 3 communities.

The officers who worked that area for Northern Division were, for the most part, the officers that transferred to Northwestern Division from Northern. The remaining officers that came from various other parts of the city requested transfers to Northwestern Division. For every patrol officer that went to Northwestern from the commands other than Northern and Northeastern, a like number of new officers were given to that area station. Those officers going to the commands other than Northwestern came from a pool of officers that had just completed field training and/or had requested transfers to the various commands.

William Lansdowne

Chief of Police