



Anatomy of the
Gun Trace Task Force Scandal:
Its Origins, Causes, and Consequences

Executive Summary

January 2022

Steptoe



GTTF Investigation Report, pp. iii-iv:

“If officers engaged in a foot pursuit, **suspects would frequently be beaten** once they were caught, and in some cases **deliberately sent to the hospital.** ...

BPD members **conducted stops and made arrests without a sufficient factual or legal basis.** ...

Facts acquired through lawful investigations would often be supplemented by **evidence acquired illegally** through other means. ...

Officers were taught that their courtroom testimony should not vary from the incident reports or charging documents they had submitted, even if those documents were wrong. ...

These practices have long been embedded in BPD’s culture and help to explain why it provided a nourishing environment for corruption and misconduct.”

GTTF Investigation Report, pp. vii-viii:

“A common form of corruption, which was not universally perceived by officers as inherently wrong, was making misrepresentations of fact to support law enforcement actions such as stops, arrests, and searches. ...

This category of misconduct took various forms. The BPD officer would falsely represent that an observation or set of observations had been made by the officer himself rather than by the supervisor or informant. Or the officer would fabricate the observation entirely. The falsehood would then be perpetuated through false testimony, if necessary, that would be consistent with the inaccurate written accounts of what had happened.

Our investigation demonstrated that this type of corruption was casual, routine, and pervasive—and carried with it no consequences. BPD members focused on the outcome—the arrest of someone they believed to be guilty—rather than the dubious means they used to achieve it. “

“Responses to a 2000 survey revealed “that nearly one out of every four BPD members believed that as many as 25% of BPD members were engaged in stealing money or drugs from drug dealers –a stunning result.”

“Presumably, if the definition of corruption had been expanded to include misrepresentations and lies in official police documents, which was common at the time, the number would have been even higher.”

The background is a collage of various images related to law enforcement. It includes several police uniforms, some with visible badges, and several mugshots of individuals. The images are layered and slightly faded, creating a textured, collage-like effect.

GTTF Investigation Report, page viii:

“IA was reviled and distrusted by the BPD rank-and-file, and as a result, it had great difficulty recruiting and retaining capable investigators. IA investigators received no formal training of any kind, which further degraded its reputation and discredited its work.

...

Many BPD members believed the outcome of trial boards depended more on whom you knew than on what you did.

Simply put, the system that existed to deter, detect, and punish misconduct lacked credibility and both internal and external legitimacy.”

GTTF Investigation Report, page xxviii:

Historically, BPD did not provide new officers with an adequate understanding of the challenges to their honesty and integrity they would face every day, including from their colleagues. Instead, new officers felt the pressures to make cases and generate numbers, and to be accepted by their colleagues. They frequently felt the pressure to tell lies and make misrepresentations. For many, that was where the corruption started. Indeed, that form of corruption was so deeply embedded in BPD's culture as a necessary part of the business of policing that many BPD members did not view it as corruption at all.