

No other person, police executive, or otherwise has had more experience with police shootings than have I. Dating back to the early 60's, I have been involved in either the investigation or the review of LAPD officer-involved shootings . I even go back to the time when a young lawyer by the name of Johnny Cochran first came to the public's attention. Johnny represented the Deadwyler family in what was at the time a very controversial police shooting, sensationalized by the electronic and print media. It was the first time that a coroner's inquest was televised. Johnny lost the case, because of the very detailed police investigation, which was honest and forthright in assessing the facts regarding the shooting. It turned out to be an accidental shooting, precipitated, in large part, by the erratic actions of Deadwyler. I played a significant role in the investigation of that shooting.

From 1968 to 1992 I reviewed every Los Angeles police shooting and/or major use of force. Whenever a Los Angeles police officer discharged his firearm a detailed investigation is conducted. I reviewed them all for over 24 years.

I cite the above to give credence to my comments regarding David Klinger's book *Into the Kill Zone: A Cop's Eye View of Deadly Force*. It is a fascinating account of numerous officer-involved shootings. But, the real meat of the book lies in the candid interviews of scores of police officers that were the principals in those shootings. It begins with Klinger's account of a shooting in which he was involved as a young Los Angeles Police Officer, taking the life of a man who was trying to kill his partner. He writes, "Edward Randolph was 26 when I killed him. I was 23. I first laid eyes on him less than a minute before I shot him, so I didn't know his name, how old he was, or anything else about him before I ended his life." This piercingly painful, gritty account of his own experience in a life or death situation has given him a special insight and a credibility not found among others who may write on this subject.

The book reads like a novel. It is almost impossible to put it down. It was learning experience for me even with my many years of investigating and reviewing of police shootings. Not only does Klinger bring out "just the facts" of each shooting, he goes into the background of those who were involved. What motivated them to become police officers. How, prior to entering law enforcement, they morally viewed the possibility that they may have to take some human's life in the line of duty. How they were trained, both in the academy and on the streets, to deal with violent situations and how to prepare themselves mentally to kill. He presents stories from officers about situations wherein they could have, but did not shoot. Some exceptionally harrowing split second decisions that turned out to be right, but just as easily could have been tragically wrong.

As I read the accounts of the many shootings in *Kill Zone*, it was as if I was in a time warp. So many like situations that I had investigated or reviewed in past years. Officer's reactions before, during and after these violent incidents can be, and often, are completely different, yet underneath, there is a sameness that cannot help but strike the reader with an incredible impact. Clearly, one cannot finish this book without knowing that police officers are indeed human beings who can experience a plethora of emotions over

seriously injuring or killing another human being. There is a quality of reverence for human life that runs through *Kill Zone*, but survival takes center stage.

*Kill Zone* is a must read for every police officer. It is an even more a 'must read' for police executives. In fact, any one who needs enlightenment regarding police shootings can benefit immeasurably from this book, *particularly those in the media*. Television could do a dramatic attention-getting series without the need for a single fictional story idea. The truth is far more powerful, and it is all there in *Kill Zone*.

Reviewed by: Daryl F. Gates, Chief Los Angeles Police Department, retired.