



CULVER CITY: FROM WHITES ONLY TO NATIONAL MODEL OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION?

JOHN KENT

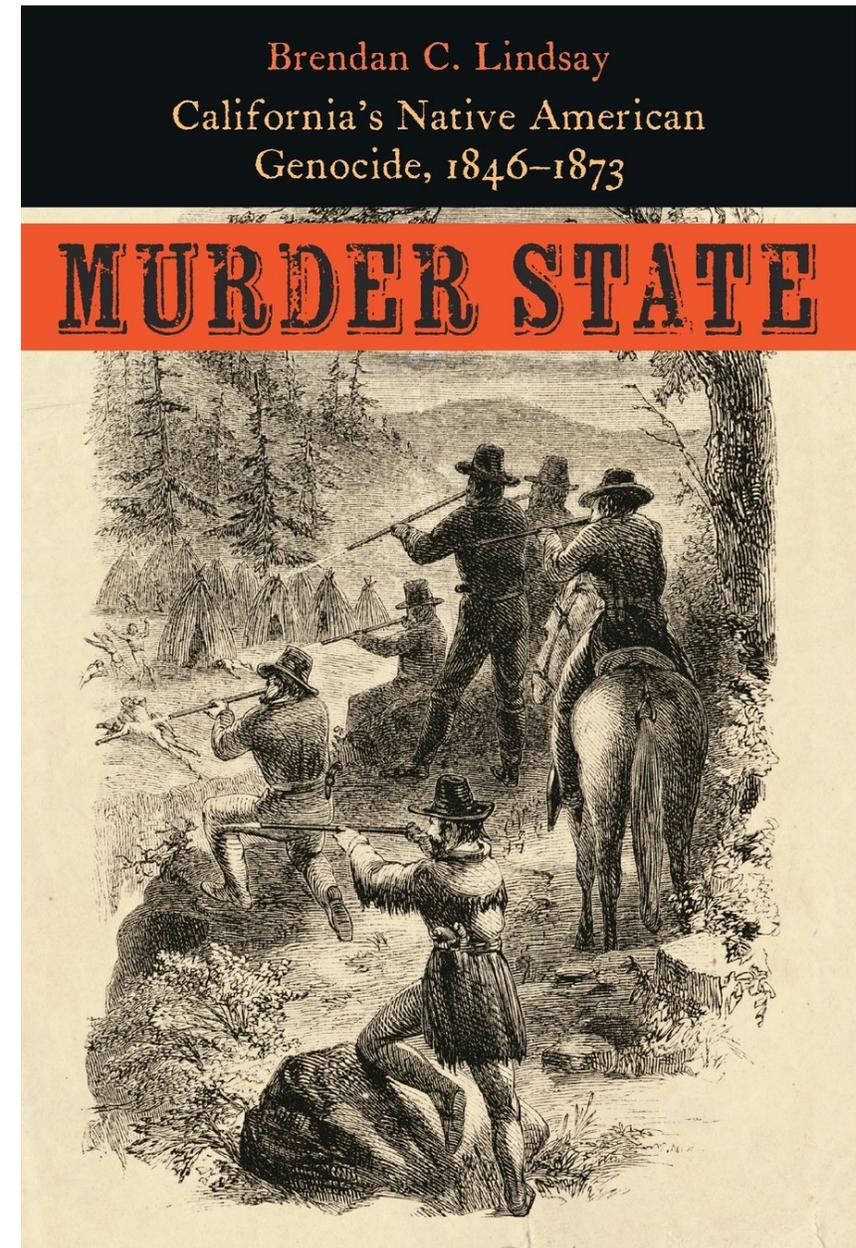
CULVER CITY WAS FOUNDED ON LAND STOLEN FROM THE NATIVE TONGVA PEOPLE

For centuries, the Tongva lived on land currently part of Culver City. One of their long used footpaths has become the 405 freeway.

They were massacred by waves of Spanish, Mexican and Euro-American invaders through a combination of slavery, disease, relocation, forced labor, imprisonment, broken treaties and a genocidal war of extermination, including paid bounties for dead “Indians”.

BY THE END OF THE 1870s, “IN A REGION WHERE AN ESTIMATED 5,000 TO 10,000 NATIVE PEOPLE HAD LIVED..., U.S. CENSUS TAKERS COUNTED JUST 316 NATIVE PERSONS. THAT AMOUNTS TO A 97 PERCENT POPULATION DECLINE.”

Kelly Lytle Hernández, City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles



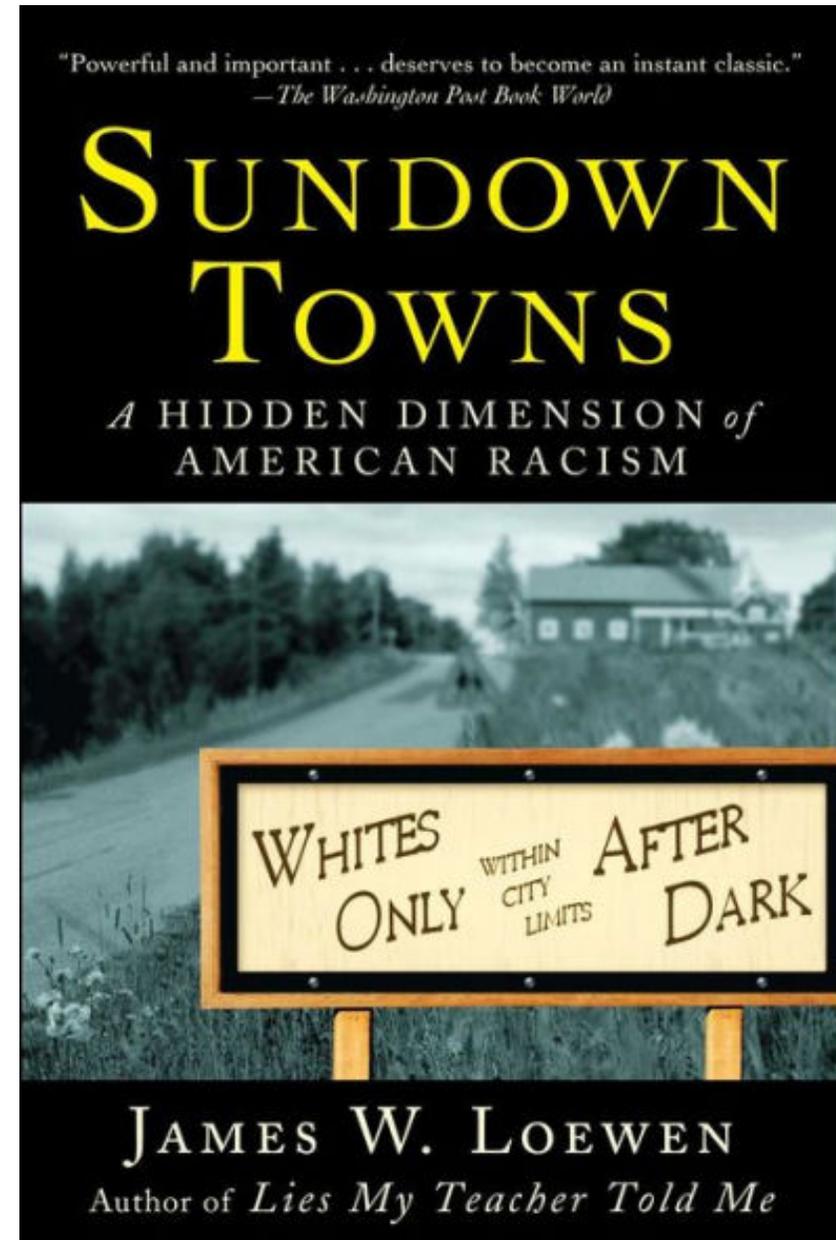
CULVER CITY WAS ALSO A SUNDOWN TOWN

To compound these crimes, when Culver City was founded, no native people were allowed to live here.

As James Loewen revealed in his 2009 book *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*, Culver City was a sundown town.

Towns like Culver City earned this name because some of them posted signs at their city limits reading “N*****, Don't Let The Sun Go Down On You”.

In Culver City, this restriction applied to nonwhite and Jewish people.



MANY KNOW THIS, ESPECIALLY NONWHITE PEOPLE

OLDER BLACK WOMAN

Grew up in LA...everyone knew it....driving to the beach you drive around culver city....you get stopped every time...

BLACK MAN

It was clear to me in the 90's as a teenager that my city...that I was representing every Friday on the football field, would then turn its back on me, literally on the way home from the game. And I had to worry what streets we took if I didn't want to be harassed. It is not on the citizen to prove a racist city is still racist. The onus is on the city to prove it has effectively dealt with the cancer of white supremacy.

JEWISH MAN

We were among the early Jewish "settlers" in CC. [In the early 1950s,] My dad and 11 other Jewish men decided that CC needed a synagogue so they began what would become Temple Akiba.... That did not go down well with the local burghers and our house suffered a cross "burning" (not with flames but with water softener salt burned artfully into our front lawn with "Jews Go Home" and a cross).

WHITE WOMAN

My dear 80 year old Japanese friends said they wanted to buy a house in Sunkist park and were told they couldn't because they were Japanese.

HARRY CULVER PROMOTED HIS "MODEL LITTLE WHITE CITY"

This is an early ad from the Harry H. Culver Company which ran in the *Los Angeles Herald* on March 12, 1915.

See this model little white city, scarcely a year and a half old.

Free Excursion
to Culver City
Saturday



at **1 p.m.**

Tourists and newcomers are specially invited.

This is your opportunity to see Culver City at our expense—the Culver City that you've heard about.

See this model little white city, scarcely a year and a half old. Learn the interesting history of this growth—a growth that has been the talk of Southern California. See if you don't agree with certain authorities who agree that Culver City will have a population of 10,000 in 1920.

Excursion party leaves from 202 Hollingsworth Building Saturday at 1:00 p. m. Apply immediately for free tickets.

Culver City lies midway between Los Angeles and Venice on four big city-to-sea auto boulevards at the intersection of three interurban electric lines—the commercial center-point of the most rapidly developing residential section in the Southwest.

Harry H. Culver Company
2nd Floor Hollingsworth Bldg.
6th and Hill Streets. Main 8045.

6032. Main 8045.

CULVER CITY WAS EXPLICITLY FOR CAUCASIANS ONLY

Culver's close associate, Guy M. Rush was even less subtle with his pre-Christmas ads promising a present and a box of fine candy from Santa to every child who brought an adult with them.

(Lots and presents restricted to Caucasian race.)

This ad was in the Los Angeles Herald, December 19, 1913.

Get Your Free
Gift Sunday

Boys and Girls:
Get your father, mother or some grown-up friend to go with you next Sunday and meet me at "Brooklyn". West **EVERYTHING IS FREE.**

Special trains from 4th and Hill, beginning at 11 o'clock. Get free tickets now at 901 Story Building. Meet me at "Brooklyn". West and get—

1—A Big Box of Fine Candy
2—A Real Christmas Present
That Will Tickle You

Be sure and get tickets now.
Your old fat friend,
SANTA CLAUS.

50-Foot Lots \$550 and up

10% cash—balance as you like.
10% discount for building.
10% discount for cash.
3 car lines.
3 boulevards.
31 minutes from 4th and Hill. All improvements included in price.

(Lots and presents restricted to Caucasian race.)

GUY M. RUSH CO.
901-5 927 Story Building, Sixth and Broadway
P. S. Office open evenings.

HARRY CULVER – LOT SIZE

When Harry Culver announced his plans for the city in 1913 he had these racial attitudes in mind.

He stated that the initial “tract will be subdivided into about 250 large residence lots, each with proper restrictions”.

There were **two key elements** to this statement.

First, his reference to “large residential lots” established an economic restriction.

Large lot size was a common exclusionary zoning ordinance that was “successful in keeping low-income African Americans, indeed all low-income families, out of middle-class neighborhoods.”

—Rothstein, Richard, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*

HARRY CULVER – DEED RESTRICTIONS

Second, Harry Culver was establishing what are called deed and covenant restrictions on the properties he sold. He became an expert in these restrictions. In 1927, as president of the Los Angeles Realty Board, he oversaw the issuing of the opinion show here.

“The Los Angeles Realty Board recommends that Realtors **should not sell property to other than Caucasian in territories occupied by them**. Deed and Covenant Restrictions probably are the only way that the matter can be controlled.”

—Gibbons, Andrea, *City of Segregation: 100 Years of Struggle for Housing in Los Angeles*

DEED RESTRICTIONS STILL EXIST TODAY

Even though they are now illegal and unenforceable, many of these deed restrictions exist today on residential property deeds in Culver City.

Here is the wording on the deed for a house on Sherbourne Drive in Culver City.

5. That said premises shall not, nor shall any part thereof, ever be conveyed, transferred, leased or demised to any person other than of the White or Caucasian race.

DEED RESTRICTIONS WERE OFFICIAL CITY POLICY

During World War II, Culver City convened a meeting of its air raid wardens in the Council Chambers at City Hall. The wardens were to canvas the city to ensure families kept their lights off at night or installed blackout curtains to avoid aerial attacks.

The meeting, ironically, was held under a banner proclaiming “God Bless America” and “Life, Liberty and Justice for All”.

Mike Tellefson, the City Attorney, instructed the assembled wardens that when they went door to door, they should circulate documents in which homeowners promised not to sell or rent to African Americans.

“You cannot prevent an owner from selling property to a Negro, but such restrictions will prevent him from occupying it.”

Mike Tellefson, the City Attorney

THE KU KLUX KLAN

In the mid-1920s the Klan claimed almost five million members from all walks of life, with California known as a strong Klan state.

Prominent people in the film industry have testified to their extensive presence in Culver City.

George Stevens, a two time Oscar winning Director for *A Place in the Sun* and *Giant*

and

Lewis Milestone, two time Oscar winning Director for *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Two Arabian Knights*.



AT INCE STUDIOS, “MOST OF THE GUYS I KNEW WERE MEMBERS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN...AND CULVER CITY WAS JUST LOADED WITH THIS PARTICULAR THING.

George Stevens



[T]HE KU KLUX KLAN GOT SO STRONG IN CULVER CITY THAT YOU KNOW YOU WOULD DRIVE TO THE STUDIO AND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD YOU SEE A WHITE PAINT, INITIALS – KLANSMEN I GREET YOU – KIGY.

Lewis Milestone

THE KU KLUX KLAN

The Klan's Culver City presence continued through the 1940s, including within the city's police force, and a cross burning occurred on a black family's lawn as recently as 1976.



THE CULVER CITY POLICE

Over the years the Culver City police have played a significant role in maintaining the color lines in the city.

In the 1940s the Chief of Police was accused of misconduct, including openly recruiting for the Klan.

There are numerous historical reports from black entertainers and musicians who performed in Culver City. When they finished late at night, they would be either arrested or escorted by police officers back to the Central Avenue district in LA.



IN 1950, THE OWNER OF THE ROLLER DOME TOLD A WELL KNOWN BLACK MUSICIAN AND HIS FAMILY, “WE DON'T ADMIT NEGROS. NEGROES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO SKATE HERE.” THE POLICE WERE CALLED AND TOLD THE FAMILY TO “CLEAR OUT OF CULVER CITY AND NEVER SHOW THEIR FACES THERE AGAIN.”

THE CULVER CITY POLICE

In 1967 the Culver City Police Department hired its first black police officer, James Forte.

According to a profile of Forte in the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, “Forte discovered that there was major racism within the department”.

He reported that “his first years as a police officer were wrought with name calling and challenges”.



FORTE SAID HE EXPERIENCED
SIMILAR SENTIMENTS FROM CULVER
CITY’S RESIDENTS.

THE CULVER CITY POLICE

In 1994 the Culver City police hired Tim Wind. He was considered “one of the most unemployable cops in the country” because he had been seen by millions on videotape kicking and beating Rodney King.

He had been fired by the Los Angeles Police Department.

Despite more than 700 signatures on a petition to have Wind fired and emotional protests by a stream of residents, the City Council voted unanimously to endorse Wind’s hiring.



THE CULVER CITY POLICE

In 1998 *the LA Weekly* reported that the Culver City police were hog-tying suspects' feet to their hands behind their back as a method of control, even after it had been banned in other police departments.

The L.A. County Coroner's Office had concluded that hog-ties by Culver City police "led to the deaths" of two suspects – **they even declared them homicides.**

Both suspects were nonwhite.

One of these cases was reviewed by a jury, which awarded half a million dollars to the family of the murdered suspect.

No charges were ever filed against the police in either case.



THE CURRENT SITUATION IN CULVER CITY

I would now like to bring this discussion into the present day.

There is no question our city has an ugly past. But it has also made great strides forward. For example, by some estimates, it has one of the most diverse student populations in the country.

However, there are still serious problems which, as we look to the future, need to be addressed.

James Loewen, the author of the *Sundown Towns* book, talks about what he calls second-generation sundown town issues. He warns that within a city's workforce – among police officers, teachers, and city employees there can be problems lingering from a white supremacist past.

As our city updates its General Plan, it will be essential that all those elements of the city's infrastructure be examined for these lingering problems.

With this in mind, I want to look more closely at the Culver City Police Department.

THE CULVER CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

“Sundown town police forces...may still be viewed by themselves and other residents as a city’s first line of defense against black interlopers. As a result, they engage in DWB (“Driving While Black”) policing, targeting black motorists for minor infractions like failing to signal turns.”

—James Loewen

As Kelly has so powerfully demonstrated in her book, the Los Angeles area has become the national, maybe even world leader, in using intensified policing and mass incarceration as a means of controlling nonwhite populations.

Culver City is no exception to this pattern.

WHITE WOMAN

I remember way back when, people would not drive through CC because you would be pulled over for a broken taillight, amplified music, etc. It kept a chaotic element out of the city.... I never had a problem with that. CC needs to continue that legacy. People need to know and be made aware that this city does not tolerate speedsters, gangsters, law breakers, drunk drivers, etc. this is not the city for them.

Los Angeles Police Department Captain Alleges He Was Victim of Racial Profiling by Culver City Police.

This was the headline on the May 11, 2018 edition of NBC Local News. The online article went on to say:

“Capt. Darnell Davenport, who commands the LAPD's Southwest patrol division, took legal action last month after he said he was unjustly stopped and questioned by two Culver City officers under the 405 Freeway.”

“‘Mr. Davenport is an avid supporter of law enforcement, thus he has been particularly disturbed by his treatment,’ the claim document said. ‘Mr. Davenport encourages and supports proactive policing methods, however he cannot reconcile his detention with any justification other than the racial profiling of ... African-American males,’ the claim said.”



SHARE



TWEET

Dashcam video shows Culver City officers use choke hold to subdue man

This was the headline on the April 21, 2018 edition of Eyewitness News. It referred to a Feb 4, 2017 traffic stop and arrest of a black LA resident, Terry Walton, who was passing through Culver City. The city and several of its police officers were sued over the arrest and settled out of court for \$200,000. I want to read a quote from a local online publication, the *Culver City Catalyst*, to highlight some of the coverage of the incident. This was written by Warren SZ.

“From what can be gleaned in the dash footage, [the police officer’s choke] hold goes on for at least two minutes. That’s an extremely dangerous length of time to restrict oxygen flow to the brain.... Muscle spasms in Mr. Walton’s legs...begin triggering sporadically about 25 seconds into the hold as the officers turn him onto his chest. Interspersed with random punches from [a second police officer], the spasms go on for about a minute before Mr. Walton is still, possibly unconscious.”

THE CULVER CITY POLICE

Lejoy Grissom was black.

As almost always happens in these cases, a review by the district attorney determined the killing to be reasonable and lawful.

I've read the DA's review and agree with the jury.

- Two civilian witnesses said Grissom had his hands in the air when he was shot
- Officer Martinez was **looking at Grissom through the "target sights" of his submachine gun.**
- Was Officer Martinez ever disciplined or charged?

In 2016 Martinez was the President of the Culver City Police Officers Association – the police officers union.

Los Angeles Times

\$8.8 million awarded to family of man killed by Culver City officer

By JOEL RUBIN

MAY 8, 2013 12 AM

A jury Wednesday evening awarded \$8.8 million to the family of a man fatally shot by a Culver City police officer.

*The unanimous verdict came in U.S. District Court after jurors deliberated for **a few hours** over the 2010 death of Lejoy Grissom.*

Four officers and a supervisor responded. With guns drawn, the officers ordered Grissom out of his car.

*Officer Luis Martinez fired three rounds from a **submachine gun**, all of which struck Grissom.*

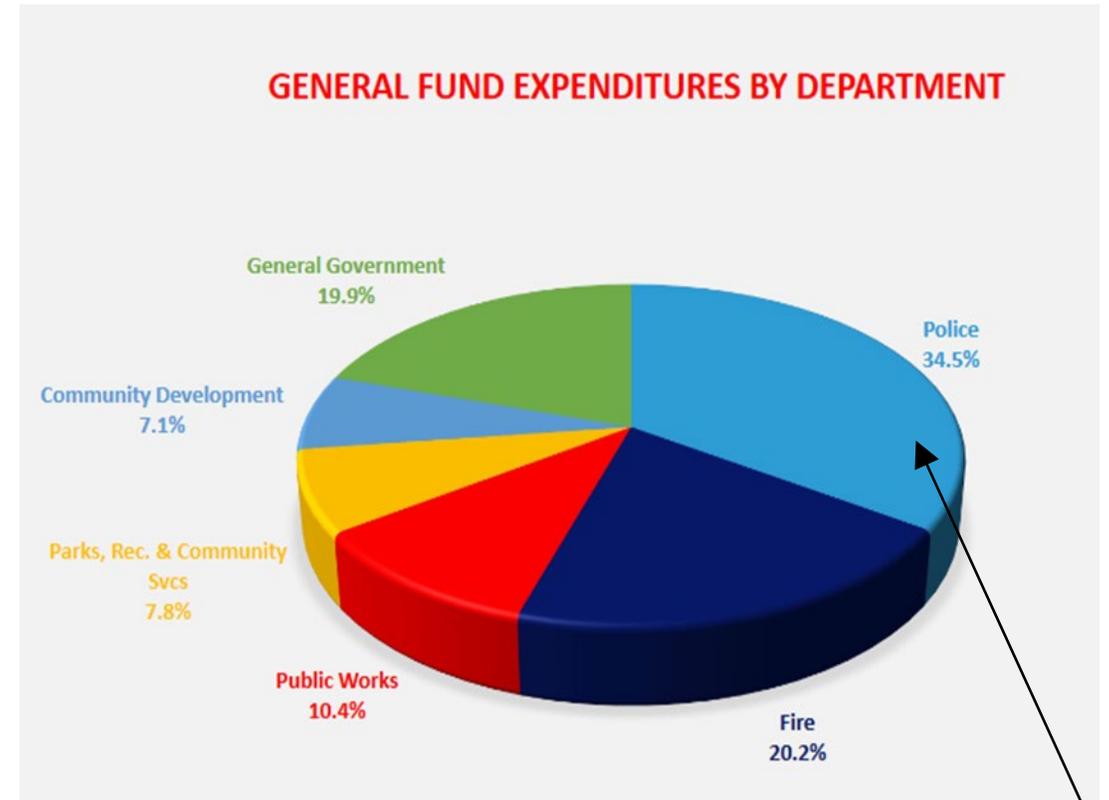
The other officers at the scene all testified that Grissom was facing the officers and had nothing in his hands when he was shot, the attorneys said.

Grissom was found to be unarmed.

THE CULVER CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Evidence of the power and influence of the police in this city is the amount of money they are budgeted.

Department	Proposed Budget 2019-20
POLICE DEPARTMENT	\$46,436,271
FIRE DEPARTMENT	\$27,104,370
TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT	\$19,843,924
PUBLIC WORKS	\$14,028,845
PARKS, REC. & COMMUNITY SVCS	\$10,433,707
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	\$9,603,467
TOTAL	\$127,450,584



Over one third of the total city's budget goes to the police.

2017 PAY IN CULVER CITY

Rank	Job title	Total Pay & Benefits
1	Police Chief	\$539,278.78
4	Assistant Chief of Police	\$473,607.36
7	Police Captain	\$409,967.44
8	City Manager	\$409,540.74
10	Police Lieutenant	\$398,988.69
57	Superintendent of Schools	\$275,537.93
166	High School Principal	\$180,205.08
188	Elementary School Principal	\$161,438.64
258 (#95)	Police Officer	\$131,355.86
657	Council Member	\$28,342.09
816+	School Board Member	\$3,390 - \$6,146

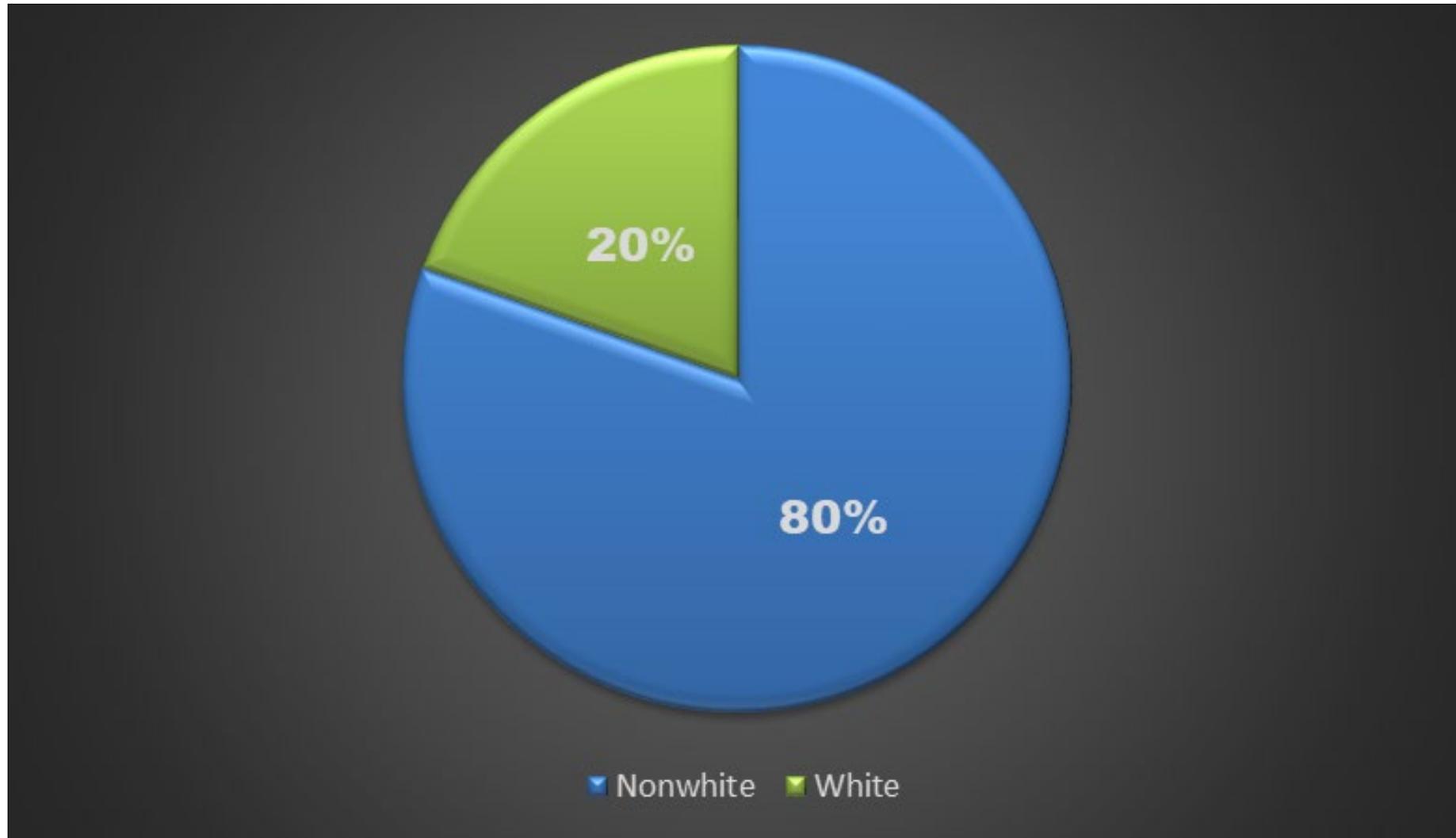
The average salary for a Chief of Police in California is \$139,136, which is 44% above the national average.

Our Chief makes almost four times this much.

There are 94 police officers in Culver City making more than the average California Chief of Police.

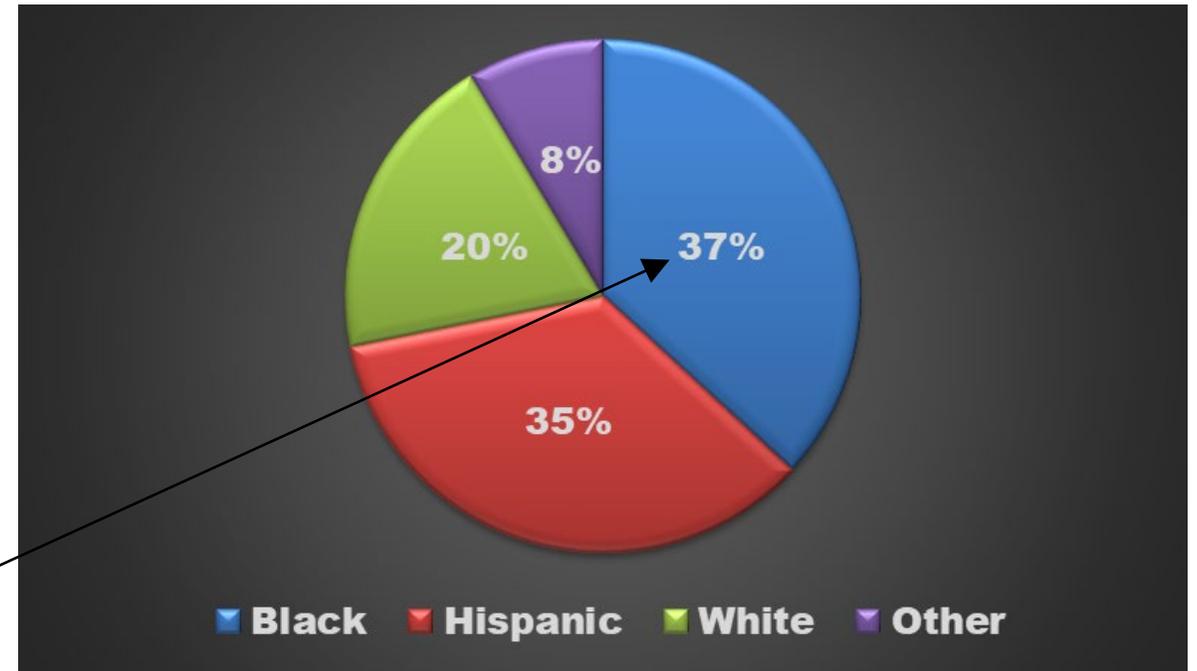
There are 17 police officers in Culver City making more than the School Superintendent.

CULVER CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT ARRESTS BY RACE 2017 TO 2018



CULVER CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT ARRESTS BY RACE 2017 TO 2018

Race	Count	% of Total
Black	1535	36.86%
Hispanic	1456	34.97%
White	816	19.60%
Other	357	8.57%
Total	4164	100.00%



CC about 8% black,
Westside about 5%
black, LA County
about 8% black.

AS MENTIONED EARLIER, MANY KNOW AND EXPERIENCE THIS

BLACK MAN

As a teen in the 90's and CCHS former student, I experienced first hand (on numerous occasions) "running that gauntlet" down Washington Blvd. Me and my friends always took Venice Blvd to go home after the constant harassment. None of us gang-banged or were trouble makers. Just ...being brown or black in CC would get you a regular stop, even to this day.... CCPD still has a long way to go IMHO.

LATINA

I have lived in cc my whole life! They have always racial profiled! Maybe some officers don't but there are plenty that do! You don't have to behave like anything! You just have to have a look and that's enough for some to go and pick on you! I can say it has gotten a little better, but racism is everywhere unfortunately! You know, us brown people can't have nice, new, expensive cars unless we are doing something wrong to get it!

OLDER BLACK WOMAN

Don't be shocked, be better. There is so much that is still the same in CC. Getting stopped for walking/driving while black in CC is still happening.

BLACK WOMAN

Was? that's still a city you don't want to ride through after dark.

BLACK WOMAN

Mar Vista/Culver City is a No No

LATINA

5 CC [cops] beat my father inside our garage claiming they had followed him from Palms speeding through the streets. My mother witnessed this attack and heard them call my dad very negative and racist terms for a Latino. My dad in reality had just left his mom's house on Flaxton a mere 3 blocks from our home in Beverlywood West.

IN FACT, SOME ARE TERRIFIED

BLACK WOMAN

I have a soon to be 14yo that I am allowing to start to navigate and explore Culver City with his friends and I am TERRIFIED that he might look “suspicious” to someone and the police are called and he is killed. Please do not respond with “as long as he’s not doing anything wrong he’ll be okay” or “teach him to be respectful to police and there won’t be a problem” because it is clear now that black people can be in their OWN HOMES and that does not shield them from dying from a cop’s bullet so only imagine what might happen on a public street...

BLACK WOMAN

I dropped my son off at school and I pulled over on a residential street because I needed to take a call. Police pulled up 4 minutes later saying they got a call ... so I can’t sit in my car on a residential street and have a phone conversation. It’s sickening. And so many are fed up with it.

BLACK WOMAN

I myself have been harassed by CCPD, just not killed. Harassment is also not ok.

WHITE WOMAN

My cousin was thinking of becoming a police officer. He did a ride-a-long with some officers in Culver City. The racism he heard from the cops during the ride a long was enough to turn him off from applying.

WHITE WOMAN

[T]here is nothing a black person can do to feel safe from the police. Even sitting in your own home playing video games can be fatal.

WHITE WOMAN

The Culver City police have always been aggressive toward teenagers and most particularly the black teenagers. My sons have some harrowing stories about how the police treated their black teenage friends in comparison to how they were treated. My youngest was once stopped because he was running down the sidewalk wearing a hoodie - thrown down on the street, handcuffed with cops yelling at him guns drawn.

CONFRONTING OUR PAST AND MAKING OUR PRESENT BETTER



“MOST FORMER SUNDOWN TOWNS HAVE
NEVER ADMITTED THEIR RACISM.”

JAMES LOEWEN – SUNDOWN TOWNS (2ND EDITION)

Because of this, our city has a chance to set a national example. To do this, I propose that Culver City publically and officially do the following as soon as possible:

- Admit it
- Apologize
- Renounce this past and commit to preventing it from happening
- Take concrete steps to rectify and redress this history

To this end, I will be submitting to our City Council a draft resolution of acknowledgement, apology and commitment to do better. I have some copies of this proposed resolution with me, which people are welcome to take home.



**THERE IS MUCH
WORK TO DO**

THANK YOU

CULVER CITY: FROM WHITES ONLY TO NATIONAL MODEL OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION?

JOHN KENT

