

GATES: Chief Knows He's Under the Gun

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"It shows that if you want to, you can stir up a lot of interest on a subject," a grim Gates told the gathered throng, which peppered him with questions. "[But] on this . . . [the attention] is probably very well justified."

Media members raised questions not only about King's beating, but about a number of incidents involving officers and blacks over the years. Gates was even asked to comment on the widely publicized 1979 shooting death of Eulalia Love, a 39-year-old black woman who was gunned down by officers as she appeared ready to throw a knife at them. Officers had gone to her home after she reportedly struck a gas company employee who was shutting off service because of an unpaid \$22.09 bill.

He also was asked about recent incidents involving Hall of Fame baseball player Joe Morgan and former Lakers basketball star Jamal Wilkes. Morgan was awarded \$540,000 in damages by a federal court jury after he complained that he was roughed up by a police officer who mistook him for a drug courier. Wilkes was pulled over on his way home from work, ordered out of his car and handcuffed by officers who gave him conflicting reasons for having stopped him.

Gates, who noted that the city is appealing the Morgan case, denied that the department exhibited racism in its handling of minorities.

He went on to call King's beating, which has drawn fire from civil rights groups, "a great disappointment, [a] tremendous disappointment" that never should have happened.

While declining to release names of any of the 15 officers at the scene when King was beaten, Gates directed much of his anger at a sergeant whose responsibility, under Police Department guidelines, was to ensure that the emotion and adrenaline of the officers involved in the car chase did not lead to violence.

"We've put into our . . . procedures—and we have over and over stressed it—that we want a supervisor at the end of these pursuits to prevent this kind of thing from happening," Gates said. "That supervisor was there. . . . Unfortunately, we had a total human failure on the part of that sergeant and many other officers who should have interceded."

Gates said the failure to intervene was a "cowardly" course taken by every officer present and vowed to take every possible step to prevent it from occurring again. "I preach—I mean I really preach—to every single person who graduates from the Police Academy about the law and their need for a reverence of the law," he said. "What they should have done, if they really loved their brother officers . . . [was to] have stepped in and grabbed them and hauled them back and said, 'Knock it off! That's what the sergeant should have done [and] that's what every officer there should have done.'"

At times during the hour-long press conference, questions were shouted all at once. Tempers flared when the Rev. Heber Jentzsch, president of the Church of Scientology International, asked about the Police Department's alleged role in infiltrating citizen watchdog

groups after the Eulalia Love shooting. Jentzsch described himself as someone who had closely followed the Love shooting as part of a ministers group called The Gathering and later noted that he had clashed previously with Gates over the issue.

"How will we be assured [in this case] that the same situation will not [occur]?" Jentzsch demanded of Gates.

Gates, staring at the floor in obvious annoyance, answered: "Well, much has gone under the bridge. Any other questions?"

As the press conference continued, an angry Deputy Chief William Booth approached Jentzsch off to the side of the room, challenging his assertions about police spying.

"You're really a liar," Booth whispered. "I'm not a liar," Jentzsch replied. "Yes, you are—the biggest one

I've seen."
"You're a liar," the Scientology official retorted.

"You're a liar!"
"You're a liar!"

Apparently unaware of the exchange, Gates was asked to comment on City Councilman Nate Holden's proposal for additional training and psychological testing of new officers.

"Once again, this is a model department," Gates insisted. "Everybody's clamoring and saying, 'We ought to do this, we ought to do that.' People across the nation in law enforcement follow what we do. We have psychological examinations. . . . We have a month of cultural training . . . [and] a long period of training on the use of force."

"[This incident] is an aberration," Gates added. "This is something that should never have happened."

*Grim Gates Faces Heated Questions

■ **Media:** The chief seems to know that the news conference on police beating might be the most significant of his stormy tenure.

By DAVID FERRELL
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Police Chief Daryl F. Gates arrived 20 minutes late, knifing his way into a warm, stuffy conference room that seemed more like a lion's den, jammed with 17 television cameras and more than 70 news media members.

He appeared ruddy and strained, despite his dapper blue suit and a red tie spangled with tiny American flags.

The news conference Thursday—amid a nationwide uproar over the beating of black construction worker Rodney G. King by several Los Angeles police officers—was perhaps the most

■ MIXED REACTION

Residents of Lake View Terrace expressed mixed views about the incident that occurred in their community. B3

significant of Gates' stormy 13-year reign and he seemed to know it.

He stepped to a lectern bearing the official department seal and motto—"To Protect and to Serve"—and emphatically announced that three officers will face criminal charges for their role in Sunday's incident. A sergeant, and as many as 11 other officers who stood by and watched the beating, could face administrative charges, Gates added.

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JOB KENNEDY / Los Angeles Times

Police Chief Daryl F. Gates talks about beating incident at a tough news conference with more than 70 journalists.

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