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Former LAPD Chief/LA City Councilmember Bernard Parks' Statement in Response to the LA Times Article Regarding Rick Caruso's Role in Denying His 2002 Reappointment at LAPD Chief

Hello, again. When I retired from the Los Angeles City Council in 2015, I honestly thought that my public life was pretty much over. But, when suspended City Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas was indicted on federal bribery charges in October of last year, I put pen to paper in hopes of creating an accurate record and limiting the phone calls from the various media outlets who, understandably, would be interested in my comments due to our history as political adversaries.

Today, with the mayoral candidacy of Rick Caruso, I find myself in the same position, entirely due to the fact that, over the years, he has trumpeted his role in denying my reappointment as LAPD Chief of Police some 20 years ago. And, there's very little doubt that due to his glaring lack of civic accomplishments— and the help that he is now apparently getting from the *L.A. Times*— that he will continue to do so in a misguided effort to bolster his campaign. When I started doing research for this response, I did so considering what this city would need in a new mayor. After reading Saturday's article, I think it's time we all consider what this city needs in a new newspaper. I don't quite know how a retiree, in his 70's, first, ended up as the focus of a story and, second, was only allowed one quote. But, hey, here's hoping *LA Times* reporter Jim Rainey has another craft at his disposal, like basket weaving or welding because this writing thing doesn't seem to be working out. So, let's begin...

To start, it was probably predictable that Caruso and I were never going to get along. Our backgrounds proved to be too different. Rick Caruso is an heir to a family fortune built partly on defrauding poor and disadvantaged people. In fact, his father, Henry was indicted by an LA County Grand Jury in 1957 for criminal conspiracy to defraud and cheat, forgery and grand theft related to his auto dealerships¹ and was billed by

¹ <https://www.courtlistener.com/opinion/1432724/people-v-caruso/>

Time Magazine as the “shadiest(salesman) of them all”². My father, like me, was a police officer. Rick was born on third base. I was born in the segregated south and had to flee to LA with my family with dreams of finding better circumstances; even if they were only slightly better circumstances. So, yes, we are quite different.

Throughout my 50-year career with the City of Los Angeles, I have tried to steer clear of buzzwords and labels. But, when you hear younger people talk about the term, “**Privilege**”, my best guess is that they are talking about people like Rick. “**Privilege**” is probably what allowed Rick’s father to only spend one year in county jail. And, when you are “**Privileged**”, you benefit exponentially from the kind of luck that allowed the Carusos to keep their fortune. The elder Caruso’s crimes against LA County’s minority communities predated asset forfeiture laws. So, that means a portion of the money that has become a big part of the younger Caruso’s political identity might have all been federally confiscated if the timing had been right. “**Privilege**” is what prompts some to blur the lines between, who is wealthy and who is skilled.

For instance, though wealthy, Rick is not an FBI graduate. I am. Though wealthy, Rick is not a former Police Chief. I am. Though wealthy, Rick did not create the first cold case unit in the nation. I did. But, there’s a belief by some that our law enforcement credentials are somehow equal because of Rick’s short stint as a police commissioner. Come to think of it, Rick’s only known foray into chasing bad guys was when he launched the USC enrollment scandal investigation, only to find that one of the biggest culprits was right under his nose, on his very own boat³. The same people who think that our law enforcement experience is similar probably also take Joe Rogan’s medical advice over Dr. Fauci’s. Again, I say, “**Privilege**”. And, the reason we know it’s “**Privilege**” is because if Rick and I switched places and, I came out with a statement critiquing “Forever 21” or “The Gap”, you’d probably laugh me right out of the food court.

In all seriousness, when we look back at 2002, we have to consider that there were a lot of moving parts. After bringing crime down to a 30-year low, firing 140 problem police officers and receiving the highest ratings possible from the previous police commission for four straight years, I requested another five-year term from the mayor, Jim Hahn and his police commission. The mayor, who was just coming off an election win, due in large part to his father, Supervisor Kenneth Hahn’s support in the Black Community, had to make a decision. He could acknowledge the improvements I made in the department and nurture his political base within the Black Community by supporting my retention as Chief... or he could side with the Police Protective League(PPL), which was none too pleased with me, primarily because I had the nerve to hold them and the officers they represented accountable. Specifically, they were upset that I enhanced the

² <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,865774,00.html>

³ <https://www.lamag.com/citythinkblog/olivia-jade/>

discipline system, demanding that LAPD supervisors file all of the public's complaints—no matter how frivolous they may have initially seemed.

Now, the reason that the Black Community felt that Hahn went back on his word when he didn't support my reappointment was because... he did. On several occasions leading up to his election, while campaigning, he gave every verbal indication that we would be working together. A *Times* article from March 25, 2001 says as much. After telling the *Times* that I should be reappointed, Hahn went on to say, "This Chief has done more to discipline officers than the last two police chiefs combined"⁴. Perhaps rubbing even more salt in the wound was the fact that Hahn took the liberty of pointing me out during an event we both attended for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), where he publicly declared that I was, "his chief". So, you can imagine the whiplash that it created in the community after the election, when Hahn announced that I had lost favor, falsely citing among other things, a rising crime rate and my alleged reluctance to reform the department. And, then-Police Commission President Caruso took it upon himself to carry Hahn's water—no matter how untrue the claims.

20 years before former President Donald Trump's BIG LIE, concerning the 2020 Presidential Election results, Hahn and Caruso proved they were way ahead of their time by crafting a series of BIG LIES; all aimed at discrediting me to justify my removal from office.

LIE #1: Crime was on the rise- No it wasn't. And, this lie is perhaps the easiest to disprove, in a large part because our city's own reporting shows a 30-year low in crime and a 20-year low in homicides during my tenure. In addition, the University of Southern California (USC), the school where Caruso sat at the helm of the board of trustees, also did a report that showed crime was down significantly during my tenure⁵. So, why would Caruso continue to state the same "fake news" when he obviously had access to that report? My only guess is that the report was hidden on his boat with the enrollment heiress. And, to those of us who've been paying attention, we don't have to think too far back to the last time a businessman-turned-politician, who changed parties and didn't release his tax returns, was exposed to some factual numbers he didn't agree with and tried to change them. "**Privilege**". And, it should come as no surprise that when Caruso recently made the claim that L.A. is currently experiencing the worst crime in the city's history, it turned out to be an absolutely, unmitigatedly false "alternative fact"⁶. There's a pattern here: 1.) To force a change, create a crisis, even if invalid 2.) Once the desired change is achieved, claim that the crisis has been solved, even if invalid. In 2006, when Caruso teamed with my successor, Bill Bratton,

⁴ <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2001-mar-25-mn-44370-story.html>

⁵ <https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/la-west/la-stories/2021/07/17/former-lapd-chief-bernard-parks-on-racial-unrest> (timecode 20:48)

⁶ <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-04-03/rick-caruso-no-one-feels-safe-in-los-angeles-what-do-residents-say>

they announced a dramatic drop in crime. As a councilmember, I told the public that the LAPD was underreporting the crime statistics⁷ in an effort to paint a rosier picture than what actually existed. My claims went largely ignored by the fine members of our local media, until the *Times* reported in 2007 that not only had LAPD been underreporting crime, that they had been doing so for at least eight years⁸. So, given this fact as well as Caruso's aforementioned trouble with numbers, it's a good bet that his claim of a 30% drop in crime during his stint as police commission president is not accurate because we don't know if the falsely-reported statistics are being included. And, it's a better bet the his role in reducing crime was minimal, at best. LA's historic drop in crime started in the early 90s, before he got there and continued after he left.

LIE #2: Parks Didn't Do Enough to Reform the Department- I'll keep this one short. If you fire 140 people over a five-year period, whether it be at LAPD or at McDonald's, congratulations, you are a reformer. If you brought officer-involved shootings down 50%, you are a reformer. If you made sure that minorities, women and members of the LGBTQ community were represented throughout the department's ranks, you are a reformer. If you provided the community easier access to LAPD's complaint system, then guess what? You are a reformer.

LIE #3: Parks Should Be Blamed for Rampart- The absolute nerve that it takes for someone to blame me for something that started at least months or possibly years before I became chief, while refusing to take any accountability for the absolute shit show that we've witnessed at USC over the last several years is next level "**Privilege**". Not only, did I discover Rampart, I stopped it. I fired or disciplined those involved and pushed for their prosecution. And, my role regarding the incident was deemed to be above board by all authorities, local and federal, alike. Plus, I reorganized the entire department's gang functions and put in safeguards to reduce the possibility of these activities ever happening again. In addition, I established an Internal Board of Inquiry, published a 400-plus page report, documenting the shortcomings of the department and then, immediately began implementing the recommended solutions⁹. This same Board of Inquiry Report¹⁰ was converted by the U.S. Department of Justice into what we now know as the consent decree¹¹.

But at USC, whether it be sexual assaults or illicit drug use by prominent members of the administration, a federal bribery scandal involving a member of its faculty, discriminatory policing practices on campus, unruly fraternities, false reporting of

⁷ <https://www.dailynews.com/2006/06/30/an-empty-debate/>

⁸ <https://www.latimes.com/local/cityhall/la-me-crime-stats-20151015-story.html>

⁹ <https://www.lapdonline.org/newsroom/consent-decree-independent-monitor-reports-on-lapds-reform-efforts/>

¹⁰ https://lapdonlinestrgeacc.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/lapdonlinemedia/2021/12/boi_pub.pdf

¹¹ https://lapdonlinestrgeacc.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/lapdonlinemedia/2021/12/final_consent_decree.pdf

school achievements to the U.S. Department of Education, or the enrollment scandal, Caruso has had a front row seat for all of it and, has offered next to nothing in terms of a resolution. Maybe he should pick one of the school's many scandals out of a hat and start there first, before attempting to handle the problems of America's second largest city. It's not enough that USC's turmoil (1)resulted in a dean and others being indicted, (2)forced out the school's president, (3) awarded more than \$1 billion in settlements to the victims of sexual abuse or (4)that Caruso stepped down recently. As a USC graduate, it's my strong belief that the school and the students would be better served if the federal government took over operations via a consent decree; the same kind of consent decree that Caruso applauded when he incorrectly deemed that a crime-cutting, community-friendly LAPD was in "crisis"(his favorite word). I assure you that none of the controversies I dealt with during my tenure as chief at LAPD ever came close to what's been going on at the university.

I implemented LAPD's consent decree and was painted in this weekend's piece as someone who was resistant to reform and not transparent. Caruso refused to release the results of the sexual assault investigation at USC after promising to do so, and then boasts in a *Times* article, that "he's cleaned up the messes at USC". **"Privilege"**.

And, speaking of LAPD's consent decree, we've already witnessed Caruso hitching his wagon to his imaginary role in the process of hiring Bratton as my replacement. Caruso would have you believe that locating Bratton was like finding a needle in a haystack. But, it wasn't. Before Bratton became chief, he was within close proximity, actually working for the company the city was paying \$11 million for monitoring the consent decree. Many would consider this a conflict of interest from the start. But, it gets better. After becoming chief and the consent decree mysteriously being extended for another pricey five years, Bratton left the department and went to work for... you guessed it, the same company that was monitoring the consent decree¹². His return to the firm occurred as it was still receiving LA City general fund money for monitoring the consent decree. When did Bratton's consulting contract with the firm end? When did it begin? Did he have any financial interest in the company? Did he ever work as both chief and consultant at the same time, potentially resulting in a conflict of interest? Few know for sure, partly because neither the police commission, Hahn, nor the *Times*(as usual) provided much public scrutiny. But, when I was chief, the *Times* covered me a little differently; one time writing a really juicy article about a small group of officers, who became so incensed with how tough I was on officers, that they didn't want me at their funerals should they die in the line of duty¹³. When you benefit from those who ignore the obvious and report on the hypothetical, it's **"Privilege"**.

By the end of my re-appointment process, one thing I learned about Caruso was that he was really good at doing what he was told, regardless of the factual circumstances. At some point, in Hahn's eyes, I went from being the disciplinarian that LAPD needed

¹² <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2009-aug-13-oe-hayden13-story.html>

¹³ <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1999-jan-15-me-63878-story.html>

to the guy who was single-handedly responsible for a non-existent rise in crime and hurting the feelings of officers, whom I fired for things, like excessive force and lying. The change in Hahn's attitude probably came at about the same time the PPL was offering their endorsement in exchange for the chief's badge, the three-day workweek and reducing discipline. The reason we know this is because Hahn's predecessor as mayor, Richard Riordan, said so. I also believe Hahn's successor, Antonio Villaraigosa, has said as much publicly. Both men have been in positions to know what is negotiated in these types of endorsement meetings, so I'll leave it at that. The point is, that given our city's current state of corruption and real world problems, the last thing we need is someone really good at doing what he or she is told. And, right on cue, in Saturday's *Times*' article, when asked about his decision to support a trash fee increase to pay for more police, Caruso suggested that he was merely following Hahn's lead. I couldn't have said it better myself.

Caruso's strong desire to be on the police commission came to light during a lunch we had leading up to the 2001 Mayoral Election. The two of us sat down at Marino's on Melrose, where he seemed desperate and concerned that his support of Hahn (he consistently referred to Hahn as "my guy") could end his chances at achieving the post, if Villaraigosa won the election. He seemed to be seeking my counsel, and, because I was chief and ethically forbidden to wade into political waters, I offered nothing. Though that meeting didn't amount to much, I walked away from it, realizing how incredibly self absorbed he was and that he was willing to move heaven and earth to become a police commissioner.

I wonder what Caruso is willing to give up for the honor of having the PPL tell him exactly what the hell to do. We know that, like Hahn, Caruso supports the things that typically win PPL endorsements. The difference now, as opposed to back then, is that Caruso is likely getting bonus points for pulling his support from District Attorney George Gascon after initially supporting his campaign financially. These are the symptoms of the politicized police force Caruso helped create. This environment has allowed the politically ill equipped to try to offer short-sighted endorsements in an effort to influence who gets our votes. Whether it's Bratton making the unethical leap as police chief to endorse Mark Ridley-Thomas's campaign for supervisor¹⁴... or whether it's Caruso chasing a fad into a bad endorsement decision on Gascon, before throwing more money at his mistake via a recall, we need to do better. When police chiefs are endorsing potential convicts and potential mayors can't make up their minds on whom they've endorsed— or whether they're a republican one week or a democrat the next, we need to do better. And, that goes for our local paper of record as well, which provides "alternative facts" faster than some switch political parties. In an article from their very own paper in 2005, the *Times* reported: "... LAPD insider Bernard C. Parks, brought his strong moral sense and an iron disciplinary hand. Violent crimes went down dramatically"¹⁵. But, this past Saturday, *Times* reporter, Rainey wrote about

¹⁴ <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2008-mar-21-me-endorse21-story.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2005-aug-14-ed-lapd14-story.html>

“an increase in violent crime” which he pulled out of thin air, without offering any statistics(or footnotes) and pinned it on me. Imagine how hard it must be to gain the trust of the readers when not even the *Times* believes what it writes.

I’ve always believed a big part of thriving in public service has to do with being right a lot more than you are wrong. If we’re judging by Caruso’s endorsements, he’s not off to a good start. I, as well as others, pointed out the red flags, telling the public that Gascon’s record didn’t match his rhetoric¹⁶. But, just like authentic crime statistics, Caruso ignored the warnings until it became obvious how bad Gascon has been for public safety. In the age of Google, when asked about his flip-flop on Gascon, Caruso said, “Maybe I should have done a little more research”¹⁷. You think? I find it particularly funny that Caruso likes to call out his opponents for being “career politicians” who have enabled corruption. Let me say this: It’s really easy to remain a career politician, if some hapless billionaire, like Caruso, keeps funding you. Have indictments? No problem. He has routinely given to Ridley-Thomas, Jose Huizar and Mitch Englander: The Three Indicted Stooges wrapped up in our current political corruption scandal. So, please Rick, tell us more about how tough you are on crime. **“Privilege”**.

Another thing I learned about Caruso is that, if given a choice, I probably wouldn’t take him to a gunfight. During the height of the reappointment process, it was reported that members of LAPD allegedly witnessed Caruso call Congresswoman Maxine Waters the absolute last thing that you would ever want her to know you said about her, if you were, in fact, dumb enough to say it out loud(he allegedly called her a bitch). There are several things that I recall. Of course, I remember the the incident. But, what I really remember most is when the congresswoman found out about it and –predictably– showed up at a Police Commission Meeting to confront Caruso, he ducked out of the meeting; didn’t show up¹⁸. Given the circumstances, that was probably the smartest thing I’ve ever seen him do. But, sometimes smarts and bravery are far distant cousins. Ironically, it was his own disregard for our city’s laws that led to the Waters Incident. The LAPD staff that claimed to hear the derogatory remark were meeting with Caruso regarding his violation of the noise ordinance due to after hours construction at what would become The Grove. While we’re on topic, when’s the last time a businessman-turned-politician, who changed parties and didn’t release his tax returns, was exposed to some factual numbers he didn’t like and tried to change them, made insensitive remarks towards women and/or minorities and had little regard for the law? The only things we don’t know are (1) when Caruso will claim to be the “only one” who can fix immigration and (2) what size MAGA hat he wears. **“Privilege”**.

¹⁶ <https://lasentinel.net/chief-bernard-parks-da-candidate-george-gascon-is-not-who-he-says-he-is.html>

¹⁷ https://twitter.com/elex_michaelson/status/1499654415589916674?s=21&t=EZ8Ju3DSY0pjPDJ6N7a01w

¹⁸ <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2002-mar-27-me-waters27-story.html>

What you are really hoping is that when someone makes a derogatory statement like this, is that they have what our former President Barack Obama would call a “teachable moment”. If you look at the Caruso Affiliated website, you can see that there’s been an effort to include minority kids in some of the company’s social impact programs. However, there has not been the same effort made to include minorities on the page that shows who the company actually hires for key positions. Though he still refuses to comment on the remark he allegedly made about Waters, any good detective knows that silence is sometimes just about as good as an admission. And, if reporters like Rainey would start treating Caruso more like a mayoral candidate and less like somebody you met on Tinder, maybe he wouldn’t allow him to skirt the issue by simply calling the Waters Incident “a diversion”. I don’t care how many pictures he has hugging black kids, at some point, he is going to have to own whatever he said about Waters. Dodging tough questions is not mature and, most importantly, it’s not mayoral. The Waters Incident doesn’t help his re-creation as a man of the community, and it’s already tough enough convincing the public that he’s not the same man who partnered with Hahn in 2002 to choose officer morale over holding officers accountable for their behavior.

I will admit that people can change, but my police bias does not allow me to believe that people can change *that* much. Case in point: almost two decades after his apparent misstep with Waters, a little more than a year ago, he seemed to struggle with the topic of race, yet again. During an interview on Spectrum, and for reasons known only to him, he described me as: “A very popular, **black** police chief... and it was not politically correct to be challenging him or thinking about his leadership”¹⁹. So many ways to go here... The most obvious interpretation is that, in his mind, I was a popular chief– but only because I’m black. And, that’s offensive. Beyond that, it’s just a weird thing to say. I wouldn’t call him a popular, white developer because truly popular people don’t need million-dollar ad buys to become popular²⁰. And, if being black was all you needed to do to win popularity in the Black Community, then where oh where is all the black support for Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas in his time of need? I’ve been a minority my whole life, and one thing I’ve noticed is that when minorities don’t fit into a box that others try to put them in, a lot of times they try to stuff you in that box anyway. When they don’t know how to label you, you become a “popular, black police chief” or like the *Times* put in their headline, this weekend: “a black LAPD Chief”. A message to all concerned: **I do have a name**. And, the reason I’m popular is that, for the most part, people(not just black) were pleased with the service that I gave them. And, their displeasure with my removal and the way I was treated led to Hahn being unelected. That answer may not fit nicely in Caruso’s box or the box at the *LA Times*, but I have a 50-year career and three election wins to back that up.

¹⁹ <https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/la-west/la-stories/2020/06/30/developer-rick-caruso-is-committed-to-uplifting-and-empowering-the-city-of-angels-> (time code- 17:44)

²⁰ <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-04-07/caruso-has-now-loaned-his-campaign-10-million>

And, while it may be fashionable now for Caruso to mention my popularity as a means to enhance his story, in 2002, he was one of the folks promoting the myth that officers were leaving the department because of me²¹. It could be worse. Hahn once said publicly that he thought I was popular because I'm good looking; even more bizarre—in so many ways. Anyway, if Caruso's campaign continues to go like I think it will, you will find that he can't talk about his so-called law enforcement accomplishments without referencing me, either directly or indirectly. I guess that's understandable. I mean, you can't talk about "Forever 21"... forever. Can you? **"Privilege"**.

Another thing that screws up Caruso's revisionist narrative, is that the thousands of people who protested and came to city council to testify in support of my reappointment weren't only black people. The group represented a diverse spectrum that was and forever will be Los Angeles and, unfortunately, *Times* reporter Rainey silenced those voices in his piece, instead taking the words of unnamed, faceless "experts". Ironically, the one person who formally spoke against my reappointment... is black. There's footage that proves all of this²². Thinking back, a Trump appointee, like Caruso, was probably distracted by the size of the crowd and, like Rainey, lost the message of the event. And, in true Trump fashion, when the public isn't buying what you're selling, you take matters into your own hands. During my reappointment process, the City Attorney's Office admonished Caruso for public comments he made regarding my confidential material²³.

The last thing I learned about Caruso, is that he wasn't a very good friend to Jim Hahn. It's been said that Hahn's decision on my reappointment was career suicide. If that's the case, then Caruso was Dr. Kevorkian. For the two of them to drive off of the cliff together, all while kickstarting an era of political power by police unions is the stuff that Greek tragedies are made of. These emboldened police unions are at the root of our nation's modern-day battles between the community and the people paid to protect them. And, these battles are centered around police abuse.

If researched correctly, our local media and Caruso's opponents will determine that Hahn's 2002 decision was about creating a more lenient environment for officers throughout the department. Caruso and Hahn supported a plan that allowed officers to work three days a week. I didn't because of simple math. If officers work three days a week, while you work five and criminals work seven, it's not effective. Today, the three-day workweek continues to hamstring department resources, forcing supervisors to deploy 25%-30% fewer patrol cars than if they were fully staffed. And, it has failed and/or been abolished in other cities. Even the *Times* woke up just in time... to be late to the party, editorializing nearly 10 years after I raised issue with it, that the three-day

²¹ <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2002-apr-10-mn-37083-story.html>

²² <https://www.dropbox.com/s/bcg58yvi46gfwlq/PARKSDOC.mp4?dl=0> (time code:1:26:25)

²³ <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2002-apr-22-me-parks22-story.html>

workweek should be abolished²⁴. So, I guess, at least by their standards, I got another one right. Nonetheless, we remain married to the policy because of a self-serving campaign promise made by Hahn at the turn of the century. To put it simply, before you ask the public to pay for more police, try putting the ones you have back to work because Caruso's attempt at bringing in 1,500 new officers will go up in smoke, much like Trump's border wall. And, no, Mexico isn't paying for any new officers.

Caruso, Hahn and Bratton began softening my disciplinary policies the minute I left the department. And, that proved to be a slippery slope. Bratton instituted policies of negotiated penalties and plea bargaining. In 2008, The *L.A. Daily News* reported that LAPD was "doing away with automatic punishment for officers who break the rules"²⁵. Instead, the new rules encourage supervisors to "forgo suspensions for officers that they believe will change their behavior". That's a lot of discretion to give to people who are not experts in the field of behavior.

While life was getting easier for officers in Caruso's LAPD, it was getting more difficult for LA's residents. According to a November 24, 2013 article in the *New York Daily News*, citing a Harvard Kennedy School report, Caruso's handpicked police chief not only brought the controversial "Stop and Frisk" policy to our department, he expanded it²⁶. Six years after Bratton came to LA, the number of stops conducted by officers went up nearly 50%. And, he continues to support the policy to this day²⁷. This came as news to me. As a member of the city council, I don't recall ever hearing that the LAPD had instituted the "Stop and Frisk" policy. This is also another indictment against the *Times*. It's sad state of affairs when L.A. readers have to read a paper based nearly 3,000 miles away to find out what's going on in their city. If the report cited, in the *New York Daily News* holds true, it means that Bratton either implemented "stop and frisk" at LAPD without the knowledge of the city government or only certain officials knew about it. Neither scenario is good. So while the *Times* and their "experts" were patting themselves on the backs for what a great idea it was to let me go, it seems Caruso's LAPD was patting down more and more of our city's residents, in a possible violation of their civil rights. Fortunately, LA's current Police Commission recently created new limits on pretextual stops by LAPD Officers²⁸.

For me, losing a job that I spent a career trying to achieve was disappointing. It's tough for me to explain how difficult it was for a black man to start at LAPD in the 1960s and rise to the department's highest rank. Most people wouldn't understand it. And, it

²⁴ <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2007-nov-21-ed-lapd21-story.html>

²⁵ <https://www.dailynews.com/2008/08/23/lapd-overhauls-its-discipline-policy/>

²⁶ <https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/bratton-article-1.1527258>

²⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/07/bill-bratton-stop-and-frisk-new-york>

²⁸ <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-03-01/new-limits-on-pretextual-stops-by-lapd-to-take-effect-this-summer-after-training>

certainly wouldn't translate to those who've had a lot of things handed to them, like Caruso and even Hahn. But, on the bright side, I'm the first and, right now, the only black person to ever do it. And, though it's not my entire identity, it does mean something. Plus— and this is the best part —the trade off meant that both Caruso and Hahn —thanks to the voters who recognized their scam— would be out of city life by the following election. How good of a chief was I? Although not perfect, I was just good enough to take out an uninspired and underperforming sitting mayor and his billionaire flunkey in one fell swoop. I count that as one of my biggest accomplishments, so it was well worth it. I took one for the team. But, no good deed goes unpunished. As the budget chair on the city council, I had to spend a good portion of the next 12 years keeping our city out of bankruptcy, following the national fiscal crisis.

Since my reappointment process, Caruso has had at least one glaring opportunity to help the city that he's now running to represent. But, instead, he helped his own self interests. On the Coliseum Commission, Caruso teamed with the now-indicted Ridley-Thomas and others to see to it that more than \$1 billion in property: the Coliseum, the Sports Arena and the surrounding parking lots were gifted to USC— **for free**, in contrast to the desires of the overwhelming majority of people who live in the Exposition Park Area. Keep in mind, that the Coliseum was built in 1923 in memory of World War I Veterans. Since the takeover, USC has scored financially from three years of Rams football games, a new soccer stadium and countless events. Meanwhile, our city, county and state haven't seen a dime from the revenue-sharing plan USC proposed²⁹. During the process, Caruso showed his usual disregard for good faith policies and procedures. Despite being a coliseum commissioner, he still held his role with USC's Board of Trustees. And, despite the very obvious conflict of interest that presented, he sat in on the negotiations until I raised the issue. And then... he resigned³⁰. So, if you're keeping track, that's two times I forced him out of public life. Anybody want to go for three? Definitely not built for a gunfight...

Now, staying on the subject of USC, when Caruso and his board of trustees finally decided it was time to move on from school president Max Nikias following the sex, drug and enrollment scandals, they showed him some love, awarding him a compensation package worth more than \$7.6 million, a tenured professorship and a seat on the school's governing board³¹. When Jim Hahn and Caruso decided it was time to move on from me, they showed me... the door. I didn't expect the \$7.6 million, but what I did get were ongoing attempts by both men to smear my name and my

²⁹ <https://www.latimes.com/local/la-xpm-2013-jun-22-la-me-coliseum-20130623-story.html>

³⁰ <https://www.latimes.com/local/la-xpm-2011-sep-29-la-me-coliseum-caruso-20110929-story.html>

³¹ <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-07-16/usc-paid-former-president-max-nikias-more-than-7-6-million-in-exit-package>

career whenever they had the chance³². Meanwhile, the next time Caruso publicly states anything negative about Nikias, it will be the first time. **"Privilege"**.

In closing, If the goal of the Caruso campaign is to try to discredit my career for the sake of promoting their candidate, I welcome it. Through the years, local history has shown that these tactics do not breed longevity. There is plenty of room left on the path traveled by former LAPD Chief Willie Williams, Ridley-Thomas and Hahn if Caruso and his team choose to take it. So, if he still feels a little bit raw about my supporters sending Jimmy Hahn home for good in 2005, I'll be waiting and easy to find. I won't be on his boat.

³² <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-caruso-mayor-hahn-20140904-story.html>