

# LAW & JUSTICE

## Child Abuse

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sons more than once.

"I don't know how to tell it," the man told a sheriff's deputy. "They just occurred — I don't know an explanation, why we done it or I done it or wanted to do it or anything else it just — an impulse I guess or something.

"As far as an explanation I just couldn't dig one up."

He wouldn't have to. Seven days later, the decision was made not to pursue charges against the scoutmaster.

The last sliver of hope for justice for the abuse of two teenagers and an 11-year-old boy slipped away in a confidential letter from a Louisiana Scouts executive to the organization's national personnel division in New Jersey.

"This subject and Scouts were not prosecuted," the executive wrote, "to save the name of Scouting."

An Associated Press review of the files found that the story of these brothers and their scoutmaster, however horrendous, was not unique.

The files released Thursday were collected between 1959 and 1985, with a handful of others from later years. Some have been released previously, but others — those from prior to 1971, including the story of the three scouts in Ouachita Parish — have been made public for the first time.

The documents reveal that on many occasions the files succeeded in keeping pedophiles out of Scouting leadership positions — the reason why they were collected in the first place. But the files are also littered with horrific accounts of alleged pedophiles who were able to continue in Scouting because of pressure from community leaders and local Scouts officials.

## Reece Adjusts Use of Force Policies

### Advocates seek city and federal agreement first

BY CARI HACHMANN  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Advocates are urging the Portland Police Bureau to wait until the U.S. Department of Justice and the community have reached an agreement on police use of force before finalizing the new policy changes that Police Chief Mike Reese announced last week.

The city and the Department of Justice have been in negotiations following last month's federal report findings that the Portland Police Bureau has a "pattern or practice of excessive force against people with mental illness."

Before any agreement was reached, Police Chief Mike Reese announced policy changes to improve how police officers deal with Portland's mentally ill.

The changes to policy included the re-implementation of a Crisis Intervention Team made up of volunteer and specialized patrol officers who would be available to dispatch on mental-health related calls. The bureau had a similar team in the past, but dropped it in 2007 to fully train all officers on the



Police Chief Mike Reese

subject.

According to Reese, all officers would continue be trained on Crisis Intervention with the team in place.

Chief Reese also announced changes to three directives involving use of force: Taser use, application of force, and use of deadly force.

The police bureau posted the policies online and asked for community feedback by Friday, Nov. 2, 2012.

Advocates responded, including Portland Copwatch, a grassroots group promoting police accountability through citizen action.

In public comments e-mailed to Chief Reese, Portland Copwatch's Dan Handelman first, urged the bureau not to finalize the new policy changes "until the community and the DOJ have decided that the plans will do something to eliminate the

pattern and practice of excessive force that was found".

Handelman critiqued that when under scrutiny in the past, the bureau has made minor changes to policies while asking investigators to hold off until there is time to see how the new changes work.

"Such shenanigans are no longer to be tolerated," wrote Handelman.

Portland Copwatch fears that implementing policy changes before an agreement is reached, might give federal courts the impression that there is no need for oversight, intervention, or further community involvement.

Handelman also expressed that the bureau make the directives easier for the public to understand by changing its confusing numerical language.

Further, advocates hoped to see other directives previously brought to police attention, like the Medical Aid directive, addressed in the DOJ agreement.

Portland Copwatch said they support the idea of a hybrid Crisis Intervention Team model that includes all officers being trained but also specific skilled members apart of an on-call team.

However, advocates emphasized that the existence of such team should not relieve members of their responsibility to de-escalate and use

their own training to resolve situations.

Nobody wants to see a repeat death of Jose Mejia Poot, said Handelman.

Poot was a Mexican day laborer shot at a mental health hospital in 2001 when a second set of officers arrived after the first set, which included a CIT-trained officer, had gone off duty.

Copwatch's Handelman went on to express concerns on the Portland Police bureau's Force, Deadly Use of Force and Taser policies, with specific comments on sections like policy, constitutional and bureau standards, procedures, duties, and many other details.

Police Public Information Officer Pete Simpson responded by saying, "At this point [the policy changes] are drafts that have been posted to solicit feedback."

"No timeline has been established on adopting them," said Simpson, "And the DOJ agreement is one factor that will be considered in the eventual adoption of policy changes."

To read and comment on the Police bureau's policy changes, go to <http://www.portlandonline.com/police/index.cfm?c=59757>.

Portland Copwatch's comments are public and should be available online soon.

## Section 8 Waiting List to Open

Low-income renters who struggle to pay their rent have the opportunity for relief by applying for Home Forward's Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher waiting list.

The agency (formerly Housing Authority of Portland) will take online applications for this popular rent assistance program during a 10-day period starting Thursday, Nov. 1.

Section 8 vouchers help those with limited incomes afford rents in the private market. When the list last opened in 2006, Home Forward received nearly 10,000 applications.

For this opening, 3,000 households will be randomly selected from all applicants to be added to the waiting list. Once a household is on the waiting list, priority selection for

vouchers will be provided for seniors, persons with disabilities, and people who are working or engaged in education or training programs.

The Section 8 program currently provides rent assistance to about 8,700 households.

For information, visit [homeforward.org](http://homeforward.org).

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