



Session 27 | An Examination of Police Initiated Neck Restraints
September 9, 2020
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. EDT

The current, most controversial use of force by police is the application of neck restraints with the Eric Garner incident being one that has struck the nation's consciousness. The panel discussion will examine the use of neck restraints, the difference between a chokehold and a lateral vascular restraint, the risks and dangers of applications, the banning of the holds by several law enforcement agencies, and the reasons that many law enforcement professionals remain adamant supporters of the use of neck holds. The panel will focus on civilian oversight's role in the investigation and review of these uses of force as well as considering best practices in policy development and a menu of strategies to address the spectrum of views on neck restraints, particularly in light of increased neck holds with tragic results being captured on recording devices.

Attendees will learn the differences between the various neck restraints, how the use of force is intended to disable a resistive individual, and the risk of serious injury or death in their application. Attendees will further learn why many in law enforcement are strong adherents to its authorized use. The discussion will include discourse about whether all neck restraints should be banned, some should be, and if not banned what level of threat should be present before use. The discussion will also consider training, monitoring, and review issues in jurisdictions where neck restraints remain authorized.

Speakers:

- Michael Gennaco, Principal, OIR Group, Los Angeles, CA
- Julie Ruhlin, Principal, OIR Group, Los Angeles, CA
- Lakshmanan Sathyavagiswaran, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner (Ret.), Los Angeles County Coroner's Office. Los Angeles, CA
- Jody Stiger, Sergeant, Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles, CA

Speaker Biographies

Michael Gennaco | As a principal of OIR Group, Mr. Gennaco provides services in the field of independent oversight; serves as a monitor for negotiated agreements involving police reform; assists federal courts in developing remedial plans intended to cure defects in Constitutional policing; conducts independent reviews of critical incidents including officer-involved shootings and in-custody deaths; conducts audits of law enforcement departments focusing on review of internal investigative processes and policies; and undertakes independent internal investigations of allegations of police misconduct.

Mr. Gennaco headed up civilian oversight of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for thirteen years and continues to provide ongoing oversight for the Anaheim, Fullerton, Palo Alto, and Burbank (CA) Police Departments and the Portland (OR) Police Bureau. Mr. Gennaco played a central role in creating independent oversight models for both the largest sheriff's department and prison system in the United States. Mr. Gennaco has also provided independent review of critical incidents, adverse civil verdicts and/or best practices audits and designed remedial recommendations for the cities of Madison, Westminster, Pasadena, Portland, Torrance, Spokane, Santa Monica, Santa Maria, Inglewood, Glendale,



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Oxnard, Alhambra, Davis, Lompoc, and Oakland Police Departments, and the Orange County, San Diego County, King County, San Francisco, Ventura, Merced, and Denver Sheriff Departments as well as the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the Department of Juvenile Justice.

Prior to his work in police oversight, Mr. Gennaco served as an Assistant United States Attorney and was responsible for prosecuting police officers for excessive force.

Julie Ruhlin | Julie Ruhlin is a Principal of OIR Group, providing advice and an independent perspective to communities and law enforcement agencies on critical incident analysis, policy reform, and training initiatives. She has worked with agencies and municipalities throughout California, as well as Portland, Oregon; Madison, Wisconsin; and Denver, Colorado. She currently serves as a team leader for the Santa Clara County Office of Corrections and Law Enforcement Monitoring. From 2011 to 2014, Ms. Ruhlin was Deputy Chief for the Office of Independent Review in Los Angeles County.

Ms. Ruhlin joined OIR in 2006 after working with Merrick Bobb at the Police Assessment Resource Center in Los Angeles, where she was responsible for investigating and drafting special reports to the County Board of Supervisors regarding policy and training deficiencies within the Sheriff's Department. Prior to working with PARC, her private law practice focused on civil rights and criminal defense. She graduated from American University and the University of Southern California School of Law.

Lakshmanan Sathyavagiswaran, M.D. | Dr. Lakshmanan Sathyavagiswaran is a medical graduate from Madras University India. He was granted a conferred MD (Doctor of Medicine) by the University of State of New York. He is a 35+ year veteran of the Los Angeles County Coroner's Office, who retired as Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner/Director (1992 to 2013). He again served Interim CME-C (2016-2017). He was President of the National Association of Medical Examiners for calendar year 2010.

He is an American Board Certified Physician in Anatomic, Clinical & Forensic Pathology, Internal Medicine, Geriatric Medicine and Infectious Diseases. He is also certified in pathology by the Royal College of Canada. He is a Professor of Medicine and Pathology at Keck School of Medicine USC, Honorary Voluntary Clinical Professor UCLA Geffen School of Medicine and a Peace Officer holding a specialized law enforcement Executive Certificate from POST.

During his career at the Department he has responded to several disasters and has personally handled/testified on several high profile cases. During his tenures the Coroner's office underwent a \$32 million refurbishment to construct a 500-decedent capacity crypt and replaced the HVAC system, obtained a CT scanner to conduct virtual autopsies and started a fully functional DNA laboratory. The Office also obtained accreditations from NAME, ANAB ISO/IEC 10025:2005 Forensic Science Testing Laboratories, ACGME, and IMQ-CMA for CME and POST certification.

During his tenure, the Department of Coroner hosted the 39th Annual meeting of NAME in 2005. He has numerous publications to his credit. He has published two textbooks: "Forensic Neuropathology" and "Multidisciplinary Medico-legal death investigation –Role of Consultants".

Jody K. Stiger | Jody Stiger is a sergeant with the Los Angeles Police Department and has 27 years of law enforcement experience. He has spent 20 years of his career training officers in tactics and the use of force. He has personally trained over 5,000 officers.



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Prior to law enforcement, Sergeant Stiger spent 4 ½ years in the United States Marine Corps and fought in Operation Desert Storm. While in the Marines, he also served as a Mountain Warfare Instructor. Sergeant Stiger has worked numerous assignments within the LAPD such as an undercover narcotics officer, surveillance, a patrol officer, gang enforcement officer, training and has 14 years of supervisory experience. He has developed training for multiple tactical situations and use of force policies for the LAPD and other law enforcement agencies. Jody has taught tactics and use of force for the LAPD and the Rio Hondo Police Academy. He currently is the aide to the Inspector General for the Los Angeles Police Department and has assisted with several investigations which resulted in high profile reports. Sergeant Stiger has consulted for numerous agencies nationwide and is a firm believer in civilian oversight within the law enforcement community.



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