

JASON SHOCK

Jobs abound with L.A. police

Are you a college student that fears the difficulty of finding that high-paying job that offers insurance benefits, a company car, an oceanside dream house, a beautiful blue suit to wear to work everyday and your own handgun?

Well, quit spending all that cash on school and head west. A great career in law enforcement is waiting for you in sunny southern California.

Not only will you receive all of the above, but Andy, Barney and the boys are also throwing in low to no job responsibility and immunity from prosecution when you and your partners lose control on a bad day, grab your bats and beat the hell out of people.

Only one precaution before jumping on this "can't miss" job opportunity: everyone outside of your immediate family will likely label you an incompetent jackass, powerless without a gun.

Consider the latest dilemma faced by Los Angeles' finest and put yourself in their shoes — a double murder in one of the city's richest neighborhoods with the prime suspect a football hero. If the scene was Watts or South Central and the suspect a soccer player, this story would only turn up on Hard Copy or Geraldo. You might have caught it somewhere on cable.

The suspect and an abundance of evidence were gathered within 24 hours. O.J. had to travel across the country to make this possible. Can't you visualize him hurdling suitcases and juking hot dog vendors through Chicago's O'Hare Airport to reach his Hertz rental? Unfortunately for police, most of the world sees Simpson in this light, thus creating a sticky situation in a land where football is king. If you have a Heisman trophy and are inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame, public perception will be favorable.

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Imagine denying the Juice a few days to grieve! Forget bloody evidence and motive, it takes hours to fill out the paperwork anyway. The force had a handle on the situation, simply take a couple of days, file a few forms, allow O.J. to attend the funeral of the woman he treated like a queen, and make the arrest at a later date. This is Southern Cal's Juice, man, give him a break.

Of course, it can't be put off forever. The boys in blue can buy time and verdicts, but the press seems to manage to stick their noses into everything and ask probing questions. They must stand up, do their job. Arrest the most famous Trojan in USC history.

"Yo, Juice, this is Willie (L.A. Police Chief Willie Williams) down at the station. I was wonderin' if maybe you had some free time tomorrow, say around noon, to come in and get booked for double murder with special circumstances. You'll face the death penalty, and life as you know it is over. I know your busy, Juice, I hate to be a bother. You'll be there? Great! Looking forward to seeing you, have a nice day."

The biggest case of your career, and you didn't even have to lift your fat rump out of your chair. Unless, of course, the impossible happens and you get outsmarted and the Juice breaks loose.

Inconceivable, I know, a convicted

wife beater wanted for double murder fleeing arrest.

Actually, it does happen on occasion. Chief Williams testified that "it wasn't the first time a suspect had reneged on an agreement to surrender." For double murder, Willie? I'm going way out on a limb to guess that it is rare for murder suspects, even in L.A. with the smoothest lawyers, to be given the opportunity to run a few errands before turning themselves into authorities.

Anyway, you know the story. Cops enjoy some prime time TV exposure and eventually save O.J.'s life and haul him in. The district attorney praises their job on national TV. (More advice: stay clear of those state prosecuting jobs, you, too, could be prosecuting O.J. in front of millions of people who want him acquitted and then campaign for re-election. My bet is the death penalty is out of the question.)

Be a cop, it's a job opportunity of a lifetime. Besides, President Clinton is supposed to be hiring and L.A. just may be a hot spot for up-and-coming police officers.

Of course, if you can run fast, break tackles make movies, you'll probably be taken care of.

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Barney

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Berry told reporters after the hearing that Barney's statement was his own idea, and that his words of regret and sorrow were sincere.

"Scott has made his journey of the spirit and journey of the soul on this," he added.

Not all, however, were equally convinced of Barney's sincerity or truthfulness. Lacey, who still feels "disgusted" that he had to make a deal with Barney to prosecute the murder, said the statement was inappropriate. Barney "is still not

facing up to the fact that his part was more than he said it was," and the statement reflected that. Lacey also called Barney's professions of faith "a jailhouse conversion."

Stan Harms also said that Barney was lying to himself as well as the court. However, the issue of truthfulness was secondary for Harms.

"It's up to all of us to make sure that Mr. Barney stays in prison for the rest of his life," said Harms.

Barney could ask the state Board of Pardons for a commutation of his life sentence to a term of years, but Lacey speculated that such a request would not be made for at least twenty-five years.



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