



## Col. Dean Esserman

*Highly Acclaimed Police Chief*

TOPIC: Security

SUBTOPICS: Leadership and Management; Social Change; Organization and People; Ethics and Culture

### BIG IDEAS:

#### COMMUNITY: A Return to Neighborhoods

We are a nation of cities. America's youth is growing up in an urban nation where violence and crime all too often claim the lives and futures of our children. As an American Police Chief, patriot, and father, Colonel Dean Esserman understands the importance of investing in today's youth before tragedy befalls them. By understanding and fostering the impact communities can have in a child's life, he has truly influenced the future of so many.

From 2003–2008, Colonel Esserman established the program "A Return to Neighborhoods" to reconnect and commit to building and strengthening relationships with the Providence community. The program re-established the Police Department's commitment to the community policing philosophy and renewed trust with members of the Providence community. Through innovative programs, dedication and tireless efforts, Colonel Esserman along with his Police Department, have helped to re-build community ties with the Police Department and ultimately made Providence a safer, stronger, and more thriving community.

## BIOGRAPHY

He's not a typical police chief. By promoting novel approaches like "social justice" and community policing, Dean Esserman transformed the once-corrupt Providence, RI police department and—along the way—earned national recognition modeling leadership in his profession. He has attracted the attention of business leaders intrigued by his innovative, invigorating management style and his ability to affect large-scale change. All of this from a former pre-med student.

Dean's journey to his current role as the Providence Chief of Police began unconventionally during his sophomore year at Dartmouth College. He was studying history and pre-med when he accepted an off-term internship through Dartmouth's Medical School to help design and establish a medical rescue unit for the New York Transit Police. The experience changed Dean, who became fascinated by the unexpected responsibilities required by cops in their daily work. As America's first responders, police are called to handle myriad social situations—women in labor, landlord disputes, even malfunctioning heating systems in tenement buildings. Dean realized that—through a career in law enforcement—he could make a real, measurable impact on his community. Dean decided to forego a degree in medicine and pursue law school instead, and so began his lifelong passion and commitment to public service.

After graduating from NYU Law School, he served as Assistant District Attorney in Brooklyn and then General Counsel to the New York Transit Police. During his tenure in New York, he found a mentor in Chief William Bratton, one of the nation's most visible, successful

#### LEADERSHIP: Building Cohesive Teams and Forward-Thinking Cultures

When Mayor Cicilline introduced the Providence police force to its new chief, Dean Esserman, the command staff was skeptical. Esserman was an outsider, unlike the chiefs who preceded him. He was a native New Yorker, Ivy League-educated, and a son of privilege. Department morale was low, and city-wide corruption was high. Through colorful anecdotes and tactical recommendations, Colonel Esserman shares what it took to turn around his force and create a successful, forward-thinking team.

#### POLICING: Homeland to Hometown Security

Dean Esserman shows how our response to terrorism must focus on more than one thing at a time. While we need a vigilant national government to lead in securing the Homeland, we must also recognize that people are needlessly terrorized on their blocks in their Hometowns. Colonel Esserman talks about ways communities can work at the local level to feel safer—and that would have repercussions across all the land.

police chiefs. Dean remains Bratton's protégé today.

Dean left his New York post to serve as the Assistant Chief of Police for New Haven, CT. There, he implemented the city's first community policing plan and the state's first federally funded drug gang task force, and he cut crime city-wide.

Following his position in New Haven, Dean assumed the Chief of Police role for the M.T.A. Metro North Police Department, where he led an agency-wide terrorism threat-assessment study and implemented a multi-million dollar security upgrade at Grand Central station. In 1998, he was appointed Chief of Police in Stamford, Connecticut, where his philosophy of community-oriented policing contributed to a 50% reduction in the city's crime rate.

In January 2003, when new Providence Mayor David Cicilline took office, the police department had been accused of favoritism and corruption. Cicilline's predecessor, Vincent A. "Buddy" Cianci, had created a criminal enterprise riddled with corruption, and crime was ever-escalating. One of the mayor's first orders of business was to turn the police force around, and he called on Dean Esserman to do it. Since then, Chief Esserman has revamped the city's crime-fighting force and replaced the department's traditional methods with a community policing concept. The results? An inspired command staff, a double digit drop in Providence's overall crime rate for three years running, and a transformed city.