

## **Mikail Ali**



Mikail Ali is a lieutenant with the San Francisco Police Department who is widely admired for his work ethic and spirit of service to the community and colleagues in the SFPD. He has been influential notwithstanding his relative youth in the positions he has held (becoming a sergeant at 29 and a lieutenant at 39, young for the SFPD). He grew up in public housing developments in Oakland and San Francisco, born to a single, teenaged mother. His grandparents, who had worked as World War II civilian employees in the U.S. Navy in the shipyards of Seattle and Oakland, instilled in him at an early age an understanding that public service is important.

His days of living in public housing were a source of inspiration that he drew on when faced with the daunting task of patrolling, as a young officer and veteran sergeant, the very housing developments where he once lived. While serving as an Inspector in the Gang Task Force, he and the team he supervised were faced with a horrendous gang situation in the City's largest and perhaps most neglected housing development. One particular gang had terrorized the residents with their acts of violence, resulting over the years in numerous shootings and homicides. Committed to ending this untenable situation, Ali and his team worked with others, including the US Attorney, over a year and a half, to identify the most egregious of these gangsters and build cases for prosecution. At the same time he worked with housing development residents in a way that earned mutual respect and understanding and discouraged the area's at-risk youth from choosing the gang lifestyle. Ali served as a role model for both those officers he supervised and the residents in the developments. His team's efforts significantly contributed to the federal government's felony indictment of 12 of these gangsters. Following these investigations and prosecutions, there was not a single shooting in the area for over nine months, and the gangs have not been able to regain a foothold in the development since.

During his career with SFPD he has served in a variety of assignments, including narcotics and gang enforcement, investigations, SWAT operations and the juvenile division. He has been an innovative force within the Police Department, spearheading the implementation of a number of efforts, including the procurement and installation of gunshot location technology and the San Francisco Police Department's Gun Stop Program (a gun buy-back initiative). He has served as an advisor to and then acting director of the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. He broke new ground during his tenure at the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, both with technology adoption and with recommendations that eventually improved the accountability of San Francisco entertainment venues, which all too often had been the scenes of serious violence but had not accepted responsibility for what goes on in their establishments. The foundation he laid while working in the Mayor's office resulted, over the past several years, in virtually all his recommendations for reducing disorder and violence in the clubs being implemented, including ordinances and policies that added security cameras and private security, created security plans, and require clubs to verify identification.

His view of the responsibilities of rank are shaped by the words of retired US Army General Bruce C. Clarke, which he recalls reading in high school: "Rank is given you to enable you to better serve those above and below you. It is not given for you to practice your idiosyncrasies." Having interrupted his undergraduate studies in business management to join the SFPD in 1992, Ali is scheduled to receive a Bachelor's in Public Administration with an emphasis in Law

Enforcement Leadership from the University of San Francisco in December 2010. He is active in community service, having been involved for 22 years with the Bay Area chapter of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, the first intercollegiate Greek-letter organization established by African Americans. Its mission is to develop leaders, promote brotherhood and academic excellence, while providing service and advocacy for its communities. He is now president of the alumni chapter of this service organization, and he actively supports Alpha Phi Alpha scholarship recipients during their college years and afterwards, as well as engaging with high school students as a mentor starting at the sophomore level in several East Bay high schools. His efforts have inspired scores of young African American males and produced many successful college graduates. His credo, oft repeated to his colleagues in the SFPD, is that the driving force behind what we do in law enforcement has to be how we best serve the divergent communities in which we operate, how we tailor what we do to best suit the communities' needs.