Time & Space – Halloween in the Witch City
Paul Gormley
Lynn University – Criminal Justice

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences - Annual Conference
March 30, 2016
Salem Massachusetts

- Small city in Essex County with a long history related to Halloween and Witches
- Witch trial events occurred in Salem Village (not within City of Salem) 1692-1693
- Witch Trial history, commerce, advertising, tourism associated with City of Salem
Haunted Happenings

- Successful tourism / marketing campaign
- City (pop. 41,340) swells to 100,000
- Friday, October 31, 1997
  - Unseasonably warm
  - Heavy Advertising
  - Hotels & attractions are full
  - Traffic backed up onto major highways
  - Hundreds arrested: stabbings, fights, disorderly, assault / battery, larceny, etc.
Monday Morning

• Over 100 arrests in custody (since Friday)
• Dozens more released on ROR / bail
• Criminal justice / public safety unprepared
  – Lack of capacity at police lockup, transportation to court
  – Court lacks detention capacity, staff to handle document processing, arraignments
  – Prosecutors & Defense Bar overwhelmed
• Lessons learned – it’s not just Salem PD
Flash Forward – Halloween 2015

- Saturday, October 31, 2015, days before are unusually warm, Halloween night is merely unseasonably warm.
- “100,000 STRONG: Haunted Happenings the biggest and safest ever, officials say”

Salem News, 11/01/15
Halloween 2015

- Lessons learned; months-long preparation & readiness – multi-agency coordinated plan
- Normal shift: 16 police officers (out of 100 total)
- Halloween night: 207 officers from 17 communities including patrol, tactical teams, detectives
- Plus:
  - 22 ambulance personnel (hospital in readiness)
  - 5 dispatchers
  - 30 Transit Authority officers at the train station
  - Sheriff’s Department – deputies, transport, detention
  - Special units: MSP Motorcycle & Mounted, Gang Task Force, Essex County Drug Task Force, Probation
“Crowd builds early on a warm Halloween afternoon”

Salem News, 10/31/2015
A City Under Tight Control

The Salem Police will close any additional roads as needed to ensure public safety. Expect very heavy traffic delays and take alternate routes.

Legend
Closure Times
- Roads closed at 12:00 noon.
- Roads closed at 10:00 pm.
“Police said there were record-low arrests for Halloween, with just 11 throughout the weekend, and eight related to the massive street party downtown. There were also approximately 20 people taken into protective custody for intoxication.”

Salem News, 11/01/2015
Success!

“Record-Low Arrests in Salem, Mass. On Halloween”

www.necn.com

“Few arrests in Salem despite big Halloween crowd

Boston Globe 11/01/15
Thank You!

Paul R Gormley, J.D., LP.D  
College of Arts & Sciences  
Criminal Justice  
Lynn University  
3601 South Military Trail  
Boca Raton FL 33486  
pgormley@lynn.edu  
(formerly practicing in Salem, Massachusetts)