



Naperville FOP Response to the Death of George Floyd, & Anti-Police Sentiment

On 5/25/2020 and over the days following, the world witnessed as George Floyd was killed, murdered by now former police officer Derek Chauvin. I can't imagine a single person in the world could have watched that video and not been horrified. How could that happen? How could that officer do that? How could those officers simply stand by and not say something, do something, anything different? The men and women of the Naperville FOP share those same exact feelings of outrage and anger.

There are over 800,000 police officers in this country and every day, tens of thousands of those officers initiate arrests. Annually, each of those officers likely initiate anywhere between a few to a few dozen to well over a hundred arrests, accounting for tens of millions of arrests for all variety of offenses, some minor, some very serious, and many in between. Including all police contacts, the number of police interactions often surpasses 50 million a year. Throughout all of them, however, whether the offense is murder or armed robbery or burglary or forgery or driving while license suspended, no person in police custody should ever be put into a position within seconds, minutes, or any time after being secured that could likely result in harm, injury, or even death. Once a person is arrested, the arresting officer is responsible for that person's well-being. One of the most obvious dangers post-arrest is harm from positional asphyxia, a form of asphyxia that occurs when someone's position prevents adequate breathing.

Positioning of subjects post arrest is a commonly trained subject because of the fact that any person in a state of excitement can die merely from being laid on his/her chest alone. Add any pressure to the person's, back, shoulders, or neck area, and that horrific result will likely occur. After having received extensive training on this subject over the last twenty years, I asked myself over and over the following: How could those men not know this? How could this not have ever been covered in any of their training sessions? The utter recklessness displayed following that arrest by not rolling Mr. Floyd on his side, which would have been a very simple thing to do, is beyond comprehension. I simply cannot imagine what that officer was thinking. Whatever explanation he may or may not have for that behavior is of course pointless because in this case, we know it doesn't matter. He chose the wrong set of actions, and as a result, he killed a man, murdered him in fact. The district attorney's office of Minneapolis reviewed the full video, and as someone that believes in the system but knows full well how time-consuming due process can sometimes be, understands they acted swiftly as well as with clear purpose in this case, by promptly leveling the subject charges.

What the Naperville Fraternal Order of Police would like to express to everyone in our city and beyond, in no uncertain terms, is that we stand in complete solidarity with every angered and outraged person that witnessed the murder of George Floyd, and we, along with you, recognize it for the injustice and crime it was. We are, in fact, opposed to every act of atrocity, injustice, and incident of murder everywhere, and stand with all victims of violent crime all over the world, no matter their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or other differing characteristic. Furthermore, the Naperville FOP fully acknowledges that racism does still exist in this country, and we want everyone to understand we not only abhor and despise those attitudes, but we find them wholly intolerable, and thus will not suffer any of our brothers or sisters acting, speaking, or behaving in any form of a racist or unjust manner. To be honest, it seems strange to even have to type these words, to have to say or proclaim that we are against crime and injustice and racism, but for what it's worth, if these words mean anything to anyone, we of course are.

Like every cop I've ever met, I, John Reed, President of the Naperville Fraternal Order of Police, became a police officer years ago because I wanted to be one of the good guys, to save people, to save peoples' lives, to stop bad things from happening, to right wrongs, and in general, to simply help people. Like many of you, after watching that video, I wish I could go back in time and stop the murder of George Floyd from happening, a crime which probably could have been averted in any number of ways. Like many of my colleagues, we have all felt that way many times over the course of our professional careers, wishing we could change what happened from one horrific incident to another. We feel that way on every deadly incident involving a child, as well as reference many murders and many other unspeakable acts, too many to enumerate.

Watching the hurt, pained, enraged, and saddened members of our community speak out toward us asking to know how we felt, I felt compelled to answer that question here in this format in as sincere and direct of a manner as possible. Then, after witnessing all the anti-police vitriol, hatred, extremism, zealotry, rage, and in a few cases, murder, unleashed against the police officers of this country over the last few weeks, I felt equally compelled to express our clear and unwavering support for all the men and women of blue across our nation now being demonized, vilified, and in many cases victimized as a result of what I can only describe as poisonous, misguided rage.

Here is what we would like you to know. Whether you're a cop in Naperville, IL or anywhere else in the world, every officer enters this vocation of police work for one reason, or one reason above all others, and that is to help people. That is at least what we say, almost universally, when asked why we became the police: "I want to help people." The real reason we enter this profession, however, is the following, something which doesn't always sound right coming out of our mouths, depending upon the circumstances, but is the truth. We enter this profession because of love. Love for our fellow man, love for doing the right thing, love for stopping the

bad, love for being a part of the good, and a love of service, or serving a cause greater than our own self-interest. The choice to be a police officer is actually in complete opposition with the concept of self-interest. Police officers on the average suffer higher divorce rates, higher suicide rates, and higher mortality rates. That isn't because our job is easy. We know of all the warnings, numbers, and admonitions, but stick with it anyway, because what we sacrifice in peace, we often make up for in meaning. Most of us do at least. Some of us, however, do not, only to discover along the way we somehow did it wrong, and often too late. In the case of officer suicide, it's our family members who face that grim reality and face it alone, because we are gone.

Something else we would like to share with you, and again something I didn't learn over the course of twenty years but rather very early on in my police career, probably after the first hundred or so people I arrested, is the following: Although many people make many kinds of mistakes, many of which need to be addressed by the police, there are few outright, unredeemable, "bad" people in this world. Of the one thousand plus people I've arrested over the years, I can think of only a few I thought were really, "bad." Most of them, the vast majority of them, seemed to be more or less regular people that had gone wrong somewhere, somehow, or rather, things had gone wrong for them, maybe that day we met or probably in most cases, some time before. And of those "bad" people, even those folks, when interviewed, questioned, and asked about the origins of their problems, it often became pretty clear pretty quickly, what had happened to them. Usually, I noted some combination of common anti-social risk factors, with those being no father, and/or, poor parental upbringing, and/or, substance abuse, and/or, poverty, and/or, mental illness, and/or, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. So then were they bad? As with anything in life, the issue becomes more complex the more we learn, and the more we understand. But when these same folks are robbing people once again or trying to kill people once again and/or are trying to kill you, and there are more coming down the pipe next week, self-preservation kicks in, we stop empathizing with them, we charge them appropriately, and we move on simply because we must, because "the bad" (things not necessarily people) keeps coming, and "the bad" does not stop.

These are the people law enforcement interact with every day, some with a lot of baggage, some without, but no matter the person, like the officer with whom he/she interacts, every person, officer or civilian, brings to every police encounter the totality of every experience that has ever happened to them, everything they've ever learned, lived, and experienced, every belief, every perception, and perhaps most damning to us all, every expectation. In essence, each interaction between police and public (tens of millions every year) occurs between these two sets of people, imperfect human beings meeting other imperfect human beings. In spite of this, every police officer knows his or her application of the law, arrests initiated, and response to resistance (use of force) must be done with perfection, or whatever species of action comes closest to it. If not, any encounter can quickly descend into chaos, into a free-for-all, into a life and death situation, into a pitched struggle that at best doesn't look right, and at worst, will be ugly, violent, or worst of all fatal. When these encounters go south and the person subject to arrest dies, nationwide condemnation follows and as we have seen, a nation can burn, literally and metaphorically. When a police officer dies, however, with his or her only crime being the failure of being absolutely perfect on that day, no one outside of law enforcement seems to care.

Everyone knows the name George Floyd, but where are the protests for the following Americans:

Patrick Underwood

David Dorn

Cody Holte

Chris Beaty

Max Brewer

Julian Keen

Shay Mikalonis

Angelo Bronson

John Tiggs

Lazarra Daniels

Keishanay Bolden

Mekhi James

The first six were law enforcement officers, murdered in cold blood, within the past few weeks. Shay Mikalonis is the Las Vegas Police Officer that was shot in the back of his head in the middle of George Floyd protests, now on a ventilator, and paralyzed from the neck down. The next four were people murdered in cold blood in Chicago on May 31st, four of eighteen total marking the deadliest day in Chicago's history, ever since they began keeping such records approximately sixty years ago. I would have listed all their names but the reality is, despite a valiant search effort, I could not find them. The last person was a 3 year old boy shot in the back and murdered on June 21st, one of three children murdered that weekend. Shouldn't each and every one of those people be a household name as well?

Where is the outrage for these people? Where are their protests? What are we going to do to reform our society so this type of thing, these types of things, don't happen again? We of course know the answer, as there is no one asking those questions, no one except for police officers, and everyone else capable of spotting the hypocrisy and the one-sided presentation of news occurring in the media today. The reality is there are no conversations such as those because the world has come to expect no better. Most of the world has unfortunately come to accept that people in Chicago and other large American cities get slaughtered at record breaking rates, and policemen across the nation get murdered every few days because well its part of their job (it's not of course), all while selective outrage has become the new American norm.

I would be remiss in discussing this issue without citing facts and evidence, however, so I looked up some applicable numbers, and here they are. According to a June 2, 2020 Wall Street Journal article by Heather MacDonald, in 2019, police officers fatally shot 1,004 people, 19 of

which were unarmed whites, 9 of which were unarmed blacks. Although we know there are often explanations and eventually justifications for these uses of force, these are the incidents that usually raise questions and further examination, and understandably so. The article continues to state that, "In 2018, there were 7,407 black homicide victims. Assuming a comparable number of victims last year, those nine unarmed black victims of police shootings represent .1% of all African-Americans killed in 2019. By contrast, a police officer is 18½ times more likely to be killed by a black male than an unarmed black male is to be killed by a police officer." If you are one of the people overwhelmed with rage over what you think is happening in this county, please read those above sentences again.

Now imagine if we lived in a society of worldwide condemnation for every murder, be it officer or civilian or otherwise, but we of course do not, and probably never will. When we look at the numbers of civilians killed by police officers, due to some degree of negligence or recklessness, we understand that number should of course be zero. It should never happen, but the reality is, imperfect human beings are hired to police and enforce law amongst other imperfect human beings, and an expectation of universal perfection simply cannot occur in the real world. I understand the wish to ask for it, but to expect as much is to set up oneself, one-world, for an unrealistic standard of perfection that cannot ever be attained.

Seemingly, American media would have everyone believe police officers are one of the leading causes of death in the United States, with articles published every year titled something to the effect of, "Police Violence Epidemic," and others named in a similar manner. Anyone at all interested in truth, reality, or facts, knows what myopic works of fiction those stories really are. What are some of the leading causes of preventable death in the United States then? Let's look at one example at least somewhat relevant to this subject for a frame of reference. A 2016 John Hopkins University study on leading causes of death showed that medical malpractice accounts for more than 250,000 deaths a year on the low end, and perhaps as many as 400,000 deaths a year on the high end. That's per year. 250,000 Americans, killed by doctors, through some degree of accident, negligence, or recklessness, every year, which

equates to about 685 people a day. Where are the news stories about this? Where is the outrage? I'm not trying to cast any aspersions on the medical field, an essential and honorable profession of service, healing, and life-saving of course, but why does one profession dealing in the realm of life and death get a complete pass on any questions reference how or why these numbers could possibly be so high, while another gets both barrels or rancor and vilification, and with the numbers of malfeasance not even comparable?

And now come the calls to reform the police, to defund the police, to disband the police. On June 4th, one of the days hundreds protested throughout Naperville, I had the opportunity to speak with one of the protestors after their main group began to disperse. I explained to him in summary much of what I've already presented here, that police officers get into this profession for love, that we seek to serve and protect, and how it was somewhat ironic their group was screaming at and bombarding hatred and vitriol upon the very people blocking off streets and hustling around town to make sure it was safe for them to do so, protecting their First Amendment Rights. I also pointed out our secondary but equally important purpose was to ensure if anyone within their group or an outside agitator was to initiate some form of violence or property damage, we would take the necessary steps to stop that from happening, and to enforce the law. In addition, we were also present to protect the protestors from anyone that might wish to inhibit their right of free speech, a person that may perhaps disagree with them and attempt to initiate some criminal behavior against them.

I thus pointed out the uniqueness of the situation. He and his group were out protesting police brutality and the death of George Floyd, we the Naperville Police were charged by the oath of our vocation to serve and protect them while doing so. I explained our word and sense of duty extended well beneath the layers of our skin and down to our very cores, into our very souls, all while they in turn focused solely on us because of our profession, our vocation, our uniforms, and because we were the only police around.

I further explained that although I of course did not like or agree with their words of anger (getting called “pig,” being told “fuck you” a few hundred times, hearing my female partners called “dykes,” etc.), I told him I at least understood, and as a testament to the professionalism of our department, we were standing by and protecting him and his fellow protestors while they did so. I also explained we wore helmets (something the group seemed to take exception with), to make sure the things thrown at our heads didn’t fracture or penetrate our skulls. It was the same with our bulletproof vests, I told him, simply about protecting us, to help keep us alive when inevitably, someone, someday, maybe today, will likely try to hurt or kill one or all of us.

To this the man related that wasn’t him, as he hadn’t been here on Monday when the city was looted (burglarized really), as that was three days ago, and those had been other protestors. I pointed out to him the hypocrisy of his own words. He and his colleagues could stand and scream at us for hours on end, for days and days, over the actions of a different police officer, belonging to a different police department, in a different city, over 400 miles away, but it was unfair for me to draw any parallels or take any precautions reference what I saw with my own eyes, reference what happened to me, on my own city streets, in my very town, with many members of their same group present, and all of it occurring only three days previous. To his credit I could see he heard my words, and considered them.

I will tell you now what I told him then. We love you, we only want to serve and protect you, but in a nation of 800,000 police officers working in a field of life and death decisions, many of which need to be made one way or another, by well-intentioned human beings acting against the criminal will of other human beings, unfortunately mistakes are going to be made. We all know no police officer wakes up in the morning and pulls out of the driveway deciding that’s the day to kill someone. Unfortunately, however, we live in the real world, and accidents happen, negligence happens, recklessness happens. It of course should not, but it does, seemingly a few to a few dozen times a year for police. Whereas I of course understand the outrage when a police officer kills someone that should not have been killed, as a person raised

on the precepts of fairness, accountability, and uniformity, I am compelled to ask what is wrong with us that all murders don't outrage us in such a manner. Why is it that all murders don't send us to the streets, that all murder victims' names aren't as alive in our minds and on our lips as George Floyd? Why?

And what of these purported claims that police kill a disproportionate number of black Americans. Putting all emotion and feelings aside, what do the numbers say? What is the evidence? In a July of 2016 Washington Post article, Heather MacDonald of the Manhattan Institute wrote the following:

"Typically, activists and the media measure police actions against population ratios. Given that blacks are 13 percent of the nation's population, a 26 to 28 percent black share of police gun fatalities looks disproportionate. But policing should be measured against crime rates, not population percentages, because law enforcement today is data-driven. Officers are deployed to where people are most being victimized, and that is primarily in minority neighborhoods."

The article goes on to highlight a number of statistics and worthy points I encourage anyone interested in facts and truth to review for themselves, and includes one of the following conclusions:

"But contrary to the Black Lives Matter narrative, there is no government agency more dedicated to the proposition that black lives matter than the police. The data-driven, proactive policing revolution that began in the mid-1990s has saved tens of thousands of black lives that would have otherwise been lost to urban gun violence had crime remained at its early 1990s rate. Unfortunately, those crime gains are now at risk, thanks to the false narrative that police officers are infected with homicidal bias."

Solutions? Those with the courage to explore those options should probably begin by examining the plainly visible damaging effects that have occurred all across our country

throughout any number of urban communities resulting from decades of fatherless child rearing, years of poverty/government dependence, and deteriorating family/social value systems. The result of all these societal failures layered upon one another in and through virtually every American urban environment has somehow created a mindless culture of accepting, rationalizing, and minimizing criminal behavior into something widely considered a normal means to an end, while at the same time, grossly promoting anti-police fictions into false narrative phantasms of permanent victimhood. Moreover, it is this very sense of permanent victimhood that has become the universal panacea for anyone struggling anywhere, because nothing is anyone's fault anymore, and everyone, along with everything elsewhere is to blame, especially the police.

Police reform is wonderful for those departments in need, more training, more education, and so forth, agree, 110%, but how about some social reform as well. Could we do something about the culture of crime and entitlement that clearly exists throughout many parts of our country as well? That of course, is harder to address. For starters, it would be nice if everyone started valuing all lives, honoring all laws, respecting all people, loving one another, once and for all. I would love for that to happen, and have hope for it, high hopes in fact, but no expectation.

John Reed, President

Naperville Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #42