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# Time to Step Back and then Move Forward: The Current Frenzy is Asinine

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# **Time to Step Back and then Move Forward: The Current Frenzy is Asinine**

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Writing of the issues surrounding police engagement with all manner of abnormality, social conflict, deviance, disasters, and disorder, has its slings and arrows. This constant foray into adversity and social dysfunction may result in harmful outcomes for psychological, emotional and physiological systems. Working overtime, dealing with a public that has lost civility in many cases creates stress, adversity, and trauma. Over time it may take a toll, we have examples, yet, not all is lost!

It was heartening to see the military's acknowledgment of PTSD, read the research, and constructed a personal view that in civilian emergency services, we need to use a tailored approach to providing assistance. To that list, I opted to establish the label of accumulated stress, adversity, and trauma (ASAT) to explain the list of adverse conditions that emerge from time to time or perhaps continuous linger as a constant companion of those who serve society in the many positions. See the following:

1. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/update-book-silent-killer-police-first-responders-richard-lumb?trk=mp-reader-card>
2. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/public-safety-officer-emotional-health-addressing-silent-richard-lumb?trk=mp-reader-card>
3. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/factors-combat-stress-reaction-comparing-military-law-richard-lumb?trk=mp-reader-card>
4. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/strengthening-resilience-our-police-first-responders-richard-lumb?trk=mp-reader-card>
5. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/recognizing-addressing-symptoms-ptsd-our-police-richard-lumb?trk=mp-reader-card>

The work of military, public and private services provide shafts of sunlight through the dark clouds of despair, struggle, and resulting harm. Were it not for the work of those whose experience and contribution provides so much to people, the level of bleakness would be much worse. Still, some issues must be addressed, not some future time, but now, and with some urgency.

Turning to police specifically, the noise from a small segment of society whose accusations are self-service and not directed to problem-solving (“*Kill Da Pigs!*”) have an agenda, and it is not community order and social well-being. Enough has been

written describing the appalling rationale behind it, judge for oneself. What we should be doing is having leadership step forward to find sustainable solutions. Those, whom we would expect to do this, with some self-agenda, have made it worse. Citizens need to stop watching TV and investigate facts, seek the truth, and become knowledgeable and then engage in their communities. Get up off the couch and participate as a citizen again!

As a matter of fact, we are demanding too much of our emergency services, while we remain silent behind the walls of our homes. Police, like other community services, need a broader examination and partnerships with decent and concerned citizens. The accompanying stress is harmful, it is preventable, and it demands the attention of the field and community.

More detailed sites: (Each article offers additional references)

1. <https://adrenalfatiguesolution.com/police-stress-fatigue/>
2. <http://www.aaets.org/article87.htm>
3. [http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/submissions/Miller\\_Laurence\\_Testimony.pdf](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/submissions/Miller_Laurence_Testimony.pdf)
4. <http://ubhc.rutgers.edu/vinjweb/documents/LantermanBoyleetal2010.pdf>

Moreover, with all of the evidence, results of research, personal stories, behaviors that contradict normality, as judged from earlier experience, accusation, and other challenges encountered by the employing agencies; denial remains high by far too many.

This statement is not accusatory, not at all. Society demands these services, a substitute for their engagement of handling the injured and dead, responding to danger while others flee, encounters with drunks, drug issues, mental health problems, career criminals and the violent and dysfunction of daily occurrence. Dialing 911 has given us both a resource for help and a way to avoid personal engagement, thereby placing the entire burden on those few who wear a uniform and perform the services.

A minuscule number of our society comment about police misconduct and fail to acknowledge it was their response to a lawful order that set the whole circumstance in play. Actions that threaten and harm an officer or behave in a confrontational and unacceptable manner achieves some group's agenda, but it is not acceptable. The solution is simple, follow the command, and it will soon end. Police law enforcement, by law and oath, enforce citizen legislative rulemaking, citizen District Attorneys prosecute, citizen Judges and Court staff administers that phase of justice, and to that list, we must add personal and community funded defense attorneys. The police are but one of the multiple links in the chain of criminal justice systems. Police are required to enforce the law; the choice is not theirs, but erroneously believed so by many.

It is time for the majority of citizens, community leaders, police executives, citizens and others who desire community order and justice to stand up and be heard. The silent killer of police, an accumulation over time of those punishing encounters, must be addressed. Time to end excuses and pretending all is well.

### **Steps Needed.**

1. Remove, all of the non-police activities, unloaded on them by others who fail to address the issue with sustainable solutions in mind.
  - a. Substance abuse counselors
  - b. Mental health workers
  - c. Social and domestic problems
  - d. Other non-law enforcement duties due to no one being available
2. If society cannot act in a civilized manner, then elected officials to need to provide staffing and resources to enable police to handle the demands. Moreover, it would be helpful not to be part of the problem for political reasons.
3. More resources for training are required. Shifts must be adequately staffed, and it often bears the addition of overtime pay. Each state's training academy must direct the topics and instructors and deliver it to the field in an efficient manner. They must certify trainers and quality of delivery. Also, they must evaluate outcomes to ensure the training is working as established.
4. Citizen oversight is a misnomer, for if you do not understand the field of practice, this is no way to judge delivery. We do not have citizens judging medical practices, attorneys, auto mechanics, fast food workers and all manner of occupation. Emotions rule, and that makes little sense. If such a group is commissioned, they must complete extensive familiarization training to understand the job and spend time on calls for service for a reality check.
5. Calm down the hype, make intelligent choices, develop a plan to fix problems, and engage in the process. The noise, commotion, diversion from sustainable solutions wastes time and certainly costs much money.

The future of police, now dependent on inadequate funding, outdated law, confusing roles, minimal basic law enforcement support, and in-service training. Many other countries expend substantially more for this important single variable. See the following sites.

1. State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies, 2013.

<http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/slleta13.pdf>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Police\\_academy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Police_academy)

The era of small agencies requires study. Expecting them to be all things to all people is absurd and perhaps needs attention. Clear expectations for police extend to the community as well. We must stop blaming the police for poverty, inadequate services to address substance abuse, mental illness, social disorder, and other maladies that are social wrongs initiated by individuals and where the police only engage after being called or come across the problem while on patrol. Citizens have an obligation to help themselves become independent. It is convenient and stupid to transfer blame to the police. Of course, the recently political actions, disgusting in themselves, add to this equation.

Causation of the myriad of social problems rests with society and its elected and appointed officials. Skipping down to a single agency, police, is misguided and covers the lack of social agenda needed to fix the core issues, thereby reducing their presence in a very misinformed public. The situation is not resolved by partisan groups or the field of policing; as it must receive the attention of average citizen who speaks up, engage and pays attention to the relevance of truth and accurate facts. The 0.000042 percent has to take responsible action (Congress), based on fact, research, common sense, zero partisanship, and the good will to act responsibility. We, who elect and appoint these officials, must insist on this being done!

No to end on a negative thought, the choice between fix and solution is a simple twist of attitude and commitment. Personal agendas have no place in the decision-making, necessitating close attention and demands for unvarnished engagement. The silent voices must also be heard to provide a balanced view of all citizens.

## **Final Thoughts.**

Police and Sheriffs who engage with their community, not in mere rhetoric, but born of solid example and endearing partnerships that enhance the quality-of-life for all citizens is a laudable goal. This statement is not to the single concept of community policing, a wayfarer along the path of reference, rather a sustainable partnership on whom collaboration, problem-solving, and sharing of outcomes emerge from its true character and purpose.

Sustainable Whole Community Capacity Building (SWCCB) is the strengthening of individual, organization, and system capacity to perform appropriate functions by collaborating effectively, efficiently and sustainably. The goal of capacity building is to enable adaptation of a problem-solving model that achieves sustainability to an identified issue.

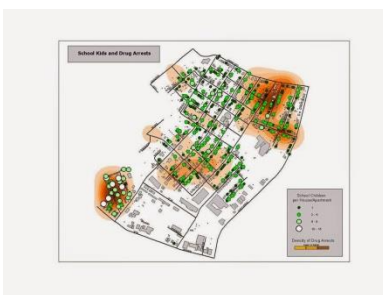
Police and sheriffs, absent working citizen partnerships, cannot by themselves create an environment that provides the level of safety, quality of life, and expected community

outcomes. Citizens, working in harmony with police, sheriffs and other public/private agencies, make improvements in the reduction of crime and disorder, including the resolution of persistent problems that include repeat calls for service, addressing “hot spots” and other collaborative gains that positively impact on the community’s quality of life.

Traditional law enforcement models have their continued role in the resolution of crime and disorder, but given the diversity of the times, the emergence of best practices research, the advent of smart policing and other enhancements, we must also consider tactics of value that result in sustainable community solutions to citizen concerns.

The delivery of police services includes consideration of complex social, cultural, economic, crime and disorder and other influences. As social norms, beliefs, and practices change, so too must our public service agencies, if we are to remain active in determining sustainable outcomes to identified problems. The advent of technology, communications systems, new models of crime control and problem resolution, has added to the demand that police response includes sustainable outcomes. If we examine repeat calls for service and identify persistent “hot spots” of crime and disorder, we find substantial expenditure of police time and demand for service at these locations. Additionally, police and sheriffs working without citizen engagement establish an expectation that they (law enforcement) are the sole owners of the problem. No so! Citizens must not sit back and pass the problem forward as they too have responsibility.

We have new tools that allow improved response and effectiveness. Goldstein’s (1990), community problem-oriented policing model changed the culture and operational structure of police response in several important ways. The value of including community stakeholders increases the likelihood of sustainable solutions to crime and disorder issues. Building community capacity to assist police in resolving quality of life concerns strengthens potential on many fronts. Utilization of data analysis, drilling down to root causes and influences allows knowledgeable determination of appropriate solutions. With community engagement, police are in a much stronger position to guide desired outcomes and to build confidence in their community commitment.



As we embark on a multiple step process to develop collaborative responses to a community’s crime, disorder, and quality of life concerns, we do so with enthusiasm. It involves a partnership between police and other stakeholders, the application of tools and models that have direct applicability in finding sustainable solutions to persistent problems.

The era of “go it alone” police response is over, it is now time to step forward, embrace new tactics and models and in the process improve effectiveness and efficiency. We experience a new world, one where order and chaos fight for control. Our police and Sheriffs must represent order and efficiency and, in doing so, demonstrate the utility of a robust and powerful community partnership. One benefit is improved effectiveness and efficacy – a definite goal indeed.

Goldstein got it right and the benefits of community problem-oriented policing, and new community capacity building strategies are the current contributors to improved community quality-of-life.

Richard C. Lumb, Ph.D.