

I am a Black man who has been blessed to have done quite well and now am in my mid '60's. I believe that Police Accountability is something that should have been addressed decades ago.

One of the Myths that many Whites have about Black people and the Police is that we don't like Police; want to get rid of them so that we can loot, steal, kill, and do anything we want without consequences, and as sad as that way of thinking is, one would be surprised by the numbers who THINK that way and FEEL that that's what would occur.

I believe that Police officers SHOULD be held accountable for their actions. I also believe that they SHOULD NOT BE PROTECTED from being sued. Holding them accountable and giving them something to lose would definitely be a deterrence (not always) from inappropriate behavior.

I grew up in the Segregated South and what I didn't SEE with my own eyes I heard from the mouths of Older Black folks who sat around sometimes talking about things they had witnessed. Black men being snatched out of their houses in the middle of the night and taken out in the woods & beaten to death; often while Police/Sheriffs either helped or monitored the situation. People killed and no one EVER having to answer for their deaths. So, my level of dismay growing up was well established before I came North and dealt with Big City Police. Our city had Five Black Police Officers who could only patrol Black neighborhoods and who could only arrest Black people. Whites could curse at them, call them the N-Word and all kinds of derogatory & insulting words and there was nothing they could do about it. Meanwhile White Police had their run of the entire city and could arrest anyone.

In 1970, I lost one of my parents to cancer and before she died she made my uncle promise that he would bring me to live with him and help me get into college, which he did. So, I came to Bridgeport, CT. While first living in Bridgeport and attending high school, there were occasions when I was downtown and missed my bus and rather than waiting 30 - 45 minutes for the next one I would start walking. In doing this I found myself being exposed to some very shady behavior by members of the Police Dept. Granted, not every Police Officer was doing what I saw but there were doing it or who knew it was going on and their Blue Code of Silence meant that they were NOT going to say anything about it. I witnessed Police Officers taking money from Prostitutes on street corners and from Pimps and Drug dealers. Several of the kids in my class who lived in Father Panik Village told me that they all have to PAY the Police if they want to do business in the Police's beat. They even told me that the ladies had to "Service" the Police if asked; something I witnessed one day with my own eyes while walking near an underpass of the highway.

When I came to the Greater Hartford area, I met some Good cops in Hartford. I also knew that there were some Bad Apples in that bunch as well. Same kind of behavior. One guy I knew. Middle Class-Blue Collar, never been arrested for anything. His only vice was he loved to Gamble. When the Jai Alai players went on Strike, he respected their picket line and did not Cross it. However, one day his mother asked him to play

some numbers for her at the Advanced window. He parked his car across the street from the Fronton, walked over to the players and told them that he has not gambled since their strike and supports them but his mother insisted on him playing these numbers for her. So, he apologized to them and told them that he was going to walk over and play the Advance window. The majority of the players didn't have a problem with that and thought it was admirable that he wouldn't drive his vehicle through their picket line. However, two of them didn't seem to care and started gesturing that he was a monkey or an ape, then one of them called him the "N-word". He turned around and said, "What did you call me?" as he grabbed the player by the throat. The police officer who was standing nearby came over and detained him. I saw him before they took him to the station. He posted bond and then came back to get his car. Upon his return it was clear that one of the Cops punched him in his face so I asked, and he confirmed it saying that it happened while he was handcuffed.

There are so many examples: If you asked 100 Black people to give you two incidences they have had with Police I would bet that more than 90% of them could tell you stories. I'm sure you remember the outrage back in the '70's & '80's of all the Black people being stopped & harrassed by Avon Police for driving through town going to Barkhamstead. As college students, my friends & I didn't know anything about Barkhamstead. We were on Rt 44 looking for Fred Locke Stereo shop to buy some stereo equipment. We knew it was in Avon but didn't know exactly where. So, the front seat friend was looking to the right and I was in the back seat behind the driver looking at businesses on the left. We were driving in the right lane and there were cars going by us in the left lane. Avon Police spotted us and pulled us over. I looked out the back window and noticed that the officer unsnapped his gun holster as he approached our vehicle. I told my friends "Please don't agitate this man He just unsnapped his gun holster". He had no real reason for stopping us but he gave the driver a ticket for speeding. When my friend said "Officer, we were purposely in the right lane looking for the store and cars were flying by us..." The officer walked away and said "Have A Nice Day". In Vernon, I had an Officer pull his gun on me one night thinking that I was one of the people breaking into cars. I was leaving my girlfriend's apt. late night and this guy followed me all the way out of the complex, then pulled me over. I had been told years earlier to always keep your license & registration clipped to the sun visor. That way you can just reach up and hand it to the officer, and it prevents any mistake of one opening their glove compartment and being shot because the officer thinks he sees a gun. Another occasion, I went through a busy intersection and the light turned yellow. When I got to the entrance ramp of the highway the Police Officer was trying to catch us. I say us because there was a car behind me that also went through that intersection. The Police Officer pulled that car over (A car filled with white people), then he looked ahead and saw me. So, he let them go and came after me. I got a ticket for running a Red light. I told him that the light turned yellow when I hit the intersection which means that I was supposed to clear the intersection not jam on my brakes and block it. I said, furthermore, the car that you let go they went through that same intersection AFTER ME so why did you let them go? He had no answer....Fortunately, I won in court. Lastly, one night I was driving home from Stratford, CT. I must have passed 4 or 5 State Troopers and none of them bothered me. I get back to my home town, get off the

highway, see a Police Officer sitting in the Headquarters parking lot. I know he's looking for Drunk Drivers and for people who in spite of the "No Turn on Red" sign will turn. I'm straight. I don't drink. I pass him. He sees me and pulls out behind me. He follows me, and I know he's running my plates to see if the car is stolen, my identity, etc...Once he has that information the lights come on. When I ask why I was stopped he starts giving me the sobriety test. When he realizes that I'm not drunk and there is no smell of marijuana or drugs in my vehicle (because I've never used them) he feels he has to justify stopping me, so he says that I wavered back & forth across the yellow line a few times. So, he gave me a warning. I was so incensed that I called his supervisor because I was going to go down and file a complaint. When they tracked down the supervisor I told him that he's already been told why I'm calling to which he replied that no one had told him anything other than that some citizen wanted to speak with him. However, two minutes into the conversation the supervisor slipped up and said, "well, that's not what he told me...". I said, well that's just sums it up. He is dead wrong and you're going to stick up for him. You just told me two minutes ago that no one had told you why I was calling" and I hung up.

Lastly, I have seen some of the Best of Police Officers and I've seen some of the Worst. Cops who just brutally beat people because they can. I was in Springfield one afternoon years ago and the Police were arresting a young Hispanic male on State Street. They handcuffed him, had him on his knees in the middle of the street with his head tucked down. While he was in this position an officer came up and kicked him in the head, and the only reason the officer was disciplined was because Channel 22 News was there filming.

Smartphones & video cameras are showing us how DIRTY our Police Forces have always been. Before these devices, people would complain about Police Brutality and many thought it was just criminals trying to get cops in trouble. Now, people are seeing that it is true. If a suspect is fleeing the scene, trying to escape from being arrested He is NOT a Threat to that officer. Shooting a kid who has a Toy gun that clearly has the markings to indicate that it's a toy, putting a man in a choke hold in NYC for selling illegal cigarettes - even after Choke holds had been banned, breaking into the house of an elderly grandmother who had a shotgun to protect herself and shooting her - then admitting that you raided the wrong house. Then, I remember Boston when the young man called 911 and said that someone had robbed them, killed his wife, and shot him...and that it was a Black man. Boston Police turned Roxbury upside down, breaking into people's homes, apts., looking for this imaginary suspect. Then, when they begin to realize that this man killed his wife and they were closing in on him he killed himself. However, the bigger tragedy is what they did to Black Residents in Boston and there was no apology, no anything.

Police have always known right from wrong. I say this all the time. You can not tell me that a Drug Addict from Raleigh, N.C. who has never been to CT. could come here, go to any of our major cities, talk to some folks, and within an hour or two make contact with someone who knows how to get that Addict some drugs, and within an hour of making contact that Addict could have scored the drugs they want and have them

flowing through through veins....yet we have Police who LIVE in these same cities, many of them grew up in those cities, but yet they can't seem to find the Drug Dealers or know where the Crack Houses are....Believe me, they know.

Cleaning up every aspect of Police Depts. is a monumental job. Curbing the killings and the Brutality is a good place to start.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Goldstein