

# **The Politics of Policing**

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**GOOD AFTERNOON!**

**I AM OFTEN ASKED WHAT MOTIVATED ME TO ENTER POLITICS AFTER SOME 40 YEARS POLICING CAREER. THE REASON IS SIMPLE, I WANTED TO BE ON THE INSIDE OF THE SYSTEM TO INFLUENCE OR MAKE CHANGES ABOUT CRITICAL PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES THAT OVER THE YEARS I RECOMMENDED TO POLITICIANS, THAT FOR THE MOST PART WERE REPEATEDLY IGNORED.**

**THAT SAID, IN THE END IT WAS THE EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME.**

**A REPORTER RECENTLY ASKED ME TO REFLECT ON MY 40 YEARS CAREER IN POLICING AND HOW THAT COMPARED WITH MY SIX YEARS AS AN ELECTED MEMBER OF THE CANADIAN FEDERAL PARLIAMENT.**

**BASICALLY, TO DRAW A DISTICTION BETWEEN LAW ENFORCEMENT AND LAW MAKING!**

**AS I LEARNED FROM BOTH THOSE EXPERIENCES, THE DIFFERENCES ARE SOMEWHAT BLURRED AND OFTENTIMES IN CONFLICT WITH EACH OTHER.**

**BUT IN TODAY'S REALITY I CONTINUE TO BE AMAZED AT THE DEGREE OF HEAVY LIFTING, EITHER EMBRACED OR DOWNLOADED TO POLICE SIMPLY BECAUSE IT'S THE RIGHT AND ONLY THING TO DO WHEN SOCIETAL SYSTEMS BREAK DOWN OR DON'T EXIST.**

**THE POLICE WILL ALWAYS BE THERE TO RESPOND TO WHATEVER THE CHALLENGE, CRISIS OR SOCIETAL MELT DOWN!**

**THAT SAID, WE CAN ALL AGREE THAT MORE AND MORE THE POLICE HAVE BECOME THE CONSTANT IN PEOPLE'S LIVES IN THE MOST DIFFICULT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES RIGHT DOWN TO THE DEGREE OF QUALITY OF LIFE AVAILABLE IN TROUBLED NEIGHBOURHOODS.**

**HOWEVER, ALL TOO OFTEN UNJUSTLY VILLIFIED FOR NOT DOING MORE WHILE OTHER RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES, INCLUDING POLICY MAKERS ARE LEFT OFF THE HOOK.**

**ALTHOUGH BOTH JOBS, POLITICS AND POLICING, ARE ALL ABOUT PUBLIC SERVICE AND EVEN THOUGH BOTH ARE GOVERNED BY AN OATH OF OFFICE, ON DELIVERY THEY ARE UNIQUELY DIFFERENT.**

**ALTHOUGH FACED WITH UNIQUELY DIFFERENT CHALLENGES, I ALWAYS ASCRIBED TO THE WISE VIEW OF OUR GOOD FRIEND CHARLIE CONNOLLY WHO TOLD ME THAT THE EXHIT STRATEGY FROM THESE CHALLENGING JOBS IS TO ALWAYS REMEMBER; "IT'S ALL ABOUT SURVIVAL WITH HONOUR".**

**MOST OF US WHO HAVE WITNESSED AND EXPERIENCED THE DYNAMICS OF POLICING FIRST HAND; THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY, ALONG WITH THE CONSTANT EVOLUTION OF CHANGE, THE RETOOLING, REMAKE AND STUDIES ABOUT HOW POLICING IS DELIVERED, PERCEIVED AND REPORTED, THE DESCRIPTORS AND SLOGANS, THE FADS, THE CONSTANT BUDGET WOES, ETC., CAN WELL APPRECIATE A ROAD WELL TRAVELLED.**

**THAT SAID HOWEVER, THERE ARE THREE AND NO DOUBT MORE LESS DEFINED, BUT OTHERWISE MAJOR ISSUES THAT TODAY, MORE THAN EVER, IMPACT POLICING.**

**SO MUCH OF IT INFLUENCED BY A VERY PERVASIVE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT, AN UNRELENTING MEDIA AND ALL TOO OFTEN, CONFLICTING AGENDAS:**

- 1) A MAJOR ATTITUDE SHIFT BY AN INCREASINGLY CRITICAL PUBLIC, INCLUDING POLITICIANS EXPRESSING NEGATIVITY TOWARDS POLICE.**
  
- 2) UNREASONABLE EXPECTATIONS THAT POLICE AND EVERYTHING THEY DO PASS THE MICROSCOPE TEST, AND DO SO PERFECTLY.**
  
- 3) OVER-EXERCISED, VOCAL AND AGGRESSIVE ANTI-POLICE ACTIVISM.**

**DO I DARE ADD THE UNSACIABLE THIRST FOR BLOOD OF A PREDOMINANTLY LAZY, RUN TO JUDGE MEDIA THAT SEES ITSELF AS THE SELF-APPOINTED OVERSIGHT AUTHORITY OVER POLICE AND ALL THAT THEY DO.**

**OR IN THE ALTERNATIVE, BELIEVE THAT THEY, THE MEDIA, HAVE A DUTY TO ADVANCE THEIR AGENDA BY INFLUENCING POLITICIANS AND PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT POLICE.**

**THE FOUNDER OF THE LARGEST NEWSPAPER IN CANADA, IN THE PAPER'S VERY EARLY DAYS, DECLARED THAT THE PAPER'S PRIMARY MANDATE WAS TO BECOME THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE OF THE COMMUNITY.**

**ALL TO SAY THAT THE ROLE OF THAT MEDIA IS NOT SOLELY ABOUT REPORTING, FACTUALLY, FAIRLY AND IMPARTIALLY; BUT PACKAGE EVERYTHING, EDITS AND SCRIPTS – VIEWED THROUGH THAT LENSE.**

**AND I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT POLITICIANS ARE HIGHLY ATTENTIVE AND INFLUENCED BY WHAT THE MEDIA REPORT. AND ANYTHING ABOUT POLICING THESE DAYS MAKES GOOD COPY.**

**THE SPIN, THE HYPE, THE HEADLINES EVEN THE PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEO ARE ALL PACKAGED TO BASICALLY CONTORT A POLICE STORY IN A WAY THAT WILL BEST REFLECT THE PARTICULARF BIAS AT PLAY.**

**A CONSCIOUS EXERCISE IN THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS.**

**WE OFTEN HEAR THAT POLICE ARE LOSING THE PUBLIC TRUST, THAT NO LONGER DO POLICE ENJOY WIDE PUBLIC SUPPORT AND MORE.**

**REFRAINS THAT IN A TECHNICAL PURELY ABSTRACT SENSE MAY HAVE A RING OF REALITY TO THEM, HOWEVER WE NEED TO TAKE A PAUSE AND REFLECT ON THE REASONS FOR MUCH OF THAT DECLINE; PERCEIVED OR OTHERWISE.**

**A SITUATION BEST DESCRIBED BY A COLLEAGUE WHOSE VIEWS I SHARE; “TRUST IN POLICE WAS NOT LOST – IT WAS STOLEN BY A PARTISAN MEDIA AND AN ORGANIZED WELL PROMOTED ANTI ESTABLISHMENT – ALSO KNOWN AS ANTI POLICE.”**

**THIS KIND OF TAINTED MEDIA STRATEGY IS VERY EFFECTIVE WHEN DEPLOYED TO MANIPULATE AND INFLUENCE GULLIBLE POLITICIANS, INTO SAYING OR DOING SOMETHING CONTROVERSIAL OR IN THE ALTERNATIVE, UTTERLY CRASS AND WOEFULLY STUPID.**

**AND WHO USUALLY DO JUST THAT!**

**CASE ON POINT, WHILE I WAS A DETECTIVE IN TORONTO'S HOMICIDE SQUAD, IN MARCH 1980 MY PARTNER AND I INVESTIGATED THE MURDER OF A YOUNG TORONTO POLICE OFFICER SHOT DURING AN ARMED ROBBERY AND HOSTAGE TAKING INCIDENT.**

**AS YOU WELL KNOW, THE ON DUTY DEATH OF A POLICE OFFICER IS A PROFOUNDLY TRAUMATIC EVENT FOR FAMILY, COLLEAGUES AND CITIZENS WIDELY, AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THIS CASE, MADE THE SITUATION MUCH MORE PROFOUND.**

**IN TORONTO AT THE TIME WE HAD A PIECE OF WORK FOR MAYOR; OPENLY HOSTILE TOWARDS POLICE, A NASTY POLITICIAN WHO FAILED TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL FOR THE FALLEN OFFICER, THE FATHER OF THREE YOUNG CHILDREN.**

**AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, THE MAYOR WAS ROUNDLY CRITICISED FOR NOT ATTENDING THE MURDERED OFFICER'S FUNERAL. DURING THE BACK-LASH THAT FOLLOWED, HE DEFENDED HIS ACTIONS BY INDICATING THAT HE DIDN'T WANT TO DEMONSTRATE A BIAS.**



**THIS IS ONE SITUATION WHERE THE POLICE CAPITALIZED ON THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT, BECAME POLITICAL ENSURING THE SHORT TENURED SURVIVAL OF THE MAYOR.**

**THE DEPOSED MAYOR WENT ON TO BECOME A VERY VOCAL CRITIC OF TORONTO POLICE AND ME AS CHIEF. HE IS THE DARLING OF CERTAIN LIKE MINDED MEDIA OUTLETS WHO TO THIS DAY GIVE HIM ALL KINDS OF AIR TIME.**

**A FEW YEARS BACK A FORMER SENIOR TORONTO POLICE OFFICER CALLED HIM OUT PUBLICLY STATING: “THE FORMER MAYOR AGAIN EXPOSES HIMSELF AS SMUG, ARROGANT, MALICIOUS AND FACTUALLY RIDICULOUS.”**

**AND FURTHER: “HIS ATTACKS ON THE POLICE ISN’T CRITICISM OR WELL MEANING. IT IS JUST A LONG-TIME COP HATER BEING A COP HATER.”**

**I CAN ENUMERATE OTHER EXPERIENCES, AS I AM SURE SOME OF YOU CAN, WHERE POLITICIANS AND POLITICS HAVE MIGRATED INTO THE POLICING ENVIRONMENT, MOST EVIDENT AT BUDGET TIME.**

**ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT SITUATIONS FOR POLICE LEADERS TO SURVIVE IF THEY BECOME CONFLICTED WITH THEIR POLITICAL MASTERS.**

**BUT DON'T GET ME WRONG, WHEN IT COMES TO POLICE, MORE POLITICIANS ARE ON SIDE AND CONSCIENTIOUS ABOUT SUPPORTING POLICE, ARE SYMPATHETIC TO THE CHALLENGES POLICE FACE AND WHO ARE WILLING TO PUBLICLY SAY SO.**

**HOWEVER, WE CAN ALL AGREE THEY ARE VERY FEW!**

**WITHOUT GETTING INTO THE CURRENT POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT HERE IN THE US, ADMITTEDLY AS AN OUTSIDER BUT ONE WITH A KEEN INTEREST IN THE GOINGS-ON, I SEE A FEW POLITICIANS SPEAKING AND ACTING IN SUPPORT OF POLICE.**

**THEY GET IT AND ARE NOT DISTANCING THEMSELVES FROM THE FACT THAT IN THE US, 64 OFFICERS WERE SHOT AND KILLED IN 2016, 21 WERE AMBUSHED. OR THE FACT THAT THERE ARE CURRENTLY 20,789 NAMES OF OFFICERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY INSCRIBED ON THE NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON, DC.**

**IN CANADA, WE NO LESS HONOUR OUR FALLEN HEROES!**

**SADLY, GIVEN TODAY'S CIRCUMSTANCES IT SEEMS THAT THE ONLY WAY WE CAN SLOW DOWN THE ANTI POLICE DRUM BEAT IS TO HAVE POLICE FUNERALS.**

**HOW SAD IS THAT? ACTUALLY PATHETIC!**

**I BELIEVE THAT THE CURRENT ANTI POLICE CONTINGENT TOOK A PAGE OUT OF THE ANTI VIETNAM WAR ANARCHIST MOVEMENT; WHEN THEY WEREN'T GETTING RESULTS TO THEIR CAUSE, THEY TURNED ON SOLDIERS, DEMONAZING THEM AS "BABY KILLERS."**

**THE SAME PERVERTED STRATEGY SEEMS TO BE IN PLAY WITH THE COP HATING, COP BASHING CONTINGENT WHO ARE ABLY LEGITIMIZED BY SHALLOW POLITICIANS AND LIKE MINDED MEDIA WONKS!**

**POLICE, ESPECIALLY THOSE IN LARGE COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTS WHERE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND RACIAL TENSIONS PREVAIL, ARE PARTICULARLY CHALLENGED IN A VERY REAL WAY, HAVING TO RISE ABOVE THE FRAY TO MERELY SURVIVE THE BARRAGE OF UNWARRANTED CRITICISM, LOOK AFTER BUSINESS AND NOT BE DISTRACTED BY SO MUCH NOISE.**

**ALL TOO OFTEN ALSO HAVING TO ENDURE SCURRILOUS PERSONAL ATTACKS DIRECTED AT THEM BY ORGANIZED WELL PROMOTED ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT – ANTI-POLICE MOVEMENT. .**

**THEN THERE IS ALSO IN PLAY THE INTERNAL POLITICS OF THE DEPARTMENT WHERE SOME UNION/ASSOCIATION LEADERS SEE THEMSELVES AS THE DEFACTO CHIEF AND WHO OFTEN SPEAK OUT AND CITICISE THEIR DEPARTMENT’S LEADERSHIP WITHOUT HAVING TO ABIDE BY THE SAME RIGOR, DISCIPLINE AND ACCOUNTABILITY CHIEFS ARE EXPECTED TO HONOUR AND OBEY.**

CASE ON POINT BEING THE VOTES OF NON-CONFIDENCE ON POLICE CHIEFS THAT OVER THE YEARS SPRUNG UP HERE AND THERE INTENDED TO DO NOTHING MORE THAN DISMANTLE THE AUTHORITY, POLITICAL AND PUBLIC SUPPORT THAT IS CRITICAL FOR A POLICE LEADER TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY

WHICH BRINGS ME TO REFLECT ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF MODERN DAY POLICE LEADERS LIKE A HOCKEY REFEREE AS DESCRIBED BY VERN BUFFEY IN HIS BOOK TITLED; "BLACK AND WHITE AND NEVER RIGHT".

BACK IN 1829 SIR ROBERT PEEL HAD IT RIGHT WHEN HE STATED; "POLICE SEEK AND PRESERVE PUBLIC FAVOUR NOT BY CATERING TO PUBLIC OPINION BUT BY CONSTANTLY DEMONSTRATING ABSOLUTE IMPARTIAL SERVICE TO THE LAW".

IMPARTIAL IS A VERY PROFOUND WORD GIVEN MANY INTERPRETATIONS, ESPECIALLY WHEN VIEWED AND JUDGED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EXTRAORDINARY CHALLENGES ROUTINELY FACED BY POLICE AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR POLITICAL MASTERS AND THE PUBLIC WHO OFTEN DO NOT UNDERSTAND OR APPRECIATE THE RIGORS OF THE JOB.

**AS WE KNOW THE EVOLUTION OF POLICING HAS BEEN CONSTANT; MOSTLY VIEWED OUTWARDLY, THE CRIME STATISTICS, SATISFACTION SURVEYS, NUMBERS OF ARRESTS, THE DREDDED POLICE BUDGET, ETC.**

**RECENTLY, I DID A QUICK PERUSAL OF MEDIA HEADLINES THAT COLLECTIVELY HIGHLIGHT THE EXTRAORDINARY POLITICAL AND MEDIA FOCUS ON ALL THINGS POLICE.**

- **A POLITICAL COMMENT ABOUT THE TORONTO POLICE TRANSFORMATION TASK FORCE REPORT: “WHAT YOU ARE SAYING IN THIS REPORT IS THAT POLICE ARE GOING TO MAKE CULTURAL CHANGE ON THEIR OWN, THEY’RE GOING TO PULL THEMSELVES UP BY THEIR BOOT STRAPS. WHAT NONSENSE! THAT’S NOT THE WAY CULTURE CHANGE HAPPENS IN ANY ORGANIZATION”.**
- **CANADIAN POLICE FORCES SWITCH TO DARKER CRUISERS; A DISTURBING TREND – CRITICS SAY.**
- **HALIFAX POLICE WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN PRIDE PARADE AMID NATIONAL DEBATE.**

- **STATE BILL REQUIRING CALIFORNIA POLICE TO DISCLOSE SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT CLEARS FIRST HURDLE.**
- **SESSIONS ORDERS JUSTICE DEPARTMENT TO REVIEW ALL POLICE REFORM AGREEMENTS, (OTHERWISE KNOWN AS CONSENT DECREES).**
- **THE POLICE VERSES EVERYBODY ELSE.**
- **A RECENT HISTORY OF RACIAL PROFILING AND POLICING.**
- **OBAMA COMMENTS – POLICE INVOLVED SHOOTINGS.**
- **THE EVOLVING STRATEGY OF POLICING.**
- **BUT THEN AGAIN, HOW MUCH MORE INNOVATIVE CAN A POLICE DEPARTMENT BE; “HALIFAX POLICE TO HOLD IT’S FIRST EVER VOLUNTARY SURRENDER DAY.”**

**A MERE SAMPLING OF THE CONSTANT REFRAIN THAT DAILY SEEMS TO ENGULF THE POLICING PROFESSION AND ABOUT WHICH, I PREDICT WILL CONTINUE TO GROW EXPONENTIALLY GOING FORWARD.**

**WHAT IS NOT WIDELY KNOWN OR REPORTED FOR THAT MATTER IS THE RECENT UPSURGE IN POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD) IMPACTING THE LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSION.**

**RECENTLY THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO PASSED NEW "PRESUMPTIVE" LEGISLATION THAT RECOGNIZES THE ONSET OF PTSD AS A DIRECT CONSEQUENCE OF THE JOB OF POLICE, FIRE AND EMS PERSONNEL.**

**DURING MY TIME AS THE ASSOCIATE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE AND MINISTER FOR VETERANS AFFAIRS, I WITNESSED FIRST HAND THE EXPONENTIAL RISE OF PTSD CASES AMONG SOLDIERS AND VETERANS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO HAD BEEN DEPLOYED TO COMBAT DUTY IN AFGHANISTAN.**

**INCLUDING THE MEDIA HYPE ERRONEOUSLY REPORTING A CONNECTION BETWEEN PTSD, SUICIDES AND THEIR SERVICE IN THE MILITARY.**



**SITUATIONS THAT OFTEN-TIMES ARE MUCH MORE COMPLEX THAN THE QUICK TO REPORT – QUICK TO JUDGE AND UNPROVEN CONCLUSIONS THAT FOR OBVIOUS REASONS WE COULD NOT REFUTE.**

**A PREDOMINANTLY MEDIA DRIVEN MORAL PANIC, A SELF SERVING FIRESTORM, VERY DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH, BUT ONE THAT RESULTED IN VALUABLE LESSONS LEARNED!**

**I DON'T WANT TO OVERSTATE THE ISSUE, HOWEVER PTSD AND THE ASSOCIATED MENTAL HEALTH COMPLICATIONS WILL SURELY CONTINUE TO BE AN INCREASING CHALLENGE FOR POLICE AGENCIES.**

**EVERY DEPARTMENT HAS, OR SHOULD HAVE, PEER SUPPORT SYSTEMS, PROTOCOLS, POLICIES AND PROFESSIONALS TRAINED TO ASSIST MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN DISTRESS WHO ARE DEALING WITH COMPLEX ISSUES THAT DO NOT LEND THEMSELVES TO EASY SOLUTIONS.**

**I HAVE REFERENCED A FEW ISSUES THAT I BELIEVE ARE PERCOLATING IN AND AROUND POLICING AND NO DOUBT THERE ARE MANY MORE EACH OF YOU CAN ENUMERATE.**

**HOWEVER, THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICS IN THE POLICING ENVIRONMENT HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY VALIDATED BY FORMER PRESIDENT OBAMA'S REMARKS (EVEN BEFORE THE FACTS BECAME KNOWN) ABOUT THE POLICE INVOLVED SHOOTINGS OF ALTON STERLING AND PHILANDO CASTILE.**

**REMARKS THAT APPARENTLY EMBOLDENED THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT IN TORONTO, OR AS OTHERS HAVE REFERRED TO THEM AS; "A CULT – A HATEFUL IDEOLOGY" THAT QUICKLY SPILLED OUT INTO AGGRESSIVE ACTIVISM ONTO THE STREETS OF TORONTO.**

- **WITH VIRTUAL IMPUGNITY BLACK LIVES MATTER CAMPED OUTSIDE THE FRONT ENTRANCE OF TORONTO POLICE HEADQUARTERS FOR WEEKS ALONG WITH ALL THE NONSENSE ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR DISRUPTIVE TACTICS.**
- **BROUGHT THE TORONTO GAY PRIDE PARADE TO A HALT WITH A HUMAN BLOCK DEMANDING THAT THERE NOT BE POLICE OFFICERS IN THE PARADE FOLLOWING WHICH THE PARADE ORGANIZERS AND CITY POLITICIANS CAPITULATED TO THEM.**

- **HAVE DEMANDED THAT TORONTO POLICE OFFICERS DEPLOYED IN NEIGHBOURHOOD SCHOOLS BE REMOVED.**
- **CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN A VITRIOLIC CAMPAIGN AGAINST POLICE – ABLY ASSISTED BY LAZY QUICK HIT MEDIA HACKS.**
- **HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COOPTED THE MEDIA INTO REPORTING THEIR HATEFUL RHETORIC DIRECTED AT POLICE.**

**ALL TO SAY THAT THE DIRECT POLITICAL INFLUENCE ON POLICING IS PALPABLE, AND NOT JUST HERE IN THE UNITED STATES.**

**I CAN ELABORATE A GREAT DEAL ABOUT MY OWN EXPERIENCES WITH AND ABOUT POLITICAL OPPORTUNISM ON THE BACKS OF THE POLICE.**

**MORE ON POINT, THE PURSUIT OF POWER AND CONTROL OVER POLICE BY POLITICIANS EXERCISING INFLUENCE AND AUTHORITY OVER POLICE OUTSIDE OF THEIR LEGAL AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITIES.**

**IF TRUTH BE KNOWN, IN TODAY'S EMOTIONALLY CHARGED ENVIRONMENT, POLICE LEADERS SHOULD BE THE BEST POLITICIAN IN TOWN!**

**I BELIEVE THAT A DIRECT LINK, CAUSE AND EFFECT EXISTS, INCLUDING THE VIOLENCE - THE ATTACKS ON POLICE OFFICERS, AND THE EXPLOITATION BY THE MEDIA AND POLITICIANS, SPEWING OUT HATEFUL RHETORIC ESPECIALLY WHEN OFFICER INVOLVED INCIDENTS/SHOOTINGS HAPPEN.**

**I AM PLEASED TO SEE THAT THE FBI UNDERTOOK THE STUDY;  
"THE ASSAILANT STUDY – MINDSETS AND BEHAVIOURS".**

**"NEARLY EVERY POLICE OFFICIAL INTERVIEWED AGREED THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME, LAW ENFORCEMENT NOT ONLY FELT THAT THEIR NATIONAL POLICE LEADERS PUBLICLY STOOD AGAINST THEM, BUT ALSO THAT THE POLITICIANS' WORDS AND ACTIONS SIGNIFIED THAT DISRESPECT TO LAW ENFORCEMENT WAS ACCEPTABLE IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE BROWN SHOOTING".**

**I HIGHLY RECOMMEND YOU READ THE REPORT.**

**SO, WHERE IS POLICING HEADED? WE KNOW WHERE WE HAVE BEEN AND HAVE A PRETTY GOOD APPRECIATION FOR WHERE THINGS ARE PRESENTLY.**

**I LIVED THROUGH THE WHOLE BUZZ ABOUT COMMUNITY POLICING AND HAVE HAD TO DEAL WITH POLITICIANS WHO INSISTED I IMPLEMENT COMMUNITY-BASED POLICING – NOT HAVING A CLUE ABOUT WHAT IT IS OR WILLING TO MAKE ANY INVESTMENT IN THE PROCESS.**

**IN UTTER FRUSTRATION WHEN PRODDED BY A REPORTER ONE DAY WHO CHALLENGED MY DESCRIPTION OF EXACTLY WHAT COMMUNITY POLICING IS, I BROUGHT THE EXPLANATION DOWN TO HIS INTELLECTUALLY DEPRIVED LEVEL.**

**I TOLD HIM THAT COMMUNITY POLICING IS BEST APPRECIATED IF YOU ARE SEATED IN THE FRONT OR THE CAGED BACK SEAT OF A POLICE CAR WEARING A SET OF HANDCUFFS.**

**FAR TOO MANY TIMID POLICE LEADERS, THEIR PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, POLITICIANS, THE PUBLIC AND THE MEDIA**

**ARE PRESENTLY SWIRLING AROUND IN A FRENZY TRYING TO REDEFINE, RESTRUCTURE AND REINVENT POLICING WHILE AT THE SAME TIME, AS I HAVE SAID FOR MANY YEARS; POLICE HAVE BEEN RELEGATED TO BE THE JANITORS OF SOCIETY.**

**JUST LOOK AT THE MISMANAGEMENT OF THE MENTALLY ILL, ESPECIALLY THE ONES POLICE ENCOUNTER, THE ONES ABANDONED BY THE NON-HELPFUL SYSTEM WHO ALL TOO OFTEN END UP IN CONFRONTATIONS WITH POLICE OFFICERS AND TRAGEDIES HAPPEN.**

**IN CANADA POLICE AGENCIES ARE EAGERLY STEPPING IN TO ASSUME ADDED RESPONSIBILITIES RESPONDING TO MENTALLY DISTRESSED INDIVIDUALS TEAMING UP WITH MENTAL HEALTH EXPERTS; SORT OF FLYING SQUADS.**

**I AM NOT SUGGESTING THAT THIS IS A BAD THING, WHAT I AM ALLUDING TO IS YET ANOTHER RUN TO THE POLICE TO BASICALLY SHORE UP A MOSTLY DISFUNCTIONAL MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM NOT CAPABLE OF EFFECTIVELY CARING FOR THE MENTALLY ILL WHO ALL TOO OFTEN END UP IN CONFLICT WITH POLICE.**

**IN WHICH CIRCUMSTANCE, THE POLICE ARE THEN SEEN AS THE PROBLEM WHILE THE CAUSAL CONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS ARE NEVER EXPOSED.**

**MUCH EASIER TO DEFAULT BLAME TO THE POLICE.**

**ADMITTEDLY DE-ESCALATION IS A GOOD THING, HOWEVER I AM CONCERNED ABOUT POLICE REPRESENTATIVE ENTITIES, ALBEIT WELL-MEANING, OVER-REACHING IN EFFORTS TO GAIN THE TRUST OF THE COMMUNITY.**

**DOES THIS HIGHTENED EXPECTATION PUT OFFICERS AT GREATER RISK PERSONALLY, DEPARTMENTALLY, RESTRICTING THEIR OPTIONS IN VERY VOLATILE SITUATIONS?**

**ONE CONCERN AMONG MANY IS THE ADDED LEVEL OF SCRUTINY, JUDGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY DEMANDED OF POLICE OFFICERS WHEN THEIR ACTIONS IN CONFLICT AND DANGEROUS SITUATIONS WILL BE MEASURED AGAINST THE TECHNICAL ASPECT OF OTHERWISE CALMLY DEFINED RULES OF ENGAGEMENT.**

**AN UNREALISTIC PURSUIT OF PERFECTION WHEN THE ACTIONS OF POLICE ARE EXPECTED TO PASS THE MICROSCOPE TEST. I LEARNED A LONG TIME AGO THAT PERFECTION IS NOT OF THIS WORLD AND IT SURE ISN'T FOUND IN POLICING.**

**WHEN IT COMES TO JUDGING THE ACTIONS OF POLICE, INVARIABLELY EXPECTING FLAWLESS PERFORMANCE WHAT IS OFTEN NEGLECTED IS THE REGARD FOR THE HUMAN DYNAMIC, THE IMPACT OF A TRAUMATIC INCIDENT ON THE PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL RESPONSE OF POLICE OFFICERS; INCLUDING THEIR ABILITY TO RECOUNT ACCURATELY INTIMATE DETAILS OF A TRAUMATIC EVENT.**

**AND WHAT ABOUT THE VERY REAL FEAR FACTOR WHEN FACED WITH IMMINENT DANGER OR DEATH?**

**IN OTHER WORDS; THE HUMAN DYNAMIC, THE FEAR FACTOR ASSOCIATED WITH EVERY TRAUMATIC EVENT IS NEVER FACTORED INTO THE DEBATE OR WHEN THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR POLICE OFFICERS ARE DEFINED AND IMPOSED BY WELL INTENTIONED ARCHITECTS IN THE SAFETY AND COMFORT OF A BOARD ROOM.**



**POLICING IS BECOMING MORE CONFLICTED AND CHALLENGING GIVEN ALL THE RULES AND EXPECTATIONS LAID DOWN BY POLITICIANS AND THE COURTS.**

**I KNOW, I WAS IN POLITICS FOR SIX YEARS WHERE I WITNESSED FIRST HAND THE WELL MEANING BUT ABSTRACT KNOWLEDGE AND APPRECIATION ABOUT THE RIGORS OF POLICING.**

**I NOTED THAT WHEN IT CAME TO POLICE OR PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES MANY POLITICIANS WERE SOMEWHAT DISMISSIVE OF THE FEET ON THE GROUND IMPACT THEIR DECISIONS WOULD HAVE.**

**THEIR ATTENTION SPAN VERY LIMITED AND ALL TOO OFTEN MORE CONCERNED ABOUT PANDERING TO THIS OR THAT SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP OR HOW THE MEDIA PLAY WOULD UNFOLD.**

**IN CONTRAST A HUGE VOID EXISTS REPORTING THE ACCURATE, FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS POLICING HAS MADE IN EVERY ASPECT OF THE PROFESSION.**

**REMARKABLE PROGRESS IN SUCH AREAS AS CRIME PREVENTION AND REDUCTION, CRIME VICTIM SUPPORT PROGRAMS, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, TRAINING, OPERATIONAL EXPERTISE, EQUIPMENT, COMMUNITY INTERACTION, ACCOUNTABILITY INCLUDING RECRUITMENT SELECTION, TESTING AND MORE.**

**EXTRAORDINARY STEADY PROGRESS; SUCCESSES THAT I BELIEVE ARE APPRECIATED BY MOST FAIR MINDED AND INFORMED LAW-ABIDING REASONABLE PEOPLE, INCLUDING POLITICIANS.**

**THAT SAID, IF POLICE ARE TO BE BETTER POSITIONED TO PROVIDE THE PUBLIC, INCLUDING POLITICIANS WITH A BETTER AND MORE INFORMED APPRECIATION ABOUT ALL THINGS POLICING, THE CHALLENGES, THE SUCCESSES AND EVEN FAILURES, POLICE LEADERS MUST DO BETTER!**

**I RESPECT THE VIEW THAT SOME POLICE LEADERS MAY HAVE A CONTRARY POINT OF VIEW OR A DIFFERENT PERCEPTION OF THE POLICE ROLE IN MODERN-DAY SOCIETY, HOWEVER I MAINTAIN THE BELIEF THAT POLICE LEADERS MUST BE PROACTIVE COMMUNICATORS, EVEN WHEN THE WHEELS COME OFF; ESPECIALLY WHEN THE WHEELS COME OFF!**

**I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT THE PUBLIC HAS A RIGHT TO KNOW, WITHIN REASON, THE HOW AND WHY SOMETHING WENT WRONG, THAT A MISTAKE WAS MADE AND THAT APPROPRIATE MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN TO DEAL WITH THE SITUATION.**

**THIS IS NOT ABOUT DEFLECTING, EXCUSING OR MINIMIZING AN INCIDENT OR SHELTERING AN INVOLVED OFFICER, BUT MERELY ACCEPTING THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION; A SITUATION THAT WILL BE DILIGENTLY INVESTIGATED AND THE FINDINGS APPROPRIATELY DEALT WITH.**

**DURING MY TIME, POLICE EXECUTIVES WERE EXPECTED TO BE LEADERS, EVEN CHANGE MAKERS OR AGENTS OF CHANGE.**

**BEEN THERE – DONE THAT!**

**TODAY, ADMITTEDLY FROM MY POINT OF VIEW, POLICE LEADERS AND THOSE ASPIRING TO CLIMB THE LADDER OF ONEROUS RESPONSIBILITY MUST BE MUCH MORE EQUIPPED TO BE THOUGHT LEADERS, EMERGENCY RESPONSE LEADERS AND ASTUTE POLITICIANS THEMSELVES.**

**AND WHAT ABOUT THE PLIGHT, TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF FRONT LINE OFFICERS?**

**THE ONES DOING MOST OF THE HEAVY LIFTING, WORKING IN THE TRENCHES HAVING TO DEAL ROUTINELY WITH DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS SITUATIONS, HAVING TO ENDURE THE CONSTANT SLINGS AND ARROWS OF SO MUCH UNDESERVED, MISINFORMED AND VENEMOUS CRITICISM.**

**WHAT ABOUT THEIR MORALE, MENTAL WELLBEING AND THEIR STATE OF MIND?**

**AND WHAT ABOUT THEIR FAMILIES?**

**RHETORICALLY I ASK; DO POLICE EXECUTIVES BELIEVE THAT POLICE OFFICERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE CYNICAL AND UTTERLY FRUSTRATED WHEN ENGAGING SELF PROMOTING COMMUNITY LEADERS, SELF SERVING POLITICIANS OR MEDIA HACKS WHOSE PRIMARY MISSION SEEMS TO TARGET POLICE.**

**I GET THE SENSE THAT THE VIEW OF THESE CYNICS IS FRAMED IN THE BELIEF THAT LAW ENFORCEMENT CAN BE EMPLOYED WITHOUT CONFLICT OR USE OF FORCE, IF ONLY POLICE WOULD COMMIT TO SUCH A POLICY.**

**THE THORNY ISSUE OF RACIAL PROFILING MAY NEED TO BE BETTER ADDRESSED, INTELLIGENTLY, FACTUALLY AND WITH A RENEWED SENSE OF COMPASSION.**

**THERE MAY BE A NEED ONGOING TO QUESTION WHETHER SOME MINORITIES ARE ARBITRARILY SELECTED FOR EXCESSIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT AND A REALIZATION THAT IT'S RESOLUTION PROBABLY IS NOT SIMPLY A POLICE ISSUE.**

**STILL, THERE NEEDS TO BE A BETTER CONCLUSION THAN PRESENTLY OFFERED BY EITHER SIDE OF THE DISCUSSION; AND FINGER-POINTING WILL SIMPLY PROLONG THE AGONY ALL ROUND.**

**ADMITTEDLY I HAVE OFFERED YOU NO SOLUTIONS THAT WILL HELP YOU COPE WITH THE MANY CHALLENGES THAT ABOUND IN YOUR PROFESSION.**

**HOWEVER, AS A POLICE VETERAN AND FORMER POLITICIAN AND NOW PRIVATE CITIZEN AND BUSINESS PERSON, I ENCOURAGE YOU TO NOT BE DISTRACTED BY THE USELESS RHETORIC EMANATING FROM THE ANTI-POLICE CONTINGENT; WHOEVER THEY ARE.**

**THEY HAVE NEVER WALKED A MOMENT IN YOUR SHOES AND IF THE TRUTH BE KNOWN, COULD NOT SUCCESSFULLY PASS BASIC POLICE RECRUIT TRAINING.**

**IN YOUR DARKEST MOMENTS, TAKE A PAUSE, CLOSE YOUR EYES AND REFLECT ABOUT YOUR DEPARTMENT, THE GOOD MEN AND WOMEN, POLICE AND CIVILIANS WHO WORK THERE AND ALL THE GOOD WORK THEY DO, THE PEOPLE THEY SERVE, THE LIVES THEY SAVE; THEN PICK YOURSELF UP, REINGAGE AND GET ON WITH THE WORK AT HAND.**

**IF NOT YOU, THEN WHO, IF NOT NOW THEN WHEN!?**

**YOU MATTER!**

**THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS!**