

*Blueprint for Change:*

NYSACOP Proposals to Fix  
Failed Reforms

Chief's Corner

Vehicle Attacks

*Counsel's Corner:*

Use of Force—  
Law, Science and Reality

*Agency Spotlight:*

Dunkirk PD

NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE, INC.

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MARCH 2022

***Juvenile Justice System Broken:  
Lack of Accountability  
Breeds Contempt***





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Do you have an interesting law enforcement story or an article you would like to submit, photographs of member activities or field scenes?  
Contact the editor: Mark Spawn at APB@nychiefs.org

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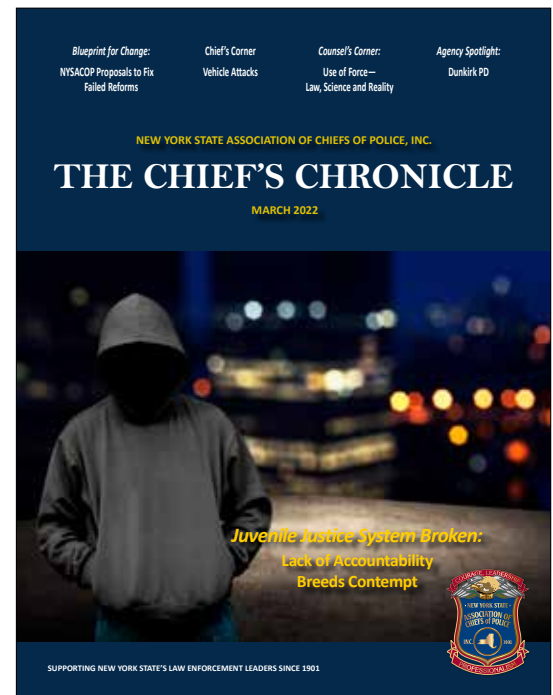
# In this issue:

Authorities in Gloversville knew there was a problem – they saw the trajectory of an out-of-control teen. Even though police, child protective services and the schools knew that a now-15-year-old was heading down the wrong path, their hands were tied by the “justice” system. The youth who had racked up 12 cases with the police during the summer of 2020, was also a suspect in an additional 13 cases. But it would take the murder of a 59-year-old man for the youth to be placed in detention. It is not a unique situation in Fulton County, the story is emblematic of the limited resources and the absence of accountability that resonate throughout other parts of New York State. In our cover story, Gloversville Police Chief Anthony Clay and School Superintendent Dave Halloran discuss the challenges facing their fields when trying to procure services for adolescent offenders, and how it impacts public safety.

Also, President Timothy Parisi and Executive Director Patrick Phelan discuss two issues affecting law enforcement in the Empire State – The Law Enforcement Response to Mental Health Calls and Civil Service Reform, respectively. Learn about the NYSACOP Blueprint for Social Justice Reforms, Use of Force in Chief Michael Ranalli’s *Counsel’s Corner*, Vehicle Attacks in Chief Stuart Cameron’s *Chief’s Corner*, and an agency profile of the Dunkirk Police Department.

## Other stories:

Chief Joseph Sinagra highlights discussions between law enforcement and the cannabis industry as the retail market begins to take form; Lifesaving actions by officers in an overdose, and in a rescue from a burning building; Learn about NYC’s pedestrian safety initiative; and in our Historical column we reflect on how police relief funds took care of widowed officers in the early twentieth century. We also profile the illustrious careers of three retiring police executives whose careers collectively span 120 years. Don’t miss the inspirational story of how a police officer redirected a young woman caught in a meth raid and how she went from being a person with addiction to a college student on the Dean’s List.



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# The Law Enforcement Response to Mental Health Calls



**Pres. Timothy Parisi,  
Chief/Illion PD**

**P**olice Officers routinely respond to calls involving people in a mental health crisis or suffering from a chronic mental illness. While many interactions are non-violent with an uneventful transport to a facility, some interactions do involve violence with the person in crisis posing a threat to others as well as themselves. Though training for officers in this area has come a long way, the significant draw on police resources has not been addressed. We have all seen the media sensationalizing

and mischaracterizing police officer's interactions with people in crisis acting out, putting themselves, officers and others in danger of injury or even death. Those in the media and others who have never experienced such an interaction from a police officer's perspective

**Though training for officers in this area has come a long way, the significant draw on police resources has not been addressed.**

are more intent on villainizing the police rather than bringing substantive solutions to the table. Quite frankly, it parallels the unilateral passage of ill-conceived, so-called reform legislation that was predicated on a false narrative and which has had an effect on the safety of communities all over the state.

Some communities are working on local solutions; however, nothing has been accomplished statewide. There also needs to be an awareness that smaller and rural communities lack the availability of resources that are available in larger communities. New York is a very diverse state, one size does not fit all, but our hope is to find some reasonable options to provide our membership relief, and to provide our recommendations to the legislature for funding and legislation where appropriate. In a recent survey about mental health transports, we received a significant number of replies from our chiefs, and a lot of meaningful insight. In reviewing the survey results we feel your consternation from suggestions that included, "looking for options", "revolving door", "a hot topic affecting all law enforcement...", and "important topic to research." Something that we noticed in the survey is the mode of transportation is a varied as our state's geography. Many answers indicated that ambulance was preferred; another respondent indicated that mental health transports in police vehicles are not permitted; and another indicated that most transports are completed via police car. For those transports done by ambulance, some included a police officer accompanying the patient, others did not. If the patient had an injury, medical condition, or was under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they had to first be cleared by the medical hospital before going on to the mental health facility.

Respondents were asked to provide the average distance travelled for a mental health transport (one way). The average among all responses was 13 miles. However, one respondent noted, 'if there are no local beds, we have to transport three times farther.'

Many respondents noted the unenviable position of police doing mental health transports recognizing that the involvement of law enforcement can imply criminality, and can stigmatize a person already in crisis. For our smaller departments that may only have 1 or 2 cars working, a mental health call can take that unit out of service for hours. A few chiefs noted that the same applies to their local ambulance service when EMS transports a mental health patient, one being concerned when the rig being used is their only Advanced Life Support rig – the dilemma posed to the community whether to be without a police officer or an ambulance? One chief mentioned that police are frequently used through the means of pickup orders in situations where a patient does not have transportation.

Apparent in all of the responses is the frustration, bureaucracy, and resource commitment involved with police transports of persons with mental illness. But there was an occasional bright spot in the responses. A couple agencies indicated that they are collaborating with outside entities to help decrease police transports of persons in crisis. One department is employing a tele-health option in a pilot program with their hospital to decrease transports by police. We look forward to investigating what innovations are happening to see if they can be replicated in other regions.

As much as there has been a political cry that police should not be involved with mental health issues, current systems and practices definitely promote the use of law enforcement. The absence of sufficient community resources for decades has caused mental health issues to default to first responders.

As law enforcement officers, we want to see compassionate care offered to persons in crisis. Employing a police response to these situations will certainly continue to happen, especially when a person

**As much as there has been a political cry that police should not be involved with mental health issues, current systems and practices definitely promote the use of law enforcement. The absence of sufficient community resources for decades has caused mental health issues to default to first responders.**

is acting out, or exhibiting suicidal or homicidal behaviors. These are the types of calls to which police will inevitably be summoned. But mental illness is not a crime. The degree to which police are involved needs to be scrutinized. We cannot sacrifice safety for convenience; and we cannot compromise the safety of other citizens by unnecessarily tying up police resources; nor, using police as a convenient transport for a mental health pickup order without the realization that a ride in a police car might exacerbate an already-tenuous condition and further stigmatize the patient from seeking out help in the future.

At our next Board meeting, we will form a committee to evaluate the data we received and help form some suggestions toward solutions. We would appreciate any success stories from communities that may have already found solutions on a local level.




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# Civil Service Reform



**Chief/Ret.  
Patrick Phelan  
Executive Director**

One of our goals at NYSACOP is to address issues that are of concern to our membership. That can be more challenging than it sounds. New York is a big state with almost 600 police departments, and it can be difficult to find consensus. A couple years ago, through discussions with our Board of Governors, we determined there are universal concerns about the New York State civil service system as it pertains to hiring and promotion. In 2021, NYSACOP formed a committee to address our concerns.

The Committee consists of Chief Shawn Heubusch (Batavia PD), Chief Patrick Garey (Endicott PD), Chief Michael Woods (Colonie PD), Chief Chris Bartolomei (SUNY Buffalo), and myself. The Committee’s mission is to identify issues of concern shared by our members and identify specific solutions to those issues. NYSACOP will then work to effect change in the system.

One of the first steps in this process was to send a survey to our membership. These surveys are tremendously valuable to our Association and we appreciate our members taking the time to fill them out. We always try to keep them short and to the point because we know your time is valuable. This article will address the results of the Civil Service survey and next steps. We received 150 responses to this survey, that’s a great response and a very good sampling of our membership.

**Question 1: Who is in charge of your civil service department/hiring process?**

- 68% County
- 13.33% City
- 6% Town
- 6% Village
- 6% other

**Question 2: Would you support any of the following changes to the written exam (rank 1-5). The following were #1 rankings, 1 equals most important;**

- 37.31% Pass/Fail system (10.45% ranked this #2)
- 30.66% Expand eligible to top 10 (36.5% ranked this #2)
- 23.53% Expand eligible to top 5 (39.71% ranked this #2)
- 16.54% Like it the way it is (11.02% ranked this #2)

Most civil service commissions are county entities with a smaller number of city entities. We can see there is clearly an appetite to

move away from the “rule of 3” and a very small percentage of those surveyed “like it the way it is”. This is one of the key issues, the rule of 3 needs to be changed. There are variety of problems that arise from the rule of three including the list getting stalled and agencies being forced to hire people they don’t want to hire or promote people they don’t want to promote because they can’t get past them on the list.

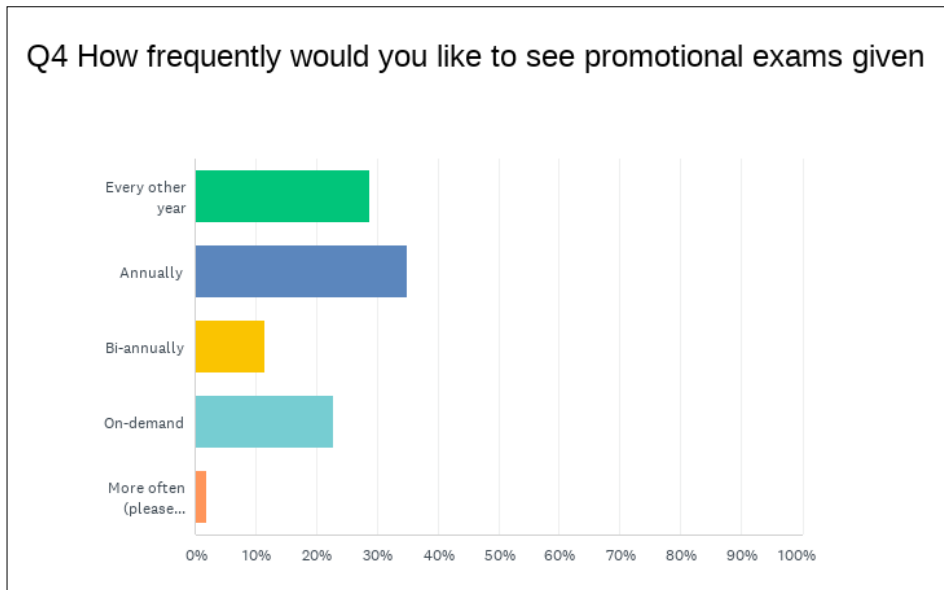
**Question 3: How frequently would you like to see the police officer exam given?**

- 30.41 % Annually
- 25.68% Every other year
- 21.62% Bi-annually
- 11.49% On demand
- 10.81% More often

74.33 % answered Annually, Bi-annually, on demand, or more often. Obviously this is a key issue, our members want to see the test given more often. There are many reasons for this, one main issue is that it is difficult to recruit for an exam that is more than a year away. We probably also don’t want to see the lists expire annually but there are remedies like a list that is constantly updating.

**Question 4: How frequently would you like to see promotional exams given?**

- 35.14 % Annually
- 28.38 % Every other year
- 22.97 % On demand
- 11.49 % Bi-annually



Questions # 5 – 7 relate to the physical agility exam, a hot-button issue. ▶

**Question 5: Who administers your physical agility exam?**

75.33% County  
10.67% City  
4% Town  
10% Other

**Question 6: What changes would you like to see to the physical agility exam?**

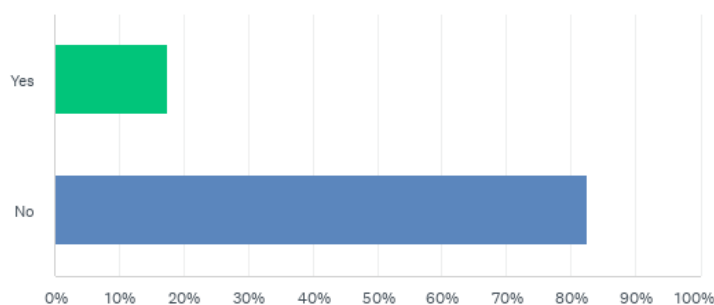
37.86% Frequency of exam  
30.71% Giving individuals leeway in the standards  
15% The standard that is used  
10% Who administers the exam

Questions 8 – 11 related to the administration and payment for the psychological and medical exam, it's a fairly even split between wanting civil service to control and pay for the exams and the agency controlling and paying for the exams.

**Question 12: Who completes your department's background process?**

63.33% My department with specially trained officers  
28% My department with officers that have not received specialized training  
8% Another agency completes our background investigations

**Q7 Do you support the relaxing of physical agility testing standards to increase the candidate pool?**



**Question 7: Do you support relaxing the physical agility testing standards to increase the candidate pool?**

82.31% No  
17.69% Yes

Pretty self-explanatory, our members do not support making the exam easier but they do support changing the exam. We received 140 comments on question #6. Obviously our members are not satisfied with the current agility exam. Some of the changes suggested:

- Provide a second chance
- Have a 5 phase test and require passing 3 of 5 phases
- Use a new standard but do not lower the standard
- Tolerance for improper technique
- Allow a re-take in 6 months if the candidate misses by 5% or less
- Give physical test prior to written test
- Timed 440 followed by push-ups, pull-ups and sit-ups to simulate foot chase
- The textbook sit-up is not always a good measure of fitness.
- Have the hiring agency administer the exam
- Standards to better reflect the physical requirements of the profession

We lose a lot of good candidates on the physical agility exam, some of them are very physically fit but somehow fail the exam, often on technicalities like not doing the sit-up properly according to the examiner. There is a lot of room for improvement in the physical agility exam and this will be something the Committee focuses on in the coming year.

**Question 13: What is the biggest hurdle to conducting a complete background investigation?**

82.14% Lack of staff  
16.43% Lack of training  
15.71% Lack of understanding the new standards

It's not surprising but still alarming that 82.14% of those surveyed considered lack of staff a challenge to conducting a complete background check.

**If you would like to join the Civil Service Reform Committee please contact Executive Director Patrick Phelan at [pphelan@nychiefs.org](mailto:pphelan@nychiefs.org).**

So from this we take away some key ideas. Our membership is interested in some type of change away from the rule of 3; Pass/fail or expanding the eligible candidates to the top 5 or 10 are logical solutions. Our membership would like to see the entry exam given more often; we know that some commissions offer the exam every two years or even every four years. Additionally, there is a clear desire for change in the physical agility exam. Our Committee will delve into these problems and look for a path forward to address these issues with the state.

If you would like to join the Civil Service Reform Committee please contact Executive Director Patrick Phelan at [pphelan@nychiefs.org](mailto:pphelan@nychiefs.org).



# Use of Force: Law, Science and Reality

BY CHIEF MIKE RANALLI (RET.) GLENVILLE POLICE DEPT.; LEXIPOL PROGRAM MANAGER



Chief/Ret.  
Michael Ranalli, Esq.

In prior articles I have written about the concepts of the duty to intercede and the integration of proper root cause analysis into the five pillars of organizational risk management. In this article, I will build on those concepts while focusing on trends in recent case law dealing with use of force incidents. These trends also provide an opportunity to explore the impact that certain medical or scientific studies should—or should not—have on policing policies and practices.

## *Aguirre v. City of San Antonio*

The facts and holding of *Aguirre v. City of San Antonio*<sup>1</sup> will set the stage. Police received multiple calls of an apparent mentally disturbed man walking down the center of a busy divided highway, waving his hands. The first officer on the scene drew her firearm and ordered Aguirre to “come here” and then threatened, “I’m going to shoot you, mother f---r.” Aguirre ignored the command and kept walking alongside a 3-foot-tall concrete median. Officers approached him, pointing a gun and a TASER device at him. Aguirre stopped and placed his hand on the concrete barrier, and the officers noticed fresh needle marks on his arms.

Three officers grabbed Aguirre, handcuffed him, lifted him over the barrier and dropped him on his head. They then lifted him and placed against him a police car with his head and upper body pushed



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over the hood. While not visible in the video, at some point Aguirre must have been pushing back, because five officers began struggling with him, eventually bringing him to the ground face-first.

For approximately 5-½ minutes, Aguirre was held down on the ground with pressure to his arms and back, his legs held bent at the knees. After officers noticed he was no longer breathing or responsive, they turned him over and removed the handcuffs. Sternum rubs and “similar techniques” failed to revive him, so officers requested EMS to respond; 4-½ minutes after rolling Aguirre over, the officers began CPR. The attempt was unsuccessful, and Aguirre died.

Aguirre’s widow and estate sued for, among other things, excessive force. Their medical expert concluded restraining Aguirre face down with his hands behind his back and his legs bent onto his buttocks in a hogtie-like position was the cause of Aguirre’s death. The expert also concluded the needle marks indicating recent drug use made this restraint even more dangerous.

After analyzing the case under the *Graham* factors, the court ruled that genuine issues of fact existed material to whether the officer’s use of force was excessive, and it would be up to a jury to decide the issue.

The court also considered whether the force used could amount to the use of deadly physical force because there was evidence—the needle marks—of drug use. The court ruled “Taken in the light most favorable to Plaintiffs, [the] evidence indicates that a reasonable officer in the Officers’ position would have known that applying the maximal-restraint position to Aguirre and holding him in this position for an extended period posed a substantial risk of causing his death or serious bodily injury.” The lack of any visible resistance of Aguirre in the video footage, the fact that numerous officers surrounded him, and the fact that traffic had been restricted all weighed against any justification of applying a prolonged prone maximal-restraint position.

The next step in the qualified immunity analysis is to determine if the right to be free from excessive force under these circumstances was clearly established: “The law is clear that the degree of force an officer can reasonably employ is reduced when an arrestee is not actively resisting.”<sup>2</sup>

We now reach the critical point of the decision in relation to the purpose of this article: “...at least five other circuits have held that, even in the absence of a previous case with similar facts, ‘it is clearly

**“...exerting significant, continued force on a person’s back while that person is in a face-down prone position after being subdued and/or incapacitated constitutes excessive force” [emphasis added].<sup>3</sup>**

established ... **that exerting significant, continued force on a person’s back while that person is in a face-down prone position after being subdued and/or incapacitated constitutes excessive force**” [emphasis added].<sup>3</sup>

The court also found: “...evidence indicates that a reasonable officer in the Officers’ position would have known that applying the maximal-restraint to Aguirre and holding him in this position for an extended period posed a substantial risk of causing his death or other serious bodily injury.”

There is a lot to this case, but for the purposes of this article I want to focus on the highlighted language quoted above, which is consistent with rulings in multiple circuit courts—continuing to apply pressure to a person’s back in the prone position after they have been subdued and/or incapacitated constitutes excessive force. Recent Conducted Energy Device (CED)-related cases have also led to similar results—

the law is clearly established that a person has a constitutional right not to have a CED applied when they are no longer actively resisting.<sup>4</sup>

### Where Law and Science Intersect

But wait a minute, aren't there scientific studies and experts that say the prone restraint and CEDs will not cause death? And aren't there also statistics showing the percentage of police-citizen contacts where force (beyond compliant handcuffing) is used is extremely small? Finally, aren't there also related statistics indicating the percentage of people who die at the hands of the police is only a fraction of a percent?

The answer to those questions is yes, yes, and yes. Civil suits and criminal prosecutions of police officers usually result in a battle of the experts. Each side hires experts to opine on various topics to either place blame or deflect it. But here lies the potential problem. This all occurs *after* incidents are over. I will not cite any of those studies in this article because they are not necessary to this discussion. Yes, it is important for contemporary law enforcement leaders to be aware of research pertaining to law enforcement actions. But to rely on them for modifications to training and/or policy is risky. Suffice it to say you cannot just read an abstract of a publication and even *begin* to think you know enough about the study to draw definitive training and policy conclusions. At a minimum, an understanding of study methodology and the limitations of such controlled studies (e.g. using subjects who are not under the influence of drugs and do not have comorbidities) are required to properly interpret the findings.

For me as a police trainer, and for Lexipol as a policy provider, we cannot rely on scientific conclusions that may be contested continuously in courtrooms across the country. Instead, we need to

Now to the issue of risk created by these types of incidents. I do not know if extended prone restraint or CED applications can or cannot "cause" deaths. Instead, I will take a simpler and more commonsense approach to the issue. Do an internet search inquiring how many people die every year while shoveling snow. You will likely find the results to be about 100 per year. Why? Common explanations are that people suffer heart attacks while doing this strenuous work. They may have gone directly from a sedentary status to extreme exertion, which can be exacerbated by cold weather. I do not need to get into a debate over whether the shoveling killed the person or whether it was a heart attack. Or whether other pre-existing or individual risk factors contributed, such as obesity, age, or excessive consumption of alcohol or drugs prior to the activity. Could the person have had a heart attack anyway? Yes, they could have. But the point here is the sudden strenuous activity increases the risk to the person, which is identifiable.

It seems obvious a similar increased risk could apply when a person struggles with police—either consciously choosing to fight or because they are in physiological or psychological crisis. The risk is likely higher for the latter category—individuals experiencing extreme agitation, often fueled by the use of unregulated drugs. It is critical for officers recognize the symptoms of altered mental status and agitation and discontinue or modify the force or control technique applied as soon as it appears no longer necessary. For subjects who consciously choose to fight with police, medical attention is warranted at any signs of injury, distress or complaints

**It is critical for officers recognize the symptoms of altered mental status and agitation and discontinue or modify the force or control technique applied as soon as it appears no longer necessary.**

**The objective reasonableness standard of *Graham v. Connor* requires that any police use of force be reasonably necessary at its inception and continued application. Once a person is no longer an apparent threat to the officer or others, the use of force must be stopped or modified as soon as is practicable. This standard applies to any use of force, regardless of whether the person is injured. Death or serious injury is not a prerequisite to a violation of a constitutional right.**

focus on what is legally required and the risk created by certain types of incidents.

I will first focus on the simplest of the two—what is legally required. The objective reasonableness standard of *Graham v. Connor* requires that any police use of force be reasonably necessary at its inception and continued application. Once a person is no longer an apparent threat to the officer or others, the use of force must be stopped or modified as soon as is practicable. This standard applies to any use of force, regardless of whether the person is injured. Death or serious injury is not a prerequisite to a violation of a constitutional right.

from the person. For those in a state of severe agitation, medical attention must be requested as soon as the risk is identified, not waiting until the person is subdued and in apparent distress, as happened in the *Aguirre* case.

The bottom line: Medical and forensic experts will continue to debate the causes of and contributors to in-custody death. New research and studies will come and go, but they do not have much immediate value to the officer during such an encounter. To clarify, science does have value in helping to guide and develop training and procedures for officers to follow. Examples include science involving human performance under stress and how human beings learn and retain information. Both can help develop training programs to prepare officers to make better decisions. By contrast, causal factors of in-custody deaths are so diverse and case-specific, the training and procedure value is limited. Following the law and understanding the risks will help mitigate the harm, which is our ultimate goal.

### Root Cause: Why?

Why does it appear that officers sometimes continue to apply force even after the need for the force is over and the person is no longer resisting? The case law across the federal circuit courts makes it clear this is a continued problem. Why? While this is a self-assessment all leaders should make, I propose three possible reasons:

1. *Extreme emotional arousal due to the “dump” of adrenaline and other hormones.* The flood of hormones can impact an officer's perceptions of the event and make it difficult to immediately dial down their response. This physiological condition may apply in the following reasons as well.
2. *The difficulty officers can face in determining when the person effectively stops resisting.* When an officer has a person down on the ground in the prone position, and the person keeps attempting to push up, are they “resisting” at that point or are they trying to get the pressure off them so they can breathe? That is a question multiple courts have asked, especially when there are two or three officers on top of a person. And they will typically answer the question in favor of the plaintiff.
3. *A lack of skill by the officers involved.* Officers may not have the knowledge or faith in their skills to transition to a different restraint position. If your agency has not focused in defensive tactics training on transitioning from a prone restraint to an alternative tactic or position, then you need to do so. Moving the person on their side or sitting position or concentrating on controlling the person's hips and legs instead of their back are, or should be, a part of any contemporary defensive tactics training. Another important training issue can be seen in the *Aguirre* video. It appeared that every officer on the scene felt it necessary to become part of the physical intervention. This is not necessary and can be counterproductive as the officers may actually be fighting against each other. Having multiple officers on a scene can be beneficial, but once it becomes necessary to go hands on with a person, contemporary training emphasizes one- and two-officer takedowns and restraints.

This is where back up and duty to intervene are so critical. As other officers arrive on scene, they should be alert to the possibility of the

**If your agency has not focused in defensive tactics training on transitioning from a prone restraint to an alternative tactic or position, then you need to do so. Moving the person on their side or sitting position or concentrating on controlling the person's hips and legs instead of their back are, or should be, a part of any contemporary defensive tactics training.**

above three scenarios and be empowered to intercede and “tap out” the involved officers if needed. Use of force situations are extremely

difficult. It is not a sign of weakness to need help and have another officer intervene to help both the officer and the person involved.

Do not get sidetracked by scientific studies. Instead, focus on doing the right thing for the right reason by following the law, properly accounting for the increased risk to the person, and monitoring the situation for signs things are going in the wrong direction. Sadly, even when officers do everything right, a person may still die after a violent encounter. Then the lawsuits may be filed, and the experts may battle. But for the officers involved, there should be some comfort in knowing you did everything you could.

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<sup>1</sup>995 F.3d 395 (5th Cir. 2021). Video of the incident is linked through a footnote within the case at <https://www.ca5.uscourts.gov/opinions/pub/17/17-51031.mp4>

<sup>2</sup>citing *Brosseau v. Haugen*, 543 U.S. 194, 199, 125 S.Ct. 596, (2004)

<sup>3</sup>The five cases cited by the court were: *McCue v City of Bangor, Maine*, 838 F.3d 55 (1st Cir. 1016); *Weigel v Broad*, 544 F.3d 1143 (10th Cir. 2008); *Champion v. Outlook Nashville Inc.*, 380 F.3d 893 (6th Cir. 2004); *Abdullahi v City of Madison*, 423 F.3d 763 (7th Cir. 2005); and *Drummond ex rel Drummond v City of Anaheim*, 343 F.3d 1052 (9th Cir. 2003). For another recent case, see *Lawhon v. Mayes*, UNPUBLISHED 2021 WL 5294931 (4th Cir. 11/15/2021) (officers held Lawhon in a prone restraint for three additional minutes after he became motionless and silent); (Unpublished opinions are not binding precedents within the circuit, but this does not mean they do not have value. The reasoning of the court and the reliance on previously decided precedent are relevant to learning and improving police response.)

<sup>4</sup>*Browning v. Edmonson City, KY*, 18 F.4th 516 (6th Cir. 11/17/2021); *Dorsey v Sokoloff*, UNPUBLISHED 2021 WL 5275535 (4th Cir. 11/12/2021)

<sup>5</sup>For additional information, see the Lexipol webinar: *Agitated Subjects & Ketamine: Working Together to Enhance Safety.*



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# Juvenile Justice System Broken

## Lack of Accountability and Consequences Breeds Contempt

BY CHIEF/RET. MARK A. SPAWN, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING - NYSACOP

Were there any warning signs? Could someone have intervened earlier? These are the usual questions heard from both professionals and the community in the aftermath of a horrendous crime, particularly a cold-blooded murder committed by a 15-year-old who stabbed a man in the heart. But in this case, even though officials saw the trajectory of an out-of-control teen, their hands were tied.



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### On The Radar

Chief Anthony Clay of Gloversville Police Department told *The Chief's Chronicle* that over several months leading up to the homicide, the same youth was already well known to his police force. "In 2020 he had 12 cases with us, and was a juvenile suspect in 13 other cases. The school had hotlined him to Child Protective Services about six times in the weeks leading up to the stabbing,"

**"If you think I'm bad, wait and see what my little brother's going to do."**

15-year-old juvenile suspect accused of stabbing man to death, speaking with police after the homicide

said Chief Clay. "The police, probation, school and CPS were aware of this kid – everybody knew he was going to be a problem, going down the wrong path," he added. But for all of the referrals made to other service agencies, there seemed to be no consequences or supervision for the teen. Then, on April 24, 2021, the 15-year-old, in the company of a 19-year-old and another youth, stole beer and began partying. Clay said that the trio met up with a 59-year-old man along a walking path and followed him back to his workshop which was also the man's home. While inside the workshop, Clay

said that the 15-year-old asked the 19-year-old for the knife he was carrying, and then stabbed the 59-year-old man in the chest, killing him almost instantly.

Clay said that when the 15-year-old was interviewed, he told police, "If you think I'm bad wait and see what my little brother's going to do."

Superintendent of Schools Dave Halloran told *The Chronicle*, "Raise the Age, bail reform and the absence of accountability have led to the perfect storm of young people who, unfortunately, lack hope, morality, and respect for public and private property and the well-being of others. They fear no repercussions for their actions. Obviously I'm talking about the minority of our student population, most of our kids are good kids doing the right thing but there are a number of children in our community who continually break the law and there seems to be no ramifications for their actions."

### Reunification Not Always the Answer

Superintendent Halloran notes that the mission of Family Court and social services is reunification, keeping the family unit together. He said that in a perfect world, keeping the family together is a good idea. "But when the home environment is toxic and there's a lack of any accountability, why would reunification be in that child's best interest?" said Halloran. "If that's where the problem started and no solution has ever been found, it seems crazy to me that keeping a child in an environment that perpetuates their unlawful, antisocial behavior is counterproductive to the child's long term well-being." Chief Clay agrees that the presumption that the home is a positive environment is antiquated adding that some come from absolutely neglectful homes."

Clay said that they were working with the school on a truancy case where the child had not shown up for school the entire year, so they went to the home and found the child's mother. "At 2:00 in the afternoon she is so intoxicated she can't form words to communicate with the school district staff and officers about the status of her child."

Chief Clay said that when kids are in a structured environment with supervision, their behavior can change. He said that once the 15-year old was detained on the murder charge, changes were noticed. "It's your typical story, once he's killed somebody and gets secure detention, he's a model kid. A little structure, a little accountability, and he's thriving. It's the stuff he didn't have at home. There should be a way to abbreviate this process and to keep these kids into some sort of structured environment or keep better tabs and take more affirmative action before they get to the point of killing somebody."

Discussing the limitations on criminal court for certain adolescent offenders, Chief Clay noted that for some of the teens who are beginning their criminal careers at 13, 14, and 15 years old, by the time they are eligible for criminal court, "they're fairly hardened criminals by 18, and then the criminal justice system treats them like they're brand new because they were juveniles prior to that."

Chief Clay said, “We wind up with these feral kids who are out on the street, all day, all night doing whatever they want to do.”

## A Severely Broken System

Chief Clay described his department’s experience with yet another 15-year-old who was involved in a crime spree in Gloversville during the summer. “We kept picking him up and finally, he is placed in detention at Berkshire Farms where he promptly runs away. Berkshire puts out a missing person report, and we pick the kid up and bring him to the station until Berkshire gets here. At the first red light, the kid takes off from the car. Berkshire goes back to their facility and reports the kid missing again.”

Gloversville Police located the teen and called Berkshire Farms to pick him up for the second time. “He takes off from the car before he even leaves the city because they (Berkshire) say they can’t put hands on him. I got to the point where I told my people we’re not chasing this kid, we’re not using force taking a 15-year-old into custody just so somebody can let him jump out of their car a block away from the police station. After going through the summer and fall with this, they finally get the kid into family court and the judge is considering



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sending the kid to secure detention. They adjourn a few minutes, and the kid takes off from family court. This is another one of those feral kids; no structure, no family influence at home. We’re putting so many resources into these kids and really just spinning our tires, and we’ve got no teeth. There’s nothing we can do to the parents, there’s nothing we can do to the kids.”

In Orange County, New York, police are experiencing issues with the availability of secure detention beds for adolescent offenders. Police Chief Paul Rickard (Mount Hope PD) is the President of the Police Chiefs Association of Orange County. He said that finding beds for juveniles is not a major issue for some smaller

**“What saddens me we are not interceding in these kids’ lives until they’ve committed a heinous felony. Why should we not be trying to intervene long before there is somebody dead, blood in the streets...”**

**—Dave Halloran | Superintendent of Schools**

municipalities, but for larger cities it is a frequent problem. “The family court can order a juvenile to secure detention, but if there are no beds available, where do you go?,” said Rickard. “The State said they were going to take care of this, but they have done nothing”, he added. Rickard suggested that one solution could be the use of a segregated portion of the county jail which can house as many as 800 persons, and since bail reform has only a census of around 120.

But, said Rickard, the law will not permit that sort of adaptation.

Both Chief Clay and Superintendent Halloran stress that they’re not pro-punishment, but rather, pro-kid. Said Halloran, “What saddens me we are not interceding in these kids’ lives until they’ve committed a heinous felony. Why should we not be trying to intervene long before there is somebody dead, blood in the streets... some of these kids are committing multiple felonies, destruction of public property, private property, assaults, grand larceny, stealing cars, and they’re high-fiving in school the next day laughing.”

Halloran said that there needs to be a better balance in the approach to societal justice, saying, “I believe that for the citizens and every community in this state and country, their rights need to be taken into consideration, not just the rights of the accused.”

## Juvenile Response Team

Chief Clay said that after the homicide, many of the involved agencies began meeting as a Juvenile Response Team (JRT). The main stakeholders are Superintendent of Schools Dave Halloran, the Probation Department, the Department of Social Services Commissioner, the District Attorney, and a mental health representative. New York State Assemblyman Robert Smullen has attended one of the JRT meetings.

Clay said that the team is still bringing stakeholders to the table and formulating a mission statement. “Right now we are in the information-gathering mode. For me the biggest hurdle is to understand the programs that exist through DSS and CPS – the diversions programs and wrapping my head around probation system. We’re discussing a lot of ideas. At the next meeting we’re going to put a list of families on the board who we have identified – our top 5 – families we hope we can have some sort of impact on. Everything from extra truancy checks, to leveraging parents’ criminal cases to influence what mom and dad are doing, but we talk a lot about what we can’t do, and why we can’t do it.”

The Chief is desperate for new ideas. “I’m to the point where I think we need an incentive program. Maybe, if your kid goes to



*Gloversville’s Juvenile response Team consists of representatives from the Police, Schools, District Attorney, Probation, Mental Health and Department of Social Services. Stock photo: Pond 5*

school every day for 30 days, we’ll give you a PS-5 or a vacation or something. We don’t have any sticks, so maybe we need to establish a carrot. So that’s the kind of out-of-the-box thinking that’s going on.” Chief Clay continued, “We can all talk about how handcuffed we are by the system and lament about what we *can’t* do. I think it’s important to get together and figure out the things we *can* do.”

Chief Clay is interested in suggestions from other agencies for innovative or proactive policies in dealing with at-risk youth. Contact him at [aclay@gpd.fulton.ny.us](mailto:aclay@gpd.fulton.ny.us)

A dramatic sunset over a road with a large cloud on the horizon. The sky is filled with orange and yellow light, with a large, dark cloud in the center. The road is a two-lane highway with a guardrail on the left and trees on the right. A car is visible in the distance.

**There's a cloud on the horizon**

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# Chief's Corner

BY CHIEF/RET. STUART K. CAMERON - SUFFOLK COUNTY PD



## Vehicle Attacks

During the planning stages of a special event, law enforcement and security professionals have traditionally recognized the threat posed by large vehicles as a potential delivery mechanism for substantial explosive devices. Vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs) have been used to kill

### VBIED

#### Vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Device

large numbers of people across the world. While it is certainly possible for lone wolves to attack utilizing a VBIED, as evidenced by Timothy McVeigh's devastating attack on the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995 or Andres Breivik's attack in Norway in 2011, the logistics involved can make it more difficult than many other common and less complex terrorist tactics.



*Police cars and sanitation trucks used in an Atlanta parade to afford a barrier against vehicle attacks. Photo: Pond5*

In order to employ a VBIED effectively an attacker would need to have more than a basic knowledge of explosives, as well as the necessitating the acquisition of a significant quantity of explosive precursors and other components, many of which are monitored or controlled. Lone wolf attackers have attempted to employ this method, only to fail during the implementation. Faisal Shahzad, more commonly known as the Times Square Bomber, attempted to utilize a VBIED housed in an SUV to attack in a densely crowded area of New York City in 2010, but his device did not function as he intended. In June 2007, two VBIEDs were strategically placed in Great Britain: one near the Tiger Tiger Nightclub and another close by, presumably to target first responders. Both devices failed to detonate and were rendered safe by authorities. In fact,

the second vehicle was actually impounded for illegal parking and it had been moved to an impound lot prior to being discovered. Lack of knowledge on how to properly construct VBIEDs and continued efforts to tightly control the materials needed to make them can thwart those inclined to utilize this attack method. While not foolproof, efforts to control precursor materials have certainly made it much more difficult to build a large vehicle-borne device in the United States. The extensive logistics required for a single individual to covertly build and deploy a VBIED make it likely that a plot of this nature will be uncovered and stopped by authorities at some point before it can be executed. Perhaps the easiest part of preparing a VBIED is the acquisition of the truck or other large vehicle, which can be rented from a variety of national chains or even stolen. Commercial trucks are often left parked with their engines idling, making their theft less difficult. VBIEDs have been used extensively overseas, often with devastating results.

A 2016 vehicle ramming attack in Nice, France, dramatically highlights yet another threat posed by vehicles, both large and small. Many public safety officials may have thought that the tactic used during the Bastille Day attack was a new one, however, vehicle ramming attacks have been employed sporadically for many years with varying results. This type of attack has also been advocated for by terrorist organizations looking to inspire and educate would-be followers. When compared to building a VBIED, getting behind the wheel of a large vehicle and simply running people down is a much simpler strategy; less susceptible to being uncovered; and, as demonstrated in France, potentially just as devastating as using explosives.

Anwar al-Awlaki was an U.S.-born member of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula who is credited with having created a unique English language magazine called Inspire. The first edition was published in 2010. Inspire Magazine, as the name implies, was designed to inspire people to join in al Qaeda's fight against Western nations and it encourages self-radicalization. The magazine also provides details on how to employ various tactics to attack the West. For example, the first edition included an article about making improvised explosive devices titled "Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom." That article provided detailed instructions on how to construct improvised explosive devices using pipes and pressure cookers that were similar to those used in the Boston Marathon attack and other domestic bombings. The second edition of Inspire Magazine included an article titled "The Ultimate Mowing Machine" as in mowing down people. The article detailed how to take a heavy-duty pickup truck and utilize it as a low-tech attack mechanism to run over pedestrians. One of the suggestions



Photo: Pond5

add a blade to the front of the vehicle to allow it to dismember people that were struck during the attack. Shortly after the attack in Nice, France, Inspire Magazine released a detailed analysis of this vehicle ramming attack, just as it did after the active shooter attack in Orlando, Florida, at the Pulse nightclub. The guide highlighted the success of the attack, praising the use of firearms and fake explosives in conjunction with the vehicle to maximize the harm caused during the attack. The guide goes into detail to criticize the fact that a wide sharp blade wasn't added to the front of the truck as instructed in Inspire Magazine's second issue.

Israel has unfortunately had a great deal of experience dealing with terrorist attacks, including suicide bombings. They appear to have successfully and dramatically reduced suicide bombing attacks by erecting the West Bank barrier to thwart those who would bring in explosive devices to attack Israelis. Despite the success of this wall in reducing bombings, terrorist attacks utilizing other means in Israel continue. In 2008, several vehicle attacks occurred, one utilizing an automobile and two utilizing construction equipment. The automobile attack injured 15 people when a BMW sedan was used to run over people. In another attack, an earthmover was used to topple a bus and crush several cars, ultimately killing 4 people and injuring 45 others. This attack was stopped only after the operator of the machine was shot and killed.

Israel has seen additional vehicle attacks, using both construction equipment and automobiles. Attackers have strategically targeted crowded locations, such as bus stops. These attackers have also utilized a combination of other weapons during vehicle attacks. For example, attackers have exited their vehicles to stab, hack, and slash victims with edged weapons. Those that are determined to engage in terrorism seem unhindered by the increasing difficulty in obtaining improvised explosive device precursors and appear willing to use whatever method is available to them to kill, injure, and maim their victims.

The United States has not been exempt from vehicle attacks. Perhaps the most noteworthy vehicle attack occurred on a bicycle path in New York City in October of 2017 using a truck rented for

**Vehicle attackers in the United States have run the gamut from those looking to destroy property to active shooters and terrorists.**

a home improvement chain. This attack killed eight people and injured eleven more and was the deadliest terrorist attack in New York City since the September 11 attacks. Like the attacks that occurred in Israel, this attack highlighted that a special event isn't a requirement for a vehicle ramming attack.

Vehicle attackers in the United States have run the gamut from those looking to destroy property to active shooters and terrorists. Two very high-profile attacks utilized special vehicles to cause significant property damage. In 1995, Shawn Nelson, a military veteran, stole a National Guard combat tank from a base in San Diego. Nelson used the tank in a 23-minute rampage during which he crushed cars and ran over fire hydrants. He was eventually shot by police when the tank became stuck on a highway median. During the rampage, police were not equipped to stop him.

Many may also recall the news reports of Marvin Heemeyer's June 2004 "killdozer" attack in Colorado, for which he employed a bulldozer fortified with steel plates. Heemeyer used a Caterpillar bulldozer to destroy everything in his path until he got the vehicle hung up on a building and took his own life with a self-inflicted gunshot. Heemeyer had incorporated a monitor and camera to see where he was going and included gun ports in the steel plating so that he could also fire a weapon from his protected position.

In March 2006, an Iranian American named Reza Taheri-azar utilized a SUV to intentionally run-down pedestrians at the



University of North Carolina located in Chapel Hill. Taheri-azar claimed that he was attempting to punish the United States while avenging the death of Muslims worldwide. Nine people were injured during Taheri-azar's attack. Approximately four months later, Omeed Aziz Popal used a vehicle to kill 1 person and injure 19 others during an attack that started in Fremont and ended in San

stopped at a nearby casino, they discovered that her three-year-old daughter was also in the car. Both of these attackers were suspected of having behavioral health issues.

The devastating attack in Nice, France, highlights how relatively easy and effective vehicle attacks can be, especially if large vehicles are employed and other weapons are utilized. Clearly the possibility of this type of attack should be included during the security planning for any special event. However, what if the motive is simply to engage in a rampage attack, similar to an active shooter? Crowds of people are ubiquitous in every city. Unlike an active shooter who is looking for victims in a confined environment, someone in a vehicle can chase victims over wide areas. The attacker in Nice, France, drove for over one mile while hitting victims along the way.



**Countermeasures that would be deployed to prevent a VBIED attack, such as bollards, jersey barriers and heavy blocking vehicles would also hinder someone bent on a vehicle ramming attack.**

Photo: Pond5

Francisco, California. Popal told the police that "everyone needs to be killed," indicating a clear intent to cause harm.

In May 2014, in Isla Vista, California, Elliot Rodgers, stabbed, shot, and ultimately ran down people with his vehicle in a multifaceted attack combining firearms, edged weapons, and a motor vehicle. Rodgers first stabbed three people, then shot four others and continued his attack by both shooting people while driving and also running them over with his BMW. He killed six and injured many others by shooting, stabbing, and colliding with them. Similar to many individuals who have engaged in active shooter rampages, Rodgers uploaded a video outlining the details of his upcoming attack and his motive. Rodgers claimed to be seeking revenge on women who had rejected him and men whose lives were more enjoyable than his own.

On October 24, 2015, 25-year-old Adacia Chambers intentionally plowed her car into the crowd at Oklahoma State's Homecoming parade, killing four and injuring dozens more. Shortly after the Chambers attack, in December 2015, 24-year-old Lakeisha Holloway intentionally drove her car onto the sidewalk on the Las Vegas Strip while running numerous pedestrians down. She killed 1 person and injured 37 others. Witnesses reportedly attempted to get her to stop by pounding on the windows of her car with no success. When police eventually got to her 1996 Oldsmobile after Holloway

is in its planning stages. Indications that a vehicle ramming attack is being planned might include suspicious interest in renting large vehicles or in commercial driver training. Outreach should be done to truck rental outlets and commercial vehicle driving schools. Immediate concern should be raised for reports of people modifying vehicles in unusual ways, such as the modifications suggested in Inspire Magazine.

The tactics of those intent on causing harm are constantly evolving, whether they are terrorists or disenfranchised individuals bent upon engaging in rampage attacks. If one tactic is too difficult to master, another less complex alternative might be selected. Rampage attackers who have had limited access to firearms have employed edged weapons or blunt force weapons at times with equally dire results. For example, an edged weapon attack on disabled individuals in Japan caused at least 19 deaths and 20 injuries, which is more severe than many that have employed firearms. Utilizing a vehicle to attack is a method that requires little planning or specialized training. It can be launched quickly and, once it has begun, it is very difficult to stop. It is a method that is virtually within anyone's reach. Due to the variety of potential attack motivations, law enforcement and security professionals must be aware of this method and be alert for those who may be plotting to use it.



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# NYSACOP Represented on Cannabis Industry Association

## Concerns Include Packaging, Impaired Driving Standards

**C**hief Joseph Sinagra (Saugerties PD) serves as the Second Vice President of the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police (NYSACOP) and is also the Liaison between NYSACOP and the New York City (NYCCIA) and Hudson Valley Cannabis Industry Associations (HVCIA). According to the NYCCIA website, their mission is to promote *“...a legalized, sustainable cannabis marketplace. We invite our members to join the conversation about how to get that marketplace right. With input from industry stakeholders and with a goal to promote high standards for health and public safety, we communicate the needs of the marketplace to help shape policy.”*<sup>1</sup>

Chief Sinagra said that he is honored to work with this committee. “What I find interesting is that they have opened their doors to us, to law enforcement and said, yes, we want you at the table.” Sinagra said that the group is genuinely focused on public health and public safety. “This has got to be done in a way that people are going to accept, and that’s where the sustainability is going to come. If the product goes out there and becomes harmful to our community then it will be a total flop,” he added.

**This has got to be done in a way that people are going to accept, and that’s where the sustainability is going to come.**

**If the product goes out there and becomes harmful to our community then it will be a total flop.**

**—Chief Joseph Sinagra**

One of the issues, says Sinagra, is that the cannabis reform legislation is ambiguous in places. One of the primary concerns is the construction of the legislative language concerning persons less than 21 years of age. “There is a section of the legislation that is very adequate in addressing how much a person can possess, what the different degrees in crime are, but then it falls short in addressing people less than 21 years of age possessing 3 ounces or less. It adequately addresses the fact that you can’t sell to a person less than 21,” Sinagra said. Chief Sinagra said that legislation provides that a person less than 21 who possesses cannabis can be fined \$50 payable to the Cannabis Control Board. He said the law is silent on who enforces this provisions, or who collects the fine. Unlike the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Law which provides a mechanism for police to issue an appearance ticket for persons less than 21 year in possession of an alcoholic beverage, Sinagra says that the Legislature never created a similar law

for cannabis. “First of all you have to define that police officers have a role in this, that they would have enforcement authority just like under 65-c of the ABC Law,” said Sinagra who added that the alcohol statute defines the role of police, the authority of the court, and the disposition of fines. “There is no such legislative language whatsoever in the current cannabis legislation that addresses that when it comes to the possession of cannabis by a person less than 21,” said Sinagra.

For Chief Sinagra, one of the biggest issues with the cannabis legislation pertains to highway safety. “This is where, I say, they put the cart before the horse. They never addressed operating under the influence of cannabis, because now it’s not an illegal drug. There is no legislative language and there is no scientific standard set forth in the Vehicle and Traffic Law as we have for alcohol that says a person who operates with so many nanograms of THC is equivalent to being impaired, and that so much is equivalent to being intoxicated. We don’t have that.” Sinagra said the dilemma for law enforcement is proving cannabis impairment for the now-legal drug. And, he says, once you have built your proof, the District Attorney will likely not be able to prosecute the case because of the lack of definition of cannabis impairment.

Sinagra said that cannabis impairment had its challenges even before legalization. Pointing to the case in his jurisdiction in 2015. Meredith McSpirit was driving a car occupied by four male passengers. McSpirit lost control of the vehicle and went off an embankment, crashing the car onto its roof. The four men inside the car were all killed. Sinagra said that McSpirit admitted to being a habitual user of cannabis, and blood test after the crash showed the presence of THC. He said. “Our DA’s office told us we couldn’t arrest,” citing that the presence

**... the committee has a genuine interest in ensuring that legal cannabis is not jeopardizing the safety and well-being of our youth.**

**—Chief Joseph Sinagra**

of THC alone did not provide impairment.” Sinagra noted that the case was presented to a grand jury and was no-billed. “We’ve got a problem here, there’s going to be a lot of lives that are going to be lost...”, he said.

To make matters worse, Chief Sinagra said that he has learned that in the State of Massachusetts, Drug Recognition Experts (DREs) are no longer recognized for determining cannabis impairment due to the lack of scientific standards. “If that happens in New York, we are really going to be blown out of the water when it comes to addressing this issue.”

Asked whether he believed changes to the law would be

forthcoming, he said, “I am optimistic that there are going to be changes which is why I am a member of the NYCCIA and HVCIA because it gives me the opportunity to sit on their legislative committee and to have these discussions.” Chief Sinagra said that the leadership of the NYCCIA and HVCIA appreciate that there must be more research and development in the area of the impaired operator, and testing standards established by NYS, “thresholds so that police can adequately address what is really a major danger on our public highways,” said Sinagra. He added that other concerns from the committee relate to the labelling and packaging of cannabis products. He said that the committee has a genuine interest in ensuring that legal cannabis is not jeopardizing the safety and well-being of our youth. For example, said Sinagra, many studies indicate that the human brain is not fully developed until age 23, and that cannabis can impact brain development negatively. “So they’re concerned that packaging isn’t enticing to the younger generation in the way that vaping was, where it was

really targeted toward our youth. They also want to make sure that when you walk past a retail outlet that you can’t just look in and see the product. It’s not for the anonymity of the purchasers, but to make sure that it is not seen by those who might be impressed by the product. We already have a problem in this country with youth using cannabis,” he said.

Chief Sinagra noted that this is an interesting time for law enforcement having to reprogram to the fact that cannabis is legal – including consumption, possession, cultivation, and sale. For Sinagra, 32 of his 34 years in law enforcement viewed cannabis as contraband. He said, “This must be what Elliot Ness felt like at the end of Prohibition.” Sinagra is interested in any experiences or anecdotes from other NYSACOP members and encourages your comments ([jsinagra@saugtertiesny.gov](mailto:jsinagra@saugtertiesny.gov)).

<sup>1</sup>Mission Statement; <https://ciamembership.org/nyc/>; Accessed Feb. 7, 2022

## Paying Homage to Two Heroes

*Members of the Suffolk County PD Motor Unit Line the Streets of New York City first for the funeral of Det. Jason Rivera, and again for the funeral of Detective Wilbert Mora. The officers were shot by an assailant on January 21 while answering a radio call from a mother seeking assistance for her 47 year old son. In an emotional plea to the public, PBA President Pat Lynch urged support for the officers and their families. “We’re asking, we’re humbly asking you to come out and help us, said Lynch, adding “We need help, they need help. It’s time to do it now.”*



## Agency Spotlight: Dunkirk Police Department

# Community Relations Define Dunkirk Policing Philosophy

Located in Chautauqua County, Dunkirk's rich history is rooted in its location – along Lake Erie, and a strategic location for shipping from rail to sea.<sup>1</sup> The city is also known as a hub for the manufacture of locomotives, as well as being a producer of steel<sup>2</sup>. The city's extensive waterfront is energized during the summer months with fireworks, boat races, fishing tournaments, and air shows.

The city police force of 37 sworn members is led by Chief David Ortolano whose philosophy of policing is straightforward – community relations. The 37 year law enforcement veteran grew up in the Dunkirk-Fredonia area and has served the last 17 years as the city's Chief of Police. Building trust between police and the community is essential, said Ortolano adding, "Without the support of the community we cannot be successful."

Among the police department initiatives which serve the community are school safety programs, including a School Resource Officer, Breakfast with a Police Officer, school reader days, Trunk-or-Treat, and Santa for Seniors, delivering gifts to the homebound; Dunkirk Police recently celebrated their 25th National Night Out (NNO) receiving awards and accolades from their Mayor, County Executive, Governor's Office, New York State Senate and Assembly. Chief Ortolano has led the NNO in Dunkirk for all of those years, and he credits a great group of coordinators for the growth and success of the program every year.



*Dunkirk police officers reading to students at an elementary school.*

Another way in which Dunkirk police stay in touch with their community is with a monthly radio show featuring Chief Ortolano. "Any issues that need to be covered, the good, the bad or the ugly," he said. Last year Dunkirk PD received an award from the New York State Broadcasters Association for working with the local news radio station in serving the community. Ortolano said he has a great working relationship with the staff at the radio station, and particularly with the News Director who went to school with the chief. The News Director and I rode the same school



## WHY I BECAME A COP

*My older brother was a Deputy Sheriff. When he started taking me on ride-alongs and I got to know some of the people he worked with, I decided, 'that's what I want to do'. Ortolano said that he wanted to serve the community that has been such a huge part of his life, and which has been so good to him and his family. "Making a difference in one person's life makes it all worth it," he said. It is apparent from the community reaction that Ortolano and his department are regularly making a difference in the lives of so many people in the Dunkirk community. Thirty-seven years later, Chief Ortolano says, "I owe a lot of this to my brother."*



*Chief David Ortolano  
Dunkirk PD*



*Lucky students and their parents who won the chance to have Breakfast with a Police Officer at a local Tim Horton's.*

bus”, said the Chief. “If we need something to get out over the radio waves at 2:00 in the morning, they will do that for us.”

Chief Ortolano said that when the department has needed equipment, the community has stepped up. “Several social clubs have donated to us for equipment needs,” he said. “That comes from us being out there.” The Chief said that he and his department also have an outstanding relationship with the school administration, school board, students and parents. The School Resource Officer program is another valuable way of building bridges between the police and school administrations, parents, and students, said the Chief. “Just the presence of a police officer in the school, the kids gets comfortable with them. If there’s an issue they’re not afraid to talk with them, and that builds relationships too.”

Another fun school program recognizes Students of the Month with Breakfast with a Police Officer. Dunkirk PD teamed up with Tim Horton’s to provide a special opportunity for a student to have breakfast with one of Dunkirk’s Finest as a reward. The winning students and their parents are treated courtesy of Tim Horton’s and the Dunkirk Police Benevolent Association. “We pick them up at school, we put them in the police car, they ride around with one of our officers for a few hours and then we take them out to Tim Horton’s for breakfast and they get a little award. It inspires them because they love the fact that other kids are getting to do it,” said the Chief.

The school relationship also affords police with a keen awareness of school facilities throughout the jurisdiction. “Our tactical team is

able to use all of the school buildings for training during the year as well. So we’re familiar with them,” said Chief Ortolano. Police also conduct safety drills and lockdown drills with school administrator and staff.

Community support is a two-way street, and Chief Ortolano said that was evident during the Police Reform movement when municipalities in New York State were required to involve stakeholders in reimagining policing in their communities. “Our community came out to support us,” said Ortolano. “They told us we don’t want this (reform), we want our police department to stay the way it is.” The Chief said that city administration and elected officials were also supportive, telling the chief, “we’ve got your back.” Ortolano said that during the national discourse on police reform, the experience in his community was overwhelmingly positive. “Every day there were cookies, cakes, pizzas brought to the station. And every year, a local man goes to a restaurant and gets every one of our officers a \$15 gift certificate for lunch,” said Ortolano. “It’s a relationship that works both ways. We have to nurture that and they have to trust in us, and they do,” he added.

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<sup>1</sup> History; City of Dunkirk; <https://www.cityofdunkirk.com/visitors/history.php>; Accessed Feb. 7, 2022

<sup>2</sup> Ibid



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# Life Altering Meth Raid

## Empowering Conversation from Cop Sets Woman with Addiction on Path to Success

“If you told me on the day of the bust that I would be standing face to face with him, clean and sober, in school with a Dean’s List letter in my hand to show him, I probably would have laughed at you,” said Savannah Diezel, talking about the police officer she encountered during a meth raid in Fulton, New York. The person she was facing at that time was Officer Christopher Jones, currently an Investigator with the Fulton Police Department. Jones was

**“He talked to me like I was a person, a human being, like someone who mattered. I think what really struck me was the look he gave me, because it looked like he wanted me to be better, like he had some sort of personal investment.”**

**—Savannah Diezel**

assigned an exterior position at the location where a search was being executed in 2013 and was later detailed to transport Diezel to the station for questioning.

“She explained to me that she was using a lot,” remembered Investigator Jones. “It was clear that she was using and unhealthy, and scared about what she had just been through.”



**Savannah Diezel visits with Inv. Christopher Jones at Fulton PD Headquarters during Christmas 2021. In addition to showing Jones her Dean’s List letter, she invited Inv. Jones to her college graduation.**  
*Photo: Savannah Diezel*

Jones remembered the dialogue with Diezel. “I raised two daughters, it was like a father-daughter conversation,” he said. “She wasn’t acting like some people who don’t want to hear what we have to say. She was receptive. She had reached her bottom,” added Jones. Diezel said it was that conversation that finally got her attention. “He talked to me like I was a person, a human being, like someone who mattered. I think what really struck me was the look he gave me, because it looked like he wanted me to be better, like he had some sort of personal investment,” said Diezel.

Diezel decided that she had to quit drugs, and although she relapsed briefly, she knew that using again was not worth it. “I remembered that conversation”, she said. “I was sober, I’m withdrawing. I should just stick with it. And I didn’t pick it up after that,” said Diezel, adding that getting sober is just half the battle; the other half, she

said, is determining what to do with your life. Having never finished high school, she found a program to obtain her GED. After that, she set her eyes on her next goal – to become a police officer.

Diezel had moved out of state, something she said was key to her sobriety, getting away from the negative influences that would not help in her recovery. She moved to Indiana and began taking courses in criminal justice. As part of her education she volunteered with attorneys in a constructive court, described by Diezel as a last-chance court for teens. “I noticed a lot of the people going through (the court) didn’t have any education, they were just like me, they were addicted.” She added, “I’m now working with Prosecutor Vicky Becker (Elkhart County) to put together a program that gets first time offenders a lighter sentence for completing an education program and a mentorship program.” Diezel says she wants to give others the best opportunity by advocating for them the way that Investigator Jones did for her.

Diezel’s goal has evolved now to wanting to become an attorney,

**“To actually see her show up, that I was that important to her in her life, that something I did was that important, there are no words.”**

**—Inv. Christopher Jones | Fulton PD**

advocating for others the way she felt that Investigator Jones did for her. Jones is humbled by the impact his words had on Diezel’s life. He said. “I may have opened the door for her a little, but she burst through. She did all the work.” Jones said that he is very proud of what Diezel has accomplished. “It was a blip in both of our lives but she did all this amazing work and I’m really proud of her. She’s just amazing. You don’t hear many success stories like that coming from a meth lab to where she is now.”

During Christmas 2021 Diezel returned to Fulton to thank Jones in person for changing the direction of her life. She said, “I was just so excited to tell him everything I’ve been doing because he was the one that believed in me, he was the one that knew I could be better, and I did it, I came back and I wanted him to see.” Diezel showed Jones her Dean’s List letter, and also invited him to her graduation. She was glad she didn’t miss the trip to the police station, as she learned that Jones would be retiring in a few months and this was likely her only opportunity to invite him. Jones said that he was honored for the visit and the invitation. “To actually see her show up, that I was that important to her in her life... there are no words,” said Jones. After their visit at the police station where they first crossed paths 8 years earlier, Diezel said she returned to her car and cried. Later on she posted a picture and the story of her visit on Facebook. Diezel said that the post received a lot of reaction. “It blew up!” she said, noting that some of her followers are her professors and colleagues who know about her amazing story. “I wanted to show them, ‘this is the man I told you about, this was the man who helped me, the man who didn’t label me, who didn’t treat me like the addict’”, she said.

*In May 2022 Savannah Diezel will graduate with a degree in criminal justice; that same month, Investigator Christopher Jones will retire from the Fulton Police Department.*

# NYSACOP's Blueprint for Change

## Summary of Proposals to Fix Failed Reforms



**F**airness and equity are keystone principles in law enforcement. While these same terms have been used over the past two years to describe criminal justice reforms implemented by the State legislature, they have, in reality, shunted those principles, causing increases in crime and risk to law-abiding citizens. At the same time, the judicial branch is prohibited from applying reasoned judgment in the application of bail, or in the placement of the comparatively lower number of dangerous young offenders. (see related story, Page 29).

At the time these reforms were implemented, the law enforcement community was not solicited for any meaningful feedback. In fact, when these proposals were first announced, many of us forecast that it would result in decreased public safety. And so it did; and here we are. The Legislature amended some of their laws midstream, but those efforts were not enough. While some liberal leaders remain stalwart in their positions, others have equivocated that changes must

**All along we have asserted that police are not against reform. To the contrary, to be a progressive society we must always be looking at ways to be more fair and equitable in everything we do. But the pendulum has swung too far.**

be made. But crime statistics speak for themselves, and the anecdotes of police, prosecutors and victims continue daily. The New York State Association of Chiefs of Police developed a series of proposals to fix those problems which have resulted in the consternation of law enforcement officials and members of the public.

In December the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police sent proposals to Governor Hochul and members of the Senate and Assembly. All along we have asserted that police are not against reform. To the contrary, to be a progressive society we must always be looking at ways to be more fair and equitable in everything we do. But the pendulum has swung too far. NYSACOP President Timothy Parisi said, "Reforms cannot tip the balance so far in favor of the accused that public safety is jeopardized and victims are left choosing between the pursuit of justice and the fear of reprisal if they move forward with their case." Executive Director Patrick

Phelan said that he believes that the potential negative impact of reform laws were not considered; nor was fairness to victims and their families. He said, "These reforms, although designed to create a more equitable criminal justice system, have had the unintended consequence of making our communities less safe. Injustice persists if communities are not, and do not, feel safe."

After two decades of consistent reduction in crime, many municipalities have witnessed sharp spikes in crime, particularly in larger cities. "Statewide, there has been an 82.2 percent increase in shooting victims and an 80.9 percent increase in individuals killed by gun violence from 2019 to 2020. More people were murdered in New York in 2020 alone than had been in over a decade," said Phelan.

President Parisi noted that the Association is not seeking to undo all of the reform work, but said that the Association is "... offering precise and measured amendments within the legislative framework created..." Executive Director Phelan added, "These amendments strike the appropriate balance between public safety and fairness to the accused. It is in our common interest to foster a system of justice that both protects the public and preserves our constitutional rights."

The following are highlights of the proposals advanced by NYSACOP:

### Synopsis of Proposed Amendments:

#### Bail Reform

Under the current bail laws, a judge can release a defendant on his or her own recognizance, release the defendant under non-monetary conditions, or, if the defendant is charged with a qualifying offense, fix bail or remand the defendant. For non-

#### Bail

- Eliminate cash bail altogether by eradicating the inequities that allow wealth to determine freedom;
- Allow judges to consider a defendant's public safety risk, so that the people who pose the biggest threat to our communities do not continue to endanger our communities.

#### Criminal Discovery

- Stagger the discovery schedule to ease administrative burdens while at the same time providing enough information to defendants to make informed decisions;
- Limit discovery to relevant and material information and not to all information that is tangentially related to the case and provides no probative value;
- Allow the prosecution to answer ready for trial if they have substantially complied with discovery, preventing cases from being dismissed because duplicative and non-material information is provided later in the discovery process.



qualifying offenses, bail and remand is not an option. However, even for qualifying offenses, which include violent felonies, the judge must release the defendant on his or her own recognizance unless the judge makes an individualized determination that the defendant poses a risk of flight to avoid prosecution. If such a determination is made, the judge is then required to select the least restrictive alternative and conditions that will reasonably assure a defendant's return to court. Judges must also consider a defendant's ability to pay when setting bail.

This law, and its subsequent amendment in 2020, allowed the fundamental flaw of bail to remain within a limited set of cases. Freedom was contingent on a person's ability to pay. At the same time, unlike 49 other states, Washington D.C. and the federal government, judges are prohibited from considering whether a person poses a threat to the community. Dangerous individuals and career criminals have been freed to reoffend at will to the detriment of all New Yorkers.

As a result, we propose eliminating cash bail altogether. This will assure that defendants will not be kept behind bars solely because they are poor. Further, the proposal calls for giving judges the discretion to impose conditions of release if the defendant either poses a flight risk or is a danger to the safety of any person or the community. If no condition can reasonably assure the defendant's return to court or assure the safety of any person or the community, then the judge has discretion to remand the defendant. In making a determination, the judge would consider such factors as the defendant's history of violence. This will have the desired effect of keeping dangerous individuals off the street and protecting potential victims.

While we agree that monetary status should not be a factor in determining whether a defendant is set free, we believe that a defendant's threat to public safety should. The proposed amendments maintain the spirit of reform and progress. Pre-trial release will not be based on a defendant's ability to pay. At the same time, the amendments give judges the ability to remand dangerous individuals with long criminal histories who pose a threat to victims, witnesses or the community as a whole.

## Discovery

The state's discovery laws were overhauled in order to provide defendants with all information relating to their cases faster, so they could make more informed decisions as to whether to plea or mount a defense. Prior to these changes, prosecutors were permitted to turn over timely discovery to the defendant as they walked into court for hearings. It is clear the discovery laws needed reform. However, under the current laws, law enforcement agencies and district attorney's offices are overwhelmed by having to produce the volume of materials within the strict timeframes provided. Many of these documents are duplicative or irrelevant to a material issue of the case.

The current law requires the prosecution produce initial discovery within 20 days after arraignment when the defendant is in custody and 35 days after arraignment when the defendant is not in custody. Additionally, the prosecution must provide supplemental discovery no later than 15 calendar days prior to the first scheduled trial date. The prosecution must comply with all discovery obligations before filing a certificate of compliance prior to declaring readiness for trial. Further, the prosecution must turn over all material that is "related" to the case regardless of its relevance. This has immensely increased the volume of material that must be turned over in the very initial stages of discovery. Both prosecutors and police agencies

are overburdened, and some of these agencies simply do not have the resources to comply with these new discovery mandates. Most worrisome, is that the failure to disclose a document or other discoverable material that may not be relevant and material to the charges against the defendant, and is only tangentially related to the case, has led to the dismissal of criminal cases.

Finally, the current law does little to protect victims and witnesses. As part of initial discovery, the prosecution must turn over the names and contact information for all persons other than law enforcement personnel whom the prosecutor knows to have evidence or information relevant to any offense charged or to any potential defense, or to seek an order of protection in every such case. Giving victim and witness names and contact information so soon after arraignment dissuades victims and witnesses from stepping forward and reporting crime, or cooperating with an investigation. The result is an erosion of faith in the criminal justice system for victims, some of whom have suffered great physical and mental abuse at the hands of their attacker. The law even includes a provision that allows defendants to move for a court order to access crime scenes, including an individual's home (a provision that has been deemed unconstitutional by a court in Suffolk County).

In order to enable the prosecution to meet its discovery obligations and still provide the defense with discoverable material in a timely fashion, as well as offer protection to victims and witnesses, we propose a staggered approach to discovery. Under this system, the prosecution must provide initial discovery in accordance with the timelines provided for in the current law. The discovery provided at this point will give defendants enough information to make informed decisions on how to proceed with the criminal charges levied against them, but will ease the crushing burdens on prosecutors and police. The prosecution must then provide supplemental discovery 30 days prior to the first scheduled trial date, as opposed to 15 days. However, our proposal also calls for a third category of discovery—sensitive discovery, which includes any information that tends to disclose the identity of a victim or witness. Sensitive information would be provided within 15 days prior to the start of the trial in misdemeanor cases and 30 days prior to the first scheduled trial date in felony cases, after both the prosecution and the defense have filed certificates of compliance

## *Juvenile Justice – "Raise the Age Law"*

- Allow judges in Youth Part to see family court records so that defendants do not appear in front of the Youth Part judge as a perpetual first time offender;
- Amend the statute of limitations in family court so that individuals who commit crimes days before their 18th birthday can be prosecuted after their 18th birthday.

## *Appearance Tickets*

- Expand the list of crimes for which police are not required to issue appearance tickets to include additional serious offenses;
- Limit the ability for chronic offenders to continually receive appearance tickets so that they are not immediately released back into the community.

or at a time specified pursuant to a judicial protective order. The defense may still make a motion to the court for disclosure upon a showing that the defense would be prejudiced or suffer a hardship without disclosure of this sensitive information.

Under our proposal, the prosecution is required to disclose to the defendant all items and information that are relevant and material to the subject matter of the case. This is a rational basis for discovery and will provide defendants with everything they need to properly defend their case.

Our proposal also eases the burden on the prosecution, while not prejudicing the defense, by allowing the prosecution to file a certificate of compliance when the prosecution has substantially complied with discovery. The court will use this standard when determining whether a defendant has been prejudiced by a failure to disclose. A case can and should be dismissed if critical discovery is not provided on time. However, superfluous, duplicative and irrelevant paperwork should not be the basis for dismissal. This provision prevents the dismissal of serious charges on a technicality when the defense is not provided with a piece of material that is not relevant or material to a defense.



Finally, in order to address the issue of granting the defense access to a crime scene when that scene is a victim's home, our proposal calls for the defendant to show, by clear and convincing evidence, a hardship or prejudice that cannot be remedied without access to the premises, and that no less intrusive means are available.

### **Raise the Age**

We also agree with the Raise the Age legislation that was enacted. Youths under 18 accused of minor crimes should not be subjected to the brunt of the criminal justice system. Their cases should be adjudicated in family court, where they can receive programs and services that will assist in enabling them to lead productive lives. New York was an outlier in allowing youth as young as 16 to routinely be charged as adults and the legislature was correct to change that anomaly. However, there are some nuances in the laws that should be addressed in the interest of public safety.

Under current law, for any delinquency case that does not involve a designated felony, a proceeding cannot be commenced in family court after a youth's eighteenth birthday. The majority of delinquency cases do not charge a designated felony. If a 17-year-old commits a non-designated felony crime just weeks or days short of their eighteenth birthday, they can avoid prosecution if the case is not commenced before they turn eighteen. Our proposal addresses this loophole and extends the statute of limitations for 16 and 17-year-olds.

Further, whenever a person 16 or 17-years-old commits a felony, they are charged as adolescent offenders and the case begins in the youth part of superior court. In these cases, the judge must decide whether to keep the case in youth part where the youth will be prosecuted essentially as an adult, or transfer the case to family court where the youth will face juvenile proceedings. In making the determination, a sitting judge in superior court has no access to family court records and is forced to determine whether or not to transfer a case without a complete picture of the youth's criminal history. Consequently, 16 and 17-years-olds appearing in youth part on violent felony cases are treated as perpetual first time offenders.

Our proposal amends this provision requiring the family court to make available to the youth part judge, all records related to the adolescent offender's family court adjudications. This amendment will allow the youth part judges to consider the complete history of the adolescent offender, including whether prior cases have been transferred to the family court, when deciding whether to transfer the matter to family court or keep the matter in the youth part of superior court. Our proposal additionally enables youth part judges to consider factors such as the impact of a removal on the safety or welfare of the community and other pending charges against the individual.

Finally, current law provides that, in deciding whether a case involving violent felony charges should remain in the youth part of superior court or be transferred to family court, the prosecution must prove by a preponderance of the evidence that the defendant caused; (1) significant physical injury to a person; (2) displayed a firearm or deadly weapon in furtherance of the offense; and/or (3) unlawfully engaged in sexual conduct; or (4) there are other "extraordinary circumstances." Courts have held that mere possession of a firearm is not enough for the case to remain in the youth part. The prosecution must show that the firearm was displayed in furtherance of another offense. This is a difficult barrier to overcome, allowing adolescent offenders with histories of gun possession to have their cases adjudicated in family court. Our proposal calls for the prosecution to prove that the defendant possessed a firearm, or what appeared to be a firearm, or actively participated in a crime where a co-defendant possessed a firearm, or what appeared to be a firearm. This amendment is particularly important in light of youth gun violence, which is plaguing our state.

### **Appearance Tickets**

The recent criminal justice laws also mandate that Desk Appearance (DATs) must be issued for all misdemeanors and class E felonies with some limited exceptions. Thus, a person charged with offenses such as criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree, criminal possession of a firearm, criminal possession of a weapon on school grounds, and other serious crimes receive a DAT with a future date assigned for arraignment. This law enables career criminals to repeatedly commit crimes against victims and be released with a DAT from a police stationhouse within hours, with a future court date for which they might not appear. Our proposal calls for giving police discretion over whether to issue a DAT for serious crimes like criminal possession of a weapon, arson, hate crimes, and others crimes that endanger the public's safety. Additionally, we propose that police be given the discretion to issue a DAT when the person has received one in the prior eighteen months. This would enhance public safety by preventing career criminals from being perpetually released on a DAT, free to continue to commit crimes that affect the welfare and safety of our communities.

For more details of our legislative proposals, visit our website at [www.nychiefs.org](http://www.nychiefs.org).

# A Lifetime of Service

## Chief Butler's Career Spans 47 Years and Two Communities

BY CHIEF/RET. MARK SPAWN

**C**hief John Butler has seen a lot over a law enforcement career spanning more than 47 years and two police departments – Binghamton where he served for 31 years, and Vestal where he served for more than 15 years. Butler became a police officer with the Binghamton Police Department in 1974. He worked his way through the ranks, spending several years in the Detective Unit in various positions including Detective Captain from 1994-2003 where he supervised all investigations as well as a staff of 30 investigators and staff assigned to that division, and he was in charge of the SWAT Team. In 2003 Butler was appointed as Chief of Police of the BPD where he served until 2006 when he left to become the Chief of Police in the Town of Vestal. Butler said that technology has been one of the biggest changes to law enforcement during his tenure. “I was in the detective unit for about 20 years, and one of the main things was DNA technology.”



*Chief John Butler*

Asked about the memorable cases of his career, Chief Butler referred to the 1984 case of Cheri Lindsey, the 12 year old newspaper delivery girl who was murdered while collecting money on her paper route in Binghamton. “Her father was a Sergeant in Binghamton and so was I. She was doing her collections one night and never came home,” Butler recalled. “The following day police found her. She was killed in the cellar of a house near her home. She was raped and strangled,” Butler said. “I and another Sergeant took a statement from the suspect, James Wales.” Butler said this case was personal for the officers involved. Wales was convicted of murder in the second degree and rape in the first degree. He was sentenced to 33 years to life. Because of his indeterminate sentence he is entitled to a parole hearing every two years and has been denied each time. Butler said, “When you make a case like that, you bring justice to the victim and the victim’s family, and to the community as well.”

The former Chief said that there are certainly differences between policing in the City of Binghamton and the Town of Vestal. “There’s not as much serious crime in Vestal, but there are other problems, like traffic. We have Binghamton University here (in Vestal) with upwards of 18,000 students and that compounds our traffic issues,” he said.

While Butler enjoyed his service as the leader of two police departments, he really missed the days of working cases as a detective. “Being a chief, you’re dealing with budgets, management, politics and administration. You’re not personally solving any crimes or even investigating,” said Butler.

Of Chief Butler’s many accomplishments, he is proud of the School Resource Officer program. “I started the SRO program in Binghamton. It’s a great program,” he said. “The important thing is matching the officer to the school community. In Vestal, we started with one SRO and now we have three in different schools.” Butler said, “The school district really appreciates it and the kids love it. They get a sense of security that you wouldn’t have without an officer there. It’s a win for everybody – for the students, parents, educators, cops, and the department.”

Chief Patrick Garey (Endicott PD and NYSACOP Board Member) worked with Chief Butler over the years and also got to know him through the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police. “You could always depend on Chief Butler, and his sense of humor,” said Garey. “He would always fight for the guys who were working for him and made sure that the job got done. I am sorry to see him go.”

Captain Stace Kintner (Vestal PD) said that Chief Butler oversaw expansion with the staffing of the police department. He said, “Because of the growth in our town, and with the university being here, we got some additional staffing.” About Chief Butler, Capt. Kintner said, “He enjoyed his time here and he did well for us as a police chief. The good thing about his leadership style is that he recognized that he had good leaders beneath him and he gave many of us the ability to establish different things under his umbrella. He let people do their jobs.”

### WHY I BECAME A COP

*At age 21, John Butler had an opportunity to take the examination for police officer – and he did. That would be the beginning of a long and storied career. But, says Butler, his motivation at the time was to get a better job, and that becoming a police officer offered security and benefits. Chief Butler says that he has no regrets, “I enjoyed being a police officer and a detective.”*

# Officers Rush into Burning Building, Rescue Man in Wheelchair

Just days before Christmas, police officers in the Towns of Geddes and Solvay in Onondaga County received a call of a structure fire at Bianchi's Pizza Shop in Solvay. The second floor of the structure contained apartments, and responding patrols were



*Fire crews battle the fire on December 20, 2021 on Milton Avenue in Solvay, NY*

alerted that a wheelchair-bound man was trapped on the second floor and that there may be children inside. Police officers were met on the street outside of the building by the man's wife who was crying, pleading for help. The fire department had not yet arrived and smoke was billowing into the street. The officers immediately entered the burning building in search of the man. Sgt. Michael Borell, Officer Adam Lustrinelli, Officer Taylor Potter, and Officer Ryan Legacy from Geddes PD, and Officer Joseph Hardy from Solvay PD searched for the man and found him on the second floor. The five officers lifted the man in his wheelchair and carried him down the stairs through heavy smoke to the street. Officers determined that there were no children in the building.

NYSACOP Member, Chief John Fall (Geddes PD) said that the structure contained two apartments on the upper level, and Bianchi's Pizza Shop on the ground level. "I am beyond proud of these officers, we are so blessed to have them working here," said Chief Fall. "They ran into a burning building without any protective equipment to save a helpless man," Fall added. He said that all of the officers suffered minor smoke inhalation, but nothing that



*Officers recognized for heroic actions in the rescue of a man in his wheelchair from a burning building. Pictured, from left, Sgt. Michael Borell, Officers Adam Lustrinelli, Taylor Potter and Ryan Legacy. Provided photo.*

required hospitalization. Chief John Fall presented his officers with a Commendation in recognition of their heroic actions. "The five of you undoubtedly saved the victim's life and kept him from any harm as you carried him to safety. The heroic actions that you took went above and beyond the regular day to day duties of a sworn police officer." On January 11, 2022, the Geddes Town Board also recognized the officers for their lifesaving actions.

**"I am beyond proud of these officers, we are so blessed to have them working here."  
—Chief John R. Fall, Jr. | Geddes PD**

The building was seriously damaged by smoke, fire and water. The pizza business, in operation for more than a half century, was destroyed. The empathy of the police officers did not end with the rescue of the man on the night of the fire. Chief Fall said that the Police Benevolent Associations from both Solvay and Geddes donated \$1000 each to the owners of the historic pizza shop to help them get back on their feet.

Fall said he is pleased that the officers' heroic actions were definitely noticed by the public, saying that the Facebook post about the rescue on the Geddes PD page received more than 19,000 hits.



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# Community Oriented Leadership Defines Chief Beach

## Rome Police Chief Retires After 29 Years in Law Enforcement

BY CHIEF/RET. MARK SPAWN



**Chief Kevin Beach**  
**Rome Police Department**  
**Retired January 2022**

As the leader of the Rome, NY Police Department, Chief Kevin Beach held community engagement as the centerpiece of his policing philosophy. “Being involved in the community is very important,” said Beach who retired at the end of January 2022. During his more than 13 years at the helm, one of Beach’s initiatives was the formation of a Community Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from various formal and informal groups throughout the city. “We have people from the faith community, business leaders, homeless community, youth, the YMCA, domestic violence groups, and some citizens from Neighborhood Watch, and we met monthly.” Beach added, “Just having that openness where they all had my cell phone number, they all had invitations to my office. It formed really good bonds and friendships with these individuals.”

Chief Beach also instituted a Community Impact Unit, a proactive detachment of police officers assigned to quality of life issues. “They’re meeting store owners, getting into the communities, checking for any type of people doing vandalism or stealing

shopping carts, the broken windows type of approach,” said Beach. “They’re walking in some of the housing complexes and meeting residents who may not have a great relationship with law enforcement, and trying to break down those barriers.”

Beach said that the nurturing of those community relationships helped him and his department tremendously when the Governor’s executive order #203 on police reform was issued in June 2020. Said Beach, “We brought that Committee back to life because it lasted about 5-6 years and then it dwindled because they didn’t have a lot of concerns and we did have the same participation, but we stayed in touch with each other. When the reform initiative came out I brought the Committee back together along with some more people from the community. It was very easy to work with them, easy to sit down and give presentations on our policies and procedures.” Chief Beach said that one of the ideas from the Committee was to implement a body worn camera program. Previously, the item was considered too costly for the municipality which did use dash cameras. “We just didn’t have room for it in the budget. But by having their backing and support, it made it very easy for me to go to our city council and our mayor and say this is what the citizens want. So we had to find a way to do this.” Chief Beach said that, with the backing of the Committee, the city has committed \$300,000 to a body camera program.

Beach said that he routinely gave his cell phone number to people in the community, urging them to call him with problems, questions or concerns. “I feel it’s my responsibility to be there, to be somebody who’s responsive to the needs of the community.” When conflicts between police and communities began to rise after the George Floyd incident, Beach said that the established relationships between the community, himself and his police department helped to lower anxiety in his city. Beach said, “We were able to quell those tensions because of the community support we had. Our problems here were minimal.”

Beach’s career began in 1993 with the Oneida County Sheriff’s Office where he worked in Corrections. The following year he was hired as a police officer in Rome. Throughout his career Beach was a member of the Special Response Team, ATV and Bicycle patrols, and was a Field Training Officer. He was promoted to Detective in 2005, Commander of the Detective Division in 2005, and Deputy Chief in 2007. In March 2008 he was promoted to Chief of Police and served in that position until his retirement at the end of January 2022.

### Challenges of Bail Reform, Discovery Reform, and Mental Health

Discussing the challenges facing law enforcement today, Chief Beach noted that personal accountability is suffering. “Bail reform has been quite a problem with recidivism. There’s no accountability any more. The criminals know it. And people are being victimized over and over,” said Beach, adding that it takes a toll on officers, too. “How do we expect them (police officers) to continue to be proactive and care so much? They’re trying to complete reports, and the criminals are back out doing it again before you can finish your paperwork. You arrest the same person over and over

### WHY I BECAME A COP

*Kevin Beach’s career was influenced by his father, Bruce W. Beach (1948-2019), who served with Rome PD from 1969-1989. “I was born in 1971. Growing up, that’s all I knew was my father being a police officer. I knew all of the police officers. I always respected the uniform. I liked the authority and the respect that they commanded. But I wasn’t sure that was the path I was going to follow. I was actually going to join the military. I had proposed to my wife and was doing contracting work with my father – he had retired and we started a business together. I needed something a little more stable. I figured if I was going to get married and have a family, what better way to do it than to join the military. I was about 3 days away from getting shipped to Syracuse to do my processing, and my father talked with the Oneida County Sheriff. I got an interview and he hired me right then to work in the jail. The first day I put the uniform on, I fell in love with it. I just knew that was what I wanted to do. I took the Rome PD test. I studied hard for it. That was the only place that I wanted to become an officer, the only test I ever took.*



**Left: Chief Beach’s father Bruce Beach; right: Chief Kevin Beach**

**“Bail reform has been quite a problem with recidivism. There’s no accountability any more. The criminals know it. And people are being victimized over and over.” —Chief/Ret. Kevin Beach**

again, and the businesses asking ‘why aren’t you doing anything about it?’, ‘why isn’t this person in jail?’, ‘if you would have locked him up the last time then this wouldn’t have happened.’”

Beach also pointed to changes to New York’s discovery laws as having an impact on law enforcement, particularly police and district attorneys. “When you have to be trial ready in 15 days for every single traffic stop you make, every petty larceny, you’ve got to send them every piece of video, dash cams, if we bring somebody into the station they want video of every place that person walks. So we’ve had to take officers and make them full time discovery officers just to burn video. That takes officers off the street, that’s an increase in our costs,” said Chief Beach.

Beach said that another perpetual societal problem is working with people with mental health issues. Said Beach, “There’s no solution in New York State because they don’t have the manpower and we don’t have the resources to properly deal with people, they’re not criminals, but they have mental health issues, and you try to get them help.” In Rome, the former Chief said that they have a Mobile Crisis Assessment Team, but often there is only one representative covering three counties. Speaking about persons with mental health problems, Beach said, “They don’t need to be in the criminal justice system. The big cry of police reform was to possibly bring the mental health field along with police and that they would be better if they got sent on calls instead of police officers. Well, that’s not going to work because that’s dangerous. They’re not equipped with the same tools to defend themselves or other people. Even if they were, they don’t have enough people to do it.” Beach continued, “The answer is not to lock somebody up who has mental illness, but to get them help or treatment. To me, that doesn’t make any sense. We’ve had people that we’ve dealt with 80 times in a year, and there’s no place you can turn. And you feel bad, because we’re supposed to be there to help them along with the victims.”

### **Recruitment and Retention of Police Personnel**

Chief Beach is seriously concerned about the future of policing, in particular, the ability to recruit and retain quality police officers. “We just did our physical agility test for potential candidates. This was by far the lowest turnout we have ever had. When I came on we had about 300 candidates that took the test. It substantially dropped over the years but we were still hovering in 120 or so candidates. The last 2 years we down to 80-90; this past year we had 43 people take our exam, but we had 6 that passed.” Beach said this low level of interest is unprecedented, leaving the serious question as to where and how municipalities are going to be able to attract qualified candidates.



*Chief Beach with then-Presidential-candidate Donald Trump on the campaign trail during a stop in Rome, NY.*

“I never looked at policing for the benefits, but it was nice to know that you had a pension waiting for you, and there were good benefits for your family, health insurance, and that – but that’s seems to have gone the other way. You went from Tier 1, 2, 3, now they’re in Tier 6.” Beach said that with decreases in benefits, the negative attitude of some people toward law enforcement, and the pressures of today’s job, it has become increasingly difficult to recruit.

### **Retirement Delayed Not Retirement Denied**

Chief Beach was seriously considering retiring in 2020. But when the pandemic struck, being short-staffed already, he did not want to leave his beloved department and the community in a lurch. “Nobody knew where this (pandemic) was going to go. You’re getting ready for riots and checking ammunition...” Beach said that with the George Floyd incident that followed, along with all of the other pressures facing police chiefs, he could not walk away at that time. “It would have been easy to go, but I felt like I owed it to the community and my officers to stick through it with them.” Beach said that he feels things have calmed down during the latter part of 2021 and feels comfortable in passing the torch. He said, “It was time to step aside and let some of these others guys run the department.”

### **Memorable Cases**

Asked about interesting investigations during his career, Beach recalled a murder-for-hire when he served in the Detective Division where he received a tip that a woman was looking for someone to kill her husband. Beach said, “We utilized one of our undercover officers and I did the introduction. This woman actually showed up, sat in the car with us. She provided a life insurance policy, a map, and a timeline for when this guy leaves the house, where he drives to, she told us what hunting season it was, and that we could make it look like a hunting accident.” Beach said the woman even provided a down payment. After some additional investigation and surveillance, the woman was arrested. But, said Beach, the husband was not appreciative of the work of the police in identifying the conspiracy and interceding. “When we got to court, the husband absolutely lost his mind on us, saying that we set her up, that she

**“... when the undercover officer met with the woman, he asked, ‘do you want us to hurt him or do you want him dead?’, and she said, ‘I want him dead.’”**

**—Chief Kevin Beach recalling a murder-for-hire investigation**

wasn’t going to do this, that it was entrapment. He wanted her released, did not want to go through with charges. It was one of the most bizarre things I’ve ever seen.” Beach said that the woman was convicted despite protests by the husband. Beach said that when the undercover officer met with the woman, he asked, ‘do you want us to hurt him or do you want him dead?’, and she said, ‘I want him dead.’ She told us straight out, I want him dead! Here’s the insurance, I’ll give you the down payment now and I’ll give you the rest as soon as I collect the policy.”

### **Right Place, Right Time**

Over the years Chief Beach developed a reputation for getting involved in several off-duty incidents. As reported in *The Chief’s Chronicle* (December 2015) when the Chief was taking his daughter to college in Plattsburgh, New York, he came across an impaired driver and was able to intercept the man when he entered a parking

lot. The chief had contacted local police who arrested the man.

Another one of his off-duty DWI cases occurred when he was driving back from the Syracuse area and observed a car swerving in traffic. He called 911 as he followed the driver. "This person was probably going to kill somebody," said Beach. "I kept following past my exit on the thruway for almost 30 miles. As I was talking to the dispatcher, I got off in Utica. He We pulled into a hotel just after the interchange, I pulled into the hotel, he tried to make a U-turn to come back out and I blocked him in with my car. I jumped out and I ended up reaching into his car and pulling his keys, and just after I pulled his keys and was holding him there, the two Troopers showed up," recalled Beach. "He had a bottle of booze between his legs,

and apparently he had been driving and drinking this bottle since Rochester. He could hardly function." Beach said that the driver had struck a concrete barrier at one of the underpasses along the thruway scraping the length of the car and sending parts of the car flying into the roadway. "Fortunately he didn't kill anybody," said the Chief.

### Future Plans

The now-retired police chief says that he plans on spending time with his family and working on his golf game. "I want to make up for some lost time," he said. His wife and four adult children all live in the Rome area. Beach also enjoys hunting and fishing.

# Cybersecurity Starts with You

## Cybersecure departments require cyber-smart leaders. CISA is here to help.

BY: RICH RICHARD, CHIEF OF CYBERSECURITY  
CYBERSECURITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY AGENCY, REGION 2

**A**n unfortunate byproduct of today's highly connected world, cybercrime is a broad term referring to any criminal activity involving a computer and the internet. Most often associated with acts of financial fraud, ransomware attacks, identity theft, violations of privacy, cyber bullying or harassment, and trafficking in stolen or illicit material, cybercrimes can be personal in nature or financially, ideologically, or politically motivated.

Targeted at individuals, cybercrimes can involve obtaining private personal information such as logon IDs, passwords, credit card and bank account information, or even medical records. On a larger scale, these crimes can target the finances or proprietary information of an organization, or aim to disrupt its critical functions, potentially causing wide-reaching harm. When directed at a governmental authority, including law enforcement, the impact of that harm can ripple across a locality, state, region, country, and around the world.

Cyber criminals do not discriminate; they target vulnerable computer systems regardless of whether they are part of a law enforcement agency, large corporation, a small business, or belong to a home user. Combatting their efforts is a shared responsibility in which all Americans have a role to play. While the tendency might be to leave your department's cybersecurity to the IT professionals,

**While the tendency might be to leave your department's cybersecurity to the IT professionals, it takes a whole-team approach to secure an agency's cyber environment, just as it does to secure its physical environment. That begins with leadership playing an active role in fostering a culture of smart cyber practices.**

it takes a whole-team approach to secure an agency's cyber environment, just as it does to secure its physical environment. That begins with leadership playing an active role in fostering a culture of smart cyber practices.

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), within the Department of Homeland Security, was created in 2018 and tasked with leading the national effort to understand and manage cyber and physical risk to our critical infrastructure. Assisting state, local, tribal and territorial governments, including their law enforcement departments and agencies, to understand cyberthreats and working with them to prevent, prepare for, and recover from cyberattacks falls within that mandate. A team of CISA Cybersecurity Advisors (CSAs) is at work in every region of the country doing just that, and they can offer valuable resources and guidance to your agency or department in its efforts to bolster its cybersecurity.

### Understanding the Threat

CISA Region 2, which includes New York State, saw its fair share of high-profile cyberattacks directed at the private and public sectors in 2021, and law enforcement entities were not immune. Coast to coast, local governmental entities, including law enforcement and emergency communications, were among some of the most common targets of ransomware attacks, an ongoing global scourge that encrypts files on a device, rendering those files and the systems that rely on them unusable until a "ransom" is paid. Other attacks against law enforcement around the country have included paralyzing emergency response communications systems and 911 call centers; disclosing officers' personal information, including their home addresses, and calling for harm against them; and taking down law enforcement email systems, web sites, and web-based services.

Defending against cybercrimes like these first requires an understanding of the interconnected cyber ecosystem through which malicious actors can achieve their goals. Far more than just a "computer thing," cyberattacks can occur on or via any device or service connected to the internet, including mobile phones, tablets, gaming devices, smart televisions or appliances. Virtually any object connected to the "internet of things" offers a criminal the opportunity to exploit a security vulnerability to access their intended target.

Additionally, understanding the methods malicious actors utilize to perpetrate cyberattacks is key to preventing them.

Phishing attacks use email or malicious websites to solicit personal information by posing as a trustworthy organization like a credit card company, charity, or financial institution, often suggesting there is a problem or need for help. When users respond with the requested information, attackers can use it to gain access to accounts. Vishing and smishing attacks are similar to phishing attacks, but they come via phone calls (vishing) or text message (smishing), soliciting similar sensitive information or asking recipients to click on links that can trigger malware downloads into the user's device and network.

Cybersecurity and physical security are becoming increasingly interdependent, and ensuring your department is as vigilant with both requires fostering a culture of cyber awareness and standard practices that are embraced throughout the workforce.

### Preventing Attacks and Building Resilience

CISA's focus when it comes to cybersecurity is fostering prevention and building resilience – both of which can be achieved with some straight-forward practices:

- Enabling multi-factor authentication across all agency internet-facing services when possible and encouraging your workforce to do the same across their accounts and devices
- Educating your workforce to know what phishing, vishing and smishing attempts look like and what they should do if they see something sketchy
- Ensuring devices accessible to the internet are properly configured and that security settings are enabled and kept up to date
- Using a reputable anti-virus and malware product and keeping it up to date.
- Patching systems and updating software in a timely manner, enabling automatic updates if possible
- Identifying and prioritizing critical systems and information
- Creating tested, reliable, and secure off-line backups of critical information
- Having a current and tested Incident Response Plan should a ransomware or other cyber intrusion occur

In addition to these commonsense practices, CISA's CSAs work regularly with state and local governmental entities in New York State to provide an array of no-cost services, resources, and assessments. They are available to assist your department in building prevention and resilience into its cybersecurity.

As a non-regulatory agency, the organizations who work with CISA do so voluntarily and on their terms, knowing that the

information they provide to the agency will not be shared. CISA CSAs can also develop and conduct tabletop cybersecurity exercises

**To connect with your local CSA in New York or to learn more about CISA's resources, email CISA Central at [central@cisa.dhs.gov](mailto:central@cisa.dhs.gov). Or, if you are seeking assistance or technical advice regarding a cyber incident, you can also email CISA Central or call 888-282-0870.**

for your department, provide general cybersecurity awareness training, and are available to speak to your workforce or security-focused events.

To connect with your local CSA in New York or to learn more about CISA's resources, email CISA Central at [central@cisa.dhs.gov](mailto:central@cisa.dhs.gov). Or, if you are seeking assistance or technical advice regarding a cyber incident, you can also email CISA Central or call 888-282-0870.

Law enforcement officials have seen firsthand the damage that can be wrought by cybercriminals. Successfully defending against them begins with you. CISA stands ready to assist you in your efforts to keep our law enforcement professionals and nation safe and secure.

### Additional Resources

- [CISA's Cyber Essentials](#) is a guide for leaders of small businesses as well as leaders of small and local government agencies to develop an actionable understanding of where to start implementing organizational cybersecurity practices.
- [CISA Cyber Essentials Toolkits](#) provide a set of modules designed to break CISA's Cyber Essentials into bite-sized actions IT professionals and leadership can take to achieve full implementation of each.
- [CISA CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS PROGRAM TOOLKIT](#) provides resources for all segments of the community.
- [STOP. THINK. CONNECT.](#) is the global online safety education and awareness campaign to help all digital citizens stay safer and more secure online.
- [CISA Cybersecurity Awareness Program Law Enforcement Resources](#) offer materials to help combat cybercrime and spread cybersecurity awareness in your community.
- [StopRansomware.gov](#) is the U.S. Government's official one-stop location for resources to tackle ransomware more effectively.





# Lifelong Dream Fulfilled

## Stuart Cameron's Esteemed Career of 36 Years

BY CHIEF/RET. MARK SPAWN

**A**fter more than 36 years in law enforcement, Acting Commissioner Stuart Cameron retired from the Suffolk County Police Department and a career he dreamed of since childhood. Cameron was the police recruit who graduated at the top of his academy class and who continued to push himself and enthusiastically take on any opportunity that presented itself. The range of education and experiences he attained catapulted him farther than even he expected. “When I started I thought there might be a remote possibility that I might be able

to make Lieutenant. I never had any aspirations to be a chief.” After working a sector car for 6 years he began moving through the ranks – from Sergeant, to Lieutenant, Captain, Inspector, Assistant Chief, and Chief of Department. On two occasions he served as Acting Police Commissioner, the latest from May 2021 until his retirement.



*At his walkout ceremony on December 17, 2021, Acting Commissioner Stuart Cameron addresses friends and colleagues outside of police headquarters.*

### Technology

Chief Cameron recalled his early days when technology was very basic compared to today's systems. He said, “When I was a young cop – the only thing new was the car – it had the same radio, same light bar and controller. Now, every time we swapped out a police car the technology changed. The latest cars now have light bar controllers with Bluetooth beacons to turn on our body cameras. The lighting controllers would actually communicate with other cars so if two cars were going to an emergency call perpendicular in an intersection the system would alert the drivers – we can track the cars, they can be used using geo-fencing to broadcast messages, so technology has really benefitted law enforcement.” Cameron said that changes in information technology have also enhanced officer efficiency in the field. “When I started we got a daily bulletin, which was really 2-3 times a week. It would have some information about felonies, robberies, burglaries, but there was no real analysis to it,” said Cameron. “Now our officers have access to a portal where they can see the burgs that are occurring in their precincts, and if there's a crime pattern with the times, days of the week, modus operandi, potential suspects, vehicles that could be involved. There's so much more information at police officer's fingertips that not only makes them more efficient, it makes them a lot more laser-focused,” he added.

### Different Approaches to Policing

Chief Cameron noted that police responses have become more empathetic over the years, and he is particularly proud of the change in his department's involvement with the Human Trafficking Task Force and his agency's approach to prostitution. “We've changed the model completely,” said Cameron. “Instead of locking up prostitutes we treated them like victims, which really is what they are. A lot of these girls are drug addicted or mentally ill and they're exploited,” he said, noting that it is those who commit exploitation who are the real criminals. “Once we made that switch we made a lot of progress in arrests for human trafficking and we were able to help a lot of these girls to help and turn their lives around.”



*Police Officer Stuart Cameron with an SCPD cruiser.*

### Achievements

Commissioner Cameron has certainly left his mark on Suffolk County law enforcement. As Chief of Department, he established the department's first real time crime center, now part of the DCJS Crime Analysis Center network; SCPD realized reductions in traffic fatalities each year that he served as Chief; he improved officer wellness programs and transitioned the agency's mobile data computers from laptop-style to portable tablets. Since the pandemic, he was the Incident Commander for the department's response to COVID-19, including the establishment of several points of distribution for vaccines throughout Suffolk County.

### Major Cases

Among the major cases in which Chief Cameron was involved during his career was the Suffolk Sniper case in 1994. A suspect was shooting people as cover for the murder of one particular man who was his intended target, intending to make the murder seem random as part of his scheme. The suspect was identified and arrested.

Cameron was also involved in the TWA Flight 800 investigation in 1996 in which 200 passengers were killed. Said Cameron about the response to the investigation, “I think that our department and our county’s response to that event really proved the capability of our police department. All of their remains were recovered, partly by our dive team.” Cameron said that the county’s Medical Examiner was able to process and identify all of the remains.

From 2010-2011, Cameron served as Incident Commander for a multi-agency crime scene search for human remains in the Gilgo Beach-Oak Beach area for victims of an unidentified serial killer. According to various published reports, at least 10 victims of the serial killer disposed of the dismembered bodies in Suffolk County, with possibly an additional 6 victims attributable to the killer. Cameron said the multi-agency operations included Suffolk and Nassau County PDs, New York State Police, FBI, and the New York City medical Examiner’s Office.

### Homeland Security

The 9/11 attacks had a profound impact on Chief Cameron. In 2006 he was asked to chair a Committee for the Securing the City (STC) initiative. According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, “The Securing the Cities program seeks to reduce the risk of a successful deployment of a radiological or nuclear weapon against major metropolitan areas in the United States. The program assists state and local partner agencies as they build regional capabilities to detect, analyze, and report nuclear and other radioactive materials.”<sup>1</sup> Said Cameron, “It was really cutting edge and rewarding to work on. When we did it in 2006, it was only 5 years post 9/11, so like myself, most everybody working on the program had been on the job during 9/11 and extremely committed to doing everything in our power to prevent another major attack from occurring against our nation.” Cameron said what he learned from a presentation by Dr. Brooke Buddemeier, currently Certified Health Physicist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and formerly a Program Manager for Weapons of Mass Destruction Emergency Response & Recovery for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, was that lives can be saved in the aftermath of a nuclear detonation with preparation and planning, and that has shaped the work that Cameron continues to do today. “You can save hundreds of thousands of lives if you know what to do, and the people who need to know what to do are us, the state and local responders. The federal government will launch an unprecedented response to something like that but it will take them 72-96 hours to have effective boots on the ground. It’s the first day or two where the most consequential effects can be made in the response.”



**Deputy Inspector Stuart Cameron (right) during an Operation Tri-Foil exercise designed to prepare for the detonation of a radiological weapon.**

**“There’s not a lot of people in life who get to live their dream, but that’s what I wanted to do, and I got to do it. Not only was it as good as I thought it would be, it was even better.” —Comm./Ret. Stuart K. Cameron**

Cameron has led several presentations on the topic, including a webinar for NYSACOP members in February 2022.

### Advice for Today’s Police Officers

Commissioner Cameron said that three tenets have been the framework for his career, and to which he attributes success. “Be professional – look sharp and stay fit; treat everybody with respect no matter who they are. Try to be empathetic to people. Even if you’re not able to help them solve a problem, take the time to explain,” he said. “Never turn down opportunities - I always tried to say yes, and very often it would put me out of my comfort zone, like being in front of a classroom for the first time teaching, but push yourself. Never say no when an opportunity opens itself to you,” he concluded.

While Cameron said he is sad about leaving the job he loved, he knows there are new opportunities ahead and he wants to keep contributing to law enforcement. He said, “You only get one shot at life, and I want to look back and think that my life was productive and that I made a difference.”

Reflecting on his own career of almost 37 years, the veteran Chief and Acting Commissioner said, “There’s not a lot of people in life who get to live their dream, but that’s what I wanted to do, and I got to do it. Not only was it as good as I thought it would be, it was even better.”

*Stuart Cameron is a regular contributor to The Chief’s Chronicle magazine, and was the first winner of the Editor’s Award for excellent content to the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police publication.*

<sup>1</sup>DHS Awards Initial Funding of the Chicago Implementation of the Securing the Cities Program; <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2016/07/13/dhs-awards-initial-funding>;

## WHY I BECAME A COP

*Stuart Cameron said that when he was a child no one in his family was in law enforcement, and he didn’t know anyone who was a police officer. But in his earliest childhood memories, he knew that he wanted to become a police officer. He said, “I always had the utmost admiration and respect for police. I grew up in Nassau County so I wanted to be a Nassau County police officer - that was my dream. My entire early life was geared around situating myself in the best possible fashion to be a police officer. I tried to lead a life of integrity.” Cameron took several police exams and was first called by Suffolk County PD. He also received offers from the New York City Transit Police, State Police, and when he was halfway through the police academy, Nassau County called him. “it was an incredibly difficult decision, but I wanted to see it through, so I deferred the (offer from) Nassau County PD, and started working at Suffolk County and I never looked back,” he said. Cameron has absolutely no regrets in his career decisions. Even though Cameron did not take on a career with Nassau County PD, today, his son Jimmy is an NCPD Police Officer. Said Chief Cameron, “As the saying goes, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and I’m very proud of him.”*

# Mayor Adams, Commissioner Rodriguez, Commissioner Sewell Announce Major New Actions & Investments to Improve Pedestrian Safety at Intersections

## Major Design Changes and Increased NYPD Enforcement Will Target Intersections Where 79 Percent of Pedestrian Injuries Occur

**N**EW YORK — New York City Mayor Eric Adams was joined (on January 19) by New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez and New York Police Department (NYPD) Commissioner Keechant Sewell to announce major new actions and investments in pedestrian safety at intersections. With intersections the leading site of pedestrian injuries and fatalities, DOT will make design

“Thanks to Mayor Adams’ leadership, we are taking these early actions to save lives,” said Department of Transportation Commissioner Rodriguez. “As we take a new approach to Vision Zero, we know intersections are where pedestrians and cyclists face the greatest dangers — and so we can and will make hundreds of crosswalks safer with a range of treatments, both new ones and more

**Intersections pose a special safety challenge in New York City, where crashes at intersections typically comprise 50 percent of all fatalities and 70 percent of all injuries. For pedestrians, the dangers are more pronounced: 55 percent of pedestrian fatalities and 79 percent of pedestrian traffic injuries occur at intersections.**

of those that we know work. We will not be complacent or accept any life lost on our streets. My thanks to Commissioner Sewell and the NYPD for their serious focus this year on failure-to-yield, which sends a strong signal to New York drivers about how serious we are about this.”

“Ensuring the safety of New York City streets and all who use them is paramount, and this new plan is critical to the NYPD’s important work with its city partners,” said Police Commissioner Sewell. “The NYPD continues to be relentless in enforcing the laws, including this new rule that protects pedestrians crossing city intersections. Through Mayor Adams’ leadership, and by working hand-in-hand with the Department of Transportation in this new approach to Vision Zero, the NYPD will keep innovating to make our streets safer.”

Intersections pose a special safety challenge in New York City, where crashes at intersections typically comprise 50 percent of all fatalities and 70 percent of all injuries. For pedestrians, the dangers are more pronounced: 55 percent of pedestrian fatalities and 79 percent of pedestrian traffic injuries occur at intersections. Today’s intersection-focused announcement includes the following elements:

### DOT Design Toolkit Focus on Intersections

DOT announced that in 2022 it would undertake new and expanded efforts focused on intersection design at 1,000 locations, including through:



*Mayor Eric Adams addresses an audience gathered for a press conference announcing NYC DOT improvements to make 1,000 intersections safer. NYC DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez, and NYPD Commissioner Keechant Sewell also spoke at the briefing.*

*Photo: screenshot of press briefing, NYC Mayor’s Office*

improvements to make 1,000 intersections safer with improved traffic signals, raised crosswalks, and other expanded pedestrian space and visibility measures. Empowered by a new traffic rule protecting pedestrians that takes effect today, the NYPD will immediately begin expanded enforcement against drivers who fail to recognize the primacy of pedestrians in crosswalks. The agencies also announced a new education campaign to ensure that all drivers know the rules of the road.

“After the tragedy of 2021, when traffic fatalities in New York City reached their highest level in nearly a decade, we clearly need to turbo-charge Vision Zero — and fast,” said Mayor Eric Adams. “I thank my two commissioners for putting this early focus on enforcement and design within intersections, where we have the tools that can and will save lives. Drivers need to know that intersections are where most crashes happen — and so if you do not drive safely through them, NYPD officers will make sure you pay a price.”



*Crosswalk at 34th Street and 7th Avenue in Manhattan. Photo: Pond5*

- Increased focus on intersections in Street Improvement Projects: DOT will use its full toolkit of street design treatments as redesigns happen, focused on Vision Zero priority geographies, locations where fatalities and serious injuries have occurred, and Priority Investment Areas as detailed in the NYC Streets Plan. These changes include new turn signals and “head-starts” that allow pedestrians to enter the intersection before vehicles can turn.
- Raised crosswalks: DOT will begin a program to construct 100 raised crosswalks at curb level annually. Raised crosswalks serve a dual purpose of increasing accessibility for the disability community, while at the same time serving as speed bumps that slow drivers. This work will be done primarily via a new contract with the New York City Department of Design and Construction.
- Bike corrals at intersections: DOT will “daylight” at least 100 intersections with bike corrals this year, as part of its planned installation of more than 10,000 bicycle racks by the end of 2022. Bike corrals at intersections help provide visibility for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians, while preventing drivers from cutting corners and turning too quickly.
- Parking lot and gas station traffic-calming: Curb cuts at high-traffic locations like parking lots and gasoline stations, often at intersections, can create danger as drivers cut across sidewalks unpredictably — a particular concern for vulnerable student and senior pedestrians. DOT efforts will target dozens of problem locations, largely outside Manhattan, reducing driver “short cuts” and better channeling vehicle traffic to increase visibility and predictability.
- Doubling the Turn-Calming Program: Research has shown that drivers take turns more slowly and deliberately when physical elements are in place to force turns at more appropriate speeds. DOT will double the production of such efforts to 100 intersections this year.

### **Increased Enforcement Within Intersections**

The NYPD will strongly enforce failure-to-yield (FTY), a violation that especially endangers pedestrians and cyclists at intersections, with a goal of doubling 2021 FTY enforcement efforts.

While enforcement will be at intersections citywide, officers will also be empowered by a new DOT traffic rule that goes into effect today for such violations at over 1,200 intersections citywide that are governed by neither a traffic signal nor a stop sign. Under the new rule, drivers and cyclists passing through such intersections must not simply yield but fully stop until a pedestrian has completely crossed the street. The new rule is intended to clarify enforcement and remove any subjectivity from such violations.

### **New “Stop. Let Them Cross” Public Awareness Campaign**

This month, DOT will begin a public awareness campaign on social media and in community and ethnic media publications to raise awareness for the new stop for pedestrians’ rule for uncontrolled intersections. The message also underscores the importance of slowing down and being aware of pedestrians while driving in New York City.

“Street safety is of paramount importance and redesigning our intersections will save lives,” said State Assemblymember Robert Carroll. “I commend Mayor Adams and Transportation Commissioner Rodriguez for coming out of the gate intent on addressing these important safety issues early in their administration. I look forward to partnering on future improvements to make our streets safer.”

“Protecting pedestrians at dangerous intersections is paramount. As a City, we must prevent traffic fatalities and injuries, and ensure that our streets are safe for everyone,” said City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams. “Implementing design improvements, visibility measures, and other treatments, combined with expanded enforcement and an education campaign, will make a tremendous difference. I thank Mayor Adams, DOT Commissioner Rodriguez, and Police Commissioner Sewell for taking these critical actions for the safety of all New Yorkers.”

“I want to first express my sincere gratitude to Mayor Adams and Commissioner Rodriguez for their attention to this critical and life-threatening situation,” said New York City Councilmember Shahana Hanif. “Nearly a month ago, Arcellie ‘Celi’ Muschamp tragically lost her life to a reckless driver on 5th Avenue and Union Street in my district. This community knows all too well the toll traffic violence can take and the desperate need to achieve Vision Zero. I am pleased to see the DOT implementing a few of the proposals I called for just this past Tuesday, such as daylighting intersections and improving street designs, especially with leading pedestrian intervals. By taking these important steps, we can prevent future tragedies and ensure our streets are safe for everyone.”

“The urgency of making our streets safer cannot be overstated,” said New York City Councilmember Rita Joseph. “Intersections are where a disproportionate number of pedestrian traffic injuries occur, and I thank Mayor Adams and Commissioner Rodriguez for their data-driven focus on ensuring that our streetscape is people-focused. Crossing the street should not be a matter of life or death.”

“Bike New York thanks Mayor Adams and Commissioner Rodriguez for moving quickly to bring new traffic safety measures to city streets,” said Jon Orcutt, advocacy director, Bike New York. “We need physical changes to slow dangerous driving: Raised crosswalks and bike corrals at corners will save lives. We also applaud the focus on curb cuts — we need improvements in this regard along bike lanes like Brooklyn’s 4th Avenue.”

“Regional Plan Association applauds Mayor Adams and Commissioner Rodriguez for fixing dangerous intersections and doing more to protect pedestrians,” said Kate Slevin, executive vice president, Regional Plan Association. “Tragically, traffic fatality numbers were up in 2021, reaching the highest level since 2013.

**“Raised crosswalks are a design innovation that should be rolled out throughout New York City, and Leading Pedestrian Intervals, split-phase signals, daylighting, and turn-calming are all proven-effective means of keeping people safe. We hope the Department of Transportation will be given the resources to implement these changes as soon as possible.”**

**—Eric McClure, Executive Director, Streets PAC**

We look forward to working with the mayor and commissioner on a comprehensive approach to bring these numbers down and create a safer city for all. Efforts like this — with a focus on design, enforcement, and public awareness — will be fundamental to that broader strategy.”

“We’re very pleased that Mayor Adams and Commissioner Rodriguez are making intersection safety a priority,” said Eric McClure, executive director, Streets PAC. “Far, far too many pedestrians are injured or killed while doing exactly what they’re supposed to be doing — crossing at intersections in crosswalks with the right of way — and we’re confident that these new investments in intersection design will make a profound difference in keeping people safe. Raised crosswalks are a design innovation that should be rolled out throughout New York City, and LPIs, split-phase signals, daylighting, and turn-calming are all proven-

effective means of keeping people safe. We hope the Department of Transportation will be given the resources to implement these changes as soon as possible.”

“Last year was the highest on record since 2013 in terms of traffic deaths, and this trend has been moving in the wrong direction since 2018,” said Liam Blank, policy and communications manager, Tri-State Transportation Campaign. “These targeted investments to improve our city’s streets will go a long way toward achieving zero traffic fatalities. We strongly support this new initiative, and we commend Mayor Adams and Commissioner Rodriguez for prioritizing safer streets for all New Yorkers.”

“Today’s bold announcement from City Hall signifies a historic turning point in our city’s movement to make our streets safer for pedestrians, cyclists, riders and drivers. These actions and policy-changes will make a real difference in the everyday lives of residents,” said Representative Yvette D. Clarke. “Rooted in the Vision Zero philosophy responsible for our success improving pedestrian safety so far, these actions solidify not only our city’s commitment to protecting pedestrians, but our promise to pursue both environmentally-friendly and inclusive policies that will undoubtedly save lives. I thank Mayor Eric Adams and his administration, the Department of Transportation, and the NYPD for their shared dedication towards making our city more pedestrian friendly, and a more equitable space for all commuters. I look forward to seeing progress, including enforcement against those who don’t comply with these new safety measures, take root when this initiative is fully implemented.”

“I want to thank Mayor Adams and his administration for giving their attention to street safety almost immediately after taking office. Even one death on New York City streets is too many, and the number of pedestrian fatalities and injuries in recent years is disheartening. I look forward to the impact these changes will make for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers,” said Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso.

“Investment in safe street design is how we will achieve Vision Zero,” said Danny Harris, Executive Director, Transportation Alternatives. “The concrete solutions announced today will better prevent drivers from speeding and protect our most vulnerable road users, like seniors, children, and everyone who bikes. This effort must be coupled with additional actions that reduce the number of dangerous vehicles citywide, and, as we’ve put forward in our NYC 25x25 vision, also reclaim street space that better serves our public health, climate, and the local economy. Today’s emphasis on infrastructure is the right approach, and we look forward to working with the Adams administration on additional measures that get Vision Zero back on track.”

“Traffic violence is a public health crisis, and as recently as last night, Families for Safe Streets members have been at vigils mourning preventable, heartbreaking pedestrian deaths here in Brooklyn,” said Fabiola Mendieta-Cuapio, member, Families for Safe Streets. “But like other public health crises, we have the proven tools that will help us save lives. This begins with redesigning streets for safety, and we are very glad to see the Adams administration prioritizing physical infrastructure to protect New Yorkers on our streets. Nobody else should go through the pain I faced when my son was killed in a crash. With the right investments on our streets, we can save lives and solve the traffic violence epidemic.”

*Mayor Eric Adams Office – Press Release; January 19, 2022*

# Looking Back: Police Relief Associations

## Providing Support at a Critical Time to Survivors

A century ago, survivor's benefits for peace and police officers killed in the line of duty did not exist as they do today. In some cases, it was up to the municipality or private, social organizations to solicit donations for the families left behind. In a male-dominated profession in the 1920's, when that breadwinner was a police officer who died in the line of duty, the spouse and children were in financial jeopardy. How would the family keep their home, feed their children, or provide for their education? There was much discussion at the 1929 conference of the New York



**Chief John Hartmann,**  
Freeport PD  
3rd Vice President  
NYSACOP – 1929  
NYSACOP File Photo

State Association of Chiefs of Police about Police Relief Associations which provided for funds to help pay for funeral expenses and care for children.

Chief John Hartmann (Freeport PD), Third Vice President of NYSACOP spoke to NYSACOP delegates at the conference in Cortland, New York about experiences that year (1929) in Nassau County where they paid out

\$1000 to two widows within a couple of days following the tragic loss of their husbands. One of those cases, Hartmann said, was the death of Lt. John P. Dowd<sup>1</sup> of Nassau County Police Department who had been in his new rank for only two weeks when he was killed (4/30/1929) by a driver operating an automobile. The other case was the death of Patrolman Frederick C. Secker, also killed by a motorist that same year.

Chief Hartmann lamented the loss of the officers, but was grateful in the fact that there was some assistance that provided for the families. He shared the following account about Patrolman Secker's death:

*"The Chief of the Lynbrook Police Station one day called Commissioner Sykes (Nassau County Police Commissioner) on the phone and said to him, 'Something terrible has happened, will you please come down here as soon as you can.' The Commissioner got there in half an hour and was taken into the office of the police station. There was the shield of Patrolman Secker on the desk. Instead of the bright silver shield, it was dyed with his life's blood. There were also his revolver and uniform, blood-smeared and bedraggled, silent but eloquent witnesses to his loyalty to duty. Patrolman Secker, while on traffic duty, had been run into by an automobile which crashed into him in spite of his "Stop" signal, and he was catapulted through the windshield of the car and killed instantly. Within a couple of days, \$1000*



**Patrolman Frederick C. Secker – family photo as published in Nassau Daily Review, 1929**

*was paid out by the Relief Association and numerous other cases have occurred in this County and all were handled in a like and satisfactory manner by the Nassau County Police Relief fund."*<sup>2</sup>

The discussion continued and covered the formal organization and management of such Police Relief Funds. Hartmann said, "For many years the police have not received an increase in compensation for their duties in comparison with other professions, and therefore, it is vitally necessary while the government does not see fit to increase the salaries of their policemen that their communities should have a relief organization to help the police officer when he is in need of financial assistance, and this can be accomplished by having a group of citizens in different communities organize a relief organization by subscribing an amount pro-rata similar to the Nassau County organization.

The tragic death of Patrolman Secker was front page news on the day following his death. Headline: *Fred Secker Widow and Children's Memorial Fund Started to Clear Fatherless Home of Mortgages and Assure Wife and Two Children of Equal to Dead Policeman's Pay Each Year.*<sup>3</sup>

The article described the dire state of the family's assets:

*"Practically destitute as the result of a continued battle for the life of one of his offspring, Fred Secker, when he died at the South Nassau Communities hospital this morning, left his family with their home heavily mortgaged and without any money. Sensing the plight of the widow and the children, The Nassau Daily Review immediately made plans to open its columns to public subscription. James E. Stiles, editor and publisher, gave \$100 to start the fund. Then, Commissioner Edward Sykes approached the public with the idea of a benefit fund. The real condition of the Secker family was then made known and The Review Fred Secker Widow and Children's Memorial Fund was launched. It is the plan of this fund to raise sufficient money to pay off the mortgages on the little home of the bereaved mother and her two children and, in addition, assure the widow of the equal of her dead husband's salary each year. The fund will be handled by the People's Bank of Lynbrook, to be invested by that bank for the widow."*<sup>4</sup>



**A public appeal to support the widow and children of Patrolman Secker led the news on the day following his tragic death.**  
—Nassau Daily News

Immediately donations poured in, above and beyond that which was to be brought by the Police Relief Fund. Names of donors were listed on the front page of the newspaper, and within a matter of days, the momentum for donations increased. A local cartoonist wrote a comic strip for children, published in the Long Island newspaper, inspiring them to contribute to the Secker fund, and with that, donations poured in from children. In less than two weeks since Patrolman Secker's death, community donations soared to \$3000, an incredible sum for the day.

At the conclusion of his comments at the conference, Chief Hartmann told the NYSACOP delegates, "Kindly permit me to advise all of you, that the father of this wonderful Police Relief Association, the Hon. Edward Sykes, our eminent counsel John E. Roeser, and myself stand ready day and night to assist the police of any city or county of this, or any other State in this great Country of ours, in the proper formation of a similar organization, as wonderful as our Nassau County Police Relief Association.

Today, the federally funded Public Safety Officers Benefits program assists families with direct benefits for police officers and other responders who are killed in the line of duty, while also

providing educational benefits for surviving children. The legacy of police relief funds founded and organized by our predecessor chiefs, combined with government funded and non-governmental non-profits help give today's first responders peace of mind as they serve and protect their communities. Our predecessors such as Chief Hartmann, Commissioner Sykes, John Roeser, and so many others, would be proud of the program they helped to develop which 'had the backs' of so many police officers throughout the years.

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<sup>1</sup>Officer Down Memorial Page; entry for Lt. John P. Dowd; <https://www.odmp.org/officer/4251-lieutenant-john-p-dowd>; Accessed Feb. 9, 2022

<sup>2</sup>Conference Minutes of the 1929 Conference of the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police; Taken at Cortland, New York; July 23-25, 1929

<sup>3</sup>Nassau Daily Review; Jan 12 1929 ed.; Accessed Feb 9, 2022

<sup>4</sup>Nassau Daily Review; Jan 12 1929 ed.; Accessed Feb 9, 2022

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## Officers Recognized for Lifesaving Action

### Multiple Doses of Narcan and CPR Save Woman

**W**hen police answered a call of a possible overdose at an apartment complex in Auburn, New York they found an unresponsive woman on the floor of a bathroom. Officer Michael Bufano and Jeff Gardner began administering Narcan – several doses – with no apparent effect on the victim. The officers began CPR chest compressions and after several minutes, the victim regained a pulse. EMS arrived and took over care for the

victim. Said Chief James Slayton, "As a result of these efforts, the victim was fully revived, regained consciousness, and survived the incident." Slayton said it was discovered that the victim had been drug-free for ten years but relapsed due to a personal stressor that day. In a formal letter of recognition to Officers Bufano and Gardner, Chief Slayton added, "The victim's relapse would have likely resulted in her death if not for the actions of both of you."



**Do You Have an  
Innovative Program?**

**Let Us Know...**

**APB@NYchiefs.org**

# Traffic Safety Committee

**B**est wishes to you and yours from the NYSACOP Traffic Safety Team and Traffic Safety Committee for a happy, healthy and safe New Year! As always, we remain vigilant for information that we believe would be beneficial for you and distribute these materials/information through NYSACOP bulletins, our Traffic Safety Points of Contact (POC) and on our website. We hope that you find these materials/information helpful and if you haven't checked out the Traffic section on the website lately, please take a look when you have time.

It's been busy since the last *Intersections* article. We continue to work closely with the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC) and are pleased to inform you that our new grant was approved. As you know, GTSC funds NYSACOP traffic safety activities through our grant which makes the work that we do possible. We also coordinate with GTSC on training and are in the process of assisting them with classes such as



traffic safety module at the Police Executive Training course that was held in February at the Niagara Falls Airbase.

Of course, all of these activities are conducted with the goal of assisting our members and their agencies in providing high-visibility engagement in traffic safety consisting of enforcement, public information/education and engineering. While the pandemic resulted in a temporary decrease in enforcement for many agencies, **data now clearly shows that both nationally and here in New York State, traffic fatalities have increased while enforcement has decreased.**

These days it is commonplace to see unsafe/illegal driving on our roadways! Despite all of the hardship and death that the pandemic has caused, people are still dying and/or being seriously injured in traffic crashes and the proven best way to combat this critical issue is data-driven, fair and balanced enforcement with companion public information and education.

Traffic safety *is* public safety! A comprehensive traffic safety program can produce long-term positive impact for both your community and your department re: harm reduction, crime prevention/reduction and community outreach/safety. It is also interesting to note that there have been several surveys, etc. conducted recently re: the public's opinion of traffic enforcement and the results overwhelmingly show that the public supports traffic safety. If your agency temporarily decreased enforcement efforts due to the pandemic that is certainly understandable but we must increase and/or enhance our enforcement efforts to curtail this dangerous trend. We stand ready to assist you with your initiatives and/or how you can join National and State initiatives such as the recent Super Bowl impaired driving campaign or upcoming initiatives including "No Empty Chair" during prom/graduation season and Memorial Day summer/safe driving so please do not hesitate to call on us for assistance.

As always, we welcome your comments, suggestions and involvement and we are always looking for NYSACOP members who may be interested in joining the Traffic Safety Committee. For further information or if you would like our assistance, please contact Dan Denz, Mike Geraci and/or Bill Georges at [Traffic@nychiefs.org](mailto:Traffic@nychiefs.org). Thank you and stay safe!

**GTSC funds traffic safety initiatives and if you do not have one but would like to consider it, please don't hesitate to contact us for assistance.**

Drug Recognition Expert (DRE), commercial motor vehicle enforcement and motorcycle enforcement. Information on these upcoming trainings and others is listed in the weekly bulletins and on the website. Speaking of grants, does your agency have one? GTSC funds traffic safety initiatives and if you do not have one but would like to consider it, please don't hesitate to contact us for assistance.

We are also working in concert with the New York State Police and the New York State Sheriff's Association on this year's Empire State Law Enforcement Traffic Safety (ESLETS) Conference which will tentatively be held on April 6th and 7th in the Syracuse area. This promises to be a great conference and we will provide additional information to you as it becomes available. Additionally, the team recently gave a traffic safety briefing to the newly formed NYSACOP Major City Chiefs Committee and also provided a



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