

9 July 2016

THE LESSONS OF DALLAS

The recent shootings of the Dallas police officers is unquestionably a tragedy. It comes on the heels, and was arguably caused by, the recent shootings of two black men by police in Louisiana and Minnesota.

Following the Dallas shootings the various police chiefs and police fraternal Orders began a media campaign arguing what they claim is a false characterization of police conduct in the U.S. They argue, among other things, that the "viral video's" of the plethora of police shootings of black men are just "rare" incidents which don't accurately reflect police culture.

I call bullshit. I believe the police are using the tragedy in Dallas to deflect attention from the facts and control the narrative in an effort to keep things "business as usual" and turn the tide back.

These "viral video's" are rare because we are now in an era in which our ability to document these incidents is increasing. Light is only now beginning to be shined on what communities of color have dealt for decades upon decades and what is normally hidden from the public eye.

These video's also do not even scratch the surface of the problems. Without those video's the black men killed would have been a footnote in the paper stating "Armed black man shot". That would have been accepted. No one, at least no one white, would have questioned it. Now people are forced to see it, forced to put themselves in that situation, forced to see their children in that situation.

The fact is, these video's only capture a fraction of a fraction of a percent of similar incidents that are still being covered up and ignored.

These problems of police brutality don't stop with

police on the streets but also with guards in prisons — who are defined by law as law enforcement officers. Anyone who reviews the news articles posted on my FB page can read article after article on Florida guards accused of killing prisoners, including several guards being members of the Ku Klux Klan being arrested for plotting the murder of a former black prisoner.

In another instance, guards, as punishment, put a black prisoner in a shower so hot it killed the prisoner, peeling the skin from his body. One of those guards later became a police officer on the streets.

Even a cursory review of the articles printed on prisonlegalnews.org demonstrates that excessive force by police and guards is not rare incidents that just happen to be caught on "viral video" but represent general law enforcement culture.

The murders of the police officers are a consequence of that abusive culture. A culture that has gotten so out of control that it mentally broke a man to the point he was willing to go out and take action against those he perceived to be harming his community.

We can sit and discuss the wrongs of his actions but it still does not change the fact it is the result of extensive police brutality and will only get worse until the core issues are addressed: the culture of police excessive force and brutality.

While Dallas was a terrible tragedy, we need to learn from it and grow from it as a nation.