

# Why do they shoot (including shooting themselves in the foot)?

The Bethlehem Gadfly Police September 8, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts about the Bethlehem Police* 

*“Lust lays another good man low!”  
John Irving, *The World According to Garp**

Psycho-babble alert!

Gadfly just has to talk this out.

See if you haven’t been thinking along the same lines.

In a previous post your philosophical Gadfly tried to answer the question **Why do they run?**

The “they” was George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, Jacob Blake.

And “run” was metaphorical. Only Brooks ran. Floyd inched along like a running back dragging a swarm of defensive linemen toward the goal line. Blake walked with firm, determined stride, like he was leading a group of unbelieving officers to where the body was hidden.

Maybe the question should have been better phrased as “Why did they resist?” And so irrationally. Against such odds. But the point is that they were moving away. Let’s call it running.

Gadfly gave you some psycho-babble as answer.

Not to be deterred, Gadfly ventures into psycho-babble territory again.

This time he asks the question “Why did they shoot?”

And the “they” this time is Derek Chauvin, Garrett Rolfe, Rusten Sheskey — and Mark DiLuzio.

Well, Chauvin didn’t shoot. And we’ll get to DiLuzio in a moment. Just play along.

Gadfly is willing to bet that when all is said and done we will find out that “they” all had all the kind of good de-escalation and other kinds of training we would hope for.

But look at the blank stare on Chauvin knowing he’s being filmed and even hearing bystanders detail the horror he is in slow, deliberate motion enacting.



**Listen to Rolfe chatting with Brooks** for 20-30 minutes as casually as he might with a Wendy’s clerk before he sheds blood in the Wendy’s parking lot in such a reckless manner that hitting “innocent” people was a reasonable possibility.

**Count the steps** as Blake walks away from Sheskey around the front of the car to the driver’s door while Sheskey impotently follows — seven steps? Would that then be seven shots for seven steps?

You have to wonder, don’t you, how after the inter-galactic furor over the treatment of Floyd — a din even the deaf could not escape hearing — that Rolfe and Sheskey did what they did? They were real knuckie-heads, weren’t they? — to use a favorite phrase in the Gadfly house.

Critics of the critics of the police, critics like our Individual-1, for instance, claim that this furor, this din is “making law enforcement officers hesitate and second guess.” Which would be logical. But we sure didn’t see that here. Just the opposite, in fact. It’s as if they haven’t heard anything, as if they didn’t get the Floyd memo to be careful because the world is watching.

How do we explain what happened in these three cases? How will we know what to do now to lessen the possibility of such future happenings in our town? How will we know what to propose when our discussion of how we do public safety commences?

The question draws Gadfly like a giant magnet. Why did they shoot?

Which brings us to Mark DiLuzio and perhaps to an even more perplexing question. Why did Chief DiLuzio shoot himself in the foot? For that he did.

Until Last Friday Mark Diluzio was our Chief of Police, the head of a department he called the best in the state.

Chief DiLuzio said good things during the opening City conversations in the post-GeorgeFloyd reckoning with race that Bethlehem has been engaged in like the rest of the country. Listen to his **“George Floyd’s**

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statement at the June 3 City Council meeting, the first meeting after Floyd’s murder. And Gadfly can’t put his finger on the audio right this minute, but he remembers in a subsequent meeting the Chief memorably agreeing with Councilman Reynolds about the reality of systemic racism, specifically about how many Black people lack the early life advantages that he and Reynolds enjoyed.

Many liked Chief DiLuzio and supported him in this recent situation. Gadfly published praise from a typical supporter **yesterday**.

But not everybody liked and supported the Chief. Gadfly would sometimes hear negative stories about him whispered or shouted in confidence. And, in fact, Gadfly

recently found in his Facebook news feed mention of a case pending in Federal court involving him and troublesome activities under his watch.

Gadfly himself, in the **“Hayes St. traffic stop”** case, the only specific example on which he could judge, did not form a particularly good

opinion of how the Chief acted to support an officer who was possibly racially insensitive.

So the Chief knew he and his department were in the spotlight, on the hot seat, under the microscope — calling for rigorously circumspect behavior.

And yet he's not only on the **“Keep America Great”** Facebook page (which, of course, doesn't necessarily mean he subscribes to the political and racial sentiments expressed there in abundance), but he re-posts a racially charged post he finds there.

What was he thinking? What was he not thinking? Did the instinct for self-preservation just evaporate?

And the **rationale for his action**, the rationale for the re-posting, rings hollow. Gadfly will grant the however unlikely and remote possibility of missing the explicit text above the Facebook image when spontaneously clicking the share button below the image. But, as Councilwoman Negrón pointed out, the image on its own is offensive. The Chief's racial radar doesn't seem to have recognized that even days later and even after intense public scrutiny of the image.

How explain shooting himself in the foot? Chief DiLuzio is a knuckle-head like the others.

So why do they shoot?

- outright racism
- implicit bias, the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner
- the indelibility of the deep-seated default character of the “Warrior” rather than “Guardian” style of policing
- original sin (Gadfly was Jesuit trained), “In Adam's fall, we sinn-ed all”
- the **“Imp of the Perverse,”** from the Edgar Allan Poe horror story, the inner urge to do exactly the wrong thing in a given situation for the sole reason that it is possible for wrong to be done

- “a Jungian shadow-self rearing its head to get out and reveal his true feelings,” per a chatterer around Gadfly’s water cooler
- Facebook disease

When it comes to Chief DiLuzio, Gadfly’s first thought was from a scene in John Irving’s novel *The World According to Garp*, in which a wrestling coach dies from over-excitement watching porn and his peers render the verdict “Lust lays another good man low!”

Facebook lays another good man low.

But, seriously, if we don’t know the cause of the problem, how can we solve it?

Where did the training go, where did commonsense go at these moments of engagement? Doesn’t give you much faith, much confidence in “more training” as the answer to mitigating such tragedies in the future, does it?

Training is no panacea, but maybe it’s all we got.

Unless we subscribe to the nihilism of the Black lady in [the video](#) we watched a while back who said, “You know, there’s really nothing at this point that they could do that would make me feel any safer with them without them just point blank clearing them all out and starting all over from scratch.”

Sigh.