

# Avoid analysis paralysis, listen to the stories

The Bethlehem Gadfly Police September 24, 2020

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

Knowing that Bethlehem, like virtually every city in the country after the murder of George Floyd, is scrutinizing the policies and practices of its police department, and knowing that Gadfly has been trying to open himself up to all information relevant to such inquiry, a follower called Gadfly's attention to a pertinent August 10 anti-bias program by the **National Law Enforcement Museum** with a half-dozen experts on the subject, one of whom was Bethlehem's own Guillermo Lopez. Over a series of posts, Gadfly will isolate short sections of the program and share them with you so that we can more knowledgeably participate, if only from a distance, in the local discussion here.

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Gadfly finds this very short segment of the discussion very interesting. We have seen on the blog that people who defend or support the police readily quote the kinds of statistics referenced here. And we have seen here, for instance, Lehigh's Prof Ochs point out that Southside residents are significantly under-represented in statistics about complaints to the police department. That statistics don't tell the whole story. Gadfly is a literature guy. He leans toward the stories over the statistics to get a keener sense of reality. He has suggested here community meetings on the Southside run by local organizations in which residents might feel more comfortable talking about what's happening "on the ground" with the police rather than having to make the intimidating trip to City Hall to make a complaint. Note also the last bullet, where the speaker points us to the overarching problems of systemic racism where Councilman Reynolds has taken aim.

"How do we address the conflict between the perception of racist behavior by police and the statistics that officers shot Black subjects at a rate lower than Black suspects shot at officers and less than the rate of violent acts against their own communities?"

- I want to speak more to not just perception but lived experience.

- As a scientist I am all for science, but there is one thing that you cannot ignore and that is the lived experience.
- Sometimes we do an over-reliance on science and let science do the talking for us.
- True work has to happen on the ground between the police department and the community.
- Lived experience in stories are truth.
- That is the crux of the conversation, what's really happening, what's really not happening.
- This where we get stuck.
- Analysis paralysis.
- Broaden your understanding and learning . . . talk to the people who are closest to the problem.
- They will more than likely tell you what you need . . . to make course adjustments.
- Science can only get you so far.
- You have to broaden and have a better understanding of the lived experience.
- People are not in the street for no reason . . . 75 days of protesting, peacefully, they are there for a reason .
- That's what you need to start understanding — why?
- Try not to be distracted by the knuckleheads . . . try to understand why people are still in the streets.
- And it's not just about policing.