

Derek Chauvin trial: Day 1

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing, Police March 30, 2021

 *Latest in a series of posts in the wake of the George Floyd
murder* 

Gadfly singing his solo public safety song again.

Glued to the tv yesterday.

Gadfly wishes you all had his “leisure” to sit in front of that window into the body of our legal system.

He’s been hooked on this valuable voyeurism since the Army/McCarthy hearings in his teens.

This has certainly been the year for such binge watching, what with impeachments and all.

So what were his takeaways from yesterday?

Hearing that Chauvin “did exactly what he had been trained to do” got his attention.

That’s standard script in many of the “bad cop” cases Gadfly has read about over the past year, some of which he has reviewed here.

It gets police officers acquitted from questionable behavior.

Gadfly assumes that since we have that dual accreditation, our police training is good.

But, as he suggested **the other day**, we don’t know much about that training. And we should know more.

The thing he found himself most thinking about was Chauvin’s disciplinary record — 18 complaints in 19 years of service.

Sounds high to this lay person.

And reminded Gadfly that one of the things on his “ask” list for a real Public Safety meeting had to do with our police department disciplinary record and process.

Bethlehem is not Minneapolis, and Minneapolis is not the national norm for bad handling of police misconduct cases, but this article, though long, is thought-provoking and not an outlier in cases Gadfly has read about and reviewed in these pages over the past year (thanks to follower MD for calling this article to his attention): **“The Bad Cops: How Minneapolis protects its worst police officers until it’s too late.”**

There are many accounts of officers with questionable records, with a series of troublesome incidents, that take forever to be investigated, that are most often met with slight or no discipline, that often involve police unions, and which are kept secret till there is a major blow-up.

Among reforms often suggested is an “early warning” system.

Gadfly remembers Chief DiLuzio responding to a question about discipline by affirming that the department has fired and does fire officers.

Affirming that a good system is in place.

But surely — without in any way suggesting that there is some cancer in the department — we could use more detail than that.

We just need to be sure that we aren’t incubating an officer Chauvin or the other officers cited in the above “Bad Cops” article.

Not too much to ask. But we aren’t going to get a chance to ask.

Unless the current trial reminds the powers that be of the kinds of things that we should be doing in the wake of the GeorgeFloyd event.

Gadfly implies nothing bad about the department.

He applauds the department community service he sees pictorially celebrated on Facebook right now.

He will sob when they play taps over Eric Talley today, moved by and grateful for a heroism he's pretty sure he wouldn't be capable of.

But he feels the City and City Council had a "job" to do that they are avoiding.