

George Floyd's America (6): "the police were omnipresent in his life"

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing November 28, 2020

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

"This is something you talk about, the systemic racism, which is part of the problem in this country, and it's embedded in criminal justice, housing, and a lot of other things. . . . what you're saying is exactly what the Captain has said, the Deputy has said, we talk among ourselves. It may not be here in the City, but it's in the overall system."

Mark DiLuzio, Bethlehem Chief of Police, 2014-2020

George Floyd died 6 months ago this week. The *Washington Post's* six-part series, "**George Floyd's America,**" examines the role systemic racism played throughout Floyd's 46-year life. Gadfly would like you to join with him in reading one part of that remarkable series each day this week.

"A knee on his neck: Police were a part of George Floyd's life from beginning to end, an experience uncommon for most Americans, except other Black men"

HOUSTON — From the day George Floyd moved to Texas as a child to the day he was killed in Minneapolis, the police were omnipresent in his life.

They were there when Floyd and his siblings played basketball at the Cuney Homes housing project, driving their patrol cars through the makeshift courts. They were there when he walked home from school, interrogating him about the contents of his backpack. They were there when he went on late-night snack runs to the store, stopping his car and throwing him to the ground. They were there, surrounding his mother's home, as his family prepared for their grandfather's funeral.



They were at the bus stop, on the corner, and on his mother's front porch. And they were in Minneapolis — 1,200 miles from where Floyd first said “Yes, officer,” to a patrolman — when he took his last breath in handcuffs.

The frequency of Floyd's contact with police during his 46 years of life is an anomaly for most Americans, except for other Black men. While the majority of public interactions with police begin and end safely in the United States, according to 2015 survey data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, for Black Americans, those encounters are more likely to happen multiple times in a year, more likely to be initiated by police and more likely to involve the use of force.

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the sixth and final part in a 6-part series

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