

Republican Perspective
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by John Littig

The Good Guys

As far back as I can remember, the law enforcement profession was well respected by the American public. The police were portrayed in the media as the good guys. As a kid, I was taught that the police were there to help. Every eight-year-old boy wanted to be a policeman---one of the good guys.

Of course there was about a decade where police were called “pigs” by Black Panthers and by the violent fringe element of the anti-war movement. There were even police station bombings by the Weather Underground. But as groups like the Panthers faded and the Vietnam war ended so did the anti-police rhetoric and the accompanying violence.

So all in all, the police held a position of respect and there was a general public consensus that they were an integral and essential part of the community. Many restaurants, and especially donut shops, wanted police to come around. Even to the point that it became urban lore that they didn’t even have to pay for their coffee and donuts. After all, the police were the good guys.

But that was then and this is now. Setting aside the recent rash of shootings of police officers across the country, the police still enjoy respect and appreciation from the public in general. Right?

Well, you might think so, but some recent unsettling incidents have come to light. No doubt there are others.....

□ On September 2, at the drive-up window of an Arby’s restaurant in Pembroke Pines, Florida, a police officer in uniform and in her patrol car was refused service “because you are a police officer.” Arby’s CEO and Vice President of Operations both called the Pembroke Pines police chief to apologize.

□ On September 15, an employee at a Lewisville, Texas, Whataburger restaurant refused service to two uniformed police officers, saying “we don’t serve police.” Whataburger’s corporate headquarters in San Antonio issued an apology.

□ On October 2, at a Providence, Rhode Island, Dunkin Donuts an employee “was immediately rude and didn’t appear to want to serve” a uniformed police officer. The officer did get a cup of coffee, but when he returned to his patrol car he discovered that “#blacklivesmatter” was scrawled on the cup. He reported this to a senior officer, who advised him not to drink the contents of the cup. The corporate office of Dunkin Donuts

said “the franchisee has apologized on behalf of the employee to the police and very much regrets the situation.”

□ On October 3, at a West Hartford, Connecticut, Dunkin Donuts, an employee told a uniformed police officer “we don’t serve cops here.” The corporate office issued a statement saying “the franchisee has apologized to the police officer on behalf of Dunkin Donuts.”

□ On October 11, a uniformed police officer entered an Olive Garden in Independence, Missouri. He was asked to leave (which he did) because “we don’t allow guns in here.” The chain’s president personally apologized to the police officer.

Following each of these incidents, the officers involved reacted gracefully. To the extent they commented at all, they did not blame the restaurant chain or even the local franchisee. Instead they said it was “one person, probably having a really bad day” or something similar.

Do these instances of disrespect for law enforcement---coming not from known criminals, but from entry-level workers---point to a change in the national consensus? A departure from the idea that the police are our protectors, our guardians of law and order---the good guys.

What has changed, and why?

For one thing, there has been a drumbeat of vilification of police by the “Black lives matter” movement. Examples: the chant “pigs in blankets, fry ’em like bacon,” and the bogus slogan “hands up, don’t shoot,” which was debunked by Attorney General Eric Holder’s Justice Department investigation. In their October 13 debate, the Democrat candidates were asked whether Black lives matter or do all lives matter. Validating the anti-police mindset, no candidate except Jim Webb would say that *all* lives matter.

Add to this the acrimonious relationship between Mayor Bill de Blasio and New York’s finest. And the similarly toxic relationship between Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and Baltimore’s police force. Then there’s Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel publicly blaming his own police force for the rising crime rates. These things can’t inspire a lot of confidence in our boys in blue.

So how about President Obama’s responsibility in all of this? From early in his tenure up until now, he has in his public statements unwaveringly weighed in against the police. This began with Henry Louis Gates, and continued through Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, and most recently Ahmed Mohamed, the “clock boy.” It can’t enhance the public image of the police for the President of the United States to consistently side against law enforcement in high-profile cases.

Back in the day, the police held a position of high esteem in our national community---the good guys. Did the police change that? Or was it the lack of political

and moral support---from big city mayors and especially from the President of the United States.