



# Purge Bad Cops to Restore Police Integrity

The overwhelming majority of cops are good guys. But dumping bad apples is too hard.

[Louis DeBroux](#) · Jun. 3, 2020



No one with an ounce of humanity can watch the video of George Floyd's death with anything other than horror and revulsion. Handcuffed, face-down, and compliant, Floyd died because Officer Derek Chauvin knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes, even as Floyd cried that he couldn't breathe.

Bystanders pled with Chauvin to get off Floyd, but he refused, kneling on Floyd's neck for nearly three minutes after he fell unconscious. This was not the first time Minneapolis police overused this tactic.

It's painfully obvious that Chauvin used force far in excess of what was warranted, and Floyd died as a result. All four Minneapolis police officers involved were fired, and Chauvin was eventually arrested on charges of third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. His arrest should not have taken four days.

Most Americans hold police officers in high esteem, and rightfully so. Cops risk their lives to protect ours, and for about the same salary as a school teacher. In cases where they make split-second decisions to use deadly force, we tend to give them the benefit of the doubt. But law enforcement enjoys legitimacy regarding the use of force that the rest of us do not, and for that reason they must be held to a higher standard. And while the overwhelming majority of police officers serve honorably, that minority of officers who abuse power make the headlines.

If society loses faith in those charged and empowered to enforce the law, the foundation of our justice system becomes shaken, and the Rule of Law breaks down. For that reason, cops that break the law must be swiftly removed and punished, especially when it deprives citizens of life or liberty.

Unfortunately, police unions have become a powerful political force in many major cities, protecting bad officers. In the case of Chauvin, he had 18 prior complaints filed against him, but because of privacy provisions in the union-negotiated contracts, we can't know details about those complaints. These contracts often prevent the firing of bad cops.

Andy Skoogman, executive director of the Minnesota Chiefs of Police, told Fox News's Chris Wallace, "We have officers that violate public policy. They have a pattern of doing that, and chiefs and sheriffs try to fire them, and our courts reinstate those jobs."

Retired NYPD Commander Corey Pegues confirmed this, writing, "The unions, at least in New York City, outright just protect, protect, protect the cops. ... It's a blanket system of covering up police officers."

Yet despite the damage done to the reputation and public standing of law enforcement, the 342,000-strong Fraternal Order of Police union opposes greater transparency. Or at least its executive director, Jim Pasco, does. He has argued that it should be illegal for someone to record cops with their cellphones, even supporting a law that once made it an offense punishable by up to 15 years in prison. Pasco argued in 2011, "At some point, we have to put some faith and trust in our authority figures." Thomas Jefferson would be appalled.

In the days since the death of George Floyd, riots have broken out in several major U.S. cities. Often, peaceful protests were hijacked by lawless thugs who care nothing about Floyd except to exploit his death as a pretext for looting and violence.

Unfortunately, in a handful of cases, sworn police officers have become indistinguishable from antifa thugs except for the badges they wear.

In Floyd's hometown of Minneapolis, riot-gear-clad National Guard troops enforced an 8 PM curfew by firing tear gas at a woman standing on her front porch (the curfew only applies to public spaces). In New York City, an officer tore off a protester's face mask and pepper-sprayed him directly in the face, even as the protester was surrendering. In Atlanta, officers shattered a car's windows and tasered two black college students that posed no danger. Two of the officers (both black) were fired for use of excessive force. Unbelievably, Minneapolis police even fired rubber bullets and tear gas at news crews covering the protests.

Despite media claims of racism driving such actions, it must be noted that nearly every example of police using excessive force is occurring in cities run by Democrats for decades. This isn't racism; it's simply abuse of power.

Pictures and video often leave out important context, especially when tensions are high between police and protesters. But that is all the more reason law enforcement must rely on training and remain level-headed. Abusing power only reinforces protesters' belief that cops are corrupt.

Led by Justice Clarence Thomas, the Court's most conservative justice, the Supreme Court is currently revisiting the doctrine of "qualified immunity," which in theory protects police from being sued for official actions, but in practice gives near blanket immunity to corrupt cops.

What happened to George Floyd was a preventable travesty. It occurred because Officer Chauvin far exceeded his legitimate power.

George Floyd had a right to breathe, and he had a right to live. His life mattered. Not because he was black, but because he was human. We must do better.