

My Thoughts on George Floyd



One week before Ahumad Aubery's death by two white vigilantes', my wife, Judy, and I were walking through our subdivision early in the morning. I pulled my cellphone out of my right pants pocket and my driver's license fell on the ground. Judy asked, "Why do you have your driver's license?" I replied, "Because I'm a black man living in America. If a white officer should happen to stop me, then I'm prepared to prove that I live in this community."

What is it that causes a highly educated and gifted, African American male, who has been the first African American to obtain significant achievements in several areas during his lifetime, to feel the need to carry his driver's license while taking a walk through his subdivision so that he's always prepared to prove he lives in the community should a white police officer

stop him? While there are several contributing factors, I'll highlight only a few.

Let me to start with my first encounter with white police officers. I was eight years old. I was playing in a vacant lot near my house with several of my friends on a Saturday afternoon. A patrol car pulled over to the curb. Two white police officers stepped out of the car and asked, "What are you all doing?" I replied, "We're playing." The officer stated, "Well, one of you are going to jail, today!" Then the officer grabbed me by the arm, ushered me to the police car, opened the back door, and ordered me to get in the back seat.

They got into the front seat of the patrol car and pulled off with me crying hysterically in the back seat over and over again, "Officers, I didn't do anything! I don't want to go to jail! Please take me home! I want my mama!" The officers were laughing in the front seat. They drove me around for about 5 minutes and then dropped me off where they picked me up. They said, "If you tell anyone what happened today, we'll come back and arrest you and take you to jail for real next time." All my friends had scattered. I stood there alone. While I was glad to be back in my neighborhood, I was traumatized by what happened to me that day. I walked home and never told anyone what those white police officers did to me. In fact, this is the first time I'm sharing this story.

Once while driving with a friend of mine, I was pulled over by a white police officer. I did what probably every African American male has been taught to do when he's pulled over by a white officer, in order to increase his chances of getting home alive. I rolled down the driver's window and made sure that both of my hands were grasping the top of the steering wheel, so that my hands would be in full view when the officer looked inside the car. When the police officer approached the driver's window, I asked, "What's the problem officer?" He replied, "Let me see your driver's license." Before making any movement, I explained, "My driver's license is in my wallet. My wallet is in my right back pocket. I'm going to use my right hand to retrieve it so that I can give you my driver's license. Is that alright officer?" He said, "Yes."

After slowly removing my wallet from my right back pocket and retrieving my driver's license, I handed it to the officer. He looked at my driver's license and then asked, "What's a black man like you doing driving a nice car like this?" At the time, I was driving my friend's brand new, black Cadillac Sedan

Deville. The officer then asked, "May I search your vehicle?" My friend who owned the car was upset because we had just experienced being pulled over for a DWB (Driving While Black). Therefore, he said, "No, not unless you either have probable cause to legally do so or you have a search warrant." The officer took my driver's license and returned to his patrol car. It seemed like an eternity before he returned. Fortunately, when he did return, he handed me my driver's license and let us go on our way. However, he followed behind us in his patrol car for several blocks before turning around and driving away.

I've also seen white police officers pull up to a group of white youth hanging out in an empty parking lot on a Friday night. The officers briefly laughed and talked with them before driving off only to pull up across the street with their blue lights flashing to a group of black youth hanging out in an empty parking lot and ordering them to disperse.

Recently, I was so deeply focused on my dying mother until I temporarily shut out what was happening in the larger world. After my mother's death, I refocused on the larger community only to discover that George Floyd, an African American, was handcuffed and lying face down on a city street during an arrest. Derek Chauvin, a white Minneapolis police officer, kept his knee on the right side of Floyd's neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds. What's even more horrific is that 2 minutes and 53 seconds of that time occurred after Floyd became unresponsive.

Now, it's just hard for me to wrap my mind around how Dylan Roof, a white man, who massacred nine African Americans attending Bible study at Mother Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC, can be captured by police and the officers assuage his hunger by buying him food from Burger King, all because it would be considered inhumane treatment for them not to do so.

However, George Floyd can be lying face down, handcuffed, with an officer's knee on his neck, while stating that he can't breathe, crying out for his mama, begging for the officer not to kill him, and the officers present didn't consider this inhumane treatment.

I'm not asking that African Americans be given special treatment under the law. I'm asking that they be given equal treatment under the law. Unlike Dylan Roof, George Floyd was denied due process of law for allegedly passing off a counterfeit \$20 at a market, all because those who are paid through our tax dollars to protect and serve all the citizens in a given community became the judge, jury, and executioner. As a result, on May 25, 2020, while in police custody, Floyd was unjustly murdered in broad daylight on a Minneapolis, Minnesota street.

So, what is it that causes a highly educated and gifted, African American male, who has been the first African American to obtain significant achievements in several areas during his lifetime, to feel the need to carry his driver's license while taking a walk through his subdivision so that he's always prepared to prove he lives in the community should a white officer stop him? Well, it has to do with both the personal and collective encounters of white police inequities and brutality inflicted upon African Americans through the years in America.

Now at 8 years old, I'll admit I thought that all white police officers were bad. At 64 years old, I realize that's not true. In fact, I have a brother who has spent his entire career in law enforcement. He currently serves as a Captain over one of the seven police districts in Milwaukee Wisconsin. Like all

professions, there are good white police officers and bad white police officers. We have bad doctors, lawyers, nurses, teachers, and clergy, just to name a few. We have to hold these bad people accountable and remove them when necessary from the positions of trust that they occupy.

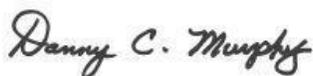
While the message of those who are peacefully protesting police brutality against African Americans resonates with me, I believe that violence is counterproductive. It serves as a distraction. It shifts the focus from where it should be; namely, on the Floyd Family and the facts of the case. Having said that, however, I fully understand what the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. meant when he said, "A riot is the language of the unheard."

At this significant moment in American history, it's my hope that we truly hear what's being said and put in place the necessary policing reforms that will prevent this situation from reoccurring. After all, this is more than a black and white issue. This is a right and wrong issue. This is a moral issue. This is a justice issue. This is a systemic red, white and blue issue that has far too long fostered disparate law enforcement practices when it comes to how people of African descent in the United States are treated by law enforcement personnel and requires drastic changes.

Therefore, I call upon you...

- To pray for the Floyd Family;
- To pray for the officer who has been charged with murder and his family;
- To pray for the officers who have been charged with aiding and abetting murder and their families;
- To pray for the peaceful protesters;
- To pray for those who are rioting;
- To pray that those who have the power to make the right decisions may have the courage to do so;
- To pray for our nation;
- To fill out the 2020 census;
- To educate yourself about systemic racism and white privilege in America:
 - Jane Elliott (Professor) to her college class
<https://youtu.be/bi3iqJykwEo>
 - Trevor Noah (South African Comedian, Politician and TV Host)
https://youtu.be/v4amCfVbA_c
 - Emmanuel Acho (Former NFL player)
<https://youtu.be/h8jUA7JBkF4>;
- To vote in municipal elections; and, for those of you who want to seek justice for George Floyd,
- To text FLOYD to 55156.

Faithfully yours,



Danny C. Murphy
General Presbyter

"But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream" Amos 5:24, NKJV.