A PATH FORWARD

REIMAGINING A DIFFERENT OUTCOME IN MINNESOTA

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

How good is your imagination? Imagine if things had gone down differently on May 25, when George Floyd died under the knee of former Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin.

Imagine if Officer Tou Thao had intervened, as called for in department policy. Adopted in 2016, the policy says that officers are required to "either stop or attempt to stop another sworn employee when force is being inappropriately applied or is no longer required."

Instead, Thao kept passers-by at bay, disregarding their pleas to ease up on Floyd even as cellphone video recorded the unfolding tragedy.

Imagine if Officer J. Alexander Kueng did more than tell Chauvin, "You shouldn't be doing this." Or if Officer Thomas Lane had acted on his instincts: As Floyd struggled to breathe, face down, Lane asked Chauvin — twice — if they should roll him on his side. Chauvin said no.

Instead, Kueng and Lane pressed their full body weight on Floyd's legs and back, rendering him immobile — and making it easier for Chauvin to take his life.

Imagine George Floyd alive, spending this Father's Day with his 6-year-old daughter, Gianna.

Power dynamics are magnified in the Floyd case because two of the four officers involved were rookies. Both Kueng and Lane joined the Minneapolis Police Department as cadets in February 2019. When Floyd's death occurred, it was just their fourth day as full-fledged cops. The most senior officer on the scene, Chauvin, was a 19-year veteran of the force.

We may never know why Kueng, Lane or Thao didn't try to stop Chauvin. But the reality is that intervening to prevent wrongdoing in the middle of a tense situation is difficult for us all.

That's magnified 100 times for police officers, notwithstanding their legal (and moral) obligations. The three officers have been charged with aiding and abetting second-degree murder, punishable by up to 40 years in prison, and second-degree manslaughter, punishable by up to 10 years in prison. For not challenging a senior officer, Kueng, Lane and Thao could spend the next half-century behind bars.

MARK VANCLEAVE AP

If the other officers had intervened, George Floyd probably would be alive today.

Minneapolis city officials have moved to strengthen the duty to intervene policy, seeking to make it enforceable in court. They added a requirement that officers immediately file a report when they see a neck restraint or chokehold being used. Similar policies have been in place for years in New York City, Miami and New Orleans, and are being enacted or considered elsewhere in the aftermath of Floyd's death.

But, as Andrew Scott, a former police officer in Boca Raton, Fla., noted, "There's policy and then there's practice. More likely than not, practice and custom will prevail over policy." Scott says that the organizational culture of most police forces doesn't allow for or reward intervention. Group think is common within tight-knit fraternities like law enforcement.

Los Angeles Chargers coach Anthony Lynn — one of just four non-white coaches in the NFL — expressed his shock at the death of George Floyd and his frustration with a system that perpetuates racial injustice. Most of all, Lynn was dismayed by the three police officers who did not intervene.

Lynn told the Los Angeles Times, "You can't just stand on the sidelines and just watch. You got to say something, man. The guy who did it, yeah, he's a (expletive), but the three who stood by and did absolutely nothing ... I'm just stunned by that. I would challenge the good ones to speak up and not be silent anymore. That's what I take away from all of this."

Bystander training has become increasingly more common in workplaces around the country. It facilitates intervention by empowering employees to address harassment or wrongdoing, even by superiors. They gain confidence to become "up-standers": speaking up when they see or hear something that doesn't seem right.

Now is the time for our nation's police forces to adopt bystander training, as they seek ways to reduce violence.

The federal Justice in Policing Act is another important step: a comprehensive approach to holding police accountable, ending racial profiling, and building trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

But first things first. To start, we must create a culture in which police officers will take action to prevent abuse — and be celebrated by their police brethren when they do.

Imagine that.

Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center, a San Diego-based organization working to create innovative solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. NCRC is nationally recognized for its conflict management and communication strategies. To learn about NCRC's programming, visit ncrconline.com

NOTEBOOKS

From Union -Tribune reporting staff

PUBLIC SAFETY: BARBARA HENRY

Mini-fire station pilot program ends

A mini fire station placed in north Leucadia on a trial basis with the goal of reducing emergency response times will be terminated due to lack of use, the Encinitas City Council unanimously decided last week.

"Ultimately, it's difficult to argue with the numbers," said Councilman Tony Kranz, who lives in the Leucadia area and strongly backed the program when it was first put forward several years ago.

Mayor Catherine Blakespear and Councilwoman Kellie Shay Hinze agreed.

"I think the cost-benefit analysis makes the conclusion clear," Blakespear said.

Before their vote, council members heard a presentation from a consultant who's conducting a review of the operations at all of the city's fire stations. Steven Knight of Fitch & Associates told the council that the Leucadia mini-station responded to 359 calls in 2019, or less than one call a day. That's about 2.5 percent of the agency's total work load citywide, he said, adding that keeping the mini-station is just not justified when two of the city's six permanent stations are handling a vast amount of the emergency response activity.

The mini-station — a portable trailer building and a small fire engine housed on a private parking lot at the old Cabo Grill restaurant on Coast Highway 101 — opened for business in January 2019 and was staffed 12 hours a day with existing city firefighters on overtime pay. Fire Chief Mike Stein arranged the $1-a-year site lease deal and told the council at the time that the pilot project would be a great way to try out a fire station without having a long-term commitment.

Putting a permanent station in the far northwestern region of coastal Leucadia had been promoted as a way to reduce area fire and medical aid emergency response times, which had reached upward of seven minutes.

On Wednesday, Stein said that to make certain the mini-station wasn't working out, he asked in December to extend what was to be a one-year pilot by an extra six months to see if there was any change in activity.

Barbara Henry is a freelance writer.

NORTH COUNTY: LUKE HAROLD

School lease with Del Mar remains

The city of Del Mar announced that the Winston School's lease, which runs through 2063, will remain unchanged following a period of negotiations between both sides.

The Winston School owns the buildings on its property, but the city owns the land and serves as landlord.

In 2018, the Winston School asked for a rent reduction from $197,245 per year to $1 and increasing the term from 55 to 99 years, among other requests, according to the city's news release. "The City and Winston engaged in discussions, off and on, to address these requests," the release said.

Negotiations ended after the Winston School received an appraisal, but wouldn't share it with the city, according to a 10-page memo written by Council members Dwight Worden and Sherryl Parks.

"The reasonable inference is that the appraisal did not support Winston's position that its rent was too high," they stated in the memo.

The city announced on June 2 that the negotiation period was concluded and that Winston's new deadline for submitting a complete redevelopment application to the city is October 2, 2020, according to the city's news release. The new date is based on the four-month extension from the point that either side decided to end discussions to amend the lease.

Dena Harris, Winston's head of school, said in a phone call Wednesday that the school's legal counsel will send a letter to the city disputing the city's position on the lease negotiations, and refuting information in the memo by Worden and Parks. Among the issues, Harris said, is that the lease wasn't supposed to be contingent upon an appraisal of the value of the school's lease.

In a phone call Wednesday, Worden said he stands by the information presented in the city's statement and the 10-page paper he coauthored with Parks. The two serve as City Council liaisons overseeing the Winston School lease.

Harold writes for the U-T Community Press.

ADRIAN VORE: THE READERS' REPRESENTATIVE

Style change for 'Black' and 'White'

The Union-Tribune made a significant style change last week. The word "Black" will now be uppercase in reference to race, as are other racial and ethnic identifiers, such as White, Brown, Latino, Asian and Native American.

Black with a capital "B" began appearing in Wednesday's paper, although a few spellings with a lowercase "b" slipped through that first day. Several readers noticed the change and emailed Thursday wondering about it.

The U-T is breaking with Associated Press style, which calls for lowercase. I think AP likely will make the change as well.

The debate over whether to capitalize Black goes back many decades, as the language around race evolved. Publications that had been capitalizing Negro in the last century began using "black" in lowercase as terminology changed.

Lori L. Tharps, an associate professor of journalism at Temple University, made a widely cited argument for capitalization in the New York Times in 2014. "By 2000, Black Americans had a choice of what to call themselves on the census: "Black, African Am., or Negro" (because some older people preferred it)," she wrote. "All racial and ethnic categories are capitalized on the census — including White."

Her conclusion: "When speaking of a culture, ethnicity or group of people, the name should be capitalized. Black with a capital B refers to people of the African diaspora. Lowercase black is simply a color."

While journalists have been using black and white in lowercase, hate groups began capitalizing "White" as part of racist propaganda. That made the decision to capitalize both more difficult.

Union-Tribune Managing Editor Lora Cicalo convened a meeting of editors and reporters this week to discuss the issue.

"There seemed to be a general consensus to uppercase 'Black' and 'White,'" she wrote in a memo to the staff. "We talked about how this style might be interpreted by readers (and others), especially given the association that has developed between the capitalized "W" in "White" and "White supremacy."

"As some pointed out, lowercasing 'white' when we uppercase other racial and ethnic identifiers could have the unintended effect of implying that 'white' is not a racial identifier."

KRISTEN TAKETA U-T

Several publications have adopted capitalization for racial identifiers.

In her note, Cicalo cited a statement from the Center for the Study of Social Policy, which in March also moved to capitalize "Black" and "White." The center said it, too, had struggled with the association of "White" with hate groups, but made the move in part to provoke thought about that very issue.

U-T accountability editor Denise Amos, who is Black, put it this way: "They don't get to own an uppercase W."

Other groups are making similar changes.

On Thursday the National Association of Black Journalists made its decision: "The organization believes it is important to capitalize 'Black' when referring to (and out of respect for) the Black diaspora.

"NABJ also recommends that whenever a color is used to appropriately describe race then it should be capitalized, including White and Brown."

The U-T's sister publication, the Los Angeles Times, decided this week to capitalize "Black" but has not made any other changes.

Issues of race and identity can be complicated and emotional. The Associated Press Stylebook offers this advice:

"Avoid broad generalizations and labels; race and ethnicity are one part of a person's identity. Identifying people by race and reporting on actions that have to do with race often go beyond simple style questions, challenging journalists to think broadly about racial issues before having to make decisions on specific situations and stories."

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

1987 PRIDE PARADE ONE FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS

In 1987 the 13th annual Pride Parade drew attention to the AIDS crisis, which had killed 289 people in San Diego County. The first AIDS death in San Diego was recorded in 1981. More than 12,000 people are estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS in San Diego County.

From the San Diego Union, Sunday, June 14, 1987:

MAYOR MAKES HISTORY IN GAY PRIDE MARCH

By Ed Jahn, Staff Writer

Mayor Maureen O'Connor tried to ignore the antagonistic, angry shouts as she walked along a gauntlet of protesters on Fifth Avenue yesterday.

The theme of the 13th annual Lesbian/Gay Pride Parade was "Making History," and O'Connor was doing just that, becoming the first elected head of a major U.S. city to walk in sympathy with homosexuals, calling attention to the AIDS crisis.

As in past marches, many of yesterday's protesters were from the Santee-based ministry of the Rev. Dorman Owens. But O'Connor ignored their taunts and harsh scriptural comments about death and sinning.

However, one man could not be ignored by the mayor. He was the one who kept shouting, "O'Connor go home!" The mayor, who was walking with members of the San Diego AIDS Project, including mothers of people who have died of the disease and people who have the fatal virus, quickly turned on the man.

"This is my home!" she shouted back sharply, and let the cheers of the marchers drown out the yells of the protesters.

That emotional moment, however, did not match the drama that ended a post-parade rally on the steps of City Hall downtown. Thousands of marchers walked from Balboa Park to see 289 crosses adorned with black ribbons and lavender orchids placed on the steps.

The crosses represented the number of San Diego County people who have died from acquired immune deficiency syndrome in the past six years. The first cross was carried by Rick Anderson, an East San Diegan with AIDS-related complex.

Earlier, Anderson said he was "scared" but also "angry at a city that spends $100,000 for America's Cup and not a dime" on assisting people with AIDS. "Is there going to be a new cross out there next year that will represent me?" he asked at the rally.


San Diego

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Police pay pact offers 7% raise

Mayor makes history in gay pride march

6th District race is well under way

THE SECRET OF THEIR SUCCESS

Suspected bandit shot at border

Anderson began crying as he carried the first cross toward the steps of City Hall. Friends reached out to offer their support, and a young girl put her arm around Anderson's waist as he approached the steps.

The crowd grew silent as the pile of crosses grew. A man placed his styrofoam cross on the steps and turned, weeping, into the arms of a bystander. Throughout the gathering, couples and small groups of people held each other and cried as they looked at the pile.

A few people began singing "We Shall Overcome," but after two verses the crowd was content to stand in silence and stare at the crosses. The only sounds were the occasional crackle of a police walkie-talkie or a stifled sob.

Anderson, who works with the Regional Task Force on AIDS, walked over to the glass door of City Hall, knelt and slipped under the door a list of three demands by the task force: immediate local funding of at least $150,000 to fight AIDS, AIDS anti-discrimination ordinances for the city and the county, and the declaration by the county Board of Supervisors of a public health emergency in the county so that federal funds can be requested.

"No one paid attention, and the key word was 'party' in 1981" when the first AIDS death was recorded in the county, said Nicole Ramirez Murray, parade co-chairman and a local gay activist, before the marchers went to City Hall.

In 1982, there were five deaths and people said, "Let's go to the beach," Murray said at the rally. "Finally, people started saying, 'Something is wrong. Something isn't right,' " Murray said. Last month there were more AIDS cases diagnosed than in any previous month, he said.

"If we continue to be passive, we will die one by one," he said. He urged the estimated 8,000 people at the rally to "get angry at the President, who took six years to even say the word AIDS." He told them to "get angry at the governor, who vetoed $20 million in AIDS spending."

HISTORICAL PHOTOS AND ARTICLES FROM THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE ARCHIVES ARE COMPILED BY MERRIE MONTEAGUDO. SEARCH THE U-T HISTORIC ARCHIVES AT NEWSLIBRARY.COM/SITES/SDUB