

DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Towards the beginning of the video, Sheriff Clarke mentions that, “You can mark social progress by the improvements made by police departments over the last 50 years. Today, police are more professional, better educated, and better trained than at any time in their history.” What do you think he means by ‘social progress?’ What is so important about the fact that police are better trained, professional, and educated than ever before, in terms of police being excellent ‘good guys?’
- Continuing in the video, Sheriff Clarke states, “You wouldn’t know it [that police are better than ever], though, if you listened to self-serving, self-righteous politicians and activists. In their version of history, the police are the villains of the story, not its heroes.” Why do you think that this is the case- that police officers are being labeled as villains instead of heroes? Who stands to gain from such fraudulent accusations, and what specifically do those people think they have to gain? Explain.
- Sheriff Clarke goes on to explain that, “The police aren’t the problem. The politicians and activists are. The police didn’t create the failed urban policies that have locked people into generational poverty. The police aren’t responsible for fatherless homes, failing schools, and bad lifestyle choices.” What exactly is Sheriff Clarke’s argument here? Do you agree with Sheriff Clarke’s assertion? Why or why not?
- Further, Sheriff Clarke points out that police, “...sure as hell aren’t responsible for the lack of respect shown to police officers. It is this lack of respect for authority, fostered over decades by the progressive left and its fear-the-police narrative, that has led to the needless deaths of so many young black men... But the idea that a law-abiding citizen has to fear the police is a terrible and destructive lie.” In what ways, specifically, has a lack of respect for authority led to the deaths of young black men? Considering the agenda being advocated by the far left of ignoring the rule of law, disrespecting authority, and vilifying the police, do you believe that the progressives are culpable to some degree for the deaths of these young black men as well? Why or why not? In what ways might the notion of having to fear the police be a terrible and destructive lie?’
- Later in the video, Sheriff Clarke notes that, “In 2014, 990 people were killed in police use-of-force incidents. Does that sound like a lot? Did you know that, according to a Johns Hopkins study, that same year, medical errors killed 250,000 people? Yet activists aren’t marching in the streets, demanding that the medical profession be reformed. Why not?” How would you answer Sheriff Clarke’s last question?

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Cops

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Slow down, police are the good guys: Column,” then answer the questions that follow.

- How much has the incidence of violent crime gone down since 1991? Between 2005-2012 how many uses of deadly force involved white officers firing at black suspects? How much more likely is a black male more likely to die from the actions of another black male than the actions of a white police officer? In the Gallup Poll, where did police rank in term of public esteem? Which ethnic group makes up nearly half of all homicide victims?
- Towards the end of the article, the author notes that, “...it’s worth remembering that literally tens of thousands of African-American lives have been saved due to enhancements in police training, tactics and equipment in the past two decades.” Why do you think that this fact is not discussed in mainstream media and in college classes more often? Explain. Do you think that cops are the ‘good guys?’ Why or why not?
- What is the main point of the article? Which statements in the article support points made in the video? Which points in the article further support the main thesis of the video?



QUIZ

COPS ARE THE GOOD GUYS

- 1. What should you do when a cop gives you a lawful command?**
 - a. Obey it—even if you disagree.
 - b. Obey it, if it is a fair request.
 - c. Suggest an alternative you are comfortable with.
 - d. Run.

- 2. The police are responsible for _____.**
 - a. fatherless homes
 - b. failing schools
 - c. bad lifestyle choices
 - d. None of the above.

- 3. Perfection is an attainable goal.**
 - a. True
 - b. False

- 4. In 2014, how many people were killed in police use-of-force incidents?**
 - a. 260
 - b. 990
 - c. 100,459
 - d. 250,000

- 5. In 2014, how many people were killed due to medical errors?**
 - a. 260
 - b. 990
 - c. 100,459
 - d. 250,000



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2014/08/21/police-militarization-ferguson-crime-violence-justice-bureau-column/14307505/>

Slow down, police are the good guys: Column

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Crime is at historic lows and polls show confidence in police, despite militarization cries.

If an American institution inspires public confidence through conspicuous, consistent progress over the course of many years, why seek to change or challenge its direction? That's the question for politicians and activists who denounce alleged "militarization" of local police departments despite their recent achievements in slashing rates of violent crime.

Numbers from the authoritative Bureau of Justice Statistics give some indication of the scope of the improvement. The incidence of violent crime reached its all-time high in 1991, and since that time has been cut nearly in half. The homicide rate was also cut at roughly the same pace, reaching its lowest level since 1963.

If any other serious social problem — such as poverty, or marital instability — showed similarly encouraging results we would applaud policies that might have contributed to progress. Instead, the American Civil Liberties Union insists that "American policing has become unnecessarily and dangerously militarized, in large part through federal programs that have armed state and local law enforcement agencies with the weapons and tactics of war." Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., enthusiastically agrees, decrying 1997 legislation providing local police forces with free surplus equipment from the Pentagon. But statistics show such programs have done nothing to slow declining crime rates, and might have even accelerated those improvements in public safety.

Moreover, there's no evidence that trigger-happy police use more deadly force because they're itching to try their new fire power. The number of annual police killings from 2005 to 2012 remained stable at about 400. Nearly all the tragic, well-publicized incidents of young black males dying at the hands of white cops occur when officers are isolated and vulnerable; none of the controversial recent shootings involved military style deployments with hordes of police in riot gear. Less than a quarter of all police uses of deadly force involved white officers firing at black suspects; in fact, a black male is 60 times more likely to die at the hands of another black male than to perish through actions of a white cop.

In addition to historic improvements in public safety for civilians, enhancements in training and equipment have lowered mortal risks for the officers themselves. During the 1970s, cops averaged more than 200 deaths a year in the line of duty, including hostile fire as well as fatal accidents, with fatalities reaching their peak (280) in 1974. Since that time, despite big growth in the number of officers patrolling our streets, the allegedly "militarized" police have proved less vulnerable to assault, with only 100 officers killed in 2013 — the lowest death toll since 1944.

Most Americans would celebrate this change if they knew about it because they view police officers in an overwhelmingly positive light. A June Gallup Poll asked respondents about their confidence levels in various institutions, and 53% expressed "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the police. Only 16% said they viewed cops with "very little" or "no" confidence. Among 16 listed institutions, the police

finished near the top in public esteem, ranked below only the military and small business, and above organized religion, the medical system and the Supreme Court. Television news and Congress, by the way, finished at the very bottom.

These figures demonstrate the absurdity in claims that public sentiment now sees law enforcement as a hostile, occupying army. In fact, the popularity of the military — top-rated institution in the nation, according to Gallup — suggests not all Americans object to local police replicating the discipline and professionalism of our armed forces.

Even at a time of intense public controversy over policing in the black community, it's worth remembering that literally tens of thousands of African-American lives have been saved due to enhancements in police training, tactics and equipment in the past two decades. With black people making up nearly half of all homicide victims, no community has benefited more substantially from plummeting homicide rates.

As conscientious leaders look for new ways to make our cities even safer for people of color and all others, it ought to be obvious that police officers aren't the problem, and will continue to play significant roles in all future solutions.

Michael Medved, a member of the USA TODAY Board of Contributors, hosts a daily conservative talk radio show.