

Transcription details:

Date: 17-Aug-2019
Input sound file: DPS _ AG Working Group_ Hearing on Investigation_ Oversight and Accountability (Part 6 of 6).mp3

Transcription results:

S1: 00:00 So, my older brother, Isak Aden, was 23 years old. It is true. He did graduate with the highest ACT score of his class. He went on to go to Saint Paul Community and Technical College to get his associate's degree and then transferred to the University of Minnesota where he was working on his IT and infrastructure degree. He was one semester short of graduating from the University of Minnesota. He started his own home care business called the Aden [inaudible] Home Care where he provided services to the youth to help instill in them-- he kind of created an environment for them where it was all about giving to others as well as taking away that gap between the older and younger generations to build some respect and understanding between the two. He also worked at a bank since he was 18 and just kind of increased in rank. So from 18 to 23, he has been working at a bank.

S1: 00:57 Just a little bit about the situation in which he was killed. There were 90 officers called to the scene. There is no way 90 police officers, 90 law enforcement officers, should be called on one person. And on top of that, the people who ended up shooting him had previous history of killing people. Like I mentioned, two-fifths of the officers have already previously killed someone in 2015 and 2013. So not too long ago. The other one-fifth of the people that killed my brother-- he is police officer of the year, won the respect for law award, and has three lawsuits filed for his conduct in administering DWI tests. So putting these people on the front lines and having them be involved in another shooting and killing is not okay. And we recently found out that Eagan police department does not wear body cameras. When you have an officer like Officer Jacob Peterson who killed Zachary Premo in his mom's back yard while he was laying on his stomach-- in front of his mom and his wife, he was shot in the back. For him to now take his accolades, move to Eagan police department, not have to wear a body camera, for him to kill my brother who was just a year younger than Zachary Premo who he had last killed in 2013, that's not okay.

S1: 02:23 So just a little bit about my brother's case, and then I kind of wanted to go back to what you said, Mr. Castile, about the scholarships that you guys offer. I hope that you do know that there is information literacy gap. There is a problem with information literacy in the black and brown communities. So, there's no opportunity for the minorities in whatever city, county they are in to know about these opportunities. So even if you were to implement them or even if you do have them, what ways can they find out about it because I have an older brother who just graduated - Isak was at his graduation - in May who is looking for a police department? He graduated, has his law enforcement certificate. But had he known about that, that would have been a useful thing for him. So, what is the police department-- what is Saint Paul police department-- what is Eagan police department doing to give these people, minority, access to that type of information? And on top of that, what is the minorities is Eagan, in Bloomington, in some of these departments that do have that type of scholarships?

S1: 03:31 And then the other thing that I wanted to talk about was community policing that you said. You do see a lot of people, even when you guys do-- I'm from Columbia Heights. I worked at the only coffee shop in the city of Columbia Heights. It's a small town. We

did things like coffee with a cop and stuff like that. At the Dairy Queen, cone with a cop and stuff like that. But even at those events, kind of like what Wanda Johnson said, you have to go in there with the right intentions. You see the officers interacting with the youth of the community and stuff, but it's always around cameras. You have people taking pictures. You have people doing all these things. And it's kind of like, "Are you really doing that, or are you taking pictures of these children without their parents' consent to exploit them, to make it look like, 'Oh, not all cops are bad?'" And also, the uniform thing. I've addressed this with Eagan police department at our first protest. They said, "Let us know about it. We want to make it safe for you. We want you to exercise your first amendment rights." I said, "Okay. That's fine. But just know that since you killed a 23-year-old man, a lot of the people from our community that's going to be protesting is going to be the youth."

S1: 04:45

These black youth that are coming to the protests have traumatic experiences with the police in one way or another. Please do not come armed. It will be a peaceful protest. There's no need for you to come armed." And the chief of Eagan police, Roger New, has stated that he was not going to be working at the time. He gave me the phone number. He gave my phone number to Mike [inaudible], who is his deputy. And he said that he would not be there. He comes in there fully armed. The whole meeting is surrounded with police officers in uniform. That is an intimidation tactic. So, the one request that people do have is don't come fully armed. Don't come fully armed. And I think that's pretty--

S2: 05:26

Yeah. I just wanted to say one more thing that most of us may not think about. For these deadly officer-involved shootings, it has a lot more effect than we can actually think about. We didn't only lose my brother that night. Right now, my sister, she's in LA. She's trying to get in-state residency so she can attend UCLA to study law. She had to come back, drop all her summer classes, and now is behind because of the situation. There's so many other aspects of an involved shooting that goes outside of the person being killed. There's families who suffer traumatic experiences who will never think the same. People have to drop their classes and get far behind because my sister was probably ahead and a 4.0 student. Now, her grades are going down the drain because of a officer-involved shooting. There is families who don't have the resources to cope with this kind of traumatic experience. They're not getting any help from any agencies. And they honestly just feel like, "It's us versus them."

S2: 06:32

So right now, we're seeing a divide between officers and families, families and public officials. There's nothing that we're seeing to close that gap. So that's another thing that we have to address. This issue goes outside of just another victim dead because we have to think about what the family goes through. Someone seeing their brother get killed, seeing their wife, son, or whatever it may be, that will have a lasting effect on that person forever. And we have to address that because that person is not going to be in state right of mind to be doing the things they need to be doing. Or we got to take into account that people are angry. They just watched their brother get killed. So, they'll do stuff out of emotion, and we need to make sure we have a fair and impartial investigation to at least calm them down, so it's not us versus them because that's what me and my sister have been feeling. It's us against the world.

S2: 07:29

And we need to see more public officials, the BCA, doing more community-related stuff. And I remember you touched on training. And you guys give training to the officers. But I'm aware that they're getting one hour of de-escalation, a few hours of fair policing. But they're getting 40 hours in firearms, 50 hours in SWAT. It's not a balanced training. And we already know the training is the first thing that has to change because I'm aware that they only get a mental health evaluation the first time they sign up to be a police officer, not after any major incident. Of course, an officer

going into the field should be mentally stable, but after killing people, seeing some things, we have to make sure that they're always mentally stable and that they're able to do their job properly, because they're supposed to serve and protect. Right now we feel like they're [inaudible] to just point and shoot, and that's an issue we need to address. Thank you.

S1: 08:27

I also want to say, just kind of build on what Valerie Castile has said about the \$11 million that also went into funding for training. I also want to know how many police officers took advantage of those resources and what it essentially went to, as well as talk about the financial aspect that Wanda Johnson spoke on, because at this point, it kind of feels like our lives are not as valued as police officers' lives. Right now, if you can understand the anger that we came into this meeting this morning-- we're essentially paying for the people who killed my brother right now. They're back on the job. These people are being investigated for murder, and it's not their first time. So for us to have to financially be funding the people who killed our brother, that's a lot to handle.

S3: 09:29

[inaudible]. I have some comments, if you would allow it.

S4: 09:36

Yep. This is a [inaudible]. I'm not sure who's ahead of who, but-- [crosstalk].

S3: 09:42

You can go ahead.

S1: 09:44

[inaudible].

S4: 09:49

Oh. Yeah. Actually, we're getting to the point where our panel has childcare challenges that they have to meet, and it's not-- we told them 5:30 [inaudible] pass that, so. I'm going to stay a little longer, but I definitely want to honor the timeframe that we had set out for today's work. So we have Mr. [inaudible] who has some comments. One or two folks over there have comments. But I think that [inaudible] agree with me that any of the folks have to meet obligations that they had set for 5:30 or 6:00, and we would thank you for a very intense day and thank you for the hard work you've put in, but I don't think you should [inaudible]. We are videoing all of this for the court, and so [inaudible] comments will still be available for you as long as we move forward [inaudible]. I would also honor the working group's time [inaudible] who have said we have [inaudible] at 5:30 and maybe work from out of town, and so some [inaudible]. I am more than willing to stay and continue the conversation, so.

S3: 11:41

Thank you very much, sir.

S4: 11:22

So, to those that have to leave, thank you very much [inaudible]. We will be in touch shortly [inaudible] next meetings and timeframes and [inaudible].

S5: 11:41

All right. Mr. [inaudible], I really have really just kind of three main points to head. The first one is in regards to this morning's protest. I think it really speaks to the trauma that this issue causes. I wanted to reiterate that I appreciate you listening to the folks who showed up this morning. I also just wanted to speak to some of the comments that were made towards County Attorney Mike Freeman and his choice to go into treatment for chemical dependency. And as a disability advocate, I did find that fairly offensive and wanted to offer an apology to County Attorney Mike Freeman for those comments directed at his person.

S5: 12:42

The second point I have, we've seen a lot of conversations around CIT training here today. While I understand the intentions of CIT training, I really think that law enforcement needs a much more generalized training, because CIT really addresses mental health. Minnesota, according to the CDC-- The numbers were released last year. Minnesota ranks second in national autism prevalence. We have to do

something about autism and law enforcement. It is a problem across the state. I have phone calls coming from Waseca County. I got phone calls coming from Bemidji. It's just outrageous. Our community has brought forth legislation. There is a really great program in St. Paul that St. Paul PD developed that is literally becoming the international standard for autism. We can't get funding for it. And so as a result of the fact that we have come to the legislature five times and asked for funding. And now we don't have a program, because we don't have any money to run this program.

S5: 13:52

We don't have time for-- We don't have the funding for the community events. We don't have the funding for the training. And so that's I think part of the frustration with this working group is we're really hoping-- I was in the corner over here huddled with Jamael Lundy, who's the committee administrator for the public safety committee. And he was saying, "This is the problem we run into all the time is we have a lot of discussions, and then we go out and we try to implement these recommendations, and they all fall flat on their face." And so I'm going to really be holding the people here today that they're going to be in the Senate and then they're going to be at the legislature, having these same conversations as we had this morning. Because that's where the real conversations really need to happen.

My final point is really in regards to the standard in Graham V. Connor. I'm very interested in ADA litigation. I do a lot of work around the ADA.

S5: 14:52

And my concern with Graham V. Connor is that if you look at the actual stipulations in the case of Graham V. Connor, the individual who filed the lawsuit in Graham V. Connor was a diabetic. The mistreatment resulted out of an altercation resulting from his diabetes. The case was filed in 1989, prior to the passage of the ADA. Today, if the same lawsuit were filed, I don't think that you would see the same result. Because you would see claims brought under the ADA. You would see claims brought under section 504, the rehabilitation act. And you would end up probably with an excessive force claim being validated by a federal district court. I think that there are much better standards that we could be using that are not Graham V. Connor, simply because when we train via Graham V. Connor, we're giving them the impression that this-- we're giving law enforcement the impression that this is a standard that's going to support them and shooting them from all claims and that's not necessarily accurate. And, so, I would also-- I think if we had someone with a disability background at the table, that might be something that-- that's an example of something that could be done about that. But having these-- when we talk about it, we really limited to mental health and it really is a much broader issue, and that is kind of my three points and thank you for your time.

S4: 16:31

Thank you very much.

S7: 20:31

Yeah, it should be. Okay. So, I'm Savannah, I am just-- I come with my mom to these events, that she is kind of like helping people get through in the system, kind of help them walk through it if they're unsure of how to.

S7: 21:35

[inaudible]. Okay. So, I'm Nicole. I'm a member or a resident of Minneapolis. Two-time business owner. This is my daughter, Savannah. I'm a mother, I'm a community liaison person for the justice and political system for people who might be illiterate in those systems that aren't really sure who to call or where to go when they have these interactions with police or politicians or whatnot and how to make a change. I'm an advocate for black, brown, indigenous, and all people of color. Just have a few quick points. The county attorney's I have private meetings with, but unfortunately, they're not here but I want to say this on record. Some questions I had for them was why are we stacking charges against black officers that shoot white citizens but not stacking charges on officers that are shooting black citizens. Officer Yanez shot multiple shots

that killed Philando. Officer Noah shot one shot that killed Justine and he's sitting in prison.

S8: 22:34

I also did interviews from Farmington all the way north to North Minneapolis with 10 different police officers about 30 days ago, and this is something separate that I'm working on with the DPS commissioner's office. But wanted to share that the officers Minnesota, when I posed the question, what do you do if a citizen is pulled over a normal traffic stop, and they tell you that I'm licensed to carry and my weapon is in the vehicle. 7 out of 10 of those officers said, if they're going to tell me there's a weapon in the car, then I'm not concerned they're going to shoot me. So I would pose, why did officer Yanez think that he was in danger? I also had 10 citizens, I posed the same question, what would you do? Would you tell the officer you had a gun or would you not? I do know in the state of Minnesota you don't have to divulge that information unless you're asked.

S8: 23:28

So, this is something that we want to educate our citizens on because if they have no intent with that weapon and there's no reason to share that, why inflame the situation when we already have a distrust between the police and the citizens. Go going back to both officers that spoke about the CIT training, I heard Dakota County mentioned 40 hours. My question and I want to hear more elaboration, later on, is that a protocol for all, or is that just that one department's timeframe? Because it sounds like that that definitely needs to be funding place there for more training in that. Also, I'm all for officer-- say that?

S5: 24:48

Ronda.

S3: 26:31

Ronda. Everybody keeps asking. I'm all for the annual health and mental screening of your officers. The reason I say that is because we see the trauma happening in our community with our citizens and we know how serious that is. So if officers are involved in these day to day interactions, there's obviously trauma happening. So we need to be caring for our police better so that they're interacting with our citizens better. And I think that's going to be something huge we can talk about that will help this panel make that change as well. I do want to say that there are definitely with that also just having a conversation and getting to know how they said, this Officer Koon Rapids from Koon Rapids said they would like to do something more to weed out officers that maybe have biases. I would absolutely agree with that. I had a personal interaction with an Apple Valley police officer. My son was involved in an altercation with another 14-year-old, so two teenagers.

S3: 27:32

We've all been involved in that, it's a normal fight it out. We've all been in that where it's nothing serious. Once the officer got involved, I was on the phone with the officer. He didn't realize I had answered the call and he's cursing and yelling at my son, pretty much asking my son to step up to him, wanting to instigate a fight, a 45-year-old officer. I was quite concerned I showed it to the scene and I am following through on that, but these are some things that are happening in the community. I wanted to just speak on a couple of things with BCA's credibility and then I'll tie it up. I am involved. I'm just going to throw out a couple of cases. The Philando Castile family, Ralph Bell's family, Elisa Gomez. Ralph Bell and Elisa Gomez are not police encounters, what they are is murders that occurred that the BCA is trying to deem suicide. There's a lot of these cases that are happening where a lot of the medical evidence, it's not suicide.

But then there's Justin Damon who was killed by police. Tamara Clark, Isaac Aiden. All these cases are tearing down the BCA's credibility. And I'll say that because, in a perfect world, Drew did say what the BCA is here to do. We saw his wonderful PowerPoint, but that's not happening. I can speak directly to the Ralph Bell case. The scene was not secured and the evidence was not received completely. The family

went back after they said the scene had been fully processed and actually found more evidence and a wallet and some other pieces that were left behind. So there's a credibility issue there on one case. Elisa Gomez is suicide, that was actually murder. Her scene was only secure for an hour and then was never secured after that and people were allowed to run through that. So there was never a secondary investigation able to happen.

So, my concern is with the BCA and I'm-- this is my purpose here is to have independent investigations done in cases where the BCA is questioned because I'm not feeling safe. If something happens to a member of my family, and I don't think any of us should, at this point that investigation is going to be fair and thorough. The BCA is blaming local PD in one case, and the local PD is blaming the BCA in one case that I'm dealing on. They say they're helping with the families. Why not if you have nothing why not help the families with the secondary investigation instead of them having to come out of their own pocket. If it's a manpower issue or a funding issue, let's figure out how to fix that. What do we need to do and where do we need to allocate? Where do we need to re-allocate? And how many citizens is it going to take to create this change? I see the panel, but tell us what we can do? Be clear what we can do, where we need to go, who we need to talk to. And so many families are saying that the BCA is not answering questions. I heard Drew today say that they are but I'm wondering why the same narrative by all the families that I've talked to, which is seven cases, which is a very minute amount, are saying the BCA is not returning their calls or answering their questions. And that's all I have.

Does that conclude all the community witnesses at this point? Well, I think I want to say thank you to everybody who came and stuck around. We had a great day Mr. Chairman and I think we heard some wonderful testimony, very important testimony. And I will say that this morning was a good way to get started because it definitely injected the degree of seriousness, urgency, and heartfelt pain that so many people have experienced in connection with this issue. So, I think our next meeting is going to be in Mankato. We do have a comment line up that people can access. And again, let me be very clear, the entire community is invited to participate in this process. No one is excluded, everyone is included. And I want to make a special thanks to Miss Wanda Johnson who traveled from California to be with us today. She gave us some very important and insightful information and if any of you all who haven't heard of the Fruitvale Station movie about her son, I recommend that you watch it. It's very stirring. And I also want to say thank you to our law enforcement representatives who are here. I want to be clear, your participation is key in order for us to move anything forward, we're going to need everyone. And so I want to say thank you all for your participation. Chief, you want to take us out?

Reverend Martin Luther King said we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. What affects one of us individually, affects us all. From that, I have always said that means that yes, I am my brother and my sisters' keeper and that is the sort of the ethos that goes with this working group, that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers. And that does not mean that we are not subject to criticism. It doesn't mean we are not subject to change. In fact, this is a vehicle for change. And so, I would also commend the folks that came this morning to voice their concerns because their concerns were heard. Some of them were not new concerns but they are still concerns that I don't think we can ever forget. That we should never not be mindful of the pain that goes with these unfortunate occurrences.

For those that are part of the working group, I appreciate your due diligence in being here. This is going to be a lot of work and that's exactly what it's meant to be. It's going to be a lot of work and we're going to, because of the work we're willing to do

here, because we're willing to listen, because we're willing to think deeply about this, because we're willing to dig deep into the issues that have been brought today both by the presenters and by the folks that came at the end for community comment, we're going to be able to move an agenda forward when this is done. That's my personal commitment. I know it's a personal commitment that I share with the attorney general's office. So I thank all of you for being with us today and I look forward to continuing this conversation as we continue to be the change that we want to see [inaudible].