



PRESS RELEASE

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STATEMENT OF CHIEF WILLIAM KINGSBURY REGARDING THE DEATH OF TYRE NICHOLS

Thousands of men and women enter the profession of policing every year. The vast majority do so with the intention of serving their communities with honor, integrity and respect. They enter policing understanding that they are members of the community entrusted with powers limited to very few—those who swear an oath to uphold the law and the constitutions of their state and that of the United States of America. It is incumbent on all police agencies to hire the best of the community, to train them well, provide them with the tools and guidance to excel and to ensure that each consistently uphold their oaths during long careers of public service.

Policing can be a difficult profession with many challenges which can cause some to stray. Agencies must have safeguards in place to recognize, combat, and repair breaches before individuals are victimized and an agency's trust and legitimacy in their own communities damaged or destroyed.

What we saw in the video tapes related to the so-called arrest of Tyre Nichols was not legitimate police work. These tapes documented the culmination of a long road of missteps which allowed five men who had no business serving in a law enforcement capacity to beat and ultimately kill a man for no legitimate reason or purpose. Police officers are not trained to engage in the conduct witnessed on those videos nor do any officers of integrity condone such action. Officers who conduct themselves in such manner are criminals and should be treated as such.

It is fundamental to fair and effective policing that law enforcement agencies hire only those who can perform honorably, fairly, and constitutionally, that they train them well, provide for guidance through policy and oversight, that discipline, both negative and positive, be employed to reinforce the high standards the community demands and deserves, and that those who do not meet those standards be separated from the service.

Policing is difficult. Use of Force issues are difficult. Police officers, even those with the best training and intentions can make mistakes. Officers who act with integrity, always striving to make reasonable decisions and reasonably apply force should be supported by their communities. Officers who take the law into their own hands, who punish, abuse, and kill without legal justification, necessity, and without concern for the sanctity of life are criminals and should not be afforded the privilege of serving their communities in a law enforcement capacity. Too much is riding on the service the police provide to untrust its powers to any but the best.

I am fortunate to lead a department comprised of individuals who are dedicated to serving our community as members of the community in an honorable fashion. We strive to improve in all facets of our organization and through this seek to earn the trust and support of our community.

It is my fervent hope that the day will soon come that we will no longer see or hear of officers engaging in criminal conduct such as what occurred in Memphis. Each community should demand as much of their police.

Prepared by:

Chief of Police William H. Kingsbury

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