



Law Enforcement Charitable Foundation Intelligence Brief



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Remembering Fallen Officers June 2022 to present

Patrol Officer Brian Lee Sember	Deputy First Class Glenn R. Hilliard	Sergeant Christopher James Nelson	Trooper Cadet Patrick Donnell Dupree
Police Officer Darryl Wayne Fortner	Sergeant Michael Domingo Paredes	Police Officer Anthony Patrick Mazurkiewicz	Police Officer Dillon Michael Vakoff
Deputy Sheriff James "Jerry" Critchelow	Police Officer Joseph Anthony Santana	Deputy Sheriff Matthew Eugene Yates	Police Officer Lloyd "Mike" Todd
Police Officer Andrew Barr	Deputy Sheriff Austin W. "Melvin" Richardson	Sergeant Jean-Harold Louis Astree	Police Officer Seara Burton
Deputy Sheriff Nicholas D. Weist	Deputy Sheriff J'Mar Colin Abel	Mounted Deputy Nichole Shuff	Deputy Sheriff Michael Hartwick
Sergeant Nicholas W. Tullier	Deputy Sheriff Austin Derek Aldridge	Deputy Sheriff Lorenzo Bustos	Senior Patrol Officer Anthony Martin
Deputy Sheriff Walter Donald Jenkins, Jr.	Detention Officer Jeremiah James Story	Deputy Sheriff II Jamie Lynn Reynolds	Master Police Officer Tyrell Owens-Riley
Deputy Sheriff Robert Adam Howard	Deputy Sheriff Jeff L. Hermanson	Police Officer Noah Jacob Shahnnavaz	Sergeant Meagan Burke
Chief Deputy Sheriff Jody Wayne Cash	Sergeant Richard Lopez	Sergeant Matthew Ryan Fishman	Captain Terry Randall "Turtle" Arnold
Border Patrol Agent Daniel Humberto Salazar	Reserve Officer Jeffrey Michael David Richardson	Special Police Officer Maurica Manyan	Deputy Sheriff Blane Lane
Police Officer Stephen Charles Plum, Jr.	Deputy Sheriff Bradley Steven Henry Johnson	Deputy Sheriff Andrew Peery	Deputy Sheriff Sidnee Carter
Supervisory Police Officer Yiu Tak "Louis" Tao	Captain Ralph Harlow Frasure	Corporal Chad M. Beattie	Investigator Myiesha Breanna Stewart
Senior Correctional Police Officer Daniel Sincavage	Deputy Sheriff William Edward Petry	Deputy Sheriff Ned P. Byrd	Sergeant Dustin Demonte
Correctional Officer IV Jade Drennan	Police Officer Jacob Russell Chaffins	Police Officer Cesar "Echy" Echaverry	Police Officer Alex Hamzy
Officer Trainee Cody Alan Olafson	Sergeant John K. Williams	Captain William Riley Hargraves	Police Officer Truong Thai
Supervising Fire Marshal John Joseph "Jack" McCauley	Police Officer Loren Michael Courts	Special Agent Jose Antonio Perez	Police Officer Steven R. Nothem, II
Police Officer Houston Tipping	Parole Supervisor Ronald D. Spangler, Jr.	Sergeant Robert Blaine Swartz	Officer Jorge Arias
Officer Adrian Lopez, Sr.	Police Officer Brian D. Olliff	Sergeant Harold Lee Russell, II	Police Officer Logan K. Medlock
Deputy Sheriff Thomas E. Baker, III	Undersheriff Lawrence George Koren	Detective Matthew Walker Blansett	Detective Kristina Zell
Police Officer Christopher Nicholas Fariello	Lieutenant Fred Douglas Beers, III	Constable Deborah Marinez-Garibay	Police Officer Brandon Tsai
Senior Investigator Kyle Lee Patterson	Deputy Sheriff Michael Adam Levison	Correctional Officer III Kaitlyn Breanne Ritnour	Marine Interdiction Agent Michel O. Maceda
Police Officer Kennis Winston Croom	Patrolman Vincent Anthony Parks	Deputy Sheriff Jonathan Randall Koleski	Police Officer Jordan Jackson
Detective Justin Michael Terry	Police Officer Daniel Francisco Vasquez	Deputy Sheriff Marchall Samuel Ervin, Jr.	Deputy Sheriff Christopher Taylor

Names gathered by The Officer Down Memorial Page, Inc.

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Printed in the U.S.A.

P.O. Box 1241 • Appleton, WI 54912-1241

(877) 325-COPS (2677)

www.LECF-Inc.org

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The *Intelligence Brief* is published twice yearly by Law Enforcement Charitable Foundation, Inc. 501(c)(3) EIN 81-1594518

Letter From LECF



According to the Officer Down Memorial Page, 650 police officers died in the line of duty in 2021. Excluding Covid-19, the leading cause of death was suicide. As I reflect upon my first year as Executive Director of the Law Enforcement Charitable Foundation and as President of the Fox Valley Fraternal Order of Police, my education on that heartache extends well beyond those brave heroes. I have waked up in the middle of the night sweating, thinking to myself, “how can we reduce the number of officers suffering from PTSD or considering suicide?” In most cases, those feelings stem from job-related stresses — for example, a recently promoted officer involved in a critical incident without the support of a union or legal-defense plan, or a decorated police officer facing politically-charged John Doe inquiries after multiple independent investigations. The world has changed drastically, even over the past 10 years. Gone are the days of thinking, “that won’t happen to me.” Just like honing our skills with training, we must learn from the past situations of our brothers and sisters in blue.

The good news is we’re making progress each day, and I am excited to share information — in two steps — crucial to protecting you and your family for years to come.

Step one: Sign up for a legal-defense plan. Because of my position with the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), I am well-versed in the FOP plan, but other unions offer similar plans. A good plan will provide additional support for criminal, civil, and administrative investigations. On average, this coverage costs about \$300 a year.

Step two: I promise you, there is life beyond law enforcement. I have been there. You start to feel anxious during your shift. It may come after a significant incident or result from progressive stress. Anxiety starts to consume your thoughts and make you doubt everything you do. You are not the only police officer to feel that way. However, in most cases, those thoughts will not

go away on their own, and suppressing them can create long-term complications. You need to talk to a professional. Doing so is not a sign of weakness nor a guarantee you cannot continue in law enforcement. But for argument’s sake, let’s say you have concluded that staying in law enforcement is not what’s best for your health or family. What do you do now? I can’t tell you how many times I have heard, “I only know how to be a police officer.” When I hear those words, I immediately think of the skills it takes to be a police officer. So, what you meant to say is, “I am a trained multitasker with experience in conflict resolution and problem-solving.” Other strengths include attention to detail, community relationship building, and the ability to work in high-stress situations. Oh, and don’t forget that in most cases, you’re a trained first responder. I could continue highlighting the skillset that police officers possess, but I think you get the point. Countless employers are looking for those skills — and we didn’t even mention that you love to help people.

Please understand, I am not encouraging people to leave the law-enforcement profession. I am simply asking you to be honest with yourself and do what is best for your health (yes, that includes mental health) and family. Many great resources are available to assist you on your journey. One of them is CopLine. According to CopLine.org, “COPLINE® has earned the trust of the Law Enforcement community by providing peer listening through a hotline by maintaining complete confidentiality as well as anonymity if the caller chooses. We train competent, confident, committed, and compassionate retired officers to engage with callers on the daily stressors officers and their family members experience.” Visit CopLine’s website or call 1-800-267-5463. In this family, no one fights alone. Stay safe!

— Matt Harper, Director, LECF, Inc
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I want to help. Please contact me about:

- A grant for a family of an officer in my community killed in the line of duty
- Educational aid through FreedomProject Academy
- A community grant for protective police equipment
- An award for an outstanding officer in my community
- Adding a name to “Memorializing Fallen Officers” list
- A tax-exempt donation to LECF
- A personal endorsement for LECF
- I would like this newsletter sent to me electronically.

Here’s my email: _____

Name _____ Address _____ Phone _____

Mail to: P.O. Box 1241 • Appleton, WI 54912-1241 or visit www.LECF-Inc.org

LECF2022

Armed Citizen Prevents Greater Tragedy

A good guy with a gun kept a mass shooting at an Indiana shopping mall from claiming vastly more than the three lives — plus that of the shooter — that it took.

Around 6 p.m. on July 17, a gunman, later identified as 20-year-old Jonathan Sapirman, stepped into the food court at the Greenwood Park Mall and opened fire with a long rifle. Sapirman lived near the mall in Greenwood, a suburb of Indianapolis.

Sapirman managed to kill three people and injure two others before another young man whipped out his legally owned gun and shot Sapirman dead, ending his shooting spree.

In a press conference on July 18, Greenwood Police Chief Jim Ison said that Sapirman had been in the mall restroom for over an hour before he began shooting, reported WRTV. Ison added that “it took about two minutes for the suspect to leave the bathroom and start shooting before he was shot by the armed civilian.”

While the loss of even one life, let alone three (and Sapirman’s), is a tragedy, “police said the toll could have been higher if not for the actions of [the] armed civilian,” WRTV wrote.

“The real hero of the day is the citizen that was lawfully carrying a firearm in that food court and was able to stop the shooter almost as soon as it began,” said Ison.

That citizen, later identified as 22-year-old Elisjsa Dicken of Seymour, Indiana, “authorized police to release his name but is asking for privacy as he still processes what happened,” WRTV reported elsewhere.

When Sapirman’s shooting spree commenced, “panicked mall goers ran for cover,” recounted WRTV. “Many sought shelter alongside employees in various stores and shops walled off from the main mall by rolling metal gates.”

Chris Roy, assistant manager of the mall’s Vans store, told the *Indianapolis Star* that he was just about to close for the day when he saw people running away from the food court.

“So, I jumped over the counter, locked the door, gathered my associates and other managers at the back door,” said Roy, 30.

They hadn’t heard gunshots, but Roy said they saw enough people running to not ask questions. Through the back door they huddled in an interior hallway with about 40 or 50 other people — mostly customers from other stores, Roy said. That hallway didn’t have an exterior exit, so they waited for police to come clear them, he said. Roy and another man tried to keep everyone calm, but occasional footsteps on the other side of one of the connecting doors sent panic through the group.

“We just instructed everybody to keep quiet,” he said.



After 10 or 15 minutes, police cleared them from the hallway and escorted them out of the mall.

Detectives found a backpack in the mall bathroom, but it was found to be harmless.

Police are still searching for a motive in the case. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is trying to recover data from Sapirman’s cellphone, which agents found in a mall toilet, and laptop, which was in an oven at his home, where Sapirman was trying to destroy it, having placed butane in the oven and turned it on.

Ison said Sapirman “had no known mental health problems,” but, “as a juvenile, he had some previous incidents with the Greenwood Police Department,” noted WRTV. The latter, however, did not prevent him from legally obtaining the weapons he took into the mall.

Gun-control advocates, naturally, took the occasion to blame firearms for the incident and call for stricter gun laws. U.S. Representative Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.), who once threatened to nuke Americans who wouldn’t give up their guns, decried that “too many families ... again lost a loved one because we are a country of unrestricted weaponry.”

Others, though, recognized that humans are responsible for their actions and that those who employ guns to protect lives should be honored.

“This senseless act in Greenwood is devastating. Hoosiers across the state are no doubt upset but also mobilized in care & prayer for their fellow Hoosiers,” tweeted Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita. “The bravery of the armed individual who took action to stop the shooter undoubtedly saved lives, and for that I and many others are grateful.” ■

— Michael Tennant



Joseph Mensah: Targeted for Doing His Job



AP Images

by Kris Hauser

Why is law-enforcement recruitment at an all-time low? Why are so many police officers across the nation leaving the force?

In addition to resignations and retirements — which by themselves are overwhelming — politics (the “defund the police” movement and little-to-no support from local officials), protests, and high-profile killings are major disincentives.

Anyone can see how unsettling it is for law-enforcement officials to deal with any one of these issues, much less all of them while serving the people in their communities. Police officers across the nation are being put under the microscope, especially if they need to use deadly force — high on the list of deterrents when deciding whether to join. No one disputes that such situations merit an investigation, but the issue lies with the conduct of these investigations. It is truly a trying time to be in law enforcement.

Joseph Mensah joined the Wauwatosa Police Department in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, in January 2015 at the age of 25. He has fatally shot three people in the line of duty: Antonio Gonzales, Jay Anderson Jr., and Alvin Cole, respectively in 2015, 2016, and 2020.

The first shooting happened on July 16, 2015. Officer Mensah and his partner, Officer Jeffrey Newman, responded to a 911 call. The call was from a homeowner who apparently shared the house with Gonzalez. When Mensah and Newman arrived at the house, Gonzalez was intoxicated and waving a sword in the direction of the officers. When the officers told him to drop it, he didn’t comply. Mensah then shot Gonzalez eight times. Gonzalez died on the scene shortly after the shooting. Both he and Newman were placed on administrative leave during the investigation.

The next shooting in the line of duty took place on June 23, 2016. Officer Mensah responded to a report of a suspicious vehicle parked outside Madison Park

in Wauwatosa. Arriving at about 3 a.m., Mensah could see the suspect, Anderson, sleeping in the vehicle. He could also see a semi-automatic handgun on the front seat. When Mensah asked Anderson to raise his hands, Anderson instead reached for the gun on the seat. Mensah, fearing for his well-being, fired into the car six times, killing Anderson.

On February 2, 2020, Officer Mensah was one of the Wauwatosa Police Department officers called to the Mayfair Mall in Wauwatosa. There was an incident involving a man with a gun, later identified as Alvin Cole. When the police tried to arrest Cole, he started to run. According to reports, Cole accidentally shot himself in the arm in the west parking lot of the mall, and then pointed the gun toward the officers. Mensah fired five rapid succession rounds at Cole because he refused to surrender his gun. Cole was taken to the hospital where he later died.

According to Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm, Cole was



AP Images

Police officials respond to a mass shooting at the Mayfair Mall on November 20, 2020. Earlier that year, Officer Joseph Mensah fatally shot an armed individual after being threatened. Because of this, he was targeted by “mostly-peaceful” protestors and ultimately resigned from the Wauwatosa Police Department.

caught on surveillance video entering the mall. He was carrying a sling bag, which was later discovered to contain a 9mm semi-automatic handgun and a loaded 30-round extended magazine. He was not allowed to carry a weapon due to his age and prior juvenile felony convictions. It was also found that the gun recovered after the shooting was reported stolen in Milwaukee in October 2019.

District Attorney Chisholm cleared Officer Mensah of any wrongdoing in all three shootings, agreeing that Mensah had acted in self-defense in each incident.

Although Officer Mensah was cleared of all criminal wrongdoing, there were loud calls for him to be fired. He resigned from the Wauwatosa Police Department effective November 30, 2020. The Wauwatosa Police and Fire Commission set an initial hearing in December 2020 to decide if Mensah should keep his position. However, the city stated it had asked the commission to meet “as soon as practical” in order to dismiss pending charges against him as he would no longer be with the Wauwatosa Police Department.

In January 2021, just two months after Officer Mensah resigned from the Wauwatosa Police Department, he was hired by Waukesha County Sheriff Eric Severson. Sheriff Severson stated, “While some have expressed concerns about Mr. Mensah’s past uses of force, I assembled a team who exhaustively reviewed Mr. Mensah’s previous work history. I have concluded along with Milwaukee DA, Wauwatosa PD, Milwaukee PD, as well as an independent investigation conducted by Wauwatosa Police and Fire commission that Mr. Mensah’s use of force was consistent with the Federal and State laws, Wisconsin training, and uniformly applied police policy. This is consistent with all other investigations.”

One would think this was the end of it. However, in 2021, Milwaukee County Judge Glenn Yamahiro ruled that in Anderson’s case, there was probable cause to charge Mensah with homicide by negligent use of a deadly weapon. Yamahiro appointed two special prosecutors to review the case.

The special prosecutors, Milwaukee attorney Scott Hansen and La Crosse County

District Attorney Tim Gruenke, reviewed this case for months. According to reports, they consulted judges and attorneys, and even conducted a mock trial with a jury. They continually found they couldn’t defeat the self-defense argument. Ethically, they can’t charge cases they know they can’t prove beyond a reasonable doubt. Officer Mensah was not charged.

Mensah Targeted

On August 8, 2020, Officer Mensah and his girlfriend (also a police officer) were the targets of a not-so-peaceful protest. According to various reports, Mensah was at his girlfriend’s house that evening. He claimed they were assaulted and that shots were fired. One bullet broke a window in her home, and another came within inches of Mensah. There was also toilet paper thrown in her trees.

In a Facebook post written the following morning, Officer Mensah wrote:

Last night, protesters came to my girlfriend’s house while I was there, and tried to kill me. I was unarmed and tried to defend my property and the property of my girlfriend. We were both assaulted, punched, and ultimately shot at several times. A shotgun round missed me by inches.

Not once did I ever swing back or reciprocate any [of] the hate that was being directed at me. I am all for peaceful protests, even against me, but this was anything but peaceful. They threw toilet paper in her trees, broke her windows, and again, shot at both of us as they were trying to kill me. There are children that live there and they knew that.

The irony in all of this is that they chanted Black Lives Matter the entire time, but had zero regard for any of the black children that live there or me, a black man.

Were the protesters hired thugs used to promote a political agenda? It certainly fits BLM’s profile.

After reporters tried reaching Mensah for comment, he responded again on Facebook:

There is a difference between a peaceful protest, and a plan to trespass on private property with the intent to damage it. My girlfriend and I had every right to defend the property from those that trespassed on it. At the end of the day, protesters chose to come to that house, no one forced them to. They chose to stay, they chose to damage property, they chose to assault us. Their decision to come onto the porch, continue their assault on unarmed and defenseless police officers, and ultimately try kill me was their decision, and their decision alone. The incident is currently under investigation and the evidence will speak for itself.

The protesters, along with state Representative David Bowen (D-Milwaukee), reportedly stated that Mensah was the aggressor and, thus, was the reason for the attacks. It was later discovered that Bowen was part of that group of protesters. He was seen on video leaving a Target store with a group of people. This is significant because Bowen was holding a large package of toilet paper, and the video showed him walking out of the store with Tiffany Henry, the Milwaukee office director for U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin. Bowen is also seen on video at the protest itself; he is shown holding up a roll of toilet paper. The video also shows Mensah and his girlfriend being attacked by the protesters, and Mensah being hit over the head with a bullhorn. This contradicts a public statement from Bowen where he tried to blame Mensah for the incident.

Neither Bowen nor Henry were arrested or charged in connection with the incident.

Civil Suit Filed

In October 2021, the Anderson family filed a civil lawsuit in federal court against Officer Mensah, former Wauwatosa Police Chief Barry Weber, and the city of Wauwatosa. The Anderson's attorney, Motley, said that she looked forward to deposing Mensah under oath.

According to the Associated Press, the

lawsuit alleged the Wauwatosa Police Department trained Mensah (who is black) to view black people as dangerous, that the police department has a history of supporting racism going back some 40 years, and that Mensah violated Anderson's constitutional rights. The family also is seeking undisclosed damages from the defendants, according to WISN 12 News.

Joseph Mensah's story could happen to any law-enforcement official who needs to use deadly force when confronting a suspect, especially if that suspect is armed. Why would a police officer put himself in that position? The officer would second-guess what he should do in that situation. If he shoots, will he be charged with a crime? If he doesn't shoot, will he or others be shot? This puts law-enforcement officials in a tough spot, and it is one of the main reasons why recruitment is at an all-time low.

The police are our protectors. We need them to ensure our communities — and, by extension, ourselves and our families — are safe. We need law and order. Without it, well, one just couldn't imagine!

It is time to stand with our law-enforce-

ment officials. The police should not be punished for protecting us or themselves when all evidence reveals they were in the right. Enough with the political agendas that side with criminals and against our police officers. Protect and serve — that is what Officer Mensah did in all three incidents. It is time to let him move on with his life.

I will close with the words of Officer Mensah:

Despite having evidence PROVING I have done nothing wrong, I have been suspended without a reason, without an explanation, WITHOUT CAUSE.

I sincerely hope all of my friends in the Law Enforcement community pay close attention to what's being done to me. If you make the decision to defend your life, or the life of others, this is what will happen to you.

It's been made very clear to me that my life does not matter and never did. If I had died instead, none of this would be happening. Let all of that sink in... ■



Milwaukee County Chief Deputy District Attorney Kent Lovern (second left) examines a car after its driver, Jay Anderson Jr., was fatally shot by Officer Mensah out of self-defense. In October 2021, Anderson's family sued Mensah over the incident.

AP Images



ILLINOIS LAW Favors Criminals



AP Images

by Steve Byas

“Someone could live in your shed, and all we could do is give them a ticket,” Keith Pekau, the mayor of Orland Park, a suburb of Chicago, said in September, speaking of the terrifying law enacted last year by the Illinois General Assembly — a law that can charitably be said to be more concerned with criminals than their victims.

“I can’t even begin to tell you how dangerous this act is,” Mayor Pekau said, emotionally urging the city council to pass a resolution denouncing the new law. Pekau added that the bill also ends cash bail for several offenses, including kidnapping, armed robbery, and second-degree murder.

The city council passed the resolution calling for the Illinois General Assembly to at least modify the nearly 800-page bill, known as the SAFE-T Act.

Governor J. B. Pritzker, on the other hand, is a staunch supporter of the law, which he signed in February 2021. He says it is “Transforming the pretrial detention system so low-income people aren’t thrown behind bars while only the wealthy walk free, diverting low-level drug crimes into substance-treatment programs and reducing excessive stays in prison.”

While it is understandable that we do not want innocent people languishing in jail just because they cannot afford bail, the bill seems more designed to prevent the punishment of criminals than any-

thing else. The abolition of cash bail is to go into effect on January 1, 2023. Even violent offenders are released with electronic monitoring, and law enforcement cannot do anything about it until the person is in violation of that monitoring for 48 hours. In other words, a person could simply hop in a car and travel hundreds of miles away, avoiding punishment for even serious crimes.

Several states’ attorneys wrote an op-ed in the *Chicago Tribune* heavily criticizing the new law, arguing it “gives violent offenders a pass.” Demonstrating just how bad the law is, they say that “Most egregiously ... is that this law substantially strips the people of this state of the ability to charge an individual with what is commonly re-



Keith Pekau, the mayor of Orland Park, Illinois, warned against his state's 2021 "SAFE-T Act." This law, going into effect on January 1, 2023, will allow violent offenders to be released without bail, among other anti-law-enforcement provisions.

ferred to as 'felony murder.' This is a crime in which an individual commits or attempts to commit a forcible felony that results in someone's death." An example would be when someone is killed while an armed robbery is taking place.

Mayor Pekau also called attention to the new effort in the Illinois General Assembly to remove "school resource officers," which has already been done in Chicago. "I personally do not want to see the city of Chicago become the standard for how we conduct public safety because they have abandoned their police officers, abandoned their residents and created a war zone full of criminals." With all the concern about school shootings, this is particularly inexplicable.

Tasked with implementing many of the new law's provisions is the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA), who offered a summary of some of the other provisions of the new law. The ICJIA said that the bill expands officer training on topics including "crisis

intervention, deescalation, use of force, high-risk traffic stops, implicit bias, racial and ethnic sensitivity training, and emergency response."

The law also creates a statewide decertification process for officers, and allows the attorney general to "investigate, initiate civil lawsuits, and enforce settlements against police agencies that have a pattern of depriving individuals of their rights." And it allows for investigation of anonymous complaints against officers.

While accused persons have historically been allowed a phone call — which is usually made to a family member, friend, or lawyer — this bill "provides people in custody with up to three phone calls within three hours."

Why in the world would anyone, even progressive, left-wing Democrats, want to support criminal activity at the expense of crime victims? Perhaps it should not be surprising, considering that many "progressives" routinely demonize hard work, private property, and "middle-class

values." Their platforms regularly violate the Tenth Commandment's condemnation of coveting — desiring someone else's property. In some cases, some of the more extreme voices want to decriminalize shoplifting.

But this bill even requires the Illinois Department of Corrections to report the most recent address of a prison inmate to the State Board of Elections, to be used in redistricting legislative districts. This is likely an effort to increase the population totals in Democrat-leaning districts.

Amazingly, the new law even reduces restrictions on driver's license suspensions, cancellations, and prohibitions of renewals based on failure to pay certain fines.

The amount of time that an individual must serve in mandatory supervised release (parole) is also reduced under the bill.

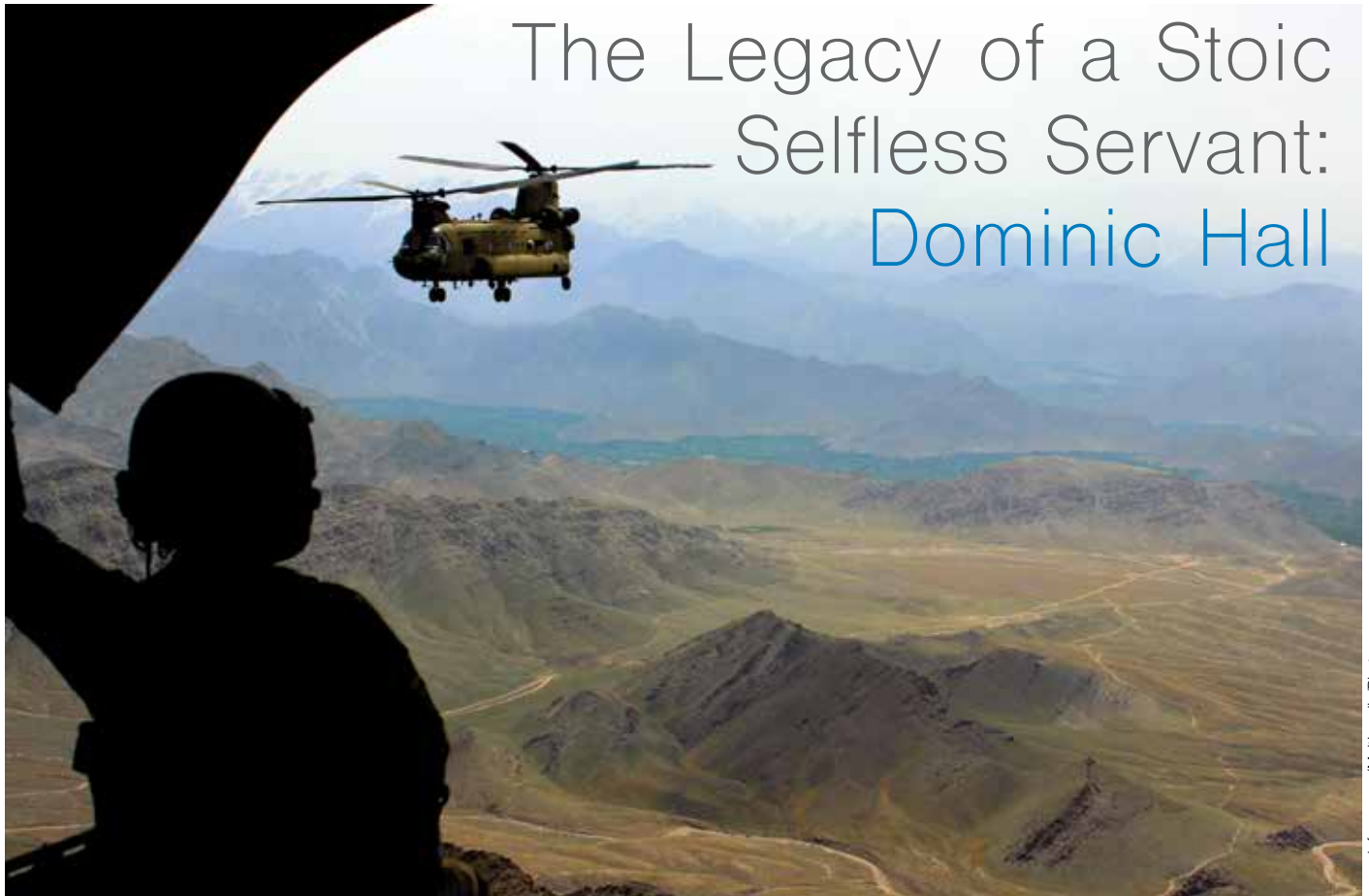
While some parts of this massive bill may be worthy of consideration, allowing all defendants charged with criminal acts to be released without posting monetary bail, will, in the words of the resolution passed by the Orland Park City Council, "cause major public safety issues."

Sadly, this is probably an example of more such laws in those areas of the country that have increasingly left-wing legislatures, governors, and district attorneys — many of whom have been put into office with the financial backing of George Soros.

Back in 1968, Independent presidential candidate George Wallace, the governor of Alabama, elicited both support and disapproval for his condemnation of what he considered soft-on-crime measures being enacted at that time. He famously said, "Nowadays you can be held up and hit in the head on a Friday, and the criminal is out of jail before you get to the hospital, and then on Monday morning, they're trying the policeman" for police brutality.

At the time this was understood as political hyperbole, but, sadly, it seems to be coming true today. ■

This article was originally published at TheNewAmerican.com and is reprinted here with permission.



www.defense.gov/Multimedia/Photos

It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather, we should thank God such men lived.

— General George S. Patton

Living conditions at Patrol Base Alcatraz are very austere. There are no showers, laundry facilities, chow hall, or pretty much anything else one would think of as a necessity of modern life... the camp or water bottle shower remains the best we can do to keep clean and cool.

— Letter from the commanding officer, June 1, 2011

Provided by the Hunter Seven Foundation

Just days before the commanding officer wrote the above message, the men of the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion had landed at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, after a 36-hour layover in Manus, Kyrgyzstan. Prior to stepping off, the men laid out their gear, soaked from the downpour they had experienced in Okinawa. They would be tasked with pushing further into Regional Command South (RC South) by establishing a new patrol base on key enemy supply routes, intended to disrupt insurgent activity and increase security for the local populace.

“Austere” was a mild description of the new base; it was a run-down set of formerly vacant buildings with barrier walls offering just a few feet of concrete above the Marines’ heads. The troops used makeshift sinks for daily hygiene, slept on sand-covered cots, and shaded themselves from the 120-degree heat in old huts.

On June 6, 2011, the men of Bravo Company, 3rd Recon Battalion, patrolled a local village in Sangin Valley. While doing their assignment, women and children suddenly began fleeing the streets. Even the livestock fled as if they knew what was about to occur. The Marines were left standing alone in the village.

Within minutes, a barrage of 20-30 enemy combatants began firing on the Marines, who quickly were surrounded. According to one report, the enemy utilized 14 known fighting positions and, at one point, had enveloped Bravo Company by 200 degrees and closed the coordinated attack on the Marines from 375 meters to just 36. After nearly an hour of fighting, one commander ordered a “danger-close” (in close proximity to friendly troops) drop of a 500lb GBU-54 laser-guided Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) to neutralize the enemy combatants. Despite requests by others for a less-lethal solution — to protect the Marines on the ground — the commander ordered the JDAM strike.

The JDAM dropped within 36 meters of the Marines, exposing

the entire platoon to significant, brain-injurious blast waves and a slew of airborne toxins. The JDAM failed to neutralize the combatants and two High Mobility Artillery Rocket (HIMAR) warheads followed. According to the Marines, they survived only because of a canal inlet they were able to jump into for some protective cover.

One of those men from Bravo Company was Marine Corps Sgt. Dominic Hall, a 21-year-old from Appleton, Wisconsin. This would be Dominic's first of two overseas deployments to Afghanistan. In a conversation I had with Dominic about this incident, he briefly touched on the physical "shock" the JDAM sent, but was very humble about his role in the operation — for which he would earn a valorous medal.

I met Dominic in fall 2021, but the impact he has had on me will be everlasting.

He was just 31 years old, recently separated from the military, a husband to his beautiful wife, Jacole, and a father to their two sons, Victor and Thorin. Even after separating from military service, Dominic, a true man of God, had a passion to serve others. He was a sworn member of the Appleton Police Department, serving in its SWAT and sniper units. In an incident on July 25, 2019, Dominic and his trainee saw a man who appeared highly intoxicated. While Dominic was speaking to him, the man pulled a knife and began stabbing himself in the neck. Despite the man's life-threatening injuries, Dominic and two other officers saved his life. For this, Department honored Dominic and the two other officers with its "Life Saving Award." This is just one example of Dominic's selfless and heroic actions.

Dominic didn't brag about his service or accomplishments. In fact, one would never know how much he had accomplished. We found out how incredible he was through candid discussions with his wife, Jacole. Unfortunately, our meetings were under tragic circumstances.

Dominic neither drink nor smoke. He was fit and healthy, exercised often, and ate well. Because of this, the medical staff



and care team were perplexed when this 30-year-old man arrived at the Emergency Department in May 2021 with severe abdominal pain and stomach upset. Oddly, the young veteran had a significant level of liver enzymes and an elevated bilirubin level at six times the normal limit — an odd situation for a man of his background. Days later, Dominic had his blood drawn again, but his levels continued to exceed the normal limit. Eventually, an imaging scan identified an ill-defined mass on the pancreas, consistent with malignancy (cancer). Fortunately, it was localized, but did have vascular involvement.

The diagnosis for 30-year-old Dominic was stage 1B pancreatic adenocarcinoma. Despite the presence of cancer, his care team thought the tumor was "borderline" resectable, and decided the best route would be an in-house clinical trial with neoadjuvant therapy. His care team assumed that because of his demograph-

ics and not meeting the "usual" profile of an individual with pancreatic cancer, he was the victim of a genetic mutation related to a familial disposition (Lynch syndrome).

Nearly two months into treatment, Dominic's side effects were too severe, and his medication was switched multiple times. His symptoms — excessive nausea and vomiting, weight loss, and pain — worsened and were so severe he had to step away from his job as a police officer. At this point, we began working to ensure Dominic had the most inclusive, evidence-based care possible and reached out to Dr. Thomas Abrams at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Around the same time, the cancer had begun to spread to Dominic's liver. By January 2022, a liver biopsy confirmed the worst — metastatic pancreatic adenocarcinoma with liver involvement. I sat back and wondered how his cancer could go from stage 1B to stage



Men of the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion

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4 so quickly.

The liver biopsy result came back, and genomic profiling showed a few mutations. Oddly, however, the suspected “genetic” marker was absent. There was no sign of the suspected Lynch syndrome his care team initially hypothesized. While reading this, I took a deep breath and let a long sigh out.

While sitting and speaking with Dominic and Jacole, attempting to find answers, solutions, and possible avenues to help cure this man, I began to learn who exactly Dominic Hall was.

In 2008, Dominic enlisted into the U.S. Marine Corps as a reconnaissance Marine candidate. Graduating from boot camp at the School of Infantry-West in December 2008, he completed the basic recon course by March 2009 and found himself at the 3rd Recon Battalion in Camp Schwab, Okinawa, Japan, by April 2009. Dominic spent a significant amount of time in the Pacific, including time stationed abroad on the USS *Essex* and the USS *Harpers Ferry*, and even served on the USS *Ronald Reagan* following the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

When Dominic mentioned the latter event, which took place in March 2011, I had no idea what he was talking about. I decided to read up about it and found that those who responded to the incident were potentially exposed to radiation. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission released a report finding that between March and September 2011, radioactive materials — including Iodine-131, Cesium-134, and Cesium-137 — had been released into the air and ocean.

Just like most chemicals, radioactive substances have a “half-life.” Half-life refers to the time taken for the radioactivity of a specific isotope to fall to half its original value. Iodine-131 has a half-life of 8.1 days and its risks can be mitigated through iodine tablets (which the Navy supplied most service members). The half-life of Cesium-134 is two years, whereas Cesium-137 has a half-life of 30 years. Thus, to this day, some Cesium particulates lie dormant on the beaches surrounding Fukushima.

I searched the National Library of Medicine to learn about this unfamiliar exposure. I found a September 2021 report by Dr. Sebastiano Venturi in the *International Journal of Environmental Research*

and Public Health. The report noted an increase in pancreatitis and pancreatic cancers among Japanese residents near Fukushima following the nuclear incident. Additionally, the report noted a correlation between radioactive Cesium and pancreatic cancer:

The pancreas is metabolically a very active organ.... The pancreas has high blood perfusion from the pancreatic arteries and can accumulate inside its cells a considerable amount of radioactive ¹³⁷Cs able to damage cell DNA.

My heart sank into my stomach, and I felt as if I was going to vomit. Shockingly, I had never heard of this and wondered how many others were affected by this exposure. The list of cancers and cancer-related deaths is quite long. Focusing on Dominic, I opened an Excel worksheet and began to document his potential exposures since boot camp. We tracked the time, location, exposure duration, and amount as recorded in whatever documents we could find using artificial-intelligence programming.

Months after the Fukushima incident, Dominic was deployed to Afghanistan for the first time. His purpose was to counter increasing insurgency and provide safety to the locals. Only days into his mission, Dominic came within meters of being hit by JDAMs, as recounted at the beginning of this article, and endured constant firefights. I continued through Dominic’s military records file and came across a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement with Valor award dated August 5, 2011. It stated:

On 5 August 2011, while conducting a five-day, company-sized clearing operation in the village of Malozai, one of Sergeant Hall’s Marines was shot while providing security from a rooftop overwatch position. Without hesitation or concern for his own safety, Sgt. Hall bolted to the rooftop position where the casualty was, took control of the M240B on post and provided covering fire and

overwatch, allowing the platoon to pull the casualty off of the roof. In the same position where his fellow Marine was just shot, Sgt. Hall stayed behind the machine gun to provide suppressive fire without regard to his own safety, which led to the successful evacuation of combat wounded... Later that same day, an enemy fragmentation grenade was thrown into his platoon's compound by a well-concealed enemy fighter. The grenade sent fragmentation into two Afghan National Army soldiers, both whom received critical injuries. Despite having a grenade explode within 10-feet of him, Sgt. Hall immediately provided life-saving aid to the first ANA soldier and both would survive their injuries solely due to Sgt. Hall's treatment...

I thought, "wow, that is *a lot* to take in less than 24 hours." But Dominic was stoically

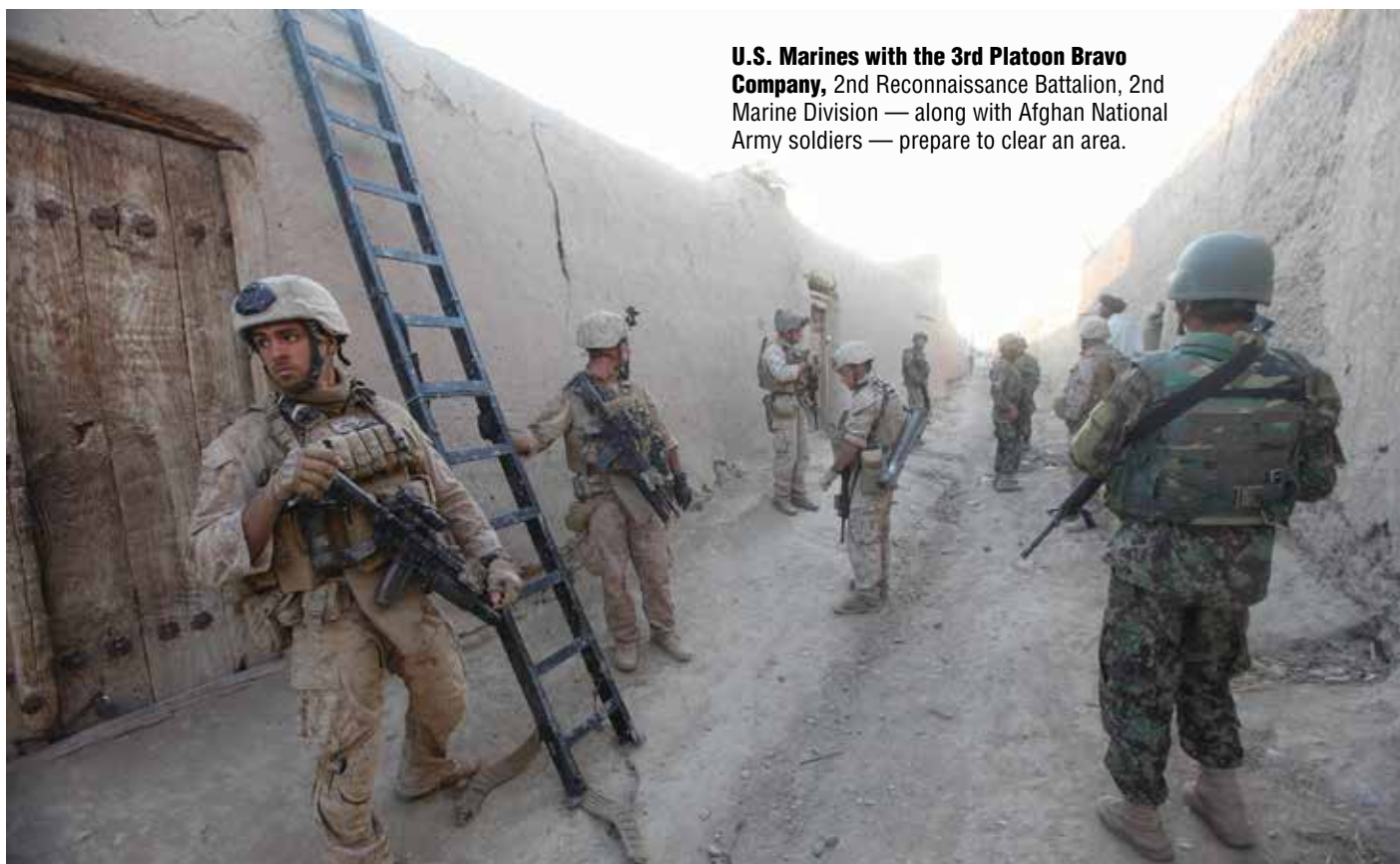
unphased and set his mind on the mission. As someone with a trauma medic/nursing background, this is heavy to witness and can sear the minds of even the most battle-hardened men — but not Dominic. His heart, mind, and soul were as pure as they could possibly be.

In December 2011, Dominic returned to Okinawa. He spent a few months in Japan before moving to the Marine Corps Reserves and heading back stateside. In the meantime, Dominic's passion for serving continued. He wanted to do more, and the reserves weren't cutting it. So, in December 2012, Dominic re-enlisted into the Ohio Army National Guard as a special-forces (18X) candidate. By August 2015, Dominic had earned the infamous "Green Beret" and graduated with high honors.

In Ohio, Dominic was assigned to Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group as Special Forces Weapons Sergeant. During that time, he met his

soon-to-be wife, Jacole. If you knew them both, you'd know they were made for each other. While waiting for orders to re-deploy to Afghanistan, Dominic was assigned some smaller tasks within the unit. Looking through his records file, we found orders placing the young soldier on "Demolition Duty" that rated as "Hazardous duty pay." Dominic had interesting stories from this experience.

Meanwhile, our list of Dominic's potential exposures grew, becoming quite impressive. The newly promoted staff sergeant stepped off for a second rotation to Afghanistan, this time to RC East with the 19th and 7th special forces groups. Within the first few days, Dominic received his Combat Infantryman Badge as his ODA began taking constant fire in the Sahak Village in Paktia Province. Additionally, he received a Bronze Star, Army Commendation and Achievement Medals, and Valorous Unit Awards — too many awards to keep track of.



U.S. Marines with the 3rd Platoon Bravo Company, 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Marine Division — along with Afghan National Army soldiers — prepare to clear an area.

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Dominic Hall

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Fast-forward to earlier this year, January 2022.

Dominic was told his cancer had progressed to stage 4 and had spread to his liver. He was only 32 years old and, as mentioned, nothing about his cancer made sense. I sat at my desk at night, sometimes as late as 1 a.m., looking for answers, asking questions, and searching for the best pancreatic cancer providers in the nation. I even reached out to Dr. Kelly Lafaro — one of the most highly recommended providers at Johns Hopkins — via LinkedIn and asked Dr. Thomas Abrams from the Dana–Farber Cancer Institute to review his case. It meant that much to me.

Our exposure roster continued growing; we found over 50 chemical compounds, exposures, heavy metals, isotopes, and toxins to which Dominic was likely exposed. We knew the exposure, dates, specific event, and locations. We had docu-

mentation to provide evidence that this specific veteran was exposed. We even knew the route of exposure, as ingested has the outcome of a different system than dermal. We knew Dominic was exposed to Cesium-137 via ingestion at 6,340 bq/kg on March 15, 2011, and that the JDAM exposed Dominic to airborne 2,4-Dinitrotoluene on March 6, 2011.

As the year progressed, so did Dominic’s cancer. His local care team said it wasn’t possible to operate. His wife told me his condition was deteriorating quickly, and his care team said he most likely wouldn’t see the end of September.

By mid-August, the chemotherapy and active treatments had been discontinued. Dominic had just turned 33 in late August, and saw his oldest son off to his first day of school.

During this time, Dominic said, “If things don’t work out, I am prepared to accept that. Ultimately, from what I am gath-

ering, the liver going into failure is what will take my life. There are a lot of nights that I don’t sleep because of the pain, but knowing that people are out there praying for me, I can’t put into words how much it touches my heart and how much it means to me that people are taking time out of their day to pray... it gives me so much hope.”

We often thought of Dominic and his wife and children during this period. On September 2, I received a text from Jacole. She told me Dominic was in the hospital and was more comfortable and peaceful. I asked what I could do and what she needed; she replied by asking that we pray for a peaceful rest for Dominic. My heart shattered. The strength of this woman was a match for her strong, stoic husband.

Dominic was called home by God on September 4, 2022 at 12:23 p.m. His last words, whispered to his wife, were “I love you too.”

I told Jacole months ago, that Dominic’s story created a new way for medical providers to review toxic exposures using evidence-based findings, artificial intelligence, and rapidly-producing machine learning. Undoubtedly, if we knew the plethora of Dominic’s exposures beforehand, his treatments would have been vastly different. Dominic was “veteran zero,” the first-ever veteran to be tracked through this next generation of methods. I told his wife that this will impact so many lives for the better and provide insight into cancers that could be stopped.

A man of honor, stoicism, pride, dignity — in a tragic situation, Dominic chose to look at his ordeal in a positive light. In a statement to *The Compass* newspaper less than a month before passing, Dominic stated:

In my heart, I feel that something good is going to come from this, God’s ways are not our ways. Ultimately, he’s going to use my death to spur something. I’m offering up my suffering for other people who are sick or suffering. I just know there’s something good coming from my death because God’s plans are for good, not for ill. ■

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Guilty on All Counts:

Verdict Reached in Waukesha Parade Massacre Trial



AP Images

On November 21, 2021, Darrell Brooks killed six people — and injured dozens more — at a Christmas parade in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Seen here is a memorial for the victims.

by James Murphy

On October 26, Verdicts were reached in the trial of Darrell M. Brooks, the man accused of killing six and injuring dozens by driving through the Waukesha, Wisconsin, Christmas parade on November 21, 2021. Brooks was found guilty of six counts of first-degree intentional homicide, as well as 61 counts of recklessly endangering safety, six counts of hit-and-run causing death, two counts of felony bail-jumping, and one count of battery.

Brooks was actually out on a \$1,000 cash bond when he committed the massacre, driving his mother’s Ford Explorer through the crowd of revelers. Milwaukee County District Attorney John

Chisholm would later call it an “inappropriately low” bail recommendation.

Brooks also had an active arrest warrant from Nevada for statutory sexual seduction, where he was charged with having sexual relations with a 15-year-old girl and impregnating her. He is a registered sex offender in Nevada.

As the homicide verdicts were read, someone in the court, reportedly a family member of one of the victims, shouted, “Burn in Hell you piece of [expletive].” The man was admonished by the judge and removed from the courtroom.

Brooks kept his head in his hands as all 76 guilty verdicts were read, and remained quiet the entire time.

On November 16, Wisconsin Circuit Court Judge Jennifer Dorow sentenced

Brooks to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

The guilty verdicts mark the end of a tumultuous trial, in which Brooks fired his attorneys only a few days before it was set to begin and defended himself as a “sovereign citizen” — a person who believes that he is not subject to certain state or federal laws.

Toward that end, Brooks routinely interrupted the proceedings, peppering Dorow with inanities such as repeated requests for the court to prove “subject matter jurisdiction,” which the defendant claimed, even up until today, had not been proven.

Dorow gave Brooks an extremely long leash as he disrupted the proceedings any way he could, repeatedly begging for documents he’d already been given,



AP Images

Darrell Brooks (left) was found guilty of all 76 charges against him on October 26, 2022. He committed the massacre driving his mother's red Ford Explorer (right).

questioning the judge's authority, raising mostly inane objections to inquiries made by the prosecution, and repeatedly requesting a certified copy of Dorow's oath of office.

He repeatedly said that he did not "consent" to be called by the name Darrell Brooks.

During his closing argument, he attempted to bring up the subject of jury nullification, after being warned not to repeatedly by the judge.

Instead of holding Brooks in contempt when he became extremely unruly, Dorow removed him to an adjacent courtroom, where he could watch the proceedings on monitors and participate from there. When Brooks would become unruly in the other courtroom, the judge had the ability to mute him so that the trial could keep going.

Many believe that Dorow allowed

Brooks so much leeway to show any appeals court that the Waukesha County court bent over backwards to allow him his constitutional rights, but Brooks' antics during the trial may have been an attempt to bait the judge into a misstep that could be used in an appeal.

"I'm unaware of any issues that Dorow has created or anything like that," said Thomas Grieve, a Madison-based criminal defense attorney. "I think the judge has done a fantastic job of patiently addressing all of Mr. Brooks' issues, which seem to have no end. He has gotten what he wanted. He has made his bed and tucked himself into it throughout this entire process. Now he's facing the consequences of it."

On October 25, an anonymous Reddit post from someone claiming to be a juror in the case caused a brief disruption. Later, the user with the handle "Justice-

4Darrell" claimed the post was a "prank" and it was removed from the platform.

While the post seemed to be in favor of Brooks, he nevertheless attempted to use it today to cast doubt on the trial.

"I'm still very concerned, this whole Reddit thing," Brooks said this morning. "After having the chance to fully read it and look at some of the language that's in it ... it's very concerning."

Brooks requested a mistrial over the incident, but the judge quickly shut down any concerns about the post, saying it was being investigated by the sheriff's department.

The jury had been sequestered and had all of their electronic devices taken from them. ■

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The Silent Struggle

Sgt. Ian Seaholm (Ret.)

I served as a police officer and sergeant with the Oshkosh Police Department in Wisconsin for 13 years. In 2019, shortly after a promotion, I began experiencing extreme anxiety, depression, and what would later be diagnosed as a debilitating form of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). I would obsessively worry about my performance as a supervisor, ruminating about my past and present decisions, disposition of investigated cases, and every minor form of perceived unsatisfactory performance I had ever displayed. I started compulsively confessing my perceived faults or mistakes, think-

ing they were catastrophic events. I was constantly reassured by coworkers, other supervisors, and even my chief that my perceived faults were no big deal (seeking reassurance was a compulsion). My department found me a therapist through the Employee Assistant Program (EAP). I started seeing a psychiatrist and taking medications.

OCD is often and incorrectly believed to be a disorder where a quirky person needs things perfect and organized. In reality, it is when a person experiences intrusive thoughts or obsessions opposite of their character (e.g., thoughts or urges harming someone physically or even sexually), as well as compulsions such as seek-

ing reassurance that they would never do those things. It is a debilitating and chronic disorder that affects millions of people. Within the many forms of OCD are two major symptoms that make it exceedingly difficult to treat. Those symptoms are guilt and doubt. To the sufferer, their thoughts feel real, so they often doubt their character, actions, and memories. They also feel extreme guilt for having those thoughts. The guilt can be so strong the sufferer believes they must have done something wrong; otherwise, they would not be feeling this way or having these thoughts. For more information on OCD, please visit <https://iocdf.org/>.

In the process of my treatment, I discov-

ered that my therapist, provided through the city's EAP, was not trained to treat OCD. His methods were the opposite of the gold-standard therapy for OCD, Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP). Under ERP, a patient and therapist expose the patient to their fears, and the patient resists the compulsion that reinforces the unwanted thought or belief. It is an extremely difficult form of therapy. Instead, my therapist just reassured me I was a good person and would not do what my brain was telling me I would do. Worst of all, he told me to stop thinking these intrusive thoughts. We know how well "not thinking about something" works.

OCD attacks the things a person holds most dear. For me, it started out attacking my career, position, and everything surrounding my job as an officer. I spent days ruminating and doing internet searches to find out if I was a "dirty cop" and would lose my job. I laid in bed for days, fearing my career was over. What everyone else perceived as minor, I saw as the end of the world. I was constantly being exposed to triggers as I approved reports involving sexual assaults of children, dealt with

sex offenders, and worked cases involving child pornography. These triggers reinforced my thoughts and compulsions, which, along with improper treatment, was why I was not getting better. I had lost all hope.

One afternoon in April 2020, I mentally collapsed. My wife called a friend who had been at my side since the beginning of my struggles, and he came over. I was a mess, bawling uncontrollably and unable to function in any capacity, let alone as an officer. He made the right call to keep me home that day, and I was placed on medical leave.

I reached out to Rogers Behavioral Health, one of the most reputable medical organizations for treating OCD and other anxiety disorders. I was almost immediately admitted to their residential/in-patient treatment facility in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. I spent six weeks there, engaged in therapy, ERP, doctors, medications — you name it — seven days a week and eight hours a day. I spent another six weeks in partial hospitalization and intensive outpatient therapy at their Appleton location. By September 2020, I had improved, though

still unable to function well enough to return to the police department.

Because of the severity of my case and symptoms, and the fact OCD is treatable but not curable, I was approved for disability retirement. After being placed on leave on April 28, 2020, I never returned to duty. I officially retired on August 27.

I will tell you that the world of mental health within law enforcement has a long way to go in acknowledging mental-health injuries in the same way as physical ones. What is the difference between an officer who is physically wounded — in a squad crash, shooting, or stabbing while arresting a resistive or combative subject — and one whose brain says, "I have had enough"? In some departments, there is no difference at all, and officers are not ostracized for having mental injuries sustained on the job. But many are not ready to accept mental injuries in the same light. It is a fact, as I can attest personally and in speaking with many organizations such as the Relentless Defender Foundation, The Wounded Blue, and the Thin Blue Line Foundation, that officers who retire due to mental-health disability are often forgotten. On my final day, an email was sent department-wide reading something to the effect of "Sergeant Seaholm is no longer employed with the Oshkosh Police Department. We wish him well." My 13 years of service were summed up in a short email. The only communication my family or I received after being placed on medical leave (until I retired) was the initial letter placing me on medical leave.

Early in my medical leave, I realized I was truly on my own. I began the application process for disability retirement within the Wisconsin Retirement System during my residential stay at Rogers, when I was at my worst physically and mentally. The disability application process involved an initial phone call, a lengthy application packet, medical and HR records and paperwork, and two separate doctor evaluations. Any disability application process is extremely difficult, lengthy, and stressful. Even with a disability attorney at your side, many disability cases are declined and need to be appealed, further adding to the stress and length of the



In April 2019, School Resource Officer Ian Seaholm (left) was promoted to the rank of Sergeant. He became a supervisor in the Patrol Division.

Oshkosh Police Department Facebook page



Stock / Getty Images Plus / Professor25

process. I am still amazed I was able to navigate disability retirement on my own during a time when I most needed the department's help.

Last fall, I was the recipient of the National Association of Chiefs of Police's Purple Heart. This award is issued to an officer medically disabled by an injury. The process involves an application process and a review of medical paperwork. Receiving this honor felt like a step in the right direction for officers who retire or are disabled from mental-health illnesses caused by the job.

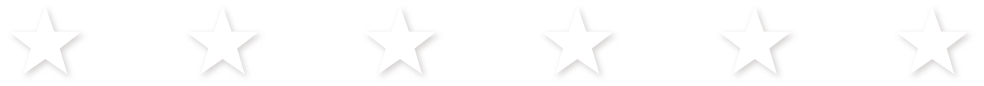
I was inspired to share my story and help other officers who are going through something similar to what I had experienced. My goal was to use my relationships in law enforcement and social media to talk about the importance of officer mental health and how debilitating it can be. As I pitched my idea to leadership, I remember being told, "The public isn't ready to acknowledge officers receiving awards for mental-health injuries." The public is not ready? If not now, when? Why don't we start right now and begin moving in the right direction? The ignorance and mistakes of a few should not reflect upon the entire organization or

profession. However, because I know I am not the only officer who left because of mental illness and who has experienced unfair treatment, it confirms that more needs to be done to remove the stigma around mental illness within law enforcement. What is even more pressing is that any person, civilian or not, can at any moment start experiencing symptoms of mental-health illness that, if left untreated or incorrectly treated, can have disastrous consequences. The stigma that sufferers "need to tough it out" or "can't be emotional" needs to end. So does the idea that one can just fight through it and suck it up. Many departments across the United States have officer wellness programs, therapists on staff, training programs, and other initiatives that support mental wellness for officers. This is a start. What I would like to see is more public education on the alarming statistics of officer mental-health issues, including suicide, on a large-scale format. Bringing more media attention to the various organizations, conferences, and literature that talk about mental injury and trauma within the law-enforcement community.

If you or someone you know is suffering from any form of mental-health issues,

I implore you to reach out to your doctor and research specialty doctors and therapists and what they treat. Finding the right mix of therapy and medication is crucial to your success. There are many healthcare professionals out there; some are better trained and more experienced than others. It took me several months to find the right combination of doctors, therapists, and medications before I started seeing results. I genuinely enjoyed my career as a police officer. I did everything I ever dreamed of doing in terms of promotions, special units, and general police work. Most rewarding were the bonds and friendships I made. Having coffee in the break room on chilly winter nights and watching early-morning television are memories I will cherish forever.

Lastly, know that mental illness can impact anyone, first responders and civilians alike. It does not discriminate, and no one is immune from it. It can creep up slowly and, when you are most vulnerable, knock you down like a punch from Mike Tyson. This is important to remember because knowing this, along with the early-warning signs and symptoms of mental illness, can be lifesaving. Most importantly, never give up. ■



More Texas Counties Have Now Declared an INVASION AT THE BORDER



AP Images

by David Kelly

In mid-September 2022, the Texas Public Policy Foundation encouraged Texas Governor Greg Abbott to declare an invasion at the southern border with Mexico to protect Texas sovereignty and Texans “from cartel forces and their allies.” At that time, 22 Texas counties had officially declared an invasion. Now, there are 40 counties that have declared an invasion at the border, or have expressed support for Texas declaring an invasion.

“They are calling on Texas Gov. Greg

Abbott to formally declare an invasion and repel it, which he has yet to do. The governor cited the invasion clauses of the Texas Constitution and U.S. Constitution in a Nov. 14 letter to county judges and in a Nov. 16 letter to President Joe Biden. He also wrote letters to the heads of the Texas Military Department and Department of Public Safety,” a Center Square article reported.

In the November 14 letter to judges, Governor Abbott bluntly acknowledged that “President Biden has abandoned his responsibility to enforce immigration laws, and Congress has refused to hold

the President accountable and has abandoned its own responsibility to use the immigration power given to it in Article I, § 8 of the U.S. Constitution.” The letter continued, “Just two years ago, we had the fewest illegal crossings in decades. This past year under President Biden, an all-time record was set for the number of immigrants crossing the border illegally.”

There have reportedly been more than two million illegal-migrant encounters at the U.S.-Mexico border in fiscal year 2022. This is unprecedented in U.S. history, and something that the Biden administration has so far failed to slow, despite its claims that the border is “secure.”

In July 2022, Abbott issued an executive order that invoked the Invasion Clause of the Texas Constitution to fully authorize Texas to take unprecedented measures to fight back against the invasion at the border. However, the executive order doesn’t declare an invasion; it only authorizes Texas law-enforcement officers to apprehend illegal foreign nationals and return them to ports of entry, along with allocating more resources to border security.

Abbott’s letter to the president reminded Biden that the “U.S. Constitution won ratification by promising the States, in Article IV, § 4, that the federal government ‘shall protect each of them against Invasion.’” Abbott stated that President Biden’s failed border policies have resulted in “Texans paying the price for your failure. Ranches are being ripped apart, and homes are vulnerable to intrusion.... Our border communities are regularly disrupted by human traffickers,” along with the



“deadly fentanyl” brought across the border, which is “now the leading cause of death for citizens between the ages of 18 and 45.”

Bluntly accusing Biden of failure regarding his constitutional obligation to “safeguard the States,” Abbott declared, “In the more than 240 years of our great nation, no administration has done more than yours to place the States in ‘imminent Danger’ — a direct result of your policy decisions and refusal to deliver on the Article IV, § 4 guarantee.”

With these latest letters, his executive orders, and the current Texas county invasion declarations, Abbott appears now to be awaiting action from the new Congress in January 2023, asking that Texas judges “remind our representatives in Washington that securing the border is the federal government’s responsibility” under the U.S. Constitution. He also wants Congress to reimburse the state of Texas for the billions of dollars spent on border security in the Biden administration’s absence.

The 40 Texas counties that have declared an invasion include Atascosa, Burnet, Chambers, Clay, Collin, Ector, Edwards, Ellis, Fannin, Goliad, Hamilton, Hardin, Hood, Hunt, Jack, Jasper, Johnson, Kinney, Lavaca, Leon, Liberty, Live Oak, Madison, McMullen, Montague, Navarro, Orange, Parker, Presidio, Shackelford, Somervell, Terrell, Throckmorton, Tyler, Van Zandt, Waller, Wharton, Wichita, Wilson, and Wise.

These Texas counties, along with the other U.S. states bordering Mexico, have endured the brunt of Biden’s failed border policies. Their frustration can be heard and echoed in the closing words of Abbott’s letter: “Texas has done more than its fair share for far too long. The time has come for the federal government to do its job.” ■

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Policewoman Sues to Stop Union From Taking Dues From Her Paycheck



powerforever/Stock/Getty Images Plus

by Bob Adelman

When Melodie DePierro joined the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department in 2006, she agreed to let its union, the Las Vegas Police Protective Association, take her dues automatically from her paycheck.

When she resigned from the union in 2020, she informed them that she was quitting and to stop taking the dues from her paycheck. The union refused, claiming that under a newly crafted and approved contract she only had 20 days — from October 1 to October 20 — to order

the union to stop. Since she missed “the window,” the union continued deducting its dues from her paycheck.

She sued to get her money back. Lower courts held for the union. The case was picked up by the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, which filed a request for the Supreme Court — a “petition for writ of *certiorari*,” in legalese — to consider her case.

Why is this case important? Because DePierro’s claims are based on a Supreme Court ruling from 2018, *Janus v. AFSCME* (American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees), in which the high court ruled that the tak-

ing of such fees without written consent violates a citizen's First Amendment right to free speech.

Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito wrote in the majority opinion in *Janus* that such action violates "the free speech rights of nonmembers [of public unions] by compelling them to subsidize private speech on matters of substantial public concern."

This is a modern-day restatement of the principle voiced by Thomas Jefferson: "To compel a man [or woman] to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he [or she] disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical."

In *Janus*, the high court referred to the right to free speech as a "fixed star":

If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters

of opinion or *force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein*. [Emphasis in original.]

DePierro's attorneys built on that idea:

That fixed star shines throughout the year — not only for a few days. [Quoting *Janus*]: "Compelling individuals to mouth support for views they find objectionable violates that cardinal constitutional command."

They maintained that "this case is exceptionally important," as a decision would affect all public employees, active or retired, represented by unions who are reacting to *Janus* by installing such "window periods" in their contracts.

A favorable decision in this case would add an additional bulwark to the complaints bound to follow the expected passage of the odious "Respect for Marriage Act." According to Utah Republican Sena-

tor Mike Lee, the bill is written in a way where it can and will be used to bludgeon into submission any groups (churches, charities, even states) that refuse to recognize same-sex marriage — upon threat of losing their precious federal funding or tax-exempt status.

Those complaints should remind the courts of the statement from *Janus*, above, that "no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, *religion*, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein." (Emphasis added.)

The petition for policewoman Melodie DePierro was filed with the Supreme Court on November 21. A decision to accept it won't be made for at least several months. ■

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"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."

John 15:13

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