

## Letter from the Editor – Choosing sides

Posted by [TBN Editor](#) On 07/18/2017

**Hollywood, MD** – The long social media post from a blue collar worker who took several deputies from the Calvert County Sheriff's Office to task for a July 10 traffic stop, followed by a brief press release from the sheriff's office responding to the allegations, has many people--some residing outside Southern Maryland--choosing sides. Whose story do you believe? Did the officers act appropriately by sending backups and a K9 unit to the traffic stop scene, conducting a thorough search of the man's vehicle and detaining him with the subjective charge of resisting arrest? Was the man totally cooperative from the outset? Is his story about being a straight arrow accurate? Was he beaten physically and berated verbally as he claims?

Many of us want to see any video that was shot of the events as they were happening. There has been no indication from the sheriff's office that the request—or demand—will be honored or even if there is any footage. We do know that Calvert's deputies have spent considerable time on camera lately. They have been featured on a national television show and the addition of dashboard cameras and for some, body cameras, make Calvert's a well-documented force. In an age where so many see themselves as videographers, it's a bit surprising that if the events described in the gentleman's social media post are as dramatic as he described them to be that someone didn't pull off to the side of the road and capture the incident on his or her phone. Of course it was a Monday rush hour plus a large police presence would likely deter such actions.

The truth is we don't know much about this man. He is a private citizen and although his current workplace is in Southern Maryland he is a member of a different community. So, what do we know about the law enforcement officers? How well do we know the men and women working in local law enforcement? The deputies and state troopers working the roads throughout the region log long hours. In addition to dealing with motorists exceeding the speed limit, law enforcement is entrenched in a prime battle zone in the ongoing drug war. While Calvert County might be a laid-back rural community, it is still within driving distance of a violent world. When they approach a vehicle they have pulled over, the officers may be headed toward a dangerous situation. In 2016, 64 of America's police officers were shot to death in the line of duty. In 2017 so far, the number of police officer on-duty deaths has jumped significantly. If you speak disrespectfully and use furtive movements during a traffic stop you can expect some reaction from the police that you might believe is unwarranted.

The complainant has the community's attention and other citizens who have also had less than pleasant experiences with local police have embraced his story with great empathy. The individual will have an opportunity to tell his side of the story to a judge late next month. Litigation in a civil court also appears likely.

The dispute is not going to be settled quickly. This will not be the final time a citizen who feels he or she was unjustly and inappropriately handled by authorities is going to complain. Those of us old enough to remember the late 1960s remember the frequent allegations of "gestapo -like tactics" being used by police from people who felt they were acting well within their rights to demonstrate and protest.

One thing that ought to be done is the timely release of any video or audio recordings of this incident. No one should have to get a court order to get that done. TheBayNet.com, a media outlet with the capability of airing such a video, would gladly post it—uncut and uncensored—and help settle the dispute once and for all. A law enforcement agency that willingly puts its employees and constituents on national television should have no hesitation with providing evidence of what can happen when the routine—for whatever reason—goes awry.

**The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the management of TheBayNet.com**

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