



Marty Kelly
Goodhue County Sheriff

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5-28-20

Dear Goodhue County Sheriff's Office staff,

It has been a difficult few days for everyone. I have tried to take some time to reflect and collect my thoughts. I have had a range of emotions from shock and disbelief to anger and grief, so I wanted to be sure when I address this issue I am clear in my thoughts.

Many people have asked where I stand regarding the Minneapolis incident, so here it goes.

The video of George Floyd's arrest and his subsequent death is horrific and I struggle to find a word that even fits to describe how tragic this is. I have concluded that there are no words. Over the past few days, I have done some reflecting on my career in law enforcement.

When I began my career 31 years ago, it was because I wanted to help others, to give back to my community and to make a difference. I can honestly say today, I feel the same way and this is still my desire every day I put my uniform on. Have I made mistakes? Absolutely! Have I learned from them? I hope so! Today as your Sheriff, I feel the qualities I want to possess and that I look for in an officer is integrity, respect, empathy and compassion for others. This situation has made me take an inventory of myself to see if this is where I am at still. I encourage all my deputies to do the same. If it is not where you are at then it is time to look at a different profession. Our job is to answer the call for help and George Floyd was asking for help from an officer. His call went unheard. Are we able to hear the call for help? Again, if we cannot hear the call, then it is time to look for a different profession.

Martin Luther King said, "A riot is the language of the unheard". I can say that I do not know what would have been like to be in Mr. Floyd's position, but what I do know is we need to start hearing. Without hearing, there can be no healing. You have heard me say this before, hence the mobilization of our peer support team. What happened to George Floyd was horribly wrong and everyone in law enforcement owes it to their county, city, coworkers and to themselves to watch this video and ask themselves if we have lost our integrity, respect, empathy and compassion for others. If so, then we owe it to ourselves and the people we serve to step away from this job.

OFFICE OF THE GOODHUE COUNTY SHERIFF

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What we thought our new normal would be, just changed; we now must work harder than ever to build public trust and serve with dignity. I know our staff is up for the challenge, but again, please lean on each other during this time of uncertainty. Through crisis comes growth. We are all in this together, so if you are struggling, please call on one of our peer support counselors or myself for help.

I pray for George Floyd's family, for our community and for my law enforcement family. I pray we continue our jobs with the strength needed to make a difference so this never happens again.

In service and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Marty', written in a cursive style.

Marty