

RENAUD TESTIMONY TO PORTLAND CITY COUNCIL ON ANDRE GLADEN

March 6, 2019

Since 2006, the year James Chasse was beaten to death by three Portland police officers, the City of Portland has failed to eliminate the routine harm done by police to people with mental illness. Mostly you've failed to understand the solution.

Chasse wasn't the first nor the last. In 2006 the PPB killed three people, in 2007 they killed two, in 2008 there was just one, and 2010 made up for 2009 with five. In 2011 there was one person killed by police, 2012, 2013 and 2014 had two each, 2015 had three, 2016 had one, 2017 had two, and 2018 had three. That's twenty-seven people over a dozen years, and - this is important - every one of them were in a mental illness crisis of some form.

Andre Gladen's death was the first of 2019 and was typical. An African American man with bipolar disorder, clearly ill and in need of compassion and medical services. A homeowner call to 911 brought a police officer who predictably escalated the situation and within moments killed Mr. Gladen.

Since 2006 the strategy selected by this council to end this problem was more training. But, as it turns out training didn't solve the problem of people getting killed. Good in it's own right - but basic misunderstanding of the solution.

The solution is to un-involve police officers from people in mental illness crisis. Separate them - get them as far away from each other as possible. This is a vastly complicated task requiring interdisciplinary cooperation across multiple governments. In the dozen years since James Chasse was killed, the work to reduce contacts between officers and people in mental illness or addiction crisis has not begun. Instead this council invited the

Department of Justice to weld law enforcement to people in mental illness crisis. This was a grievous error.

It's the elimination of mental illness and addiction crisis which will reduce the number of persons killed by police. We can stop this - but the work needs to be done before police arrive, not so much after.

What this council, as individuals and as a collective voice, can do is to learn and talk about the power and potential of recovery from these illnesses. Recovery is the least expensive and most effective way to reduce use of force by police.

I wish Andre Gladen had a chance to recover from bipolar disorder. It's a complicated illness where a night without sleep, a day without food, or a stressful event can start a crisis. Gladen needed help - not a fight. And he needed it a long time before he was killed by a Portland police officer.

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