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Trending @ RWU Law: Dean Yelnosky's Post: America's Cycle of Violence 7-8-16

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Dean Yelnosky's Post

July 8, 2016

America's Cycle of Violence

Posted by Michael Yelnosky on 07/08/2016 at 05:01 PM

A note I sent to the student body of RWU Law today:

Good Afternoon

Sadly, communities across the country continue to be ravaged by the use of deadly force by police officers against people of color. The recent instances in Louisiana and Minnesota are all the more disturbing because the shootings or their aftermath were captured on video. I went numb last night as I watched Philando Castile bleeding to death in the passenger seat of a car driven by his girlfriend, who said the couple, with a child in the back seat, had been pulled over for a broken tail light.

Mr. Castile's name joins the long list with which we have become familiar since Michael Brown's death in Ferguson, Missouri almost two years ago. According to the *Washington Post*, blacks are shot and killed by police at three times the rate of whites or other minorities when adjusting by the population of the census tracts where the shootings occurred. At RWU Law we have facilitated conversations about [this issue](#) and [the larger issue of race and the criminal justice system](#), and we will continue that conversation and mourn the loss of life together soon after you return to school.

We will also mourn the loss of the lives of the police officers who have been shot and killed just because they wear the uniform – tragically and most recently last night in Dallas, Texas. The overwhelming majority of police officers are good people doing a difficult and important job, people who, as President Obama once remarked, get little attention or fanfare for walking the beat, treating everybody with respect, and doing the brave work of keeping us safe.

What happened last night in Dallas is every bit as tragic as what happened in Louisiana and Minnesota. As I write this, we know the names of only two of the five officers killed by the sniper's bullets. None of them deserved to die – not Dallas Police Officer Patrick Zamarripa, who survived three tours in Iraq serving his country; and not Transit Officer Brent Thompson, who was married just weeks ago. Coincidentally, this week we posted a blog by Professor Logan describing April's RWU Law [J.D. v.](#)

P.D. basketball fundraiser organized to raise money in memory of New England police officers killed in the line of duty.

As a community we must continue to resist picking sides. We can and indeed we must denounce both unjustified police killings of black citizens and the unjust killing of police officers. Otherwise we will not be doing what we can to stop this cycle of violence.

Sincerely,

Michael