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COUNTING CRIME IN DETROIT

Warren Evans is fighting crime the smart way

BY DANIEL KENNEDY • JANUARY 15, 2009

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Virtually lost in the hopeful news that Detroit's homicide rate has declined by 14 % over the previous year has been any thoughtful analysis about what has caused this significant reduction.

ADVERTISEMENT First, it is important to point out that it is during disastrous economic times, such as the ones we are experiencing in Detroit, when many people might think that homicide rates would go up, not down. Pittsburgh, for example, another industrial town that has been economically stronger than Detroit in recent years, has seen a 28 percent increase in murders.

Has Detroit's decline been the result of blind luck? Doubtful. Has it been the result of more police on the streets in the city? Certainly not, since the ranks of the Detroit Police Department continue to shrink. Or, can it be attributed to some changes in policy elsewhere that are more effectively addressing the issue of violent crime? I believe so.

As a criminal justice professor for three decades in Detroit and someone who has studied crime trends both locally and nationally for even longer, it is clear that most criminal acts – including violent ones – are committed by a relatively small pool of repeat offenders, many of whose crimes will escalate in severity. The one local agency I have seen that seems to understand this and has established evidence-based approaches to addressing violent offenders has been the Wayne County Sheriff's Office under its current sheriff, Warren Evans.

Since becoming sheriff, Evans has developed a data-driven approach to crime prevention that identifies and targets high-risk individuals, whether they are wanted on felony warrants, are on parole or probation, or are in jail. The Sheriff's Office, for example, now cross references information from court, Department of Corrections, and federal gang intelligence data bases to identify wanted offenders who match the "violent offender composite." Deputies prioritize those cases and then partner with other agencies for additional resources to apprehend as many as possible.

Sheriff Evans also created a unit unlike any other that pairs deputies with state parole and probation agents to conduct random compliance inspections at the homes of individuals on parole and probation but still under state sentence. Anyone in the law enforcement/criminal justice fields knows that about 50 % of these people will re-offend.

Only Evans, however, took the logical next step to establish a full-time unit that can catch these high-risk offenders in the act of violating their parole or probation--before the illegal activity leaves the confines of their home and enters the confines of ours. Deputies working with this unit have made hundreds of on-the-spot arrests and seized scores of illegal guns.

Under Evans, the Wayne County Sheriff's Office also has become a leader in the in jail-based treatment programs that show measurable results, most notably a domestic violence counseling program for sentenced inmates that has a remarkably low re-offense rate, and Project Fresh Start, a nationally recognized program that has successfully taken dozens of drug-addicted prostitutes out of their high-risk, often deadly, professions.



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Lastly, a recently implemented "double check" policy has resulted in jail deputies discovering outstanding felony warrants--including ones for murder--for individuals sent to the jail by other agencies that did not discover those additional charges themselves.

As with anything, random approaches will bring random results. My belief is that the reduction in homicides in Detroit is not a random occurrence. Rather, it is in large part the result of the kind of smart police work the citizens of Detroit deserve.

Dr. Daniel Kennedy is Emeritus Professor of Criminal Justice at the University of Detroit Mercy.

In your voice

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OctopiAlley wrote:

Replying to MiamiMatt:

Free Press crack investigators should be looking at past and current conflicts of interest before making such pronouncements of excellence.

Its not like every police officer in Detroit didn't know of Kwame manipulating the police force through firings and influencing appointemnts... yet he said / did nothing... why?

01/16/2009 6:56:21 a.m. EDT

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notimpressed wrote:

Replying to ThaRebirth:

Replying to notimpressed:

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HA...LOL...JOHN BENNETT...the DPD stooge aspiring to be the next crooked politician...the chump is running for city council...don't trust them trust me...his words not mine.

As opposed to the Kwame stooge. Fck u.

01/16/2009 12:38:30 a.m. EDT

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Greenwood wrote:

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AARP.TheHartford.com

I've always know Warren Evans to be a man of integrity & intellect. I think he has made a great sheriff and good for him for standing up to Ficano (who wants to spend taxpayer dollars on Cobo during a recession)! How about putting more cops on the streets! As for those who hung themselves? Two less prisoners to pay for and 2 additional cells available for the next in line. The decline might be due to the fact that there are less & less people in Detroit everyday! Not only is Everyone is leaving Detroit, people are leaving Michigan at an unprecedented rate! OMG!

01/16/2009 12:34:27 a.m. EDT

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wishy wrote:

Dr. Daniel Kennedy is Emeritus Professor of Criminal Justice at the University of Detroit Mercy.

~~~~~  
Seems to me that he is also the campaign manager/cheerleader for Evans. What a joke...2 people hang themselves in 2 days in Evans' house...he feeds special food to KILLPATRICK and wants us to vote for him to run the city? Seems like he needs to get things together at the jail first....and stop arguing with Ficano about his uncontrollable budget. The good Dr. has been misinformed.

01/15/2009 11:15:34 p.m. EDT

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justice6 wrote:

Listen, brother. Not to be rude, but if you knew ANYTHING about this idiot warren evans, you would be embarrassed that you wrote this. God love you.

01/15/2009 10:57:47 p.m. EDT

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