



CHIEF OF POLICE
RAYMOND S. KOVACH

City of Garfield

POLICE DEPARTMENT

160 BELMONT AVENUE
GARFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07026

rkovach@garfieldpolice.org

TEL: (973) 478-8500, EXT. 4100 - FAX: (973) 478-2863

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To the people that we serve:

We have all seen the video of the arrest of Mr. George Floyd in Minneapolis which is very disturbing.

I agree with and applaud the swift response of Chief Medaria Arrandondo in firing the officers under his command that were involved. The second and equally important step to begin the criminal charging process has now been taken.

This was not a situation that involved a split-second decision. There is no excuse for the tactics and behavior exhibited by those members of our profession. What we all have seen is not consistent with the training and values of the Garfield Police Department, an Accredited Law Enforcement Agency that serves you, the people.

In addition to the inhumane act of one officer, to see that numerous other officers stood by and failed to act when they observed what was unfolding in their presence is equally as disturbing. Their actions are egregious and shocking to all of us. It is truly devastating to Mr. Floyd's family and the entire community. Immediate intervention by any one of the officers on that scene could have changed the outcome and saved a man's life. That is what we as police officers are sworn to do.

The act of just one officer impacts all law enforcement officers. Nothing observed in the video is acceptable. We come together and condemn those actions. The Garfield Police Department will always operate with the highest standards and will not tolerate an officer who chooses to make a poor decision.

As a law enforcement agency, we will never forget the reason why we exist. Rest assured, the conduct that we all have seen in the Minneapolis videos, including those officers who turn a blind eye, will never be tolerated by the Garfield Police Department.

In the State of New Jersey, we have Attorney General Gurbir Grewal, who has worked very hard since assuming his position to make changes in our State to ensure justice is applied fairly and without bias. He has raised the level of our training and accountability in his statewide Excellence in Policing Initiative, which we all embrace. Our officers are committed to upholding the highest standards of our profession.

I assure you the men and women of the Garfield Police Department treat all people fairly, with dignity, and respect. It is expected. We will continue to work tirelessly to strengthen trust between our officers and the public we serve.

Chief Raymond Kovach
City of Garfield Police Department

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