

Seibert, Trent (KTRK-TV)

From: Evans, Janice - MYR [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Friday, July 22, 2016 10:52 AM
To: Oberg, Ted S. (KTRK-TV)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Reuben Williams/HPD Case

Ted,

Mayor Turner is going to pass on this one. The decision is based on the threat of litigation and the fact that this incident was two years ago. We are focused on what is going on right now and working to keep the calm. If you would like to know his thoughts on building relationships, please refer to the attached op/ed that ran in the Chronicle a week ago.

Thank you,

Janice

From: Oberg, Ted S. (KTRK-TV) [mailto:Ted.S.Oberg@abc.com]
Sent: Monday, July 18, 2016 4:32 PM
To: Evans, Janice - MYR
Cc: Granato, Wendy (KTRK-TV); Seibert, Trent (KTRK-TV); Aguillard, David M. (KTRK-TV)
Subject: Reuben Williams/HPD Case

Janice –

We are working on a piece and hope the mayor will want to comment. I am somewhat concerned about the nature of the piece and the possibility it could be taken out of context, which is why I am contacting you well in advance of any airdate. I hope the mayor will be willing to put it in some context as Houston and the rest of the country struggle with how to react to recent police incidents.

Reuben Williams was arrested for DWI on 12/8/2014 (nearly two years ago). He sustained a head injury in the detention cell which required several stitches to close. He remains charged with DWI & Harassment of a Public Servant (for allegedly spitting on an HPD officer). He has a prior criminal history.

We just got the videotape of the incident from Williams last week and interviewed him. He claims his lawyer just got a copy of the videotape from HPD a few months ago. It is pretty graphic. Mr. Williams is handcuffed and being escorted from a blood test to the holding cell. As he approaches the cell door, his head violently crashes into the cell door opening the cut. The officer puts his hand on Williams neck and he drops to the cell floor bleeding.

HPD officers tell investigators in IAD reports that Mr. Williams spat on officers. Some of the inmates nearby suggest that did not happen. The videotape does not appear to clearly show spitting in the hallway. The IAD report also suggests Mr. Williams possibly slammed his own head into the wall voluntarily. He denies that. The video does not appear to show that either.

Officer Corral was not billed by the Grand Jury.

This afternoon I asked HPD about the officer's current assignment and if he was disciplined for this incident. The reports Mr. Williams turned over to us suggest Corral was at least temporarily suspended. I have also asked HPD for an on camera interview to help put this video in its proper context to educate viewers on what they are seeing.

I hope to get the mayor's reaction to the video and the incident, but more importantly have a discussion about building trust in HPD. As he said at the post-Dallas press conference, "You can't ignore it (mistrust between police and some communities they serve). You can't treat it as if it doesn't exist, or that if we just go to sleep tonight and wake up, it will be gone. It's not going to go away on its own, and as a city, we must collectively address it."

I think this piece could be one way to address it. The video is tough to watch, policing is tough to do – both true. We don't always see the things people complain about on video. The question is what do we do with it when confronted with incidents like this.

I'm happy to bring my laptop down and show you what I have. HPD likely has more for you to see. I do hope you will watch the video before making a decision about an interview – the written reports don't provide the full picture.

Let's talk soon -

Ted

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From our mayor: Now more than ever we need to pull together

Mayor Sylvester Turner | July 8, 2016 | Updated: July 8, 2016 9:05pm

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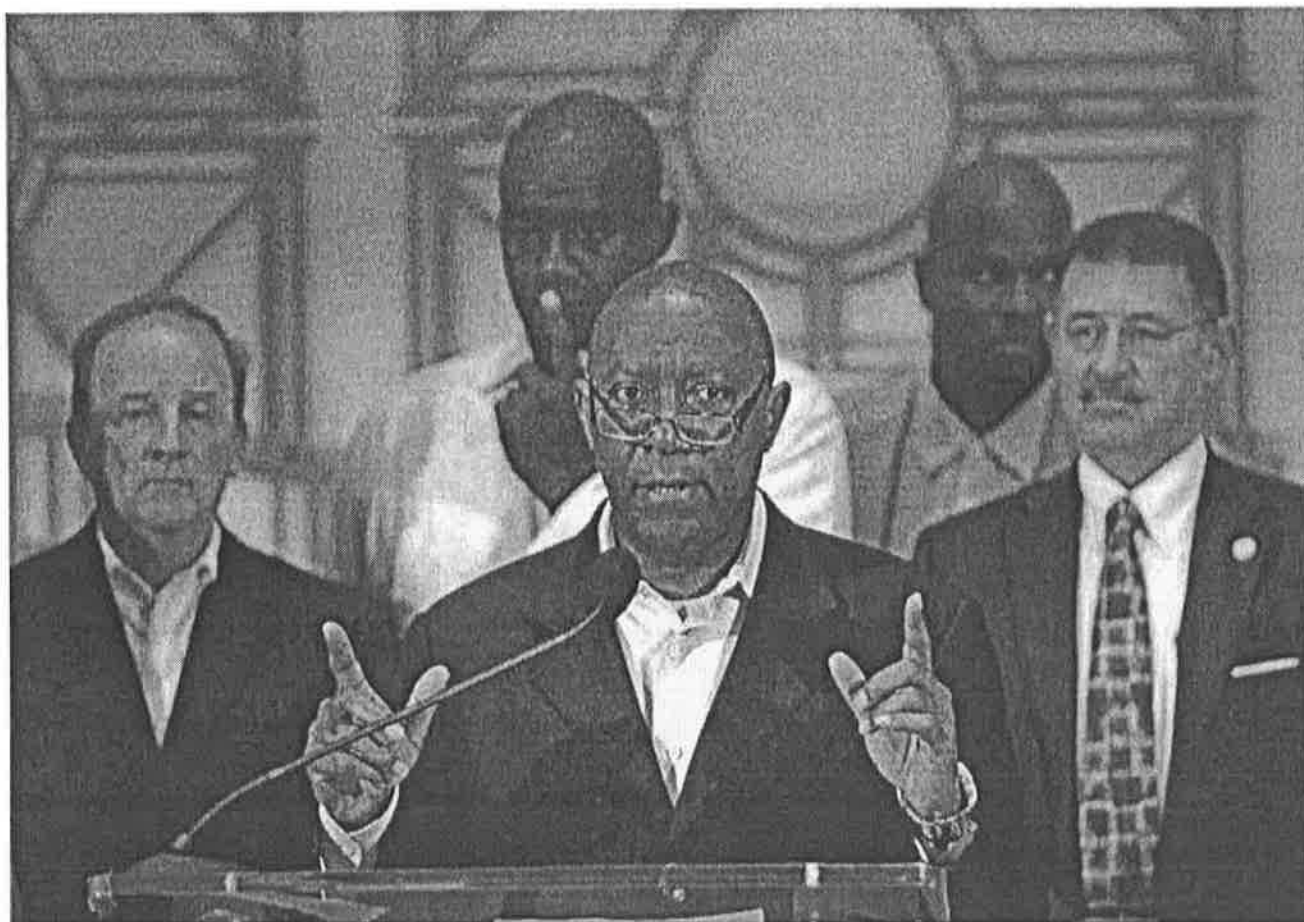


Photo: Karen Warren, Staff

Mayor Sylvester Turner addresses the media with acting Houston Police Chief Martha Montalvo at City Hall, Friday in Houston. (Karen Warren / Houston Chronicle)

I've been unable to sleep. Too many lives have been taken, too many families destroyed. I pray for the loved ones of every officer killed in Dallas, and I pray for the loved ones of those who lost their lives in Baton Rouge and Minnesota.

This is a difficult time in our nation's history. There is pain, hurt and anger all around. Though the recent shootings did not take place in Houston, we are not that far removed. There has been progress on the divide between law enforcement and those they serve and protect since I was a young black kid, but this inexcusable violence on both sides indicates we have a very long way to go. Thanks to the global social media village we live in, society as a whole is only now beginning to acknowledge the severity of the problem. Acknowledging the problem exists is the first step. We now have to agree to pull together and collectively address it.



Houston has not experienced the same kind of violence and uprisings as other cities. We like to say it is because Houston is different. Our diversity does make us more accepting of that which is different. On the other hand, I worry that we may have just been lucky. Regardless of why it has not happened here, we are working hard to get ahead of the problem before a situation causes Houstonians to react contrary to what we expect.

We cannot hold an entire group responsible for the actions of individuals. If an African-American, Hispanic, Anglo or Asian commits an act of violence against someone, we cannot blame the entire group. The same would apply to Muslims or Baptists. We also cannot blame all of law enforcement for the wrongful actions of a police officer. That would be wrong. Each individual must be held accountable for his or her actions.

Houston has taken steps to enhance trust between law enforcement and the community. Earlier this year, Houston

OPINION

became the largest city to begin deployment of body cameras for all of our uniformed officers. We are depending on these cameras to show us what really happened. If a motorist shows signs of being impaired, we will see it on the video. If there is a domestic violence incident occurring when officers arrive on scene, we will see it on the video. If the suspect has a gun pulled and pointed at an officer, we will see it on the video. And, if an officer misuses or abuses his or her authority, we will see it on the video. This is another step; it is not the answer.

HPD is also making strides in the area of training. All cadets currently receive eight hours in de-escalation training. As of September 2015, this is also mandatory for all existing officers. This training includes techniques for improving communication, using cover and concealment, creating distance and slowing the situation down.

The police chief meets regularly with ethnically and culturally diverse community, religious, academic and business leaders, to address issues and concerns impacting their respective communities and connect them with the appropriate contacts within HPD to help resolve their issues. Likewise, HPD's Police and Clergy Alliance provides an opportunity for local religious leaders to support HPD- sponsored programs and initiatives, assist victims of crime and mentor at-risk-youth. The goal is to maintain and foster an open-door policy for positive police and citizen interactions.

All of this represents a start, but it is not enough. Yes, Houston is different due to its diversity, but diversity means nothing if we are separate, segregated and apart. Now more than ever we need to pull together and use our differences to gain understanding and find workable solutions to this national emergency. The summer of 2016 cannot continue on the bloody track we've witnessed recently. I invite all leaders to join me at the table to work on this. If there is any city that can lead the way in getting it right, it is Houston!



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Opinion: Clinton's server doesn't look like honest mistake



Thursday letters: Planning ahead



The danger of President Trump isn't dictatorship

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