

# Let's Place the Blame Where it Truly Belongs

## Statement of Ald. Bob Donovan January 4, 2010

Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn put it mildly, in my opinion, when he said this after the second deadly crash last week that ended shortly after police officers attempted to make a traffic stop: **“The deadly consequences of the reckless behavior of criminals should not be linked to police attempts to keep people safe.”**

In the days following the two crashes, calls were made for police to review their policies related to traffic pursuits, to ensure that officers are following procedures. **In both incidents, the crashes occurred before officers even had a chance to pursue either vehicle, and an initial review shows that officers in both cases followed proper procedures.**

In my view, **judgment** is the critical word in both of these tragic crashes.

Where was the judgment of these drivers – both reportedly intoxicated – when they decided to get behind the wheel? In the December 31 crash at Sherman and Center, where was the judgment of the fleeing driver when he recklessly ran a red light at high speed? In the 27<sup>th</sup> and Locust crash on New Year's Day, what told the young men that it would be OK to steal a car and then drive recklessly through a densely populated area with narrow streets?

Furthermore, if the suspects had prior arrest records, I would like to know why they were out on streets to begin with. Who were the judges who handled their cases? Had they satisfied their debt to society (either through jail time or community service/restitution)? Had they been in regular contact with their parole/probation officers?

In my view, as a community we should be asking what prompted the reckless acts committed by the perpetrators in both cases. Our police officers followed proper procedures and did everything, it appears, that they were trained to do correctly. As a community we should acknowledge their skill and dedication, and have a sense of comfort knowing they are doing everything possible to keep us safe. Each and every day our officers risk their lives while making split-second decisions in situations that never receive a sentence of mention in the news.

As for the drivers of these two two-ton “bullets,” we ask now that the criminal justice system ensures justice for the victims and their families. As a community, we should be watching to make sure that justice is served.

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