

Randy's New Year's resolution

Officer Daryl Turner
Central Precinct

Portland City Commissioner Randy Leonard has opened his mouth again against the Portland Police Bureau by saying the City's Independent Police Review Board should handle internal investigations rather than Police Bureau management.

When I became a Portland cop 19 years ago, the Internal Affairs Division consisted of a captain, a lieutenant, a sergeant and three or four investigators. There was no Independent Police Review, Performance Review Board, or Citizens Review Committee. Add to all of those an Internal Affairs Division with a captain, a lieutenant, two sergeants and six investigators and we've gone from an Internal Affairs Division consisting of six or seven personnel to over 30 sworn and non-sworn.

What does Commissioner Leonard want, his own little army?

During the last decade I have served on the Portland Police Association Executive Board as an elected member or shop steward. I have been involved in over 200 Internal Affairs Division interviews as a union representative. I've seen many cases where Independent Police Review has actually added allegations to the complaint that was initially investigated.

I have seen Independent Police Review make experienced, knowledgeable, respected investigators re-interview witnesses and

suspect officers in an investigation if they felt like the questions they wanted answered weren't to their satisfaction.

How much more influence does Commissioner Leonard want Independent Police Review to have over Internal Affairs Division investigations? Maybe Randy wants his own little Gestapo to walk into Internal Affairs Division interviews and torture officers to get the outcome he wants. That would give Independent Police Review "more teeth," as Leonard was quoted as saying.

I can just see Randy Leonard, Sam Adams, and Storm Large downing a few cold ones sitting around on New Year's Eve when Leonard admits his New Year's resolution is to give Independent Police Review "more teeth." I can see them rolling on the floor in laughter as Leonard says he's not joking—he's totally serious.

Or could this be a political move by Commissioner Leonard to begin the course toward the mayor's office when Sam Adams's term is concluded? Is Leonard attempting to pacify the small number of Portlanders who scrutinize and criticize PPB officers every chance they get for their own political, personal or monetary gain?

Could this be Commissioner Leonard's attempt to even the score with Chief Sizer? It's no secret there's bad blood between the two. Maybe Leonard believes Chief Sizer took away his chance to become the police commissioner last year when she made it known that

she and Leonard's work relationship would be difficult at best.

There are enough checks and balances in the PPB's already slow moving wheels to stall the outcome of internal investigations. There are enough restrictions and politics involved in hampering competent, experienced, knowledgeable and respected Internal Affairs Division investigators. There are enough committees and review boards to make simple investigations complicated and drawn out.

Commissioner Leonard, what makes you a knowledgeable expert in the workings of the investigative process? Was it something you learned since you've been at City Hall?

By his own admission, Mayor Adams had an "inappropriate contact and relationship" in City Hall right under your nose. Did you miss that?

Didn't you get caught for breaking Portland Fire Department policy by putting on Fire Bureau equipment and actively fighting a fire?

Was the video you made with Mayor Adams and Storm Large the proper way for a City official to conduct himself on or off duty?

What would be the punishment for a Portland police officer if they had been involved in even one of these incidents.

It's easy to Monday-morning quarterback when you're sitting in a nice, warm, comfortable office watching the cold rain running down your office windows. Here's some food for thought: When you try to make a fast car faster by adding more junk to the engine, all you're really doing is making the engine heavier, slower running and hotter...until it explodes.

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mine the entire institution of policing as part of a much broader radical social agenda. This is a symptom of the polarized American political culture that has developed over the last 40 years.

Extremists on either side will never be satisfied, and should not be taken seriously—especially when developing policy with direct bearing on the safety of the public and the people in the organization who deliver service (and whose lives are on the line).

Officers need to understand that not all critics are trying to destroy the organization. Most of them are motivated by a genuine desire to improve our service. It's important to listen to what others have to say, because

they may have some valuable input. We should always reserve the right to change our minds when confronted with sufficient evidence. Thoughtful public involvement in public safety is a sign of a healthy community.

Both sides should convene a working group to identify issues like the ones that led up to the current situation and find meaningful ways to resolve them. This group should be chaired by someone outside the current union and management establishments, who is respected by both. The goal of the group should be to clearly identify workplace issues and their solutions and to increase each side's understanding of the perspective of the other.

We would be wise to remem-

ber that the Police Bureau belongs to the community. It exists to serve the community's needs, not ours. In all this internal bickering and political infighting, the organization appears, to the outside observer at least, to have lost sight of the fact that our mission is to provide excellent public safety service to the citizens of Portland.

Officers need to be able to do this within clear guidelines and as safely as possible. We need to get our house in order and stop focusing so much energy inward at our own internal politics and issues. Instead, we should focus our energy outward, at keeping our community safe.

This is, after all, why the Police Bureau exists in the first place.

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Get in. Get it. Get going.