

Surviving the crisis

Meeghan Black
Public Information Officer
Bellevue Police Department

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AGENDA

- **The importance of positive media relations in crisis communications**
- **Creating a crisis communications plan/toolkit**
- **Crisis communications case studies**
- **Q & A**



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MEDIA RELATIONS

- Proactive media relations promotes a positive image & builds relationships
- It's a direct line to your community
- Allows you to tell your story
- The media have a significant role in setting the public agenda
- The media can make or break a reputation or brand



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 **Bellevue, WA Police** @BvuePD

A home has slid off its foundation and has collapsed in the 5000 Blk 139th Pl SE. Everyone has been removed from the home. @BvueFD is searching for a water main break that has caused flooding in the area. PSE has responded to check on a possible gas leak.

HAPPENING NOW



5:23 AM · Jan 17, 2022

 **Bellevue, WA Police** @BvuePD

Bellevue Utilities is on scene working to find a source for the water. So far, 42 people and several pets have been evacuated from 17 homes. That number is likely to continue as crews assess the scene.



0:57

7:16 AM · Jan 17, 2022

4

- Inform the community
- Reassure the community
- Not place responsibility for the slide



5



6



7



POST EVENT COMMUNICATIONS

- Proactively reached out to inform the community
- Onsite news conference
 - Responsive
 - In control
- Answer questions, educate
- Alleviate fear and concern

8

City
Manager
Brad Miyake



9



10



- Families remained displaced
- Criticism over the pace of the response
- Legal maneuvering
- Condemn the property

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- Proactively communicate to your community – leverage media contacts – avoid bad headlines
- Let your community know what you are doing, when and why
- Be as transparent as possible



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It's not a matter of if but when...

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

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NEWS

Bellevue businesses see damage, looting amid George Floyd protests

National Guard called to assist city.
By Haley Ausburn • June 1, 2020 2:20 pm



Protesters call back from clouds of smoke and tear gas at a protest May 31 in downtown Bellevue. Photo by Haley Ausburn/Second Publishing

May 31, 2020

NEWS

Bellevue police officer placed on administrative leave for social media posts

Department is investigating the posts, which included conspiracy theory about George Floyd's death.

By Haley Ausburn • June 4, 2020 4:50 pm

June 4, 2020

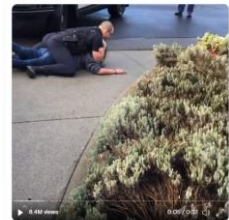


This 200lb white cop topped and choked out a black woman over a title transfer.

THE COP WORKS FOR BELLVUE POLICE DEPARTMENT IN WASHINGTON STATE!

WHO IS HE?

BLACK LIVES MATTER



12:55 PM - Jun 5, 2020 · Twitter for Android

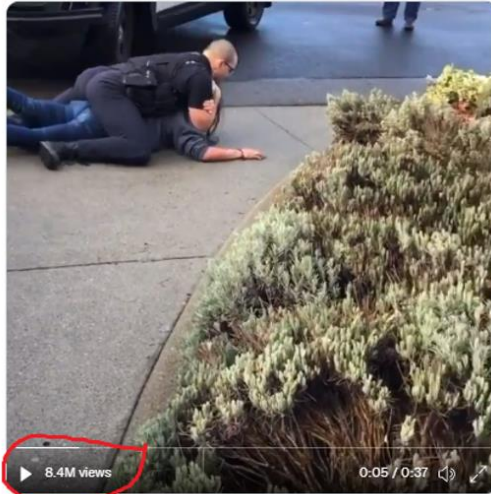
853.9K Retweets · 10.2K Quote Tweets · 122.9K Likes

June 6, 2020

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

14

BLACK LIVES MATTER



12:35 PM · Jun 6, 2020 · Twitter for Android

83.1K Retweets 10.2K Quote Tweets 132.1K Likes

15

- Good media relations ensure our voice is heard - the story will be told regardless
- Cooperation is money in the bank
- Transparency with the media & on social media = transparency with your community



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CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN/TOOLKIT

- A crisis communications plan is your blueprint in a chaotic situation
- Allows you to act immediately
- Gathers important contact information for key players
- Cuts through the chaos to get you started
- Should be as simple as possible



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CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN/TOOLKIT

- Identify key members
 - Have contact information in one place
 - Have backups identified
 - Current media contacts
- Assign team members specific tasks
 - Decision maker(s)
 - Spokesperson
 - Message creator(s)
 - Social media monitor
 - Media liaison/monitor
 - Department/Employee liaison



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CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN/TOOLKIT

- Establish how to share information within response team
 - Text group
 - Email
 - Phone
 - War room location
- Assess potential crises
 - Natural disaster/weather
 - Mass casualty incident
 - Scandal
 - High-profile person involved
- *Draft and translate critical key messages



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WHEN A CRISIS STRIKES

- Communicate as soon as possible and often
- **Empathy:** Make an emotional connection and convey caring.
- **Action:** What are you doing about it?
- **Look forward:** Call to action, how can people help?



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CRISIS COMMS CASE STUDY

NATIONAL NEWS FROM ABC

Jayland Walker had 46 gunshot wounds in his body, autopsy report reveals

on July 15, 2022



Angelo Merendino/Getty Images

(AKRON, Ohio) -- Jayland Walker, the 25-year-old Black man who was fatally shot by police in Akron, Ohio, had 46 gunshot wounds on his body, according to an autopsy report

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EMPATHY

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ACTION

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CALL TO ACTION

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OPINION

Why Didn't Akron Burn? | Opinion

BOB WOODSON, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT, THE WOODSON CENTER
ON 7/25/22 AT 7:00 AM EDT



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Akron already had a policy, for example, demanding an immediate response from city officials in cases such as this, and it carried that policy out when it mattered most. The police chief reached out to Walker's family right away and expressed his condolences promptly. The city officials and police chief already had close ties to the affected neighborhoods, so the overture was received with trust.

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The city urged peace, too. The police released the video of the shooting and described the confrontation in meticulous detail and with objectivity. Their statements have demonstrated a commitment to clarity, specificity, and justice.

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POST CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS



Be available for follow-up interviews; your communication is for the community



It's an opportunity to educate or clear up misinformation



Reputational damage control



Rebuild trust

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POST EVENT REACTION



kurtis @kurtissolheim · May 31, 2020

...

Replying to @BvuePD and @KIRO7Seattle

No visible cops at the south end where Macy's is. This is embarrassing for your agency.

🗨️
↻ 1
❤️ 11
📤



Will in Seattle @WillSeattle · May 31, 2020

...

Replying to @BvuePD and @KIRO7Seattle

Have you arrested the young white male terrorist instigators yet?

🗨️
↻
❤️ 1
📤



怪力乱神 @ChenXiaocang · May 31, 2020

...

Replying to @BvuePD

Arrest them!

LOCAL

Bellevue police chief says looters are part of organized crime ring



By Siemmy Kim, KIRO 7 News

June 01, 2020 at 10:01 pm PDT



VIDEO: Bellevue gets ready for another night of possible protests VIDEO: Bellevue gets ready for another night of possible protests

POST EVENT COMMUNICATIONS

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Police chief answers questions about May 31 riots

Published June 12 2020

"Sunday, May 31, our city was victimized by an organized criminal network who took advantage of the tragic death of George Floyd by cloaking themselves as peaceful protesters," states Police Chief Steve Mylett in a [video interview](#). "In short, Bellevue experienced a riot by more than a thousand criminals and opportunists who converged on the downtown core intent on causing destruction."

"Their criminal actions put people's lives at risk as they caused fear throughout the city. I am angry this happened, and I have directed Bellevue police detectives to identify and arrest as many of these offenders as possible. In this video, I hope to address your concerns and share with you the situation that quickly unfolded that day."



"Please know I welcome your feedback and will be holding community forums so we can discuss this situation and our plans moving forward."

POST EVENT COMMUNICATIONS

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Bellevue police arrest 23 in connection to George Floyd protest looting

Tens of thousands of dollars of merchandise have been recovered, as well as alcohol, tobacco, weapons and drugs.



34

Police: 46 arrested or charged in Bellevue looting after death of George Floyd

Published August 28, 2020 | Washington's West Coast | Q13 HD

70 suspects in Bellevue looting spree referred for charges, but 6 still need ID

by KOMO News Staff | Friday, October 23rd 2020

35

- Navi K.** • Bel Monte
That's the police I know. Bellevue Police, our police. Good work!
13 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 2
- Kat D.** • Nansay Highlands
Thank you
12 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 1
- Jane M.** • Chandler Park
Thank you Bellevue Police
11 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 1
- Lily W.** • NW Bellevue/Clyde Hill
Thank you BPD! Maybe ought to thank Bellevue mayor and city council for not getting in the way so police can do their job.
11 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 3
- Yah & Grace H.** • Newport Hills
Brilliant. Good job BPD
11 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 3
- Pat C.** • NW Bellevue/Clyde Hill
A big thank you from the citizens and neighbors that live here in Bellevue to our Great police department and law officers that keep us safe and try to keep law and order that we... See more
11 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 6
- John S.** • Downtown Bellevue
Well done!
11 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#)
- Neeti M.** • Bridle Trails
Thank you BPD
11 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#)
- Storia O.** • Summit/Lakemont
Thank you thank you!!
11 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#)
- Sandra L.** • Newport Hills
Thank you so much (May God bless you and keep you safe and strong!)
10 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#)
- Rick R.** • Enatai and Sunny Downs
Good work BPD
To all concerned BPM efforts, these type of activities certainly takes a way from the BLM momentum!
10 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 1
- Gal S.** • Alderboro
Great job BPD!!!

- Elia G.** • Tam O'Shanter West
Thank you BPD!
9 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#)
- Heidi Z.** • Cougar Mountain
Thank you BPD! We trust you, support you and you are the best!
9 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#)
- Rabeca L.** • Lake Hills
Looking at that arsenal and realizing it was all in the possession of one suspect is terrifying. I am grateful to the BPD for your hard work on this case!
9 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#)
- Jerry J.** • East Phantom Lake
This is good news, and shows professional police work. I notice none of the people complaining about no arrests being made during the looting have anything to say now.
8 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#)
- Zoe L.** • Crossroads
Well done BPD! Thank you for your service!
8 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#)
- Wendy W.** • Somerset
Thank you for your service! We stand for BPD!
8 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 1
- Lucy M.** • Cherry Chase
We stand for BPD!
7 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#)
- Dan R.** • E Lake Hills/Cougar Mountain
This makes me happy to see. At least they didn't get away with all the destruction they did. They need to be held accountable. I'm also glad to see so much support for our... See more
6 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 2
- Karen W.** • Enatai and Sunny Downs
Thanks for enforcing the laws and keeping our city safe!
2 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 1
- Karen W.** • Enatai and Sunny Downs
We support you...
2 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#)
- Scott M.** • Enatai and Sunny Downs
Nice work!
2 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#)

- Eva M.** • Sammamish/Denverway
Thank you Bellevue police for being there for us! ❤️
13 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 1
- Sally and Tim D.** • Enatai and Sunny Downs
Thank you to everyone who help d locate these perpetrators
13 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 1
- Michael H.** • Forest Drive
Fantastic!
13 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 1
- Akane L.** • Enatai and Sunny Downs
Thanks you Bellevue police for supporting our protesters and protecting our community at the same time
13 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 7
- Michelle K.** • Newport Hills
Way to go BPD and awesome citizen!
13 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 1
- Candyn S.** • Newport Hills
Great NEWS!
13 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 1
- Hanka O.** • The Lakes
Thank you Bellevue police department!
13 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 1
- Kim C.** • College Hill/Denver
Excellent job, thank you to Bellevue Police Officers, take care and be safe. Bellevue residents need you guys.
12 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 4
- Jane R.** • Lake Hills
Keep up the good work!
12 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 4
- Taw C.** • Somerset
Thank you officers! We are with you!
12 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 2
- Charles K.** • Newport Hills
Thank you Bellevue Police hope Seattle will learn from you
12 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 7
- Vicki C.** • North Town/North Bellevue Way
Thank you Bellevue police!!
12 hr ago [Thank](#) [Reply](#) 2

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COMMUNITY REACTION



Gabriele P. • Sherwood Forest



Thank you Bellevue Police Department , I support you and the officers a 100%. I value your dedication in keeping Bellevue a safe place to live. Wishing you and your officers safety and good health.

42 min ago

[Thank](#)

[Reply](#)



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QUESTIONS?

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Meeghan Black Media

Media Training & Crisis Communications

(206) 501-9795