

Police Culture Poisons the Individual

Whenever I hear speaking on the moral/ethical nature of police, or even judge them by being generally decent or indecent people, I never hear a standard of judgement. Most of the time, criticism/compliments are fluffy, collectivist and/or ambiguous to such a degree that no conversation is possible. This is also true of teachers, politicians and many other symbols/figures of authority ... but we will stick to police for now.

What qualities distinguish a good police officer from a bad one?

- an unbiasedly upholding of the law
- a demeanor of respect and honor
- standing up for truth and the values he vows to uphold
- a strong moral compass that underlies his motivations for being a police officer
- a desire to help people.

I think this is a standard most people would agree to relatively easily. With this standard set, let us set up a couple of hypothetical scenario to test these qualities.

1. A cop sees a man speeding through traffic. He pulls him over with the intent to give him a ticket. When he pulls him over he realizes the man is a fellow police officer. Does he give him a ticket?

If he does not, he is not unbiasedly upholding the law and he lacks a strong moral compass. He is engaging in corruption and he is a bad/corrupt cop.

2. Two cops pull up to a group of teenagers. They aren't causing harm, but they are being active and dressing a bit out of the norm. No laws are being broken. One cop rolls down the window to angrily look at the kids and tells them, "We are watching you. We don't tolerate hoodlums in the area, and we are itching for a chance to take in some thugs." What does the other guy do?

If he doesn't stop the cop from talking to law abiding citizens with such derision and report him, he is a bad cop for not standing up for unbiased standards, and a demeanor of respect and honor.

3. One cop find out that another cop was inaccurate on filing a report. Does he take steps to correct his actions?

If the answer is no, he is violating every established standard.

4. A cop has a strong moral code and has to enforce a law he believes is immoral. What does he do?

The laws police must enforce violate every moral standard when you look at them individually. In order for them to remain cops they must enforce them in violation of their own morality.

This is why all cops are bad cops.

Every cop is put into these scenarios every day. Every cop will admit to be putting into these sorts of scenarios every day. However, while every cop won't admit to handling them unethically, they will side step the issue and obfuscate their duty.

While a good guy could become a cop, the culture poisons the individual. The incentives of government, monopolies, unions and feeling camaraderie with others in the same culture all concentrate themselves into a situation that cops must be immoral and indecent to remain cops. If you try to be a good cop, the best possible scenario is that you will be fired ... often it would be quite a bit worse.