

Film Review: ‘Peace Officer’ Examines Police Overreach



‘Peace Officer,’ a new documentary, depicts the creation of Utah’s first Special Weapons and Tactics unit, and examines the culture of police overreach that gave birth to recent protests.

By Kam Williams
Special To The Skanner
News

William “Dub” Lawrence is the former sheriff of Davis County, Utah where he created and trained the state’s very first Special Weapons and Tactics team several decades ago. How-

the vehicle, a lethal mix of live ammo, flash-bomb grenades, pepper balls, rubber bullets, tasers and explosive devices. Dub partially blames himself for his son-in-law’s unnecessary death, because he’d helped enforce the commanding officer’s order that his daughter and Brian’s parents vacate the

before in American history have cops been so distrusted and/or disliked by such a large percentage of the citizenry. Most notably, there’s the Black Lives Matter movement which refuses to apologize for employing such hateful chants during demonstrations as: “Pigs in a blanket, fry ‘em up like

film’s narrator, laments the fact that “Most people no longer see police as protectors, but as violators of their liberty.” He also harks back to a time when a patrolman’s job description call for his primarily serving the community as a peacemaker. Sadly, that lofty ideal is long gone, having been replaced by the self-serving, “us” vs. “them” notion as reflected by the blue wall of silence and the immunity from prosecution which “allows cops to break the law with impunity.” A recipe for civil insurrection which we’ve all been witnessing.

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ever, he came to regret having ever founded that tactical unit in September of 2008 when the police were summoned by his daughter because her husband had suffered an emotional breakdown. Brian had barricaded himself in his pickup truck where he threatened to commit suicide while holding a gun to his head. Instead of defusing the volatile situation, the SWAT team proceeded to ratchet up the tension, ultimately ending the standoff by emptying 111 rounds into

area, thereby abandoning their loved one in an hour of need. Leaving it up to the first responders proved disastrous, since they failed to follow proper protocol, going so far as to shoot Brian in the head after he was already disarmed and lying defenseless in the street. This and other similar cases of overzealous policing on the part of SWAT teams is the subject of *Peace Officer*, a timely documentary co-directed by Scott Christopherson and Brad Barber. For never

bacon!” and “What do we want? Dead cops! When do we want ‘em? Now!” Consequently, attacks on law enforcement officers have become so commonplace that they’re now being murdered at the rate of about one a week. How do you explain such a frightening breakdown of the culture? Well, this thought-provoking expose’ blames the country’s increasingly militaristic approach to policing. Dub, who serves as the

Thus, *Peace Officer* proves to be the cinematic equivalent of a canary in the coal mine, as it issues a dire warning to the government to get SWAT teams under control before either the people revolt or the U.S. turns into a Fascist police state. Excellent ★★★★★ Unrated Running time: 109 minutes Studio: Submarine Deluxe Distributor: Gravitas Ventures

Hales Declares State of Emergency on Homelessness

Mayor Charlie Hales yesterday announced plans to declare a state of emergency to address homelessness in Portland, and has asked the Portland City Council to vote on a declaration of emergency.



Mayor Charlie Hales

The move would allow Portland, Multnomah County and the State of Oregon to move quickly to address a lack of housing and to create emergency shelters. The Mayor’s Office contacted the City Attorney’s Office on Sunday to begin the legal process.

- The state of emergency would allow the city to:**
- Waive zoning codes.
 - Convert city-owned buildings into shelters through an expedited process.
 - Work with Multnomah County, which can request that Gov. Kate Brown declare a state of emergency in Portland, as well. That would waive portions of the state building codes, which would allow for the conversion of buildings to shelters, and to expedite the building of the new, permanent supportive housing site for those who have been served by the Unity Center, the soon-to-be-created psychiatric emergency center in Portland.
- Other cities, including Los Angeles and Seattle, are seeking similar emergency status to address the issues.

- Hales said the declaration would have four immediate goals:**
- To complete the objective of the City and County to get all homeless veterans in Portland and Multnomah County indoors by the end of this year.
 - To open additional shelter space, in order to ensure that all homeless women in Portland are also indoors by the end of year.
 - To provide supportive housing for people dealing with mental illness as they are discharged from the new Unity Center. Hales championed the creation of that center, which opens next year. The City, the State, and Multnomah and Washington counties, contributed capital funds for the facility.
 - To enact temporary protections for renters until vacancy rates ease when new units being built come online.
- Once approved by the City Council, an emergency declaration will allow Hales and Dan Saltzman, Commissioner-in-Charge of Housing, to waive land-use restrictions and other code requirements that make the process of creating new shelter space or affordable housing slow and expensive.



Les Femmes Annual Open House

Sunday, October 11, 2015 • 3-5pm
Emanuel Hospital - Lorenzen Center
2081 N Gantenbein Ave, Portland, OR 97227
Near N. Vancouver/ N. Graham St.

Admission FREE • Light refreshment provided

You are cordially invited to attend the Les Femmes Open House. We welcome young girls 6th - 12th grade. Youth must be accompanied by an adult. Come and learn the history of this organization that has been serving youth in the community since 1951.

Please contact Carmen Pettiford, *Les Femmes* President **503.830.5732**
or **thelesfemmesdebutantes1@gmail.com**