



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on July 17, 2014

Serious Crime in Detroit Continues to Drop

After barely more than a year on the job, Detroit's new chief of police, James Craig, reported significant gains in his war against serious crime. According to Craig on Wednesday, his city has seen a 37-percent drop in robberies, a 22-percent drop in home- and business-invasions and a 30-percent decrease in carjackings. Perhaps the most telling statistic, however is this: There has not been a report of a major crime since May 4 — a period of more than two months. And this in a city that just two years ago had the highest rate of violent crime of any city over 200,000 population, according to the FBI.



Craig takes only partial credit for the remarkable rebound toward normalcy. He said, "Criminals are getting the message that good Detroiters are armed and will use that weapon [if they are threatened]. I don't want to take away from the good work our investigators are doing but I think part of the drop in crime, and robberies in particular, [is] because criminals are thinking twice that citizens could be armed."

Al Woods, a Detroit resident and former criminal now reformed, agreed:

If I was out there now robbing people these days, knowing there are a lot more people with guns, I know I'd have to rethink my game plan.

Craig, a law-enforcement officer who began his career in Detroit three decades ago as a beat cop, returned as chief last July and announced his intent to reduce serious crime:

No longer will we stand idly by as criminals run rampant and the good citizens are held captive in their own homes.

Gone are the days that a citizen calls 911 and there is no response. Gone are the days that a citizen comes to a precinct only to find that the doors are locked.

We have taken an oath to protect our citizens and protect them is what we will do.

He started at the top, first by reducing the number of LEOs (law-enforcement officers) protecting the mayor, from 23 to 6, and putting them back onto the street or in vehicles responding to service calls. He discovered too many commanders or executives holding what Craig called "meaningless positions" and so he eliminated the positions. He gave them a choice: retire or hit the streets. Most of them hit the streets, avoiding the need to fire any of them.

Then he looked at those service calls. Prior to his arrival the average response time was 58 minutes. Today it's down to between 10 and 12 minutes. His goal? Five minutes. He said, "That's a stretch goal. I would admit that. I think the national average for response time to emergencies nationally is 11 minutes. That said, I'm still pushing."



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Next he looked at homicide “clearance” rates — the rate at which such crimes were solved — and discovered that due to low morale, poor leadership, lack of financing, cruiser and motorcycles way beyond their useful lives, Detroit was solving barely one out of 10 homicides. He said, “We’re now sitting on a homicide clearance rate that’s comparable to other large cities like LA. We’re now sitting [at] probably the high 80s, low 90s.” He explained:

There’s no magic to it. The community, coming in the door, when I got here, had no confidence in the Detroit Police Department.... The reason why is because, if they can’t call us for help they’re not going to [call].

That’s part of what is going on here. Confidence is returning, people are talking to us.

In an interview with Allan Lengel of *Deadline Detroit*, Craig went on to explain why things were so bad when he got there last summer:

It was the greedy, dirty, corrupt, status-quo politicians that destroyed this city....

They didn’t invest in this police agency, they didn’t invest in public safety, they didn’t care about it. It’s evident. I mean when you look at the dilapidated vehicles.

He currently has about 2,300 uniformed officers serving a city of 900,000 people, pared down nearly 1,000 from just five years ago. He has 1,200 vehicles including motorcycles, and needs at least 800 more. He has 20 new recruits just graduating into his force, and has plans to bring in another 600.

Craig is getting help from the citizenry as well. Almost 30,000 people in Detroit are now legally armed and carrying sidearms, with that number increasing daily. In 2012, 7,584 concealed-pistol permits were issued, while in 2013 another 6,974 were issued, more than double the number issued back in 2009. Best of all, he supports citizen carry, telling Lengel:

I think it’s good for people to protect themselves, their families and, when necessary, protect someone from an imminent threat to their lives or facing great bodily injury.

I’m not an advocate of violence. I do not promote vigilantism. I promote life, I promote non-violence.... I promote law-abiding citizens who are eligible to get a concealed weapons license, who are trained and responsible when face with an imminent threat to their life.

It’s the law that they can protect themselves.

He also had this to say about anti-gunners’ attempts to disarm law-abiding citizens:

How many law-abiding citizens wander out committing mass shootings? How many law-abiding citizens are out committing armed carjackings, robberies, shootings? How many are doing that?

I say none are.

All of which adds up to a war on crime that is succeeding. Detroit has a long way to go, but Craig, with his management skills, his bulldog tenacity, and his support of citizen-carry, is already making a difference.

A graduate of Cornell University and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at www.LightFromTheRight.com, primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com.



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